



guilielmus T uenese

# WELLS OLD DEANERY GARDEN PROJECT

The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UG

## newsletter

ISSUE TWENTY FIVE SPRING 2014

### Tudor Recipes

#### *Bisket Bread*

*Crisp Sponge Biscuits; a recipe originally French but popular in England by late 16th century*

4 oz plain flour

4 oz sugar

2 eggs

1 level tsp crushed aniseed (not easy to find so I used fennel seed)

1/2 tsp coriander (use crushed seeds or very freshly ground spice, not the old pot at the back of the cupboard!)

#### Method

Pre-heat your oven to Gas Mark 4, 177°C, 350°F. Line 2 baking trays with baking parchment.

Beat the sugar with the eggs very thoroughly, with electric or balloon whisk, until the mixture is pale and stiff enough to hold the track of the whisk when you lift it up.



## ODG Friends' Summer Event



### Visit to Horatio's Garden, Salisbury

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 10.30am**

**£5 per person by our next meeting (17<sup>th</sup> March)**

Coffee, cakes, plants and merchandise will be available

**Max of 20 people so book soon!**



Sift the flour and spices and slice into the mixture with a metal spoon.

Drop the batter by teaspoons on the baking trays- the biscuits will not spread much. Bake for 10-15 mins until they begin to go brown round the edges (do not take your eyes off them at this point). Take the trays out, flip over the biscuits with a palette knife and put them back in the oven for a couple of minutes ('biscuit' means 'twice-cooked' and this is why).

They should be crisp but still a little chewy in the centre. (Many years later some inspired cook put their bisket bread mix into a cake tin and invented the fatless sponge cake...)

*P.E.*

Next time; a chicken pie that can be served hot or cold, so ideal for summertime!



A reminder of Springtime in the Garden!

## ODG Winter Event 2013

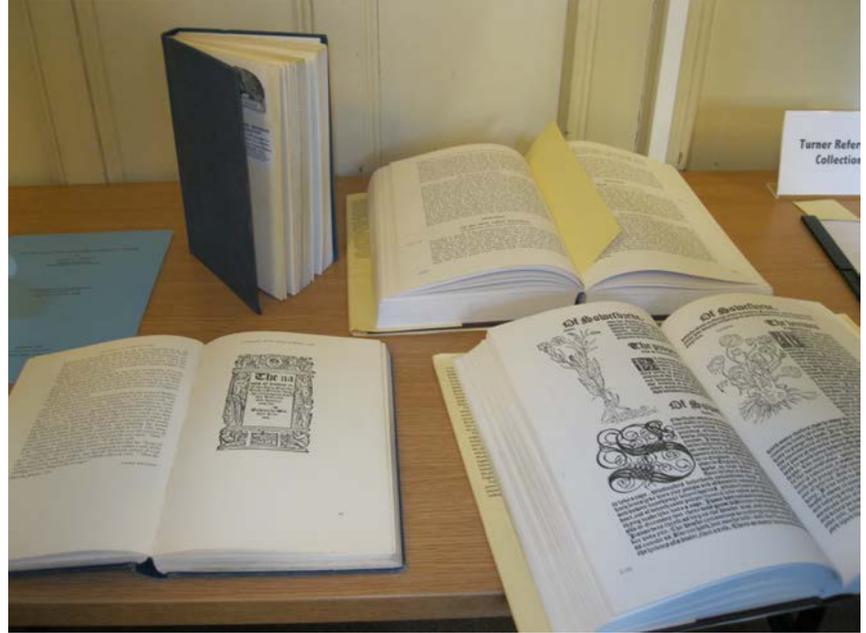
A whole morning on a Saturday in November had been set aside. Fleeting, we wondered if so long was necessary when, halfway through the morning, Pamela Egan rose to address her brief. This had been: "Would Dean Turner have celebrated Christmas?" Her answer: "Probably not." Were we now to go home? Fortunately, no. To our delight, Pamela, in her inimitable style, "elaborated," and charmed and fascinated us for another delightful 45 minutes.

