Preface

There are at least two Glastonburys. One is the mystical centre of the Isle of Avalon of international renown, home to many faiths, seekers of every kind, and the world's most famous festival. The other is a deep-Somerset market town, equally wonderful, famous until recently for shoes and sheepskins, called "the Mardi Gras of the Mendips" in honour of its legendary Illuminated Carnival.

The two towns co-exist uneasily. Mystical Glastonbury has brought shops, businesses, tourists, blow-ins, a very visible street life, but 'Avalonian' incomers are often not much interested in the everyday life of the town. 'Glastonian' locals are rude about the wild-looking 'hedgers' who hang out on the High Street; Christians and pagans are rude about each other.

This pamphlet is an exercise in what I call 'the straight history of Wyrd'. I want to show that Glaston's 'whackiness' goes back three centuries and maybe more, but at the same time to put good Somerset ground beneath the Isle of Avalon, which sometimes seems to float a mile or so above the Levels. All that I say is anchored by threads of academic referencing to 'notes' at the back, but fact is just another form of fiction and I've no desire to damage anybody's dream. There is nothing here, for instance, to challenge Nicholas Mann and Philippa Glasson's *Avalon's Red & White Springs: The Healing Waters of Glastonbury* (published in 2005): it is curious how completely distinct different sorts of knowledge can be. Read both, I say; we're all contributing to the many-layered mythology of Glastonbury.

Introduction

The medieval Abbey of Glastonbury played a huge role in the mystique and mystification of British antiquity. It was not only one of the wealthiest in the country, but it claimed to be the first, built around a little wattle church that was founded by Joseph of Arimathea, he who had taken Christ's body from the Cross and buried it within his own tomb. It claimed the bones of an untold number of saints and heroes, including King Arthur, thereby placing itself right at the centre of the national chronicle.

The symbolic significance that the medieval Abbey held was demonstrated at the Reformation. Glastonbury was one of the last three abbeys to be toppled, holding out until 1539 when Henry VIII chose to turn the Tor into a Calvary for Catholic England by hanging not only Abbot Whiting on its summit but two of his monks also, a macabre tableau surely intended to evoke the Crucifixion[1]. This act of breathtaking and quite deliberate blasphemy was meted out to nowhere else. Singling Glastonbury out for such treatment suggests that the Abbey and its legends had some special significance even within the awe-filled landscapes of late medieval England.

Henry won, or seemed to. The lands of the Abbey were given to favourites, and taken back, and sold, and the site of the Abbey itself divided and let on life-leases to tenants who sought to make an income from the rubble. The town's population, like that of Somerset in general, seems to have been if anything more Protestant and less Catholic than elsewhere. Yet what is now becoming clear is that the process of legend-making, far from petering out when the Abbey was dissolved, simply mutated into something that was if anything stronger, and certainly more unusual.

This paper is intended to fill a gap in the Glastonbury legend-making cycle: the eighteenth century, focussing on the remarkable events of 1751-3.

The first part seeks to establish that there really *was* something unusual about Glastonbury, or at least the way the place was perceived, and here I've been inspired by two scholars in particular: Ronald Hutton, whose work I've long admired, and Alexandra Walsham, whose admirable work I've only just discovered. In *Glastonbury: Alternative Histories* (2003), Ronald Hutton examines the many ways in which the scanty evidence for Glastonbury's ancient past can be interpreted[2]. He shows that there is little conclusive proof to suggest that the place was a powerhouse of ancient religion, little even to suggest that it was even a particularly early centre of Christianity. Glastonbury Abbey emerges from the wrack as a fairly standard bit of Anglo-Saxon new-build, an institution that came to steep itself so thoroughly in its own legendary broth that even today people are inclined to take its stories at face-value. I'm not going to tangle with this, the main thrust of his argument, but on the way to this conclusion he suggests that the roots of the modern Glastonbury cult barely go back to the nineteenth century, and enjoyed very little local support. Iconoclasm and indifference resulted in the piecemeal destruction of the Abbey over three centuries, and interest in the site and its legends was only reawakened by romantic antiquarians and people from outside – often very much outside, particularly America.

There's truth in these observations, but they are not the whole story. One of the main purposes of this screed is to show that eighteenth-century Glastonbury had a mystical status in the *zeitgeist* not so different to the one it's got today; and further, that this was supported and propagated by local people, not only for gain but because they believed in it. My starting-point here has been Alexandra Walsham's remarkable study of the Glastonbury Thorn, in which she demonstrates convincingly that the Reformation, far from ending the steady accretion of legends at Glastonbury, may in fact have stimulated their growth: "in short, the legend of the miraculous hawthorn was not merely a defiant survivor of the upheavals associated with the advent and entrenchment of Protestantism but also a complex side-effect of it"[3].

An earlier paper of Ronald Hutton's, which looked at the possibilities that folklore studies had to offer students of the Reformation, suggested that a sort of DIY culture of folk practices emerged to take the place of rituals once supplied by the Catholic church, tolerated by the Protestants; this, he suggests, should be seen not so much as "resistance to the Reformation as a part of the process of acceptance of it, easing the transformation of a Catholic to a Protestant society"[4]. Walsham's work suggests that this kind of blurred Reformation was particularly apparent at Glastonbury, where the legends fostered by the medieval Abbey lent themselves particularly well to the foundation-myths both of the Anglican Church and the modern state.

Walsham concludes that "the post-Reformation history of the Glastonbury Thorn suggests that the dramatic upheavals of the early modern period did not halt the creation and embellishment of myths about this ancient and evocative Somerset site. On the contrary, they served to initiate a fertile new phase in the elaboration and invention of its historical traditions"[5]. I hope to show that the same processes of legend-making that Walsham found for the seventeenth century can be seen at work in the eighteenth. The Glastonbury *mythos*, far from lying dormant or forgotten for three centuries, was in a process of more or less continuous evolution.

The second part of this paper considers the iconic development of Glastonbury as a centre of anti-rationalism during the later eighteenth century, and builds upon E P Thompson's concept of 'Jacobite theatre'[6], and Robert Poole's work on calendar reform[7], to suggest that the town's miraculous qualities were espoused with undiminished vigour by certain elements of 'the poor' as relics of a time when their needs and aspirations were better understood and met. Already by the 1750s the town's apparent resistance to the 'age of reason' was helping to establish it as a kind of capital of anti-rationalism and the imagination, a place immune from change and progress, where the millennial aspirations of the poor came true. "Avalon was again growing as Holy a Land as was ever that in which the old Bethesda flow'd", said Andrew Brice sarcastically[8]. The delineaments of today's New Age were already to be seen in 1751.

1: Glastonbury and the Past in the Eighteenth Century

Glastonbury's place in the 'national' past

To Post-Reformation England, Glastonbury Abbey was more than just another pile of Papist remains. It was the mystical seat of the British Church, with a history that was perhaps less well authenticated than the mission of St Augustine to Canterbury, but infinitely more significant since it demonstrated that Protestant England, far from being Christendom's most notorious 'rogue state', had merely reverted to a purer form of Christianity than anything emanating from Rome.

Its early holiness was attested by one of England's few tolerated miracles: the Glastonbury Thorn, which flowered on Christmas Day. It was said to be the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, miraculously transformed when that saint arrived with his twelve followers from Palestine, and planted it on Wearyall Hill. Joseph then built the wicker church, around which the later Abbey was to grow: conveniently enough, the first church outside Palestine.

This legend was probably invented and certainly exploited by the Abbey in its heyday, for it gave the English church some claim to precedence within the councils of Christendom, and much political capital to Glastonbury Abbey at home[9]. For similar reasons Joseph retained his political utility after the Reformation, since he'd got here before the Roman emissaries. His legend demonstrated that Catholics, not English Protestants, were the ones who'd deviated from the true faith. As Queen Elizabeth said in 1579, "Joseph of Arimathea planted Christian Religion immediately after the Passion of Christ in this Realme"[10]. Glastonbury was consequently revered. To William Camden, writing in 1609, it was "The First Land of God, the First Land of Saints in *England*, the Tomb of Saints, the Mother of Saints"[11], and when in 1621 George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, was granted land in Newfoundland, he named it 'Avalon', in David Lloyd's words "in imitation of old *Avalon* in *Somersetshire*, wherein *Glassenbury* stands, the first-fruits of Christianity in *Britain*, as the other was in that part of *America*"[12].

The idea was encouraged and abetted by the Anglican hierarchy well into the seventeenth century. Francis Godwin's *Catalogue of the Bishops of England* (1601) begins his account with the story of Joseph; James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, devoted an entire chapter of his *Britannicarum ecclesiarum antiquitates* (1639) to the theme. It seems probable that the connection between Joseph and the Thorn was first made by no less a figure than James Montague, one of the principal architects of Stuart Anglicanism. Although himself a Calvinist, Montague was responsible for organising a "Panegiricall entertainement" for the benefit of James I's Catholic wife Anne of Denmark, in which the character of Joseph presents the Queen with two boughs from the Thorn[13].

This gesture, given the Queen's religion, might be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between Catholics and Anglicans; but courtly Catholicism was not popular with many Protestants. Miracles of all kinds were viewed with contempt and suspicion, and it's not surprising to find that 'the Godly' took two swipes at the Christmas-flowering thorn, once in Elizabeth's reign and once during the Civil War[14]. The second attack prompted Bishop Goodman of Gloucester to suggest that the Thorn had bridged the gap between a reverent past and an irreverent present. Significantly dismissing the Joseph legend for

want of evidence, he suggested that the Thorn had first appeared when the Abbey had been destroyed, its duty "to give a Testimony to Religion, that it might flourish in persecution, as the Thorn did blossom in the coldest time of Winter … so Religion should stand, or rather rise up, though Religious houses were pull'd down"[15].

The Town and its Past

Bishop Goodman's remarkable statement was made in an open letter to Oliver Cromwell in 1653, the same year that Cromwell began to enforce restrictions on the celebration of Christmas. This juxtaposition neatly demonstrates just how far 'high church' Anglicanism had drifted from the credo of the Godly: a process that David Underdown has demonstrated that, in Somerset particularly, underpinned attitudes to the Civil War[16].

Half a century later, the same divisions are still clearly to be seen in the town of Glastonbury. There was a large Dissenter population, yet when the town was granted a Corporation in 1705 a coat-of-arms was devised that suggested unusually close links with the established Church. "Floreat Ecclesia Anglicana" was the motto, "May the Church of England Flourish", surmounted by a shield containing a mitre and two crosiers: suggesting, in Robert Dunning's words, "that Glastonbury might stand as a beacon for the survival of the Church of England against her political enemies"[17]. There was thus an Anglican 'in-crowd', which, given the evidence for Anglican endorsement of the Thorn, might be expected to have one set of ideas about the town's antiquity and antiquities; and there was an excluded Dissenter population who might plausibly have another. Yet because a large part of the Abbey ruins were let to a tenant described by William Stukeley as a "Presbyterian", who treated it as a building quarry, this attitude is often taken as typical of the whole town[18].

In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that this tenant's attitude was not at all typical, even amongst his neighbours. Charles Eyston in 1712 found that "a considerable part of the enclosure" of the abbey was let to an innkeeper who plied his guests with lashings of legendary history and can hardly have approved of his neighbour's endeavours to wipe out the very feature upon which his passing trade depended. The Abbot's Kitchen likewise was occupied by another tenant who had very different ideas about the value of local antiquities to those of his Presbyterian neighbour; hence the building's survival, in good order, to this day.

Already some of Glastonbury's great-and-good were keyed into the commercial possibilities of its antiquity. According to Andrew Brice, the town's "chief Support" was to be found in "the Resort of People to see the Ruins of its Abbey"[19]. This may help to explain why the Corporation's coat-of-

arms, as well as confirming its devotion to the cause of Anglicanism, contains more than a nod to the town's antiquity. The mitre and crosiers evoke the authority of the Abbot, and suggest a link with its legendary origins: for where better than the hometown of the first church in England to stand as a beacon for the Church of England's future?

To visitors, Glastonbury was a place of quasi-secular pilgrimage, mystically embedded in the roots of English national identity; and by the time the early travel-writers came to record their impressions the Glastonbury 'tourist industry' was already displaying an impressive degree of organisation, with a landscape to explore and guides to take you round.

A 'storyline' was developing. Defoe was told that "there are two pieces of antiquity, which were to be inquired of in this place" (King Arthur's burial-place and Joseph's Thorn). Once informed, Defoe "took guides afterward, to see what demonstrations there could be given of all these things; they went over the ruins of the place with me, telling me, which part every particular piece of building had been; and as for the white-thorn, they carried me to a gentleman's garden in the town, where it was preserved…[20]. Wearyall Hill featured in the story, if perhaps not on the tour, since the Thorn had been grubbed up in the Civil War. Furthermore, as Defoe had found, offshoots were to be found in several places around the town. Celia Fiennes in 1698 found a bush growing "quite round a Chimney tunnell", by then much the worse for wear since "the superstitious Covet much and have gott some of it for their gardens"[21]. Selling cuttings had by then become quite a lucrative sideline. Andrew Paschal, Rector of Chedzoy on the Somerset Levels, told John Aubrey that 'There is a person about Glastonbury who has a nursery of them, who… sells them for a crown a piece, or as he can get,' and there were shoots growing in the gardens of various inns, presumably for the benefit of visitors[22].

There were other features too. Although the walnut tree in the holy graveyard that never blossomed before St Barnabas' Day had gone by Eyston's time, his innkeeper was able to tell him of another arboreal anomaly, the Oak of Avalon, planted not far from the town at the place where Joseph

disembarked, having presumably sailed across the Levels in flood[23]. And already there were slightly weirder, less official aspects to the Glastonbury legend that might have attracted visitors. The possibility of finding magic treasure, for instance. In 1652 Elias Ashmole found it "generally reported" that Doctor Dee and Edward Kelly had discovered "a very large quantity of the Elixir in some part of the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey" – the elixir needed to make the Philosopher's Stone. This tale may be related to the story heard by Celia Fiennes that somewhere in the Abbey precinct was a deep cellar in which the Devil sat "on a tun of money"[24]. How well known Ashmole's account was can only be guessed; it was from time to time repeated[25], and it is certainly possible that some visitors to the Abbey were hoping to find the Elixir, or the Treasure, or both. Another dimension was added in the eighteenth century by the rediscovery of the Druids, adopted and adapted by William Stukeley and others as proto-Christians. John Wood, the architect of Bath, was one such, committed to a complex and personal theory in which Bath was a major Druidical site, on a par with such sites as the stone circles of Stanton Drew and Stonehenge. Glastonbury is only twenty-three miles from Bath; where could be more natural, he asked in his *Choir Gaure, Vulgarly called Stonehenge* (1747), for Joseph of Arimathea to set up his stall than here, "in the very Heart of all the Druidical Works above mentioned, to preach the Christian Faith to the *Britons*"[26]? Again it's hard to quantify the influence of this book, but in Bath at least Wood was certainly illustrious, and some of his readers might have been tempted to venture deeper into the Druidical heartland.

Spelmanism

To traders and merchants and shopkeepers and innkeepers, then, the town's antiquities were already a source of income and were presumably revered as such, even if they could do little to prevent one obnoxious Abbey tenant from demolishing the buildings on his plot. But there are indications that the reverence of some townspeople transcended straightforward commercialism. Observers recorded a 'superstitious' reverence for the abbey's surviving ruins, reflecting a growing sense of unease about the sacrilege and iconoclasm that had accompanied the Reformation, and particularly in the wholesale transfer of ecclesiastical lands into private hands. It was a concern epitomised by the work of the eminent seventeenth-century jurist and antiquarian Sir Henry Spelman, who as early as 1637 had been told of how a sacrilegious plough, wielded by an unconcerned tenant in Glastonbury Abbey's holiest erthe, had led to the posthumous return of "a great many Abbots in rich mitres and copes" to reclaim their remains; the tenant lost a fortune[27]. Spelman, who had himself come to grief over former ecclesiastical lands he'd bought in Norfolk, collected many other such examples, but as those who'd benefited from Henry VIII's great land-grab were also running the country neither he nor his heirs much cared to commit his views to print: his *History and Fate of Sacrilege* was not published until 1698, many years after his death.