But the morning had started with what to most was an unexpected twist.

Our programme had told us that Frances Neale was going to start the proceedings with a description of the Turner Collection; books which are variously scholarly, beautiful and valuable, that have, one way or another, been collected in recent years, and which are now freely and readily available for reference. What was unexpected was the most welcome contribution by Michael Chapman, down from the north of England and not too far away from Turner's original country, with his wife, Sheena, especially for this event. Michael told the story of his father, George, who, as a very good botanist himself, had become a fan of Dean Turner long before the ODG project was even a gleam in anyone's eye.

Not only had George alighted upon and, out of his knowledge, recognised an original copy of the 1559 "A New Herball, part 1," he had gone on to mastermind the two-volume modern version with the original text in facsimile black-letter with woodcuts which then, for "ease of reference," was printed again within the same covers in modern type and with modern spelling. It seems highly appropriate that George was also Head of Turner's probable old school, King Edward VI Grammar, Morpeth.

Michael spoke movingly of his father's failing health as he assembled a team to enable him to finish the second volume (containing parts 2 and 3), and the family dilemma as to what to do with these, and George's other Turner-related books, after George died. Michael and Sheena knew of the Wells-Turner connection and subsequently visited the garden three years ago. Although Dean Turner evidently often had not been, Pamela Egan was in the right place at the right time, and available to meet them at a moment's notice, and began to hear



Turner Collection of books



Sheena and Michael Chapman, sitting next to Pamela and Frances

the story of George, and his books, which were by now residing in time-honoured fashion in a family loft. Earning the eternal gratitude of the ODG project, Michael speedily decided to give them to the project, and all those intimately concerned with it are very conscious of the compliment Michael is, thereby, paying them and the project, and are deeply flattered that he has considered that the Old Deanery is the place where they will find a good home.

As Frances continued, there are many other Turner-related and fascinating books in the ODG Turner Collection also housed in the Old Deanery Resources Centre, some of them produced on the same principle employed by George Chapman of facsimile of original and easy-read modern version combined. There are books by Turner, there are books about Turner, books about Turner's contemporaries, books about his successors, even books about books (herbals). Gerard's "Herbal" is there, so is Culpepper's "Complete Herbal." The list begins to sound like an American air hostess's mantra: "You name it, we got it." And they are all available – for reference. Just pop into the Resource Centre (via signing-in). For the first time, it might be as well to see the librarian, Veronica Elks, who is there in the mornings, but the Centre is open throughout office hours Mondays to Fridays, and you are free to sit at your leisure and indulge.

And so we came to the Turner-Tudor Christmas.

Pamela set this in the context of the religious and political times. The rhythm of life was the rhythm of the Church year. God was and is – no question. Worship in church was done for you, you did not participate except by being present. This was true of the simple service in the familiar parish church and the fully sung masses in the scented, sparkling, coloured cathedrals.



1536 saw the onset of a condensed, intense period of change. With immense speed, Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell set about disbanding the monasteries (and their hospitals, libraries, schools, and alms giving) and sequestering their assets to the Crown. Along with this went the attack on the fabric of worship as it was known – and everyone had to conform. Locally, part of the dismembered body of Abbot Whiting, of the immensely wealthy Glastonbury Abbey, was displayed in Wells market place; as Pamela so aptly put it, "pour encourager les autres." The daily offices were reduced to two, Matins and Evensong – and they were to be read in English. Initially, sermons were much encouraged, and Dean Turner, a noted preacher, took full advantage of this license to preach widely, and probably at length. A huge campaign was waged against "idolatrous images", whether in stained glass, statuary, or paintings, including wholesale whitewashing over wall-paintings. In Wells, Bishop Stillington's huge Lady Chapel was demolished by Sir John Gate, because he wanted the lead off the roof for the king. Statues on rood screens throughout the land were annihilated..

And then there was the music. The first Book of Common Prayer of 1549 contains not one note of music but, then, as holydays were down to six a year, there wasn't much opportunity to sing elaborate anthems, and in Wells the priest vicars (the singing men) and choristers were drastically reorganised. Turner's friend, Erasmus, was particularly hot against the old, traditional church music of great choir anthems (sung in Latin). But a metrical Psalter, with the psalms rendered into verse and sung, came to be accepted, and the congregation began to sing them, although not to universal ecclesiastical approval.

So, what of Turner while all this turmoil was raging? Probably, he watched and listened with a grim satisfaction. But his patron, Somerset, who had been particularly "enthusiastic" in support of the violent changes and who had risen to become Lord Protector to the boy-king, Edward VI, fell from favour. With the accession of the Roman Catholic Mary Tudor, Turner thought it expedient that he and his family were off on their travels again.

Yet, despite all this turmoil, in many, many households and areas, "Christmas" did survive!

Depending on your station, your house might be filled with all sorts of people: relations, servants, apprentices, friends, dependants, even passing strangers; numbers might rise to 40 or 50 – for the whole twelve days of Christmas!

Thus, the sensible housewife would start her crucial food preparation well in advance, probably the end of August. Such a relatively well-to-do merchant's or farmer's wife would have her pantry festooned with dried herbs; its shelves loaded with pickled samphire, cucumbers and artichokes for winter salads, bottles of rose-water, and jars of every kind of preserved fruit, from early plums to late October apples, quinces and barberries; and its floor groaning under sacks of almonds and root vegetables.

But Christmas Day was solemn and formal.

Thereafter, celebrations went on through all the Twelve Days!

Although in a different format from today, the Hunt met on St Stephen's Day, now better known as Boxing Day. But, in the evening, along with the farm horses and the oxen, the horses would be let



blood, or bled, as it was believed this protected them from sickness, and increased their strength. But these unfortunate creatures were, at least, then rested, if possible, until Twelfth Night.

Holy Innocents' Day, 28 December, or Childermas as it was then known, marked the end of the reign of the Boy Bishop, who would have been elected by the choristers on 6 December, St Nicholas' Day. During these three weeks, there was the appearance of roles being reversed: the Boy Bishop

sat on the bishop's throne, preached, and gave the blessing; the other choristers became canons; and the clergy became servers. It was a royal decree in 1541 that put an end to this practice. Childermas was believed to be the unluckiest day of the year, and great caution was exercised on this date: new journeys were not started, linen was not washed, and no-one would dream of getting married. In fact, the entire Twelve Days was a time when strange things were abroad, such as the Wild Hunt raging across the skies. And churchyards were avoided after dark.

New Year's Day was the day of presents, not Christmas Day. Certainly in high places, people might well try to curry favour by the lavishness of the gifts they gave. In particular, to get oneself in good standing with the monarch by this method was a goal for some. Part and parcel of this at court was the accompanying ceremony.

The Twelve Days were an island of peace and plenty in a life of hard work, and they went out in style on Twelfth Night. There was a special feast, and this included a cake which contained a bean. If a man found it, he became king for the night; if a girl found it, she chose the king. Either way, suitably attired, he became lord of the revels for the night, and quite possibly led some boisterous partying, on this night even cavorting through the churchyard.

Twelfth Night could, in some places, also be the night for wassailing in the apple orchards. Guns were fired, horns blown, trays and buckets banged to drive off the evil spirits, and ensure a good crop. Cider flowed; and eventually cold daylight dawned on Plough Monday.

Lest this image of Twelfth Night roistering was over-exciting us, Pamela brought us back to the mystery that is Christmas with a metaphysical poem, "Sing Levy Dew," so ancient that it resonates with aeons past. Do not try to explain it. Do not even try to understand it. Just experience it. Allow it to connect you to a world elsewhere.

Which is what Pamela had done for us.