Whether the publication of his book unleashed some sense of pent-up guilt or merely reflected a trend that had been going on for some time, it seems that

'Spelmanism' was not only alive and well in eighteenth-century Glastonbury, but may even have been on the increase. Stukeley observed that "throughout the town are the tatter'd remains of doors, windows, bases, capitals of pillars, &c, brought from the abby and put into every poor cottage", but such carefree plundering seemed to belong to an earlier age, since during his visit, not long after Eyston's, he "observ'd frequent instances of the townsmen being generally afraid" to buy materials from the architectural breaker's yard that the abbey had become, "thinking an unlucky fate attends the family where these materials are us'd, and they told me many storys and particular instances of it. Others that are but half religious will venture to build stables and outhouses therewith, but by no means part of the dwelling-house"[28].

Eyston and Stukeley were both told how the onset of the town's commercial misfortunes was linked to the recent construction of a Market House out of Abbey stone; the same tale – and others similar – were circulating in 1751[29] (to the concern of the sophisticated, about which more anon). John Jackson in 1755 was told that the owner of Wearyall Hill was punished for preventing visitors from reaching the Holy Thorn that grew upon his land: 'he died a beggar'[30]; and some of the same sense of divine retribution on those who sought to interfere with the town's miracles is apparent in popular reaction to the 'privatisation' of its waters, as will become apparent later in this paper.

It has to be said that 'Spelmanism' failed to deter either the Presbyterian tenant or his immediate successors, who as late as the 1780s were blithely selling Abbey stone for road-grit[31]. All I wish to do here is to suggest the existence of some other strands of thinking amongst Glastonbury's population. Both nationally and locally, Glastonbury had a specific meaning in the mid-eighteenth century, a cocktail of high holiness and mystery, of national roots and slighted antiquity. Far from wanting to eliminate all traces of the past, a significant number of eminent locals were either regretting the damage that had already been done, or were already seeing antiquity as the way ahead. 'Brand Glastonbury' was already well defined.

2: Glastonbury's Amazing Spring, 1751

In his own words:

> "Matthew Chancellor, of the Parish of North Wooton, three miles North East of Glastonbury in the County of Somerset, Yeoman, doth hereby declare, that he hath made Oath before one of his Majesty's Justice of the Peace, That about the Middle of October last, he had a violent Fit of the Asthma in the Night-Time; after which he fell on Sleep, and dream'd he was some Way above Chain-Gate, in the Road above the Wall of Glastonbury Abbey-Gate, where he saw some of the finest of Water in the Horse-track; when he imagined he kneeled immediately, and drank some of it; and as soon as he was rais'd again on his Legs, there was seemingly a Person stood by him, pointing with his Finger, and saying, Take you a clean Glass, and drink you of

this Water, a Glass full Seven Sundays following in the Morning fasting, and you will find a perfect Cure of your Disorder. He ask'd, Why Seven Sundays in the Morning? He said, The World was made in six Days, and on the Seventh God Almighty rested from his labour, and blessed it above all other Days. Moreover, he said, Where this Water descends from, is holy Ground, where a vast Number of Saints and Martyrs have been buried; when he added something concerning the Baptism of the ever Blessed JESUS in the River Jordan. He is not certain whether it was Wednesday or Thursday Night he thus dreamed; but the Sunday following he went to Glastonbury, and took a clean Glass, went to the Shoot, dipt the Glass into the Shoot three several Times, drank to the value of half a Noggin, and returned God Thanks; and so continued every Sunday till the Seven Sundays were expired: From which Time he thought himself perfectly cured of that Disorder, which he laboured under more than 30 Years.

This is a true Account of my Case, and the Substance or Meaning of what I have made Affidavit to; as witness my Hand this 2d of June 1751.

Matthew Chancellor

His veracity attested by Thomas Blenham, who has known him 30 years – "a Practitioner in Physick near Wells, is well known there"[32]

Not a huge amount of information can be added to this tale. The North Wootton parish registers confirm that a Matthew Chancellor was baptised on 22 January 1693, was married to a woman called Christian, and that they had ten children, of whom five died in infancy[33]. Those who sought to mock him called him 'dotard', 'Catholic' and 'pauper', and doubtless worse; but he himself claimed that he "hath about Forty Pounds a Year Estate of his own, on which he hath, with some Difficulty, trained up six Children"[34]. The extra child was maybe born in Glastonbury, where Chancellor appears to have been a stalwart of the congregation of St John the Baptist Church; he was buried there in 1765[35]. He seems to have taken his place at the Chain Gate every Sunday, willing to tell his tale to anyone that would listen. When the Pump Room was opened, he was "made Pumper": a somewhat arduous reward, perhaps, for a man of sixty; but then, he had been cured of his asthma[36].

Dreams are notoriously tricky things to analyse, but a couple of elements in Chancellor's dream reflect information that Chancellor had presumably heard or read elsewhere. The ritual of the seven Sundays, likewise the reference to the Jordan, have something in common with the story told in 2 Kings 5, in which the leper Naaman was told by the prophet Elijah to wash seven times in the River Jordan; he did so, and was cured. More interesting, perhaps, is the description of the Abbey as "holy Ground, where a vast Number of Saints and Martyrs have been buried", for this was how the medieval chroniclers of Glastonbury also described the Abbey cemetery, a

place rendered so holy by virtue of all the saintly people buried there that even a Sultan in the Holy Land was aware of "the virtue which resides in that earth"[37]. It seems that this legend, in anecdotal form at least, was still known in mid-eighteenth-century Glastonbury.

The first published accounts of the phenomenon, however, make no mention of the miraculous dream; nor is it altogether clear when other people started following Matthew's example. Calculating backwards from later accounts, it seems that a sizeable number of people had embarked upon their seven Sundays in mid-March, and Chancellor may have sworn his first statement before the end of the month. Not until April 1 did the phenomenon reach the newspapers, however; on that (some might say inauspicious) day the *Bath Journal* announced the discovery of these Waters' "virtues". They were described as "of a very purgative Nature, and perform many surprising Cures…and its Fame spreads still more, from the Experience of the whole Country round"[38].

> BLeſſing the Wife of *Joſeph Giles*, of *Fruſhford* in the County of *Somerſet*, Shoe-maker, hath, about three Years paſt, been afflicted with an *Ague* and *Fever*, which pitcht in her Left Leg, ſwell'd exceſſively, and cauſed Loſs of Appetite, Weakneſs, and great Pain; it broke about nine Months paſt; ſhe us'd Things from Surgeons and Apothecaries, but found no Benefit. About a Month paſt ſhe began (at Home only) to uſe the *Glaſtonbury* WATER, by Drinking, and Waſhing her Leg every Day: She found herſelf better within a Week, daily grows better, is ſtrong, hearty and chearful, and doubts not of being quite well in a few Days.

On April 16, the *Gloucester Journal* also commented on the Water's "surprising Cures... and its Fame increases daily. In short, it is thought that, last Sunday, not less than 800 Persons from different Parts came to drink of this Water"[39]. By 17 April news had reached the Capital, the *Penny London Post* reporting that "great Numbers have resorted thither, and many have received great Benefit"[40].

The trickle of would-be-cureds became a stream, became a flood. During the month of May, according to Fleming, "above six thousand people were incamped at one time in the fields contiguous to the town, which was likewise greatly crouded"[41]. Others put the figure at 10,000: the London-based *Historical Chronicle*, for instance, claiming that people were deserting Bristol, Bath, and other popular resorts[42]. By June 18, it was reported that all accommodation in Glastonbury, Wells and the villages all around was taken; yet still they came. According to a letter from 'PW' in the *London Daily Advertiser* for July 11, some 20,000 people had come to take the waters 'within this month'[43].

The Nature of the Cure

The Glastonbury waters were said to be "very agreeable to the Taste, give great Spirits, and create a vast Appetite"[44], but what exactly were they held to be good for, and who came to take them? We have lots of information, for in addition

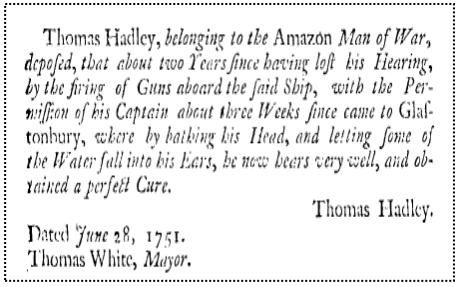
> *Anne Gill*, from *Briſtol*, aſſured me, that ſhe had had a violent Blow upon her Breaſt by a *Brute of a Husband*, which Breaſt broke out afterward all over into Pimples, that were red at Bottom and white at Top, out of which iſſued a briny Humour; beſides a large Wound almoſt under her Breaſt; ſo that her Nipple had entirely diſappeared, which, as ſhe told me, appears now when her Breaſt is wet, and diſappears when dry. The Pimples are all gone, and the Wound, within a very ſmall triſle, healed up. She never was with Child. And ſhe informed me that ſhe had purged and vomited violently with the Waters.

to the many reports in provincial papers at least four accounts were printed as separate publications.

The first of these was a letter written by "an ingenious and sensible Clergyman" (hereinafter 'Ingenious Clergyman'), dated April 23 and first printed in the *Sherborne Mercury* six days later. The 'Ingenious Clergyman' purports to be a visitor, whose first impression was that all must be "Sham and Delusion", but nonetheless decided to look into it further. He distanced himself from the Miracle, choosing "to leave such Legendary Stuff with the superstitious Vulgar", and gave potted case-histories of six successful cures[45].

The next, in point of time, took the form of "a letter to a lady", dated June 15, from "a disinterested clergyman" who signed himself as J. Davies of Plympton, near Plymouth in Devon. It was published as a 23-page pamphlet by the Exeter printer and newspaper proprietor Andrew Brice, with the title *A short description of the waters at Glastonbury, together with an impartial account of the effects thereof in a variety of cases*. When the booklet first appeared is unclear, but it was first advertised in the *Sherborne Mercury* on 12 August[46]. Davies wishes to collect information for a lady of refined tastes: "Your ingenious Queries, Doubts and Scruples, about the Virtue and Efficacy of *Glastonbury* Waters, and the Politeness and Accommodations of the Place, are such as I can, by no Means, pretend to resolve to your Satisfaction"; but he nonetheless gives a detailed account of the places from whence the water was taken and attempts to explain how the waters might work and how they should be administered, together with a further thirty case-histories.

The most ambitious and most informative pamphlet was written by an anonymous "Inhabitant of Bath" and bore the assertive title of *John v.6. Wilt thou be made whole?, or, The virtues and efficacy of the water of Glastonbury in the county of Somerset*: the reference is to Christ's healing ministry at the pool in Bethesda. This pamphlet ran to seventy-one pages, including a full reprint of the account by the 'Ingenious Clergyman', and was published by Benjamin Matthews, a Bath bookseller. It was advertised in the *Bath Journal* on June 24; the advert lists an impressive 19 outlets between London and Glastonbury, along or near to the Bath Road[47]. The 'Inhabitant of Bath' claimed to have a child suffering from the King's Evil. He arrived in Glastonbury on May 28 and immediately began collecting testimonials. He seems to have stayed in a town a week or so and then returned via Wells, the Mendips and Bristol, collecting further testimonials on route; in all, he added a further twenty-seven to the tally already published.



Thomas Hadley, *belonging to the* Amazon *Man of War, deposed, that about two Years since having loft his Hearing, by the firing of Guns aboard the faid Ship, with the Permiffion of his Captain about three Weeks fince came to* Glaftonbury, *where by bathing his Head, and letting fome of the Water fall into his Ears, he now hears very well, and obtained a perfect Cure.*

Thomas Hadley.

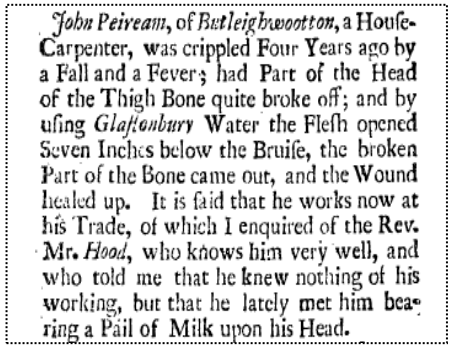
Dated *June* 28, 1751.
Thomas White, *Mayor.*

The last of these four was first issued as a seven-part weekly serial by Robert Goadby, publisher of the *Sherborne Mercury*, between July 29 and September 9. Published separately as a little book of some 115 pages, entitled *A compleat and authentick history of the town and abbey of Glastonbury, To which is*

added, an accurate account of the properties and uses of the mineral waters there, it purported to be by 'A Physician', and so will hereinafter be described as such. This may have been the much-awaited medical account of the waters' efficacy[48] but it contained little in the way of new information – only six new cures were added to the pile - and a good deal of old history, copied uncritically from Camden, Eyston and Dugdale's continuator Stevens. It was nonetheless a good seller, as the *Mercury* itself acknowledged,[49] and a second edition was printed.

From these four accounts, a total of seventy-two attested cures have been extracted. Not all of them give complete information, but there is enough to be able to make a few general observations. Thirty-four were female, thirty-eight male. Of seventeen whose ages were given, the average age was thirty-seven. Of thirty-one where the occupation is given, either their own or that of the husband or father, seven are farmers or yeomen, five are servants, soldiers, sailors, paupers. Three could be classed as gentry, but over half (seventeen) were tradesmen of various kinds. Six were in the cloth trade, which is little surprise in that part of Somerset. A surprising number were local. Out of 65 testimonials with traceable addresses, 57 came from within 35 miles of Glastonbury. 41 lived less than 20 miles away. No less than 22 people lived either in the town or within five miles of it.

Ninety-nine different ailments were reported (some people were suffering from more than one thing). Twenty reported cures from disfiguring ailments (of which 11 were for the 'King's Evil', now called scrofula). Thirteen reported cures for respiratory problems, of which 11 were for asthma, Matthew Chancellor's original complaint. A range of other internal complaints, including childbirth wounds, scurvy, abscesses and cancers, accounted for a further 15 cures. Seven people reported improvements to their eyesight, three to their hearing. Various fevers, agues, humours and palsies accounted for another seven. No less than 34 cures were reported for people with mobility problems, due to swollen or broken limbs, rheumatism and hip pains.


John Peiream, of *Butleighwootton*, a Houſe-Carpenter, was crippled Four Years ago by a Fall and a Fever; had Part of the Head of the Thigh Bone quite broke off; and by uſing *Glaſtonbury* Water the Fleſh opened Seven Inches below the Bruiſe, the broken Part of the Bone came out, and the Wound healed up. It is ſaid that he works now at his Trade, of which I enquired of the Rev. Mr. *Hood*, who knows him very well, and who told me that he knew nothing of his working, but that he lately met him bearing a Pail of Milk upon his Head.

How accurate this information might be is anybody's guess. Some testimonials might have been made up, others altered or abridged. What is interesting is that the audience they were designed to reach presumably had a similar profile to that of the people who were cured: the respectable 'poor-to-middling sort' who could not easily afford doctor's fees, but with down-to-earth trades and occupations whose solidity lent credibility to the phenomenon.

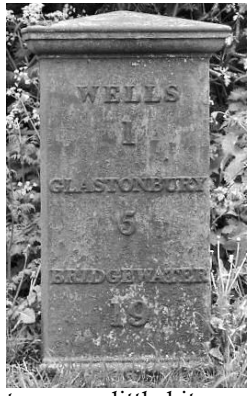
The Glastonbury Spa

> *Mary Bennet*, of *Street*, about 18 Years old, has drank of this Water four *Sunday* Mornings only, for a moſt violent *Leproſy*, from her Birth, which ſeems to be almoſt rooted out; the Branches are fallen, the white Scales are already gone off, her Skin is ſmooth, and nothing to be ſeen on it but red Spots: She has, after ſo happy a Beginning, very reaſonable Hopes of being abſolutely cleanſed from this naſty Diſeaſe, for which ſhe was two Years at the *Bath* to no Purpoſe.

Establishing credibility was the essential first step to that ultimate prize, the establishment of a spa. This was the century *par excellence* of 'spa culture', and in 1751 the spa was approaching the height of its popularity: Phyllis Hembry's figures show that an average of eight spas a decade were being discovered or developed in England between 1700 and 1749; this rose to 13 in the decade 1750-59[50].

Glastonbury was very close to Bath, the most successful spa of all, which in a couple of generations had been transformed from a small Somerset town into a European centre of fashion; and to some that first summer it must have seemed as though the same miracle could happen for Glastonbury. Curious visitors came from "distant Parts, nay, even from London… Bath and Bristol have lost their Company", reported one 'Letter' from Glastonbury that June, with ill-disguised glee[51]. It's significant that the most important collection of testimonials was published in Bath and collected by a self-styled "Inhabitant of Bath", and as we'll see the threat was taken seriously enough for the proprietors of the *Bath Journal* to resort to high-profile ridicule by way of retort.

It is impossible to say who was behind the drive to transform the town, if indeed there was anyone at all; but various members of the Corporation were prominent in the process. When the Corporation was set up in 1705, the town was sorely in need of an economic boost. Celia Fiennes in 1698 had described Glastonbury as "now a Ragged poor place … very Ragged and decayed", and the Hearth Tax returns disclose a "remarkable" number of small houses[52]. Although the Corporation's functions were limited mainly to the maintenance of law-and-order - and, a cynic might say, themselves, as a self-electing, Whiggish (pro-Government) oligarchy – its membership was relatively dynamic from the start. Individually or collectively, they were involved in building a new Market House that came to serve as Town Hall and jailhouse[53], and in promoting Somerset's first Enclosure Act, passed in 1722. Corporation members also backed the Wells Turnpike Act of 1753, which held out the promise of a well-surfaced road connection between Glastonbury, Bath and London. Preparation for this Act must have been well under way in the spring of 1751, and made the spa venture seem even more feasible. John Cannon, who served as Clerk to the Corporation in the 1730s, described its members as "naturally given to conceit and self interest"[54], but that seems a little bit harsh. The Corporators were simply typical eighteenth-century 'Improvers',



combining the pursuit of private and public profit, and unclear where the difference lay.

Amongst the Corporators of 1751, the Mayor, Thomas White, stands out as a particularly prominent supporter of the Waters phenomenon. It was White who attested Chancellor's cure, and a further eight of them; it was White who, as we shall see, brokered the deal to sell the water in London; it was White, and three other senior members of the Corporation, who as 'Proprietors of the Waters' signed the deal[55]. Others to take a keen interest included the Gould family, gentry from Sharpham Park just outside the town, who for almost sixty years filled the Corporation's two most senior posts[56]. Davies was informed that Cornelius Castle of Sharpham Park, if not a retainer then a very close neighbour, had been cured of a 'stubborn hot humour' by taking the waters. He was also informed by 'the Rev Mr Gold', almost certainly Davidge Gould's son William, that "a servant of his father" had been cured of the Evil. William Gould was of a scientific bent – a naturalist whose pioneering work on ants has earned him the memorable title of "father of British myrmecology" – and he was probably the author of a 280-page *Enquiry into the Origins, Nature and Virtues of the Glastonbury Waters*[57]. Finally, it was probably a member of the Gould family that persuaded Henry Fielding to add the role of water-seller to his other, better-known careers, of which more anon.

The entrepreneurial spirit was not slow in manifesting itself. Already by June 15, the Rev. Davies reported that "two Baths are now making to bathe in". One of these was at the Chaingate itself, perhaps on the site now occupied by a row of red-brick cottages. This was presumably "the great stone trough for washing and bathing in" that John Jackson saw in late 1755, contained in a house "like an old forsaken kitchin [*sic*]". It is hard to know what to make of these descriptions, unless the place had previously been used as a wash-house of some kind and now warranted a grander designation[58].

Next to this impromptu bath-house was the remarkable building constructed in 1714 from the remains of the Abbot's lodging, demolished for the purpose. According to 'A Physician', this house had now become "a Coffee House for the Reception and Convenience of those who bathe and drink the Waters at the Chain-Gate"; it was also selling copies of *Wilt thou be made whole?*, and by great good fortune "the oldest and largest" graft from the original Glastonbury Thorn was to be found in its garden too[59].

The bath-house was soon to be supplemented by something that aspired to be far grander: a Pump Room, that indispensable attribute of a successful spa. It was built by Anne Galloway (sometimes spelt 'Gallaway'), who described herself as "from Bath, late Shopkeeper in Cheltenham, now in

John Perry, *of* Smithorp, *in the Parish of* Church-Tauton, *in the County of* Devon, *certifies, that after the Measles, with which he was seized about four Years ago, a violent Flux of Humours fell into both his Eyes, which afflicted his Sight to so great a Degree, that he was obliged to leave off Business, being almost blind, and a most dreadful Head-ach attending it: He applied to several Physicians, which proving of little or no Service, about five Weeks since he came to* Glastonbury; *where, by frequently washing his Eyes, and drinking the Waters, he is so far cured as to see to thread a Needle, and the Humour which flowed to his Eyes is almost dried up.* John Perry.

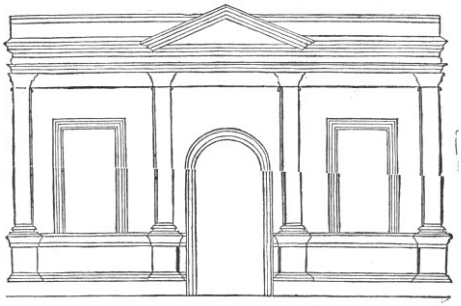
Dated June 23, 1751.

Attested before *R. Blake*, Justice.

Glastonbury"[60], thereby testifying to her experience of the country's most famous spas. In June 1752 Galloway took out advertisements in a series of West Country journals announcing the forthcoming erection of "a commodious pump-house and baths… with other conveniences." She was nothing if not ambitious. "An assembly-room is preparing, and will soon be finish'd… a large, commodious house, pleasantly situated near the Abby, with five rooms on a floor, will be completely finish'd, and ready to let for lodgings in about a fortnight or three weeks". Perhaps in response to concerns about the quality of the water, the advert claimed that "the waters in this town are almost all cover'd along the roadway, and the rest is intended to be done as soon as possible". She offered a comprehensive range of other services: "all persons wanting to buy or sell, lett or rent, estates or lodgings, or to put out or take up money, or that want apprentices or servants, as also servants etc wanting places, may have their business register'd for one shilling each"[61]…

Although Glastonbury had to wait another century for its Assembly Rooms, Galloway did succeed in building the Pump Room, just opposite the Chaingate Spout on Magdalene Street; or, more accurately, she converted a series of pre-existing cottages, grafting smart new Classical facades onto the two main frontages. It's still there today, Grade II* Listed, converted into a private dwelling[62]. (So, too, is the Chaingate Spout - now surmounted by a warning not to drink the water!)

GLASTONBURY PUMP ROOM.



MARCH 20, 1753.

THIS entitles of
or Bearer, to the Uſe of the PUMP ROOM for Year

The Pump Room was built at Galloway's own expense, as she was fond of pointing out, although she invited subscribers to share the burden and be recompensed with annual season tickets. An elevation of the new building was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in August 1753, and the publisher was stated to be handling potential subscriptions: a neat 'tie-in' with the Press of which any modern entrepreneur would be proud. The same well-respected magazine announced the Pump Room's opening in October, claiming that the Waters "increases in reputation every day"[63].

The Chalice Well

Matthew Chancellor's visionary adviser was quite

explicit: the waters were to be drunk at the Chain Gate. The very first press announcements back in April, however, took pains to point out that the water came from "Six Mineral Springs, which issue from the North-side of St Michael's Mount, commonly called Tor-Hill" and made their way across the Abbey site to Chain Gate[64].

The most important of these springs was the famous Chalice Well, then also known as the Blood or Bloody Well from the reddish-brown iron deposit through which the water rises. Modern commentators have suggested that the introduction of the Chalice Well into this story is anachronistic, dating perhaps from the late nineteenth century, but both Davies and 'A Physician' are quite clear about this; indeed the account in 'A Physician' may be the first time that the name 'Chalice Well' appeared in print. The confusion is not surprising, since even at the time people were unsure. According to Davies, the difference in water types "cause a good deal of Doubting and Uncertainty in those that go to *Glastonbury* about the most beneficial Place to drink the Waters, some drinking it near the Spring-head, others (and that the greater part) at *Chaingate*, and others drinking it sometimes at one Place and sometimes at another". 'A Physician' was likewise clear that the Chain Gate source was the more popular: "the World [is] so much prejudiced in Favour of that particular Spot", but he considered the water to be more "dilute" there than at the Chalice Well[65].

The Chalice Well site may have been considered as the more salubrious, at least before the Pump Room at the Chain Gate was built. Already by June 1751 the Rev. Davies was observing that "Over the *Bloody Well* there has been lately a large House built, designed, as I am informed, for a Pump Room". This other Pump Room has disappeared, if it was ever completed; but the stone immersion bath survives, set in a stone-flagged courtyard. Beside the well itself is an 'inner chamber' of irregular shape and indeterminate function that puzzled Rahtz and Radford when they excavated the site in 1961. They suggested that it may have been a sedimentation tank, but it may have been connected with the bottling operation which, from June that year or earlier, was despatching the precious liquid to the Capital[66].

Mrs. *Fuſſel*, of *Glaſtonbury*, took an Oath that ſhe had been perfectly cured of an *Aſthma* & *Dropſy* of many Years ſtanding, by which ſhe had been ſo enfeebled as not to be able to go out of her Houſe for Years. I waited upon Mrs. *Fuſſel*, and ſhe inform'd me that her Complaints had been very grievous for Twelve Years; that ſhe had not been able to walk to the Court Gate for the laſt Eight Years; that notwithſtanding Two Windows that were open, ſhe had been frequently carried in the Night Time out into the Court for Air, in violent Fits of the *Aſthma*; that ſhe was carried to the Shoot for Six Sundays, and was able to walk thither the Seventh Sunday. She is now very capable of purſuing her domeſtic Affairs, ſleeps with Pleaſure, and walks abroad without Pain.

Henry Fielding and the London link

Anne Galloway's comprehensive range of services was perhaps modelled on the example of another enterprise that sought to cash in on the Glastonbury phenomenon. This was the Universal Register Office, a venture established in London in February 1750 by two of the eighteenth century's most famous figures, the half-brothers John and Henry Fielding, which in July 1751 acquired a monopoly on sales of Glastonbury water in London[67].

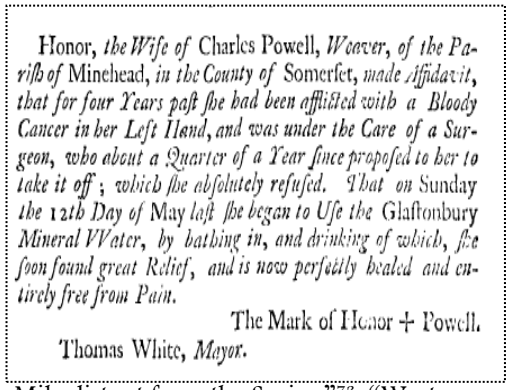
Entrepreneur, magistrate, social reformer, playwright, author of *Tom Jones* and several other seminal novels, Henry Fielding was then at the height of his fame; according to one contemporary, he had become 'much the greatest Man in the three Kingdoms'[68]. His involvement with the Glastonbury Waters has not surprisingly been treated as a quirky footnote in studies of his own life and work, but from the Glastonbury perspective his influence may have been significant.

Perhaps the first thing to say is that Fielding seems to have been a genuine believer in the potency of the Glastonbury Waters. His health was failing (he had cirrhosis of the liver), and in early August 1751 he set out with his wife and daughter to take the Waters at Bath, but by the 24th they'd moved on to Glastonbury. They returned to London on September 12, and Fielding informed the *London Daily Advertiser* that he had "received great Benefit" from the Glastonbury waters. His biographer, Martin Battestin, believes that Fielding is the author of a long and vitriolic defence of their qualities, published in the *General Advertiser* on October 8, and his novel *Amelia*, published on December 19, concludes with a character who was "last Summer perfectly cured by the *Glastonbury* waters"[69].

Fielding had strong local connections. Henry (though not John) was born at Sharpham Park, and his uncle was Davidge Gould, one-time Recorder of Glastonbury. Nephew and uncle appear to have remained on good terms; certainly Battestin suggests that Henry stayed at Sharpham when he came to take the Waters in August 1751. He was in these parts in 1746, investigating the salacious tale of a lesbian who married a woman as a husband and convinced her for two months. She was prosecuted by "Mr *Gold*, an eminent and learned counsellor at law"; this was almost certainly Henry's cousin Henry Gould, who in 1748 succeeded his father as Recorder of Glastonbury[70]. Motivated either by concern for the failing health of their kinsman, or a hope that he might apply his renowned entrepreneurialism to improve the failing health of their town, or a combination of both, the Gould connection seems a likely conduit for early and 'insider' information to have reached Henry Fielding[71].

In March 1751 the URO published the first of eight editions of Henry Fielding's *A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, a seventeen-page publicity brochure in which the URO was presented as a general-purpose agency for buying, selling and renting property, for employment, for finance and insurance, education, ship and coach timetables, parcel dispatch… "be the Wants of Persons ever so singular or extraordinary, 'tis highly probable they may have them supplied by enquiring at this Office"[72].

Glastonbury's miraculous water was that season's most singular and extraordinary Want. Already in June John Brooks of Blue Boar Court in Friday Street was offering sealed bottles at 1/6d a quart, "In Fine Order, being fresh taken up at the Spring Head". Nor was Brooks the first, since he warned the public against "a spurious Sort sold for the real Waters" which was selling much more cheaply. This was apparently drawn from the Chain Gate, since Brooks describes it as "only the waste water taken up a Mile distant from the Spring"[73]. "Waste water"! Matthew Chancellor must have been mortified.



Honor, *the Wife of* Charles Powell, *Weaver, of the Parish of* Minehead, *in the County of* Somerset, *made Affidavit, that for four Years past She had been afflicted with a Bloody Cancer in her Left Hand, and was under the Care of a Surgeon, who about a Quarter of a Year since proposed to her to take it off; which She absolutely refused. That on* Sunday *the 12th Day of* May *last She began to Use the* Glastonbury *Mineral Water, by bathing in, and drinking of which, She soon found great Relief, and is now perfectly healed and entirely free from Pain.*

The Mark of Honor + Powell.

Thomas White, *Mayor.*

Somehow the Fieldings managed to squeeze Brooks out. One brother or the other journeyed to Glastonbury and hatched a "Scheme" with Thomas White, the enigmatic Mayor, the upshot of which was an Agreement, signed on July 8, in which the "Proprietors of Glastonbury Waters", identified as White and three other members of the Corporation, accorded the URO the right to sell "our Mineral Waters in London", and "no body else, whatever".

This agreement was announced in the *London Daily Advertiser* for July 25. Readers were informed that the Waters "are now fresh arrived from the Spring Head", and were available from the URO at 14d a bottle, including 2d deposit. This was a tanner a quart cheaper than Brooks had been charging, but it was still relatively pricey compared to other mineral waters, some measure of the faith that people had in their potency[74].

Corporate Dividends

The 'Ingenious Clergyman' in the *Sherborne Mercury* made no bones about his hopes for the Waters. He wanted their curative properties to be proven, "for the Good of Mankind, and the Revival of old decay'd Glastonbury"[75]. Some observers suggested that furthering the good of Glastonbury's mankind, or some of them, had much to do with the phenomenon. To Collinson, writing in 1792, "the whole story was designedly trumped up with a view of bringing custom to the town, which had strangely dwindled since the demolition of its abbey"[76]. To Brice, "some People here, in 1751, *dream'd* of being *miraculously* soon enabled to build superb Houses of their own, high as the

Torr itself, and rich as ever was the Abbey"[77], and an unkind observer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that August opined that

"The town, very late, was a place of no note,
Where scarce one in ten could afford a new coat;
But now since the Popish Invention is found,
In trade, and in plenty, and wealth, they abound"[78]

It is true enough that, in the short term, the town's great-and-good did very nicely out of the phenomenon. Accommodation was at a premium. The Rev Davies listed several people, including the present Mayor, his successor, and the Minister, who were willing to "board Strangers in a genteel Manner, most of them not exceeding Half a Guinea a Week"[79]. By mid-June, according to the *Gloucester Journal*, Glastonbury, Wells and the surrounding villages were "so full of People from distant Parts, nay, even from London, that the Inhabitants cannot procure them Lodgings", prompting "the Proprietor of the Waters" to build "small Lodging-Places, for the better Conveniencing of Persons who resort thither"[80]. By July 8, when the deal was struck with the Universal Register-office, the Proprietors turned out to be four in number, all senior members of the Corporation, all destined to serve as Mayors before 1755[81].

Self-interest does not necessarily equate with unbelief, however, least of all in the eighteenth century. Fielding profited from the sales of Glastonbury Water but nonetheless believed in them, coming to Glastonbury to take the Cure himself; and as we've seen his cousin William Gould, brother of the Town Recorder, was probably the author of a chunky manuscript about the phenomenon. Mayors and magistrates all risked their reputations by signing affidavits, and some were willing to testify personally. The "Mr Stibbens" whose son was cured of asthma[82] was probably White's successor as Mayor and one of the named 'Proprietors of the Waters', and in 1754 Mayor Blake (not, incidentally, one of those aqueous 'Proprietors') allowed his name to be used for one of Anne Galloway's testimonials: "Mr BLAKE, Mayor of this Town, who is a Gentleman in Years, and was afflicted with the Rheumatism and Gout, that he could not walk, is now recovered by Bathing"[83].

Collapse

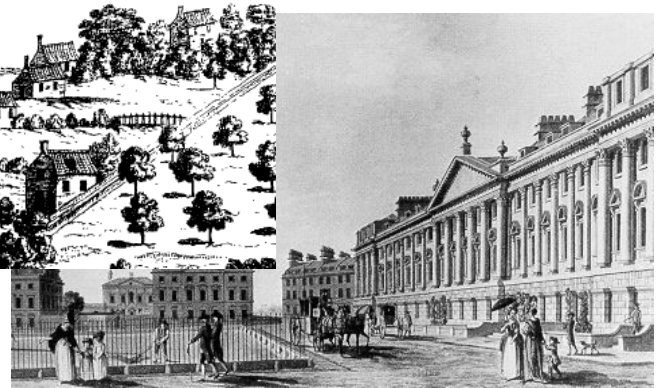
Any hopes the civic fathers might have had of transforming their town into a second Bath soon foundered, for the Glastonbury Spa rapidly evaporated. To Anne Galloway, it was the "Want of proper Accommodations" that had made it "like to fail amongst the better Sort": a want she sought to rectify with the Pump Room. Yet by February 1755 it was clear that even this venture was struggling. Although she had "been at a very large Expense, and taken a great Deal of Pain, to build a commodious House for drinking the Waters, and also another for Bathing, and other Conveniences", it was felt that a "more speedy Success" might be obtained were there to be "an Annual Subscription paid to the Benefactrix, for the better encouraging her to continue in the Service, for

the general Good." A subscription of a guinea a head for the Season was suggested, but it seems that the subscribers stayed away[84].

Nor was the London trade so brisk as formerly. The URO adverts trail away after April 1752, and no more is heard of Henry Fielding at Glastonbury. Despite the miracle waters, his health continued to decline. In 1754 he went to Portugal to convalesce, but instead died there in October[85]. Fielding's publishers, doubtless concerned for the great man's reputation, deleted his plug for the Glastonbury Waters when they published a second edition of *Amelia* in 1771[86]. By 1779, John Collinson claimed, the waters had "entirely lost their reputation"[87]. The following year, Samuel Saunders reported that the "neat and commodious pump-room, built at the expense of a lady" had been converted into a shop[88].

Why did the Spa collapse? The vagaries of fashion had something to do with it. Once visitors had tired of antiquities, and the limited amusements offered by the Pump Room and whatever was available at Chalice Well, there really wasn't very much for them to *do* in Glastonbury. "There is one Apothecary Shop and one Excise Office, but no Stationer Shop nor Post Office", noted John Jackson. "I am informed one man in the town keeps 50 Cows and makes 50 Hogsheads of Sider every year"[89], he added, confirming that Glastonbury was still a rough-and-ready country town. The Rev. Davies in 1751 intimated that "the Politeness of the Place" might be improved upon, and hoped that "the *Dung* and the *Nuisances* will be remov'd from the streets", but nothing much seems to have happened. Nearly five years later Jackson found it hard to get to St Benedict's Church, barely fifty yards from the Market Cross, because there was "a great deal of muck and mire"[90]. The Royal Almshouses, immediately adjacent to the Pump Room, were "decayed and ruinous", their roofs collapsed and the Chapel "so much out of repair that Divine Service cannot be performed with safety"; an eyesore that was not repaired until 1756 [91]. All in all, Glastonbury was a far cry from the Palladian terraces of Bath.

> * I saw a Farmer, (in the warmest Day this Summer produced) after drinking the Water, fill his Boots full of it, when at the same Time the Sweat was trickling down his Cheeks like a Shower of Rain.

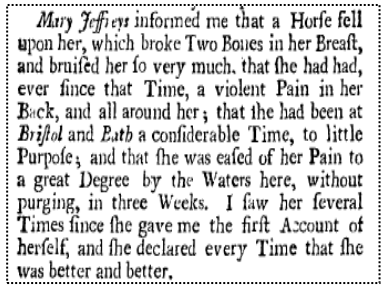


3: Hocus-Pocus

The lack of any scientific evidence for the waters' efficacity didn't help. "[T]he Infatuation is now over, and it is generally thought to be no better than any other common Water", wrote Russel in 1760[92]. Some even thought that it might be dangerous. As early as June 1751 reports were circulating of people actually dying from drinking too much of it, an unfortunate consequence attributed by 'A Physician' to the fact that the first wave of credulous, Dream-inspired curists had pre-empted all advice on dosage. Though the Fieldings responded by querying the credentials of the 'Pipkin Chymist' who dared to make such assertions, such news must have dampened the enthusiasm of more timorous curists[93].

But it was the nature of Matthew Chancellor's claim that really destroyed any chance of the Spa succeeding with polite society. There was all the difference in the world between the discovery of some scientifically-attestable quality in the Waters, and a discovery based on revelation. When news of the Waters first broke in April, the *Gloucester Journal* called it 'a very providential discovery'[94]; when however Matthew Chancellor made clear the manner in which Providence had been moved to act, support turned to mockery and scorn. As early as May 20, a Jewish contributor to the *London Daily Advertiser* was wondering whether the waters might, in his case, be more efficacious if taken on a Saturday rather than a Sunday. A wag writing in the *General Advertiser* for June 5 claimed that the bottomless "Haymarket Quart Bottle" had been sent down to Glastonbury for filling, since according to the "Visionary Prophet" the supply of "that wonderful Water" was as infinite as faith, and London was full of credulous people[95].

Bath, it was said, had been losing custom to the upstart new spa, so it's perhaps not surprising to find the *Bath Journal* in the vanguard of the mockery. On June 10, a third of the front page was given over to a lengthy poem called 'Superstition, A Tale: Or, The Glastonbury Pilgrimage', which concluded that only "solid Fact and Cure" would guarantee the new Spa's reputation: "all the Rest is – HOCUS-POCUS"[96]. Six weeks later, the same journal published an even more acerbic "sequel to Matthew Chancellor's Dream", in which the Author claimed to be have been anointed by "the Genius of the healing Fount", charged to proclaim


Mary Jeffreys informed me that a Horſe fell upon her, which broke Two Bones in her Breaſt, and bruiſed her ſo very much, that ſhe had had, ever ſince that Time, a violent Pain in her Back, and all around her; that ſhe had been at *Briſtol* and *Bath* a conſiderable Time, to little Purpoſe; and that ſhe was eaſed of her Pain to a great Degree by the Waters here, without purging, in three Weeks. I ſaw her ſeveral Times ſince ſhe gave me the firſt Account of herſelf, and ſhe declared every Time that ſhe was better and better.

that, once all physical infirmities had been cured, "Their *wond'rous Virtues* next will reach the Mind." All social ills would be righted:

"I leapt transported at the glorious Theme;
Awoke, and found, alas! 'twas ALL A DREAM"[97].

A Pious Fraud?

To many contemporaries, Matthew Chancellor's vision was not only daft, but dangerous. The seven Sundays, the bones of saints and martyrs, the dream itself, all smacked of Papistry – and Glastonbury, despite its Protestant present, was mostly renowned for its Catholic past[98]. The anonymous author of 'Superstition, a Tale' (who later turned out to be Samuel Bowden, a physician of Frome[99]), suggested that Abbot Whiting would have been delighted to see "this deluded rabble", squabbling "for this *Holy Water*"…

"To see old relics idoliz'd,
And ghostly wonders canoniz'd.
To see restor'd Rome's darling daughter,
Infallibility – in water."

People were prone to asking Matthew Chancellor directly about his religious habits, and he was forthright in his replies. He was "no *Roman Catholic*", he declared to the Rev. Davies. He told the 'Inhabitant of Bath' that he professed the religion of the Church of England – "adding, he was baptized, educated, and hath trained up his Family in it" a statement which, as we have seen, is borne out by the parish registers[100]. But although Chancellor himself might have been innocent of all Papistry, it is possible that those around him were less so. Glastonbury Spa was quite consciously vying for Bath's clientele, and Bath was notoriously soft on Catholics[101]. As Phyllis Hembry observed, this may explain why Anne Galloway's Pump Room was in 1755 advertised as being closed "on days of abstinence"[102]. Richard Russel, writing in 1760, did indeed believe that Chancellor's story had brought the Catholics to Glastonbury, at least initially[103], a claim supported by the survival of copies Chancellor's testimony in the archives of at least two Catholic gentry families[104].

It is just possible that the Chalice Well really might have been a discrete meeting-place for Catholics before 1751. There's the name, to begin with. Some suggest that it may be no older than the late nineteenth century, cooked up by the lively imaginations of the Catholic community that then owned the site[105]. A legal document dated 1716, however, describes part of present-day Chalice Hill as "a ground called Challice", and the same term crops up in rate-books from the 1730s[106]. 'Challice' could be a corrupt form of another word; it could even have been someone's surname; but it could also be recalling the medieval prophecy which claimed that Joseph of Arimathea had been buried at Glastonbury with

"two cruets, white and silver

Filled with blood and sweat
of the Prophet Jesus".

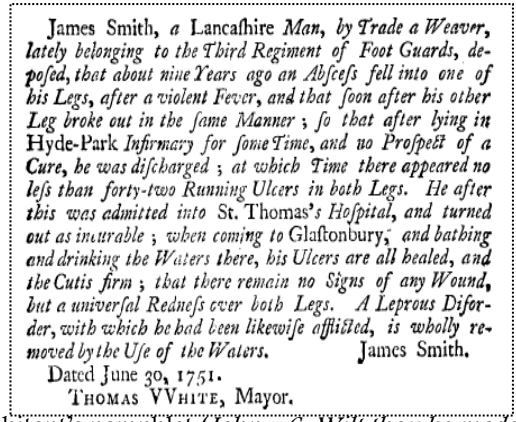
Late-medieval Glastonbury images of Joseph show him holding these two precious containers, which were even incorporated into a coat-of-arms[107]. If Joseph's staff were to be found on Wearyall Hill, why should his chalice(s) not be found at the foot of the Tor?

Catholics were certainly involved in the post-Reformation development of the Glastonbury legend. Alex Walsham has shown that the recusant priest Richard Broughton, writing in 1633, was the first to link Joseph and the flowering staff[108]; the same Broughton, quoting from Dr Montague's "Panegiricall entertainement" for Queen Anne, claims that Joseph had been sent "to bring the waters of life into this isle of Britayne", and was buried in the Isle of Avalon after he "had planted and watered"[109]. It may be reading too much into these allusions to suggest that the source of these "waters of life" was already being identified with the Chalice Well, but it is interesting that the 'Oak of Avalon' makes its first appearance in the records at around the same time. Walsham suggests that "there are reasons for believing that the seminary priests and Jesuits sent back to England after 1574 sometimes quite deliberately harnessed natural features of the landscape as arenas for their evangelical activities"[110]. It is possible, therefore, that all three features – the Thorn, the Oak, and Chalice Well – had become such Catholic 'arenas'; but of hard evidence is there none. There was a 'holy well', or at least the memory of one, in mid-eighteenth century Glastonbury, but it was a mile away to the north, off what's now the Old Wells Road[111]. And if Chalice Well was thought to have special properties, it is odd that it was not on the tourist itineraries dished out to Eyston and Defoe. However, 'Avalon's Oak', noted by Eyston in 1712 and recorded in the dry pages of the Overseer's Rate Books for 1736 and probably later[112], went completely unmentioned by the 1751 observers. If one element in the legendary landscape could so easily be forgotten or dropped, then another might be too. In the absence of any good evidence, all that can reasonably be said is that the association between Joseph and the Chalice Well, whether propagated by Catholics or otherwise, must date at least from the first reference to the Well, in the summer of 1751.

If there *was* any kind of 'papist plot' behind the Waters phenomenon, it was certainly unknown to the town's leaders, tied in by Statute to the promotion of the Church of England. What is interesting is the Church of England's own role in the whole affair, since it is clear that some Anglican clergy were decidedly 'enthusiastical' about Glastonbury Waters. They deputised for the civil authorities in taking testimonials from parishioners outside the town;[113] they brought parishioners' cures to the notice of the compilers of testimonials; [114] they compiled testimonials themselves (the Rev. Davies, the 'Ingenious Clergyman', the Rev. Gould). Glastonbury's own Minister offered lodgings to curists; Grace Clement, his Clerk's daughter, was cured of consumption by the waters and James Bartlet, the 80-year old sexton, "after many Years' Infirmity, is, without any Manner of Doubt,

recovered to a good State of Health"[115]. Matthew Chancellor himself, as we have seen, was a regular member of the congregation.

Why were these High Church folk so keen? The identity of the bookseller who published the testimonials of the 'Inhabitant of Bath' may provide a clue. This was Benjamin Matthews of Bath, whose other publications were exclusively in support of High Church themes. His authors included the Bishop of Exeter, George Lavington, who in 1749 had published (elsewhere) a vitriolic best-seller called *The enthusiasm of Methodists and papists compared*. His central argument was that there was little to choose between Wesley's followers and the mendicant friars, who feigned poverty the better to take control of people's hearts and minds.


James Smith, *a* Lancaſhire *Man, by Trade a Weaver, lately belonging to the Third Regiment of Foot Guards, depoſed, that about nine Years ago an Abſceſs fell into one of his Legs, after a violent Fever, and that ſoon after his other Leg broke out in the ſame Manner; ſo that after lying in* Hyde-Park *Infirmary for ſome Time, and no Proſpect of a Cure, he was diſcharged; at which Time there appeared no leſs than forty-two Running Ulcers in both Legs. He after this was admitted into* St. Thomas's *Hoſpital, and turned out as incurable; when coming to* Glaſtonbury, *and bathing and drinking the Waters there, his Ulcers are all healed, and the Cutis firm; that there remain no Signs of any Wound, but a univerſal Redneſs over both Legs. A Leprous Diſorder, with which he had been likewiſe afflicted, is wholly removed by the Uſe of the Waters.* James Smith.

Dated June 30, 1751.

THOMAS VVHITE, Mayor.

Might the Methodist threat help to explain the provocative, almost evangelical, title of the Inhabitant's pamphlet (*John v.6. Wilt thou be made whole?*)? Methodism was particularly strong in Somerset. John Wesley was based in Bristol, and was very active in its hinterland. The first groups to describe themselves as 'Methodists' were established on the Somerset levels in the 1740s, and Wesley had a strong following amongst the Mendip miners and the cloth-workers to the east. Anglican antipathy was extreme, with anti-Methodist riots orchestrated in many places[116].

It seems possible that Anglican support for the Waters represented yet another twist in the tale of accommodation and adaptation that the Church of England was playing with its competitors. They were endorsing a certain sort of mysterious agency, one with more than a whiff of Rome to it and yet derived from the kind of direct personal revelation that Wesley was incarnating. In their support for Chancellor's revelation, the Church of England was perhaps trying to assert that the direct encounter with the works of the Almighty which people were seeking outside the Church could also be found within it.

Insidious Craft

Papists and Methodists; both equally subversive, equally mischevious. With the benefit of hindsight it is clear that the Papist threat was tiny, but in the 1750s it seemed real enough. Catholicism was a political position, with treasonable connotations. As recently as 1745 Charles Stuart had invaded Scotland with the hopes of restoring a Catholic monarchy, and there were repercussions in Somerset. During the '45, the Bath-based vicar apostolic of the western district, William Laurence York, was denounced as a

collaborator. The charges were probably false, but he was forced into hiding for a couple of years, part of which was spent somewhere not so far from Glastonbury "in a rural recusant enclave in the Mendips"[117] .

The patriotic leader-writer for the *Gloucester Journal* certainly took the threat seriously. He suggested that Chancellor's dream had either been "procur'd by the insidious Craft of a subtle and inveterate Enemy, who hopes to serve a Cause by the Ignorance of Superstition of the Common People", or else had been "improved by them, to serve their Ends". The aim of this "Pious Fraud" was to "destroy our Religious Protestant Principles" and so make it easier to impose "their Popish Yoke"; and he urged Enquiry to see "whether some Popish Emissaries have not been concern'd in promoting this Opinion"[118].

It seems significant that Anne Galloway, who in 1754 had wooed the Catholics by promising to observe the days of abstinence, a year later announced her intention "to be careful in having the Poor well instructed in their Duties, by lending them proper Books, as are recommended by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge", an anti-Catholic organisation[119]: she clearly felt the need to placate Protestant concerns. The *Gloucester Journal* writer may have represented an extreme position, but his views were reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*[120], and must have made the civic leaders feel more than a little uncomfortable, not least because the creation of the very Corporation they served had been justified, a generation earlier, on grounds of the better maintenance of law and order: "the morall of the inhabitants are corrupt, and cavill and breach of the peace very frequent" [121]. Just six years after the defeat of the Young Pretender, Mayor White and the town's Protestant leaders were actively endorsing a phenomenon that polite society was denouncing as Papist.

4: A Thorn in their Side

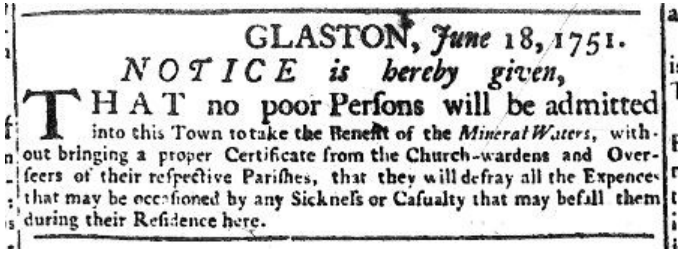
'Jacobite' defiance

Whether the political threat was real or not – and it was probably not – the sort of visceral 'folk-papistry' that brought large numbers of people to Glastonbury in pursuit of a miracle cure spelt defiance of the values of the established order. Such phenomena were a fairly common form of popular disapprobation at this time: as E P Thompson remarked, "we can certainly say that the plebs on many occasions employed Jacobite symbolism successfully as theatre, knowing well that it was the script most calculated to enrage and alarm their Hanoverian rulers"[122].

The crowds that flocked to Glastonbury were certainly dominated by the "plebs" (Fielding called them "the lower Sort of People"[123]), and from the start they were a major source of discomfiture for the town's rulers. They did not seek to be boarded "in a genteel Manner", but instead camped out in the fields, to the annoyance of at least one 'surly Peasant' who threatened to poison the waters[124]. They lived how they could; already in June Davies was hoping that "the Poor that resort hither will soon be put under proper Regulations", to discourage "*Mumpers* and such sturdy Beggars as are no

probable Objects of Cure, to the great Detriment of others that are real Objects of *Cure* and *Compassion*"[125].

On June 18 the following Notice was issued, presumably by the Glastonbury overseers of the poor:



GLASTON, *June* 18, 1751.

NOTICE is hereby given,

THAT no poor Perſons will be admitted into this Town to take the Benefit of the *Mineral Waters*, without bringing a proper Certificate from the Church-wardens and Overſeers of their reſpective Pariſhes, that they will defray all the Expences that may be occaſioned by any Sickneſs or Caſualty that may befall them during their Reſidence here.

The notice was repeated in three consecutive issues of the *Sherborne Mercury* during July[126], but doesn't seem to achieved much since the feckless poor were still coming three-and-a-half years later, when the same requirement was repeated[127]. To react more punitively might have undermined the ambiance of healing and goodwill upon which the miracle was based, and also the townsfolk's hopes of it. It might also have led to disorder, and even riot, that great bugbear of eighteenth-century administrators. In 1749, 500 Somerset labourers with blackened faces had destroyed turnpikes and property around Bristol and the authorities had thought it best to keep a low profile; similarly the Somerset magistrates' response to a series of riots in 1753 was "to let the spirit subside & not to provoke them for fear of the consequences"[128].

Thompson's concept of 'Jacobite theatre' as a form of protest by the ruled against their rulers seems very applicable to the case of Glastonbury. Even the ailments themselves for which people sought cures could be seen in this way. Of those testifying to cures, Matthew Chancellor's complaint (asthma) shared top billing with scrofula, known as "the King's Evil" since it was thought that the touch of a king could cure it. The Stuarts had made much of this power, including the two Jacobite Pretenders. The Hanoverians, however, scoffed at it, and refused to touch their scrofulitic subjects. Glastonbury Waters appeared to succeed where monarchs failed.

More examples of 'Jacobite theatre' might be found in the town's "Miracle-Mongers" whose activities caused the *Gloucester Journal*'s anti-Catholic leader-writer much anguish. They accosted visitors with details of Chancellor's dream and "make it their Business to inform Strangers of this Affair on the Spot"; and they supplemented their accounts with anecdotes "in favour of their Legendary Miracles" – disastrous miracles, like those of Spelman, that demonstrated how things went wrong when profane folk meddled with the relics of holy antiquity. There was the oven, built of stone from the Abbey, that collapsed three times; and there was the Market House,

also built from Abbey remains, whose building had led to the loss of the Market[129].

This last is particularly interesting since the Market House was also the seat of civic government and perhaps of civic pride. A large two-storey building, dominating (and eventually blocking) Magdalene Street, it was built, if not by the Corporation, then probably with the creation of the Corporation in mind. There was nothing new about the imputations of the "Miracle-Mongers". Eyston, who visited the town in 1712, had been "informed by a Man of Credit, living in the Neighbourhood of Glastonbury, that the Town hath lost, in great Measure, their Market since its Building", and referred specifically to Spelman by way of explanation. Stukeley, who visited soon afterwards, thought that building "a sorry mercat house" had contributed "to the ruin of the sacred fabric and to their own", explaining that the town "is in a most miserable decaying condition"[130]. What *is* interesting is that the same sentiments were being expressed on the streets of Glastonbury almost forty years later. Since the Corporation was set up primarily to enforce order, it may be that popular concern at the sacrilegious nature of the new civic construction actually reflected dislike at the new order which it represented.

Profaning the Sabbath

The ritual of the 'Seven Sundays' was a form of 'Jacobite theatre' that really wound up the authorities. Sound commercial sense suggested some advantage to spreading the spa's effects over the whole week, and indeed there was a growing tendency to treat the waters as medicinal rather than miraculous: all four testimonial-collectors had felt it necessary to distance themselves from the more miraculous aspects of Chancellor's account. Like many visionaries, however, Matthew Chancellor was a bit of a loose cannon; and on May 31 he went back to Mayor White and Justice Blake, and swore another affidavit in which he insisted that his cure was the result of "drinking a quarter of a Pint of the Waters from the Chain Gate, every Sunday Morning (and at no other Time) seven succeeding Sundays"[131].

The consequence of this was to turn Sunday in Glastonbury into something of a funfair. According to Andrew Brice,

"a Concourse of 10,000 ON A SUNDAY was very common, some to drink this holy Water, some to drink Ale and other prophane Liquors, some to bathe, some to stare and wonder, some to laugh, some to *court*, and others probably to be *courted*, some to sell Cakes, Gingerbread, Drams, Cherries, Appls, Nuts, some with *other Fruit to sell*, &c &c &c, all blessed Consequences of the *Dream's* or *Dreamer's* thus pitching upon the *Lord's Holy Day*, in Effect, to be thus shockingly prophan'd"[132].

The *Gloucester Journal* writer, inevitably, saw in such profanation a sign of Papist subversion, designed to "destroy our Religious Protestant Principles"[133]. This was perhaps unlikely, but there is no doubt that the Sunday hordes soon began to test the patience of the civic leaders. In May 1752 the Minister, the Rev. Richard Prat, charged eighteen boys with playing on the Sabbath. The

older ones were fined a shilling, "but the Ringleaders and most notorious offenders were ordered to the Stocks for three hours the next Market day which tis hoped will put a check to this open prophanation of the Lord's day"[134].

Old Christmas Past

The Rev. Richard Prat found himself – reluctantly - at the heart of an even bigger bit of 'Jacobite theatre': resistance to Calendar reform. On 22 May in that fateful year of 1751 the Calendar Act was passed. Eleven days were to be dropped from the month of September 1752, in order to bring Britain into line with the Gregorian calendar used by the rest of Europe. Robert Poole's inspirational work has demonstrated that, contrary to previous speculation, the calendar change was not in itself the cause of widespread rioting, but it certainly caused a considerable amount of unease. Reform amounted to "an unintended piece of cultural engineering… the calendar was the spine of the year, and to reposition it was as messy as trying to bone a fish: flesh and vital organs remained attached"[135].

No event was more controversial than the rescheduling of Christmas. Dire predictions were rife; new carols were composed, including one in which the Lord threatened to level the walls of Jerusalem

"Because thou didst not know
The reasonable day,
In which the Lord thy God appear'd
To wash thy sins away"[136].

Re-enter the Glastonbury Thorn, whose Christmas-flowering properties suddenly acquired a whole new significance. Would the holy plant observe the new regime, or would it defy Parliament and continue to blossom on the old day? "A vast concourse" of people came to Glastonbury for that Christmas of 1752-3 to find out. They "attended the Thorn on Christmas-Eve, New-Stile", claimed a report submitted to the *Public Advertiser*,

"but, to their great Disappointment, there was no Appearance of its blowing, which made them watch it narrowly the 5th of January, the Christmas-Day, Old-Stile, when it blowed as usual, and in one Day's Time was as white as a Sheet, to the great Mortification of many Families in that Neighbourhood, who had tapp'd their Ale eleven Days too soon"[137].

It is possible that the same would-be entrepreneurs who had brought the Waters phenomenon into the national limelight also saw the tourist potential of the Christmas-flowering Thorn. Some visitors certainly travelled to Glastonbury for both: John Jackson journeyed not just to see the Thorn but also "to drink and bath at the Chaingate Waters", and he returned to Yorkshire with blossom "in two vials of Chaingate water"[138]. It was certainly a profitable wheeze, as the *Gloucester Journal* noted, claiming unconvincingly that the Thorn and the town were "utter Strangers" to each other, yet "as these religious or curious People always spend some Money in the Town, they may depend upon being always welcome"[139].

Once again, however, publicising Glastonbury's miraculous attributes brought rather more interest than the town's leaders really wanted. A few weeks into the New Year, a "Paper" was printed at Hull and widely distributed around Yorkshire, and it caused much consternation and anxiety in that very far-flung region by publicising the Thorn's rebellious nature[140]. The "Paper" in question was a little eight-page chapbook entitled (or, more accurately, beginning with the words) *The Wonderful Works of God, shewing the Difference between the Old Cdristmas* [sic] *and the New.*

The Wonderful Works tells the story of Joseph of Arimathea; his presence at the Crucifixion, his arduous journey to Britain, the planting of his staff on Wearyall Hill, the building of the Old Church, how he baptised "above 5000 Persons in one Day" at Wells. Its real purpose, however, is to confirm that the Thorn *did* blossom on Old Christmas Day 1753, and in a paragraph repeated twice the author tells us that

"there was a great many Gentleman and Ladies from all Parts of *England* to see ihat *[sic]* beautiful *Thorn* where *Joseph* of *Arimathea* pitched his Staff, within two Miles of *Glastonbury*, to the great surprise of the Spectators, to see it bud, blossom, and fade, at the Hour of twelve, on Old Christmas Day, where a Sermon was preached at the same time, by one Mr. *Smith*".[141]

One John Sherwood, of Warter, near Pocklington in the East Riding, observing that these claims were "very much taken Notice of, and believed to be true by a great many People amongst us," resolved to write to the Vicar of Glastonbury and to ask him to confirm or deny the story. The Rev. Prat duly responded, dismissing the account in *The Wonderful Works* as "ridiculously stupid and egregiously false". He declared that the Thorn that year had blossomed at Christmas New-Stile "or rather sooner", and – even more devastatingly – reminded Sherwood that Bishop Stillingfleet "has plainly prov'd that Joseph of Arimathea never was here"[142].

It is necessary here to take a step back, and pursue the collapse of Joseph's academic career in the seventeenth century. Perhaps because English Protestants no longer felt the need to justify the precedence of the English Church, perhaps because a new style of critical scholarship was emerging, the Joseph legend steadily lost credibility during the seventeenth century. Already in 1653 Bishop Goodman, for want of early evidence, was treating the miraculous Thorn as a modern phenomenon[143]; and in 1685 Edward

Stillingfleet, then Dean of St Paul's, published his *Origines Britannicæ, or, The antiquities of the British churches*, in which he painstakingly analysed the sources on which the legend was based and concluded that it was a forgery. His work was supplemented and repeated by other influential scholars, for instance Jeremy Collier in his *An ecclesiastical history of Great Britain (*1708), and Edmund Gibson in his 1722 revision of William Camden's famous *Britannia*, then the 'bible' of English history[144].

After Stillingfleet, to credit the Joseph story was to defy orthodox wisdom. It remained important to Catholics such as Charles Eyston or John Stevens, who in his 1718 update of Dugdale's *Monasticon*, declared a touch disingenuously that "two such great Men as *Archbishop Usher* and Bishop *Godwin*, are of Weight enough to oppose against such as have endeavour'd to discredit this, 'till of late uncontroverted Tradition"; his own *History of the antient abbeys*, published five years later, simply repeats the legend without comment.
It remained important to Welsh historians, who were able to claim that they were the true inheritors of pure Protestant Christianity, untainted by the Catholicism that St Augustine had inflicted on the Anglo-Saxons; it remained important to Somerset patriots and Glastonbury publicists, and to those with unusual axes to grind – such as John Wood's zealous efforts to establish the Druidic foundations of Bath[145].

This places *The Wonderful Works of God* in interesting company. Alex Walsham has demonstrated how at this period "the Thorn and other winter-flowering plants were subtly being transmuted from sacred relics into wonders of nature"[146]. *The Wonderful Works* quite clearly has such scientific attitudes in its sights:

"Though modern Fools are apt to laugh
Yet at Christ's Birth were Blossoms fair
Which to this Day remaineth there"[147]

Choosing which day to celebrate Christmas had now become a choice between rival belief-systems. Though in some places, (notably, for some reason, Buckinghamshire), parish priests caved in to popular demand and celebrated Christmas on the old day as well as the new, Robert Poole has shown that the majority of Anglican ministers insisted on obedience to temporal laws. One even raised the spectre of Cromwell by suggesting that if the feast-days were not kept "decently" then they might all be abolished[148]. Richard Prat of Glastonbury was clearly one of this majority. During the height of the craze he allowed a fellow-minister to preach from his pulpit on "the discovery and due use of Glastonbury waters"[149], but his support for Stillingfleet suggests that personally he had little faith in Chancellor's miracle. His attitude to the Lord's Day profanation, and now to the flowering Thorn, suggests that by 1753 this particular Anglican's enthusiasm for the miracles on his doorstep had been exhausted.

John Sherwood of Warter had hoped that his letter to the Vicar of Glastonbury would "put an End to the Disputes of a great many People that are in different Opinions about it", and passed it on to a Yorkshire

newspaper, the *York Courant*, which duly published both letters shortly before the following Christmas[150]. But Prat's reply, far from quelling the Yorkshire doubters, simply stirred up further disputes; and two years later one man decided to walk to Glastonbury and find out for himself.

John Jackson was a fascinating and endearing individual: a "harmless hermit" seventy-one years of age when he began his pilgrimage, living in a "hutt" or "kedar kabbin" at Woodkirk, on the main road between Leeds and Dewsbury. Jackson was an all-rounder: a schoolmaster, a stonecutter, a land-measurer, clock-mender and clockmaker, a philanthropist who kept a clock in his window so that cloth-merchants hurrying to Leeds Market might get there on time[151]. As a professional time-keeper, Jackson's concerns about the Calendar are very understandable, but he was also that unusual creature, a freethinking High Churchman, scornful of "the new start up sects of our modern Schismaticks who if we may believe em – are both newborn and sinless", though clearly familiar with them. He was not troubled by their doubts about the Thorn's authenticity: "Both these and the Old Puritans deny'd and scoff'd at it." What swayed him was "hearing some of our own Clergy tamper with it and would not allow it the natural miracle and witness of the Gospels promulgation in England"[152].

Penniless, a friend penned him an 'advertisement', announcing Jackson's intention not only to walk to Glastonbury and witness the Christmas Thorn, but also to record what he saw and what he could find out. This document he then produced to strangers in the hope of receiving "some small contribution towards his expenses", which he generally seemed to get. Jackson set out on his epic 185-mile journey on All Saints Day, November 1, 1755 (Old Style, of course: our November 12). After trudging for six weeks through the mire and foul weather of an English winter, he reached Glastonbury on December 15 (Old Style…). That Sunday, after taking the waters at Chaingate, Jackson attended the morning service at St Benedict's, and afterwards was examined by the Minister in order to "tarry Sacrament". He "asked me who I was, whence I came and what Religion I was trained up in, and what I had profest and follow'd all my life. I told him I knew 'em all, and had been at 'em all, but I had never been any where as an act of Devotion, but to the Church in all my life"[153].

Although Jackson went to St Benedict's and not to St John's, Glastonbury had but one Minister at that time. Jackson was now face-to-face with the man whose comments had caused such "great disputes" in the distant West Riding. After the Sacrament, the Minister gave him a silver sixpence - "and I said Sir but this is not all I want of you. He looked earnestly at me a while; but spake not." Jackson then gave his account, but muffed his opportunity to discuss the Matter of Glastonbury, concluding rather lamely by asking for "a line or 2 from under your hand to testifie that I was here this day." The Minister

obliged, and wrote him a testimonial in the study of his house in the High Street. This was "a handsom well furnish'd room, and handsom library neatly set up", we are told by way of further authenticating detail; thus the doughty Yorkshireman bearded the new-fangled cleric in his sumptuous lair… but then he slipped off for his dinner[154].

The Thorn duly flowered that Old Christmas Day, and the Glastonbury bellringers defied their Vicar: "no Divine Service was read yet most of the day the bells rung as hard as they could at St John's Church"[155]. Did the Thorn "ever bud or blossom on the New Christmas Day", Jackson asked his hosts? "They angrily answered me nay nor never will"; but, though they did not like the New Style, "yet they say that we must not go to rebell against the Government"[156]. The Thorn's supernatural habits had become a law-and-order issue. There was no room for miracles in the Age of Reason; and by corollary those who had failed to benefit from its enlightenment – the poor, in other words, or some of them – found miracles ever more attractive.

A Different Time

In the case of Glastonbury, the thirst for the miraculous can be measured both in the enduring faith in the Waters, to which I shall return in a moment, and in the popularity of another chapbook, this one called *The Holy Disciple, or, The History of Joseph of Arimathea.* It's a very close relative of *The Wonderful Works of God.* Large chunks of text are shared by both works, and though *The Holy Disciple* appears to be more polished it is unclear whether *The Wonderful Works* was a first draft of *The Holy Disciple* or a hurried rip-off. *The Holy Disciple* was certainly very popular. Twenty-one copies have survived in the institutional libraries catalogued on http://copac.ac.uk, with estimated dates ranging from 1710 to 1805. Only six of these have been dated with any confidence, however, and these range from 1777 to 1792, which may suggest that the tale belongs more securely to the second half of the century[157].

The main thrust of *The Holy Disciple* is that the Glastonbury Thorn was living testimony to the Christian miracle, refutation to Rationalist doubt. As it concludes

"And though the Times of superstitious Popery, in these Kingdoms, be abolished, yet Thousands of People, of different Opinions, go once a Year to see it, as being a most miraculous Curiosity; which also brings Foreigners beyond Sea to behold it, at its annual Time of shewing a Wonder that is really supernatural, as being a Matter contrary to the Course of Nature, and may make us cry out with the Psalmist, O Lord! My God, how marvellous are thy Ways!"[158].

This was subversive, 'Jacobite theatre' if you will, a fine example of "the People" clinging cussedly to the old ways "out of an illiterate and ill mannered Opposition to Science and their Superiors", as the vicar of Portesham said of the calendar-rebels[159]. Furthermore, different editions included various extra themes, drawn from antiquity but likely to be of

interest to the 'lower Sort', at whom the chapbook was pitched. In two editions (at least) we learn that soon after Joseph's death, and in veneration of him,

"a great Lady living at *Glastonbury*…. obtained of her Husband so much Pasture Ground in a Common by the Town Side, for the Good and Benefit of the Inhabitants, as she was able in a whole Day to walk about Barefooted"[160].

This story was not original: a similar account was told of Dunster, also in Somerset, and there are many other examples[161]. It may well not have had any real connection with Glastonbury, although there was indeed a long-running dispute over commoning rights on South Moor[162]. But enclosures and common rights had resonance right across the country in the eighteenth century: what is really interesting here is the iconic status that Glastonbury was already acquiring[163].

Another example brings us back to the Waters phenomenon. In an edition of *The Holy Disciple* thought to have been produced at Shrewsbury around 1760, a final paragraph has been added:

"N.B. Near the Place where the white Thorn stands, there is a Spring of a medicinal Equality *[sic]*, that heretofore did, and still does, cure many Diseases; but the Proprietor formerly being us'd to exact and receive a Gratuity from those that us'd the Water, the Spring thereupon became dry, but now the Water is again restor'd, and is thought to be nothing inferior to that of Bath or Holywell"[164].

Again, to readers in Shrewsbury, a hundred miles away, Glastonbury is a *symbolic* place, where avarice and greed are thwarted by divine intervention. Access to the Waters was a real enough issue in Glastonbury, though, and had been from the start. When the crowds first flocked to the town, they camped out in the fields, to the great annoyance of at least one "*surly Peasant… Who at the Trespass of the Crowd/ Oft' snarled, and scolded, much and loud*", in Samuel Bowden's words:

"He swore he'd stop this cursed Spring,
Or Poison in the Fountain fling."

Retribution followed swiftly.

"This Curse no sooner from him flew,
But in a Moment deaf *he grew,*
Stopt were his Ears. – a Judgment sore,
Who vow'd to stop the Spring no more."

Much was made of the fact that these waters, God's miracle, were free. Samuel Bowden – writing, it should be remembered, sarcastically – went on to paraphrase the popular view:

"This Water free for Rich or Poor,
Works eleemosynary Cure;
Too long have venal Fountains flow'd,
From Bath, from Bristol, Holt and Road.
As 'tis a Present from the Skies,
It were prophane to make a Prize;
If you bestow one single Mite,
The healing Virtues vanish quite"[165].

Glastonbury Waters, however, were already being commandeered by 'Proprietors' who had great expectations of venal Fountains. It is unclear how far they succeeded in preventing free water-drinking, but the fact that in February 1755 Anne Galloway was proposing to install "Pumps and Conveniencies" at the Pump Room for the "free Use" of local residents "without annoying others" suggests not only that access to the Waters was being controlled, but also that such control was resented. Jackson's description of the Pump Room as a "new building which I think is their Water House" speaks volumes about its lack of relevance to a poor pilgrim such as himself; and his explanation of how the Waters had lost their healing power three hundred years previously, owing to the avarice of a "Lord oth *[sic]* soil", may have had some contemporary resonance[166].

Though the spa was failing, lower down the social order the perceived potency of Glastonbury waters endured. The poor just kept on coming, and by so doing added to the spa's problems. The indefatigable Anne Galloway in 1755 sought to turn the problem into a solution by invoking the financial aid of "the better Sort" to domesticate the town's poorer visitors. Noting that the poor were

"suffering much, for Want of Assistance, as many often Times do, there being most Times a greater Resort than can be well relieved by the Inhabitants, and others that come to the Place, as is the Case now with some, who suffer much with their Disorder and Coldness of the Weather, together with the Want of common Necessaries"

she invited Patrons to support poor visitors at the rate of a guinea a head, which would cover board and lodging for the seven-week period. Subscribers' names were to be "set down on Tables in the Pump-Room"; a Register-Book with full details of the beneficiaries – names, addresses, dates and times, recommendations, disorder and success. This was the occasion on which she sought to invoke the aid of books provided by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge which would help her "in having the Poor well instructed in their Duties… a Means to render them more useful the rest of their Lives, and to prevent them being troublesome to the better Sort, during their Stay for their Recovery"[167]. Either patronage was not forthcoming, or the poor were not eager to be instructed in their duties, or

both: certainly John Jackson, passing through the town a few months later, appeared oblivious to her charitable intentions.

The spa failed, but the waters were "again restor'd", as the chapbook writer noted. A visitor to the Chalice Well in May 1767 found that "the People here hold it in great Repute for Astma, Scurvey and Dropsy; telling of several cures it has and continues to make every day"[168]. A year later, Tor House, next to Chalice Well,[169] was sold to a victualler named John Pearce, who converted it into a pub. As the well was then right on the edge of town, this suggests not only that plenty of potential customers were still going to the Waters, but also that they were not of the genteel variety: pubs and pump-rooms belonged to different spheres. The pub, intriguingly, was called 'The Anchor', which in an inland location would generally signify the Church, offering security in the choppy waters of Doubt. Perhaps, like the Thorn, these deemed-holy waters had some such resonance.

Samuel Saunders, writing in 1780 and generally unimpressed with the ruinous state of the town's architectural portfolio, visited the "mineral spring" and found it to be "in a state of equal ruin with the rest". It was not, however, defunct: "A printed dream is shewn to travellers, (transcribed from the records) of the person who first discovered the virtue of the water … I was moreover told, that many inhabitants of the place and neighbourhood had received cures in similar complaints…"[170]

There may even have been a slight revival in the spa's fortunes at the end of the century. Hembry suggests that promoting one was the intention of the anonymous guidebook printed at Bath in 1792 by Richard Crutwell, publisher of the *Bath Chronicle*[171]. Entitled *The History and Antiquities of Glastonbury, collected from various authors. To which is added, an account of The Mineral Waters, and of the Glastonbury Thorn*, Crutwell's author introduced the newly-fashionable King Arthur into the equation by claiming that he'd been brought hither "to be healed of his wounds, by the healing waters of Glastonbury."

This claim was erroneously foisted onto the fifteenth-century chronicler Raphael Holinshed, but most of the rest of the text was a somewhat downmarket piece of potboiling. The *Holy Disciple* version of the Joseph legend was repeated; large chunks of Samuel Bowden's poem were used – those parts that did not attack the waters' properties – and some wonderfully disparaging references to the waters of Bath and Bristol were added:

"CEASE, lofty Bath, aloud to sing,
The virtues of thy sulph'rous spring:
Hold! Bristol, hold! Boast not thy well,
For Glaston Spring doth both excel"[172].

Hembry is unimpressed with these "ridiculous" claims[173], but the Crutwell booklet went through a further three editions (1800, 1805, 1807), which certainly suggests some revival of interest, although its very shoddiness and cheap format indicate that Crutwell was not pitching for the gentry. More the

opposite, in fact, since the pamphlet laid much emphasis on the fact that at Glastonbury no money changed hands:

"When medicines will not avail,
And Galen's art doth not prevail;
Ye sick, to Glaston come away,
Here is no Doctor's bill to pay;
This healing water will procure
An eleomsynary [sic] *cure"*[174].

This reminder of the Well's charitable qualities is interesting since in 1796 it was acquired by a Friendly Society based at North Petherton, ten miles from Glastonbury across the Somerset Levels. Such organisations were concerned for the physical well-being of their members, so this purchase suggests that the Society believed in the health-giving properties of Glastonbury water. However, in 1804 the Well changed hands again and was subsequently bought jointly by John Lilly of Pedwell and William Williams of Honiton, 'druggist'. One was described as a brewer and the other as a 'druggist', so perhaps they intended to resurrect the bottling plant [175].

Not much seems to have come of this. John Clark, writing in 1810, lamented the fact that the Waters' virtues "lie hid, alas beneath a cloud". The Well was still accessible in 1836, though "little frequented", according to William Phelps: "few persons now avail themselves of these conveniencies"[176]. Fifty years later, however, a veteran recalled a time when "Chilkwell-Street was lined every Sunday morning with all kinds of conveyances from the neighbouring villages, bringing those who desired to drink, or bathe in, the waters". Another remembered "when the walls of the Bath Room at Chain Gate were covered by trophies, left by patients who had come in lame and weak, and had departed healthy and strong"[177]. Since the Pump Room had ceased to function well over a century earlier this must be a reference to John Jackson's "old forsaken kitchin", unless this informant was very ancient indeed. Both were talking to George Wright, who was very attracted to the idea of the Waters' miraculous properties and might well have been tempted to embellish the facts, but since he was writing in the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society's *Proceedings*, whose membership can be presumed to have had a good deal of local knowledge, such testimony could easily have been refuted had it been wrong. The implication here is quite simply that the Waters continued to enjoy some degree of local repute until far into the nineteenth century[178].

A New Bethesda

Thanks to the Thorn and the Waters, Glastonbury belonged (quite literally, after 1753) to a Different Time, a time and a place where the Poor could find healing and sustenance, and the sins afflicted on them by avarice and greed would find divine retribution.

John Jackson's account is fascinating and evocative, but what he chooses *not* to notice is almost as interesting. He was living in a region where the Industrial Revolution was already beginning to happen. The population of Sheffield had doubled in his lifetime. Derby and Burton-on-Trent were burgeoning industrial towns. Birmingham had more than quadrupled its population, yet Jackson walks through these places with evident disdain. Bristol, the country's second-largest city, was dismissed as "all on an hurry and continuall bustle far worse than London", its "half ruind Cathedrall the least in all England"; while Birmingham was so indifferent to "strolers" such as himself that less than a fortnight earlier one "poor wretch fell down dead in the street" because no-one would take him in[179].

This apparent blindness to industrialisation is intriguing. It is also odd that the debate about the Thorn should have stirred such strong feelings in distant Yorkshire, but these feelings seem to be reflected in the spread of places where *The Holy Disciple* was printed. Of the twenty-one copies catalogued on www.copac.ac.uk, four were printed in London, four in the Midlands and the rest in the North or in Scotland. All but two were printed in towns that were rapidly expanding – and all were a long way from Glastonbury. To such places Glastonbury, the home of pure Christianity was exotic, remote culturally as well as geographically. When Jackson returned to Yorkshire, he was greeted with a friendly Ode from those who wanted to know more about his trip to "Glaston, Brittish Rome":

"Welcome Old Friend from that fam'd land
Where trees in winter bloom
Where Saints did live, in days of yore
Whose relicks vie with Rome"[180].

Was Jackson a pioneer in the quest for Olde Englande? Christopher Reid suggests that Jackson's preference for the 'Old English' Calendar was linked to that purer form of Christianity that England enjoyed over its neighbours, by virtue of Joseph's early arrival[181]. The Glastonbury Thorn was living proof of the link between Old Christmas and Old England, and both were under threat. For Jackson's England was certainly a Green and Pleasant Land, with many descriptions of church peals and services, and nary a glance at the Dark Satanic Mills that were rising all about him.

My use of these familiar, clichéd quotes from William Blake's *Preface to 'Milton'* is quite deliberate, since Blake's famous question, 'And did those feet, in Ancient Time, Walk upon England's Mountains

Green' paved the way for the most breath-taking development of the Glastonbury legend yet, the idea that Christ himself had come to Glastonbury with Joseph of Arimathea. Blake never visited Glastonbury, nor commented directly on the Glastonbury legends in his work, but he was certainly much impressed with the figure of Joseph. His first engraving, *Joseph of Arimathea among the Rocks of Albion* (left), was executed in 1773 when he was a fourteen-year-old apprentice; and Joseph figures in at least one other work, *Joseph of Arimathea Preaching to the Inhabitants of Britain*, *c.*1795. Was Blake, like Jackson, inspired by a chapbook that, with its emphasis on miracle, defied the 'rational' world to which he was so opposed? At all events, it's clear they shared a similar vision, of Britain as a holy land now blighted, with Glastonbury at its heart[182].

Conclusions

Outsiders?

Ronald Hutton, emphasising "the role of the outsider in fostering self-images for communities", suggests that modern Glastonbury was very much a case in point[183]; and to some extent my research suggests that this can be extended back to the eighteenth century. Characters as diverse as Anne Galloway, John Jackson and the author of *The Holy Disciple* all had very clear ideas about what Glastonbury ought to be, and they were all 'outsiders'.

This view does need to be qualified, however. Some people in the town had been turning a penny on the town's reputation for mystical antiquity since the seventeenth century at least, which, I've suggested, explains why the Waters phenomenon was so enthusiastically endorsed by the civic leaders. But the power of antiquity extended beyond the potential to charm the tourists. To the phenomenon of 'Spelmanism', the sense of regret at the loss of the monasteries and fear of the retribution that might follow, can also now be added the notion of a past in which the poor were better treated; and from this past real good might yet continue to flow. How else to explain the fact that people flocked to the Chaingate spout, to drink the waters that had been filtered through the bones of saints and martyrs?

Furthermore, this belief was first and foremost *local*. To Samuel Bowden of Frome, the phenomenon took off because the local population believed in the cures "as Matters of fact … it was on the Sanction of these miraculous Cures, that the Waters first gain'd Reputation, and that there was a fancy'd Divinity suppos'd to reside in them"[184]. A third of that first season's attested cures came from the town itself or within five miles of it. To all these local sufferers, Glastonbury was an appropriate place for such miraculous goings-on.

Defiant mysticism

When Matthew Chancellor was buried in 1765, the Rev. Prat, or someone acting on his behalf, added the epithet 'the dreamer' to his entry in the burial-register[185]. These two small words contrive to combine affection and contempt; and serve to underline the extent to which Anglican sentiment had by then chosen to stand with the newer ideologies of polite society. The beliefs

of Matthew Chancellor, John Jackson and the author of *The Holy Disciple* were relics, wrong-headed if not downright dangerous.

The Waters phenomenon, like Calendar reform, can be seen as an episode in what Poole calls "the long-drawn-out separation of elite and popular cultures in early modern England"[186]. The 'lower Sort' of Christian continued to drift towards Wesley, or to other Dissenter traditions that allowed them to make sense of the cosmos in ways they found more plausible. William Blake was schooled in such traditions, and he chose to feed the Glastonbury legend into the alternative mythic history he was defiantly creating. Blake's response to critical doubts about the authenticity of the Joseph story was to leap in the opposite direction, and to suggest that Christ himself may have come to 'England's Mountains Green'. It is no coincidence that *And Did Those Feet* follows on directly from a rant against polite knowledge:

"Rouze up O Young Men of the New Age! set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings! For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court & the University: who would if they could, for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War… there is a Class of Men whose whole delight is in Destroying"[187].

These 'Hirelings' are close relatives of the chapbook writer's "modern Fools", and in both cases their critics' defiant anachronism had a social purpose. Joseph of Arimathea, and the pure, miraculous form of Christianity which he brought to Glastonbury, belonged to the "moral economy" (to borrow Thompson's phrase)[188] that was then being undermined by the ruthless rationalism of industrialisation. Invoking the legend underlined a profound difference in values. To these eighteenth-century 'dreamers', the idea of Glastonbury had a radical edge.

A modern sort of past

Glastonbury may have been defying Time, but there was something very modern about the way it did so. There was a very modern use of the newspaper and the advertisement as a means of disseminating information; and a very modern awareness of the potential of Antiquity to draw in tourists, and draw the pennies from their purses.

It was also very 'modern' in terms of the reactions that the miracle engendered. Thus the earliest accounts do not mention Chancellor's dream: the discovery of potentially healing properties in the Waters was exciting, but prosaic. When the dream was published, however, and the 'Seven Sundays' explanation threatened to exceed the bounds of acceptable science, the ridicule began. There is an exact parallel for this phenomenon in Glastonbury's twentieth-century history in the case of Frederick Bligh Bond, the archaeologist whose excavations at Glastonbury Abbey were published in respectable journals and treated with due respect until he claimed to have been guided in his work by the instructions of a long-dead monk[189].

Most striking of all are the similarities in perception of the place, then and now. Glastonbury still has a reputation for anti-rationalism. It is still a place

where different faiths and different attitudes to faith jostle for attention, not always amicably. It is still a place where people are clearly cashing in on miracles; it is still a place where the lower Sort still congregate in numbers, to the concern and distaste of the Better[190]. The Christmas-flowering Thorn may have lost much of its oddness, but that's not just because we moderns have been able to give it a label (*Crataegus Oxyacantha praecox*). Daisies also now flower in December, and likewise many other plants as the planet overheats. Glastonbury, above all, is still a place where people come to seek a cure, a magnet for people looking for spiritual answers in a world gone wrong.

ENDNOTES

[1] Letter from J Russell, 16 November 1539, quoted in full in John Collinson, *The history and antiquities of the county of Somerset* Bath:1792, vol. I p 256
[2] Hutton, Ronald 'Glastonbury: Alternative Histories' in Hutton, *Witches, Druids and King Arthur* London: 2003, pp 59-85
[3] Alexandra Walsham, 'The Holy Thorn of Glastonbury: The Evolution of a Legend in Post-Reformation England', *Parergon* 21.2 (2004), pp 1-25, p 5
[4] Ronald Hutton, 'The English Reformation and the Evidence of Folklore', *Past and Present* 148 (1995), pp 89-116; p 115
[5] Walsham, *op.cit,* p 25
[6] E P Thompson, *Customs in Common* Harmondsworth:1993.
[7] Robert Poole, 'Give us our eleven days!': calendar reform in eighteenth-century England *Past and Present* 149 (1995), pp 95-139; *Time's Alteration: Calendar Reform in Early Modern England* London: 1998
[8] Andrew Brice *The Grand Gazetteer or Topographic Dictionary* Exeter: 1759, pp 631-2
[9] See Valerie Lagorio, 'The Evolving Legend of St Joseph of Glastonbury' 1971, reprinted in Carley (ed) *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition* Woodbridge: D S Brewer 2001, pp 55-81

[10] quoted in Lionel Smithett Lewis, *St Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury* London: 1964 pp 55, 189
[11] William Camden, *Britannia*, 1607 edition, online at http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/cambrit/dorseteng.html
[12] David Lloyd *The states-men and favourites of England since the Reformation* London, 1665:527
[13] Richard Broughton, *The Ecclesiastical Historie of Great Britaine* Douai:1633, pp 110-111. Montague was then Bishop of Bath and Wells, which means that the entertainement took place between 1608 and 1616, the dates of his episcopate.
[14] Walsham, *op.cit,* pp 10-11
[15] Walsham, *op. cit,* p 13
[16] David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* Oxford: 1984; cf R W Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society* Cambridge: 1973
[17] Robert Dunning, 'Why have a mayor for Glastonbury?', talk given to the Glastonbury Conservation Society on 30 March 2005. Online at http://web.ukonline.co.uk/jim.nagel/ap/consoc/dunning.html
[18] Hutton *op. cit* 2003, p 62, Carley *op. cit* pp 172-3; M R James, 'Glastonbury Abbey' from James, 'Abbeys', London: 1925. Online at http://www.isleofavalon.co.uk/history/james.html
[19] Brice 1759, *op.cit.*
[20] Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies* London: 1724, Letter 4, Part 2, online at http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/chap_page.jsp?t_id=Defoe&c_id=16&p_id=58
[21] Celia Fiennes, *Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary* London: 1888, online at http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/chap_page.jsp?t_id=Fiennes&c_id=27. John Jackson in 1755 was told that the owner had removed it "above 50 years since… to avoid the strangers coming to see it", but the site was both known and visible since he found a guide to take him there. John Jackson, 'Diary of a Journey to Glastonbury Thorn', *The Reliquary* 1st series (1874-5): vol 15, pp 45-51, 73-80, 140-144, 201-206; vol. 16, pp 19-27; p 203. Some of Jackson's diary has been reprinted in John Mullan and Christopher Reid, *Eighteenth-Century Popular Culture: a selection* (Oxford: 2000), pp 230-236
[22] both quoted in Walsham *op. cit* pp 15, 18
[23] Eyston *op. cit* pp 2, 112
[24] Elias, Ashmole *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* London: 1652, pp 481-2; Fiennes *op. cit.*
[25] eg Collinson 1792 *op cit*, p 266
[26] John Wood, *Choir Gaure, vulgarly called Stonehenge, on Salisbury Plain* Oxford: 1747, p 21
[27] Quoted in James P Carley, *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House at the head of the Moors Adventurous*, Glastonbury: 1996 pp 152-3. The original is in

Norfolk Record Office, MS. 7198, fol. 116; Spelman's informant was Mr Taylor, a Divine of Oxford. Thanks to Professor Simon Keynes of Cambridge and Lucy Wright of NRO for help in nailing this down.
[28] William Stukeley, *Itinerarium curiosum. Or, an account of the antiquitys and remarkable curiositys in nature or art, observ'd in travels thro' Great Brittan* London: 1724, pp 144, 145
[29] *Gloucester Journal* 9 July 1751 p 2
[30] Jackson *op. cit.*, p 203
[31] "the venerable walls of Glastonbury Abbey, we are assured, are now actually beating to pieces to mend the roads [*sic*]. We hope it will not be recorded to future generations, the penuriousness of its owner could have been the cause of so disgraceful an act" *Bath Chronicle,* 24 June 1784
[32] 'Inhabitant of Bath', *John v.6. Wilt thou be made whole?* Bath, 1751 pp 67-9
[33] Phyllis Hembry, *The English Spa 1560-1815: A Social History* London: 1990, p 170
[34] 'Inhabitant of Bath', p 72
[35] Richard Warner, *An History of the Abbey of Glaston: and of the town of Glastonbury* Bath: 1826, p 276n. In January 1745 'Mr Chancellor' was one of a dozen or so parishioners to contribute towards the purchase of new Communion plate for St John's Church. Details copied into unfoliated volume at Somerset Record Office, DD\SAS/C795/SE/28, 'Manuscript Notes and Extracts 1854'
[36] *Gentleman's Magazine* 1753, Vol. 23, p 454
[37] Carley, *op. cit* pp 145-6
[38] *Bath Journal* 1 April 1751, p 8
[39] *Gloucester Journal* 16 April 1751 p 1
[40] *Penny London Post* 17-19 April 1751
[41] Fleming, Francis. ***The life and extraordinary adventures, the perils and critical escapes, of Timothy Ginnadrake, that child of chequer'd fortune*** Bath: 1771 Vol. 2, pp 144-145
[42] Brice 1759 *op. cit*; *Gentleman's Magazine* 1751 Vol.21, p 231
[43] *London Daily Advertiser* 11 July 1751; *Gloucester Journal* 18 June 1751 p 2
[44] Daniel Defoe, ***A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain,*** sixth edition. Vol 2 (1761-62), pp 33-4, quoting a letter from 'a Gentleman to his friend' written in 1751
[45] 'Inhabitant of Bath', p 56
[46] Davies 1751, p 2
[47] *Bath Journal* 24 June 1751 p 55
[48] See the letter from 'PW' in the *London Daily Advertiser*, 1 July 1751: "an ingenious Gentleman in this country is now preparing a Pamphlet on this subject for the Press"

[49] "So great has been the Demand for this *Authentick History*, that there are only Sixty Books left out of the whole Impression, which consisted of a great Number". *Sherborne Mercury* 12 August 1751 p 3.
[50] Hembry 1990, p 360, 'Schedule A'
[51] *Gloucester Journal* 18 June 1751 p 2
[52] Fiennes, *op. cit*, Dunning 2005, *op. cit.*
[53] Opinions vary on the dating of the Market House. The author of the Glastonbury 'Millennium Walk' suggests the very late 1600s; Robert Dunning 2006, p 28-9 prefers c1714. If it was not actually built by the Corporation then it was certainly built by the same people who were petitioning for the Corporation to come into existence. Dunning, 'Glastonbury', in R W Dunning (ed) *A History of the County of Somerset*, vol. IX: *Glastonbury and Street*, Woodbridge: 2006, pp 28-9; anon, 'Millennium Walk', *http://www.glastonbury.gov.uk/g_gov/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=3401&page_id=54*.
[54] Quoted in Robert Dunning, *Glastonbury: History and Guide* Stroud:1994, p 66
[55] *London Daily Advertiser* 25 July 1751
[56] Dunning 2005, *op cit.*
[57] A manuscript, since lost to view, appeared in the antiquarian bookseller Stanley Crowe's 1973 catalogue, no. 83, item 164. By William Gould, it was entitled *An Enquiry into the Origin, Nature and Virtue of the Glastonbury Waters* and ran to "upwards of 280 quarto pages". According to the auctioneer's notes, "the mss has the appearance of having been prepared for publication. The author has written a 'Dedicatory Epistle', the text shows correction and revision, and footnotes have been added". For biographical details on William Gould, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Gould); Davies 1751: 14, 17
[58] Jackson *op. cit.*,141; Davies 1751 *op. cit*, p 4; cf *Gloucester Journal* 18 June 1751 p 2
[59] 'A Physician' *op. cit,* p 42; *Bath Journal* 24 June 1751 p 55
[60] *Gloucester Journal* 30 June 1752, quoted in H. St George Gray, 'Glastonbury Water', *Proc. Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society* 89 (1943), pp 54-8. Mrs Anne Gallaway, described as "Milliner at Cheltenham", was among the subscribers to John Marchant's edifying *Puerilia: or, amusements for the young. Consisting of a collection of songs, adapted to the fancies & capacities of those of tender years*, published in 1751. Phyllis Hembry (*op. cit.,* p 170) suggests that she may have been related to a Bath builder and developer called William Galloway, a connection which would fit the various building works promised or accomplished in her name.
[61] *Gloucester Journal* 30 June 1752, quoted in Gray, *op. cit.*
[62] Somerset Historic Environment Record notes, site number 20642, online at http://webapp1.somerset.gov.uk/her/text.asp

[63] *Gentleman's Magazine* 1753, Vol. 23, pp 64, 454. However, according to a note attached to the ticket in the Somerset Studies Library, the Pump Room did not actually open until Whit Tuesday 1754.
[64] *Bath Journal* 1 April 1751 p 8
[65] Hutton 2003, p 76; Paul Ashdown, 'How Old is Chalice Well?' *Glastonbury Review* 112, July 2005, online at http://www.britishorthodox.org/112e.php, Hembry *op. cit*, p 170; Davies *op. cit*, pp 4,5; 'A Physician' *op. cit*, pp 50, 51. Benjamin Martin, writing in 1759, claimed that "the Waters of *Glastonbury*… consist of several united Streams, which seem impregnated with Minerals of a different Nature" (***The general magazine of Arts and Sciences, philosophical, philological, mathematical, and mechanical***, vol 3 (1759) pp 87-8)
[66] Davies 1751, p 4; Philip Rahtz, 'Excavations at Chalice Well, Glastonbury' in *Proc. Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society* 108 (1964) pp 145-163, esp.148, 151-2, Somerset Historic Environment Record notes, site number 23610.
[67] See Bernard A. Goldgar's introduction to his *The Covent-Garden Journal* and *A Plan of the Universal Register Office*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1988 for a useful study of the URO
[68] quoted in Martin C. Battestin, 'Fielding, Henry (1707–1754)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: 2004, online at www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9400,
[69] M C Battestin, 'Fielding and the Glastonbury Waters', *Yearbook of English Studies* 1980, pp 205-9
[70] Battestin 1980: 207; H. Fielding, *The female husband: or, the surprising history of Mrs. Mary, alias Mr George Hamilton, who was convicted of having married a young woman of Wells* London: 1746, p 21
[71] Fielding might conceivably have been giving advice from fairly early on. He had a flare for publicity, and good publicity was a feature of the Waters affair, from the astute printing and distribution of Chancellor's attestation to newspapers across the land (a fact not wasted on contemporaries: Brice (*op. cit*) twice mentions the role of the "News-papers" in bruiting the miracle).
[72] Anon (Henry Fielding) *A Plan of the Universal Register-Office* London: 1751, p 17
[73] *General Advertiser* 26 June 1751 p 3
[74] 'A Physician' p 68, *London Daily Advertiser* 25 July 1751. For comparative information on the prices of different mineral waters, see Hembry 1990: 367.
[75] 'Inhabitant of Bath', p 62
[76] Collinson 1792, p 266
[77] Brice 1759, *op. cit.*
[78] *Gentleman's Magazine* 1751 pp 170-1
[79] Davies 1751, pp 10-11
[80] *Gloucester Journal* 18 June 1751 p 2. It is possible, given her building activities and aspirations, that 'the Proprietor' in question was Anne Galloway.
[81] *London Daily Advertiser* 25 July 1751

[82] Davies 1751, p 13
[83] *Bath Journal* 1 July 1754 p 104
[84] *Bath Journal* 24 February 1755
[85] Battestin 2004, *op. cit.*
[86] Battestin & Battestin 1989, p 526
[87] Collinson, John *The beauties of British antiquity; selected from the writings of esteemed antiquaries. With notes and observations* London, 1779, p 229
[88] Samuel Saunders, *A Short Description of the Curiosities of Glastonbury, in Somersetshire. Taken from Inspection, Description, Tradition and Record* London:1780, p 18
[89] Jackson *op. cit*, p 142
[90] Davies 1751 pp 9-19, Jackson *op. cit.*,, p 140
[91] Somerset Record Office DD\SAS/C795/SE/28, *Manuscript Notes and Extracts* 1854, unfoliated, notes "Extracted from the Glaston St John's Church Book'
[92] Richard Russel [sic], *A Dissertation on the USE of SEA WATER in the Diseases of the Glands* London: 1760 pp 295-6
[93] *Sherborne Mercury* 5 August 1751 p 2, cf 'A Physician' p 53; *London Daily Advertiser* 31 August 1751; *Universal Magazine* 8 (1751) pp 316-7 for some savagely satirical 'cures' that had resulted in death
[94] *Gloucester Journal* 1 April 1751 p 2
[95] *London Daily Advertiser* 20 May 1751, *General Advertiser* 5 June 1751. Why 'Haymarket'? The Haymarket Theatre had been most notoriously managed by one Henry Fielding, between 1735 and 1737; as a result of his satires the theatre was shut down and censorship was introduced. Little more than a month after the *General Advertiser's* announcement, the same Fielding was selling Glastonbury Waters by the quart. It seems likely, then, that 'Haymarket' was code for 'Fielding', and therefore that the *Advertiser*'s news-hounds had already tumbled to his plans.
[96] *Bath Journal* 10 June 1751 p 1
[97] *Bath Journal* 29 July 1751 p 1
[98] In 1729 John Breval epitomised pre-Reformation Glastonbury as "the Palace of *Superstition*" (preface to *Henry and Minerva:A Poem*, London:1729).
[99] The poem, slightly adapted, was included in Bowden's *Poems on Various Subjects; with some essays in prose, letters to correspondents, &c., and a treatise on health*. 1754, pp 61-5
[100] Davies 1751 p 12; 'Inhabitant of Bath' 1751 p 71
[101] See for instance J A Williams, *Bath and Rome: The Living Link. Catholicism in Bath from 1559 to the Present Day*. Bath, 1963
[102] Hembry 1990 p 171, *Gloucester Journal* 26 June 1754
[103] Russel 1760, pp 295-6
[104] Weld of Lulworth Castle, Dorset (Dorset Record Office, D/WLC/Z43); Chichester of Arlington, near Barnstaple, Devon (East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Records Service, DDCC/150/297)

[105] Hutton 2003 p 76; Clare Gathercole, *An Archaeological Assessment of Glastonbury,* Taunton: 2003, p 45; Philip Rahtz, *English Heritage book of Glastonbury* 1993: 129
[106] Somerset Record Office DD\SAS/H70/11/1, Release in trust to sell and declaration of the uses of a fine, 1716. D\P\gla j/13/1/2, Overseer's Rate Books 1737-72, folios 23, 490, 521, 524, 525, 529 (sample references)
[107] J. Armitage Robinson, *Two Glastonbury Legends: King Arthur and Joseph of Arimathea* Cambridge:1926, pp 30-31, 65, 49; Plates I, III and VII
[108] Walsham, *op. cit,* pp 10-11
[109] Broughton, *op. cit,* p 110
[110] Walsham, *op. cit,* pp 10. The 'Everland's Oake' recorded on 'The Earl of Devonshire's Glastonbury Estate Map' of 1609 (copy in Somerset Record Office, T\PH\not/1) might plausibly have been the same tree.
[111] D\P\glaj/13/1/2, *Overseer's Rate Book 1737-72*, fol. 23, 510 (examples)
[112] ditto, fol. 1-28 (examples)
[113] 'Inhabitant of Bath', pp 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 29, 33, 39, 47
[114] Davies 1751, pp 15, 17
[115] Davies 1751, pp 13-14
[116] Robert Dunning, 'The Methodist Revival', in Dunning (ed), *Christianity in Somerset* Taunton: Somerset County Council 1976, pp 67-9
[117] J. Anthony Williams, 'York, William (1686/7–1770)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: 2004, online at www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30234
[118] *Gloucester Journal* 9 July 1751 p 2
[119] *Bath Journal* 24 February 1755
[120] *Gentleman's Magazine* 1751, Vol 21, p 295
[121] Dunning 2005, quoting from the 1703 Petition
[122] E P Thompson, *op. cit,* p 68. The Jacobites were supporters of the supplanted Stuart monarchy and its heirs, who unsuccessfully invaded England in 1715 and 1745. By 'Jacobite theatre' Thompson means the widespread tendency of the lower orders to use *old*, even 'reactionary', forms to trumpet resistance to the Hanoverian government - and to 'ideas that people felt to be more repressive than progressive.
[123] Battestin 1980, p 209
[124] *Bath Journal* 10 June 1751 p 1
[125] Davies 1751, pp 9-10
[126] July 1, July 8, July 15 1751
[127] *Bath Journal* 11 February 1755
[128] Thompson *op. cit.* pp 80-81, Philip D Jones, 'The Bristol Bridge Riot and Its Antecedents: Eighteenth-Century Perception of the Crowd' *Journal of British Studies* 19/2 (1980), pp 74-92. Online at http://www.bradley.edu/academics/las/civ/bristol
[129] *Gloucester Journal* 9 July 1751 p 2

[130] Eyston *op. cit.,* p 104, Stukeley *op. cit,* p 145. The 'large and beautiful' chamber in the Market House was used for meetings of the Corporation from 1735: Dunning 1994, p 63
[131] Printed by 'A Physician', p 56
[132] Brice 1759, *op cit.*
[133] *Gloucester Journal* 9 July 1751 p 2
[134] Somerset Record Office, D\P\gla j/13/1/2, *Overseer's Rate Book 1737-52*, fol. 535
[135] Robert Poole, *ops. cit*, esp *Time's Alteration* pp 30, 138
[136] Jackson *op. cit*, pp 79-80
[137] *Public Advertiser* 13 January 1753 p 1
[138] Jackson *op. cit*, p 26. Jackson was apparently under the impression that Mathew Chancellor had been cured of a "sore leg", and as he had been suffering from the same thing for twelve years it seems probable that he too had hopes of the Glastonbury waters (*op. cit.,* pp 143, 26).
[139] *Gloucester Journal* 23 January 1753 p 13
[140] Correspondence in *York Courant* 1470 (December 18 1753); *Gentleman's Magazine* 1753, vol 23, pp 578-9
[141] The version printed in the *York Courant* described the preacher as "the Rev. Dr Smith". Prat claimed that the sermon must have been delivered "in a Dream, for I question whether any Person of the Name of Smith has preached here within the Memory of Man".
[142] *York Courant, op. cit.*
[143] Walsham, *op. cit,* p 13
[144] Jeremy Collier, *An ecclesiastical history of Great Britain, chiefly of England* London: 1708-14. vol. 1, pp 7-12; Edmund Gibson (ed), William Camden, *Britannia* London: 1722, vol I, pp lxxxii-v). A comprehensive account of Joseph's fall from grace is to be found in Sarah Scutts' unpublished MA dissertation, *Sixteenth and seventeenth century perceptions of Joseph of Arimathea* (University of Exeter, 2006), which she kindly let me see.
[145] Anon (John Stevens), ed, Dugdale, William *Monasticon Anglicanum: or, the history of the ancient abbies* Vol I, 1718, p 4; Stevens, *History of the antient abbeys* 1723, Vol I p 419; Prys Morgan, 'Iolo Morganwg and the Welsh Historical Traditions', in G A Jenkins (ed), *Rattleskull Genius: The Many Faces of Iolo Morganwg* Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2005, pp 251-268, p253
[146] Walsham, *op. cit,* pp 17-19
[147] *The Wonderful Works of God*, p 6
[148] Walsham, *op. cit*, p 22; Poole 1995, p 129
[149] The sermon was written and delivered by William Rawlins, Vicar of Stockland-Bristol "in the parish church of Glaston, St Johns, on Sunday the 12th of May 1751". It clearly went down well, since it appeared in print (Emanuel Green, *Bibliotheca Somersetensis : a catalogue of books, pamphlets, single sheets, and broadsides in some way connected with the County of Somerset* 1902, vol 3, p 204. I haven't been able to track down a copy.)

Rawlins was also licensed to teach at Glastonbury Grammar school: Diocese of Bath and Wells, Subscription Evidence Record, online at http://eagle.cch.kcl.ac.uk:8080/cce/DisplaySubscription.jsp?CDBSubscrID=31687

[150] *York Courant* 1470, December 18 1753

[151] Norrison Scatcherd, *The History of Morley*, second edition 1874, pp 107-8

[152] Jackson *op. cit*, p 47

[153] Jackson *op. cit*, p 204

[154] ditto

[155] Bob Bushaway, *By Rite: Custom, Ceremony and Community in England 1700*-1880 (London:1982), pp 48-57, stresses the autonomy of 'church ringers' and their importance in legitimising and maintaining the customary calendar.

[156] Jackson *op. cit*, p 206

[157] Thanks to Barry McKay, chap-book specialist, for drawing my attention to the fact that the Copac dates are mostly guesswork!

[158] p 17 of Glasgow edition, dated 1777

[159] Poole *op. cit*, p 130

[160] In London ?1770, Glasgow 1777 editions

[161] Collinson 1792 Vol 2 p 9; Jeremy Harte, *pers. comm.*

[162] Somerset Record Office, DD\DN/180, copy, made 1767, of order in Exchequer, 1672, concerning South Moor alias Alder Moor in Butleigh and its proposed enclosure in an action brought by the representatives of the freeholders and commoners, reciting back the legal history of the common to 1617.

[163] Similarly, in an apparent allusion to the clergy's much-resented 'appropriation' of tithes, John Jackson claimed that Joseph and his followers had lived "without appropriation where they had nothing but what an infidel king gave 'em to live on". To Jackson, the Thorn itself induced charity. There was a tradition of giving "victuals and drink" to those coming to see the flourishing sprig at Patchway: "Barrels of drink given to strangers and poor and good victuals also", and he was similarly treated by Glastonbury's own sprig-owners too. Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp 78, 204, 201, 206

[164] Shrewsbury edition, ?1760, p 8

[165] *Bath Journal* 10 June 1751 p 1. "Eleemosynary" means of, or for, charity: 'free', in this context.

[166] *Bath Journal* 24 February 1755, Jackson *op. cit*, pp 141, 143

[167] ditto

[168] " Sir Joseph Banks, *Journal*, folios 15 and 16. Facsimile online at http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.ms-ms9-33a-s16-v).

[169] Somerset Record Office, DD\SAS\C795/SE/8, Glastonbury Documents relating to title to Glastonbury Manor. Despite the bold claims of four members of the Corporation to be "Proprietors of the Waters" in 1751, the actual ownership of the site was a matter of debate sixty years later, hence these recitations of title. Matters were not helped by the fact that there were

so many springs. One of the four 'Proprietors', George Stibbens, was recorded as the owner of "the Well that runs to Chilkwell", together with "the small plot the well stands in" at various dates between 1742 and 1759, but was not mentioned in the later document. Somerset Record Office, DD/S/B7, 15/1/8.
[170] Saunders, *op. cit,* 1780 p 17
[171] Hembry, *op. cit,* 1990 pp 171-2. Robert Dunning (2006, pp 22-3) makes a similar claim.
[172] Anon, *The History and Antiquities of Glastonbury, collected from various authors. To which is added, an account of The Mineral Waters, and of the Glastonbury Thorn.* Crutwell, Printer, Bath 1794 pp 40, 45-6
[173] Hembry, *op. cit* pp 171-2
[174] anon 1794, pp 45-6
[175] Somerset Record Office, DD\SAS\C795/SE/8, Glastonbury Documents relating to title to Glastonbury Manor. The North Petherton Friendly Society was a new organisation, set up under the provisions of the 1793 Friendly Societies Act. A surviving account book (D/P/pet. n 23/5) for the period 1796 to 1802 suggests a thriving society with many members. The first entry in this book was made on May 16, just twenty-two days after the Society's two stewards signed the contract for the Well: perhaps the purchase was an inaugural investment.
[176] Anon [John Clark] *The Avalonian guide to the town of Glastonbury and its environs* 1810, p40;
William Phelps, *The history and antiquities of Somersetshire* London: 1836, pp 555-6
[177] G W Wright, 'The Chalice Well, or Blood Spring, and its traditions' *Proc. Glastonbury Antiquarian Society* I (186) 20-36, p 34
[178] The County Museum at Taunton possesses a small implement which, when they acquired it in 1943, came with a label describing it as "the seal used for sealing the bottles containing 'The Glastonbury Water' when in repute, AD 1750". The seal inscription reads CALIX DULCIS AVALONIAE ('Sweet Chalice of Avalon') around the circumference, containing the words 'GLASTON WATER' and an illustration of a chalice (Gray 1943, *op. cit.*)

At first I thought that the Fielding brothers were invoking the new taste for Gothic as a marketing-ploy, but something seemed a bit fishy about that date, so I bothered a couple of glass and ceramics experts, Francis Grew of the Museum of London and Mark Nightingale of the 'Early Glass Collector' website, both of whom agreed that the seal is much later than 1750, and probably nineteenth century. The Catholic community that took over Chalice Well in 1886 was sending out bottled water in exchange "for an offering to the apostolic school there" (Dunning 2006, p 23): perhaps the seal matrix was theirs.

[179] Jackson *op. cit,* pp 20, 74

[180] Jackson *op. cit*, p 26

[181] Christopher Reid, 'Sacramental time: John Jackson, Christopher Smart, and the reform of the calendar' (*Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 41 (2000) pp 205-224)

[182] Reid (*op. cit.*) draws some interesting parallels between John Jackson and the poet Christopher Smart, whose "spiritual reorientation and reassessment" in the late 1750s led him to react against the rationalism of his age and embrace the old calendar. Reid also points out that Smart, in *Jubilate Agno*, makes the claim that "The Lord was at Glastonbury in the body and blessed the thorn", thereby anticipating Blake's claim by half-a-century. Blake cannot have known about *Jubilate Agno* - the manuscript was only discovered in 1939 – but it is interesting that these two visionary writers, so much out of their time, came up with the same idea.

[183] Hutton 2003 pp 62, 84

[184] Bowden 1754, *op. cit*, p 62. Matthew Chancellor remained a local celebrity for a long time after his death. A portrait was still existing in 1818, according to the *Avalonian Guide* (p 32), and as late as 1897 an antiquarian found a copy of his famous testimonial in a farm-house near Wells (*Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* vol 5 (1897), pp 355-6).

[185] quoted in Richard Warner, *An History of the Abbey of Glaston: and of the town of Glastonbury* Bath: 1826, p 276n

[186] Poole *op. cit,* p 139

[187] W Blake, *Milton - a Poem* Preface (in G Keynes (ed) *Blake: Complete Writings* Oxford: 1971, p 480

[188] E P Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the Crowd', *Past and Present* 1971, reprinted in Thompson, *Customs in Common*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1993 pp 185-258

[189] On Bligh Bond, see particularly Patrick Benham, *The Avalonians* Glastonbury: 1993

[190] If John Jackson turned up in Glastonbury today, he would instantly be taken for a 'hedger', since, Scatcherd claimed (*op. cit*, p 107), he was renowned for having "a head through the hair of which, it was thought, a comb did not as often pass as once a year"!

PICTURES

Front cover, pages 39 and 50: from *The Holy Disciple (various editions).*
P 1 from *The Wonderful Works of God*
Cures: Blessing Giles (p 12) and Mary Bennett (p 16) from the 'Inhabitant of Birth', pp 41 and 58. Ann Gill (p 13), John Peiream (p 15), Mrs Fussell (p 20) and Mary Jeffreys (p 27) from J. Davies, pp 18, 14, 16 and 20. Thomas Hadley (p 14), John Perry (p 18), Honor Powell (p 22), James Smith (p 30) and the boot-filling farmer (p 25) from 'A Physician', pp 66, 63, 67, 62 and 3.
P 26: Glastonbury, detail from Stukeley, '*The Prospect of Glasenbury Abbey*' in *Itinerarium Curiosum* plate 37; Bath, Queen Square by Thomas Malton (1784)
P 7 Stukeley, *A Prospect of the Ruins of* Glasenbury Abbey, in *Itinerarium Curiosum* plate 36
P 35 St John's Church: detail from Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum* plate 36
My thanks to David Bromwich of the Somerset Studies Library for permission to use the announcement from the *Sherborne Mercury* (p32) and the Pump Room ticket (p19).