After a suitable pause, Sylvia Hanks offered a special vote of thanks to Michael and Sheena Chapman, and remarked upon the good fortune of the project in having at its behest two such impressive figures for these occasions as Frances Neale and Pamela Egan. The audience agreed.

*Richard Hanks*

### **Transcript of Michael Chapman's Talk available to all**

A copy of the very personal and moving talk about George Chapman and the story behind the modern edition of Turner's *A New Herball* (1989/1995), given by his son Michael Chapman as a surprise guest speaker at the Friends' Winter Event last November, has been added to the Turner Reference Collection in the Old Deanery resources centre.

Michael's talk gave us an insight into the modern *Herball* which we could not possibly have come to know otherwise, and which makes us appreciate it all the more. His talk showed how a small but determined start by amateur enthusiasts can lead to an unexpectedly big outcome - rather like the Old Deanery garden project! *FN*.

*Sing levy dew*

*Here we bring well water  
From the well so clear,  
For to worship God with  
This happy New Year.  
Sing levy dew, sing levy dew,  
The water and the wine,  
The seven bright gold wires  
And the bugles they do shine.*

*Sing reign of fair maid  
With gold upon her toe -  
Open you the west door  
And turn the Old Year go.  
Sing reign of fair maid  
With gold upon her chin -  
Open you the east door  
And let the New Year in.*

**Return of Peter Turner Effigy**

This e-mail came from Phil Manning, the Church Manager of St Olave's Church in London;

'This comes with warm greetings from St Olave Hart Street and is being sent to all those known to us who have supported us in the successful recovery and reinstatement of the long-lost effigy of Peter Turner or otherwise expressed an interest in his story'

**Monument returns to City home after 70-year exile**

David Meara

For over 300 hundred years the monument to Dr Peter Turner, clergyman, physician, natural historian and MP, could be found on the left of the south-east window of St Olave's Church, Hart Street, in the City of London. It consisted of a half-effigy showing Turner robed and gowned with his hands joined in prayer, set under an arched canopy with a flat pediment and an inscription beneath.

Much of the monument was destroyed when the church was bombed in 1941; the effigy went missing at the same time. It reappeared in April 2010 when it came up for sale at auction. The auctioneers, Drewetts, froze the sale while the return of the bust to St Olave's was negotiated. Thanks to the goodwill of two European antique dealers and the generosity of many individuals and trusts, the monument has been returned to the church.

Turner himself spent much of

his childhood in Germany, and studied at Oxford and Heidelberg. He practised as a physician at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London, and also made a particular study of plants, encouraged by his father's researches. He sat as MP for Bridport in 1584-85, and lobbied unsuccessfully for a more Genevan style of worship and a more Presbyterian form of church government.

Turner died in London on May 27, 1614, and his body was buried near his father's in the south aisle of St Olave's, where his monument was eventually placed next to the southeast window. At a ceremony this summer, the return of his monument was celebrated in a short service, when a wreath was placed underneath Turner's bust in memory of the renowned clergyman and doctor of physics. Period music was sung and a toast was made to the good doctor, no longer in exile.

The Venerable David Meara is Archdeacon of London

*The Times - Sat 21/9/13*

**Peter Frost**

Gardeners will be sad to learn that Peter Frost, who mowed the lawn and clipped the yew hedge for us until quite recently, died on 27<sup>th</sup> November. It was characteristic of Peter that, where some professionals might have been put out when a group of enthusiastic amateur volunteers proposed a makeover of the Old Deanery Garden in 2003, he was amused, curious, and ultimately delighted that the garden was once again being cared for. He was, given gentle reminders, punctilious in seeing that the lawn was always tidy for our public events; and it was he who made our original, massive pair of compost bins, now moved up the hill. His funeral service took place on 13<sup>th</sup> December in the packed quire of Wells Cathedral, and was conducted by Richard Lewis, the former Dean of Wells. Frances attended on behalf of the Old Deanery Garden members. F.N.

**Events & Diary Dates 2014**

*Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 7pm for 7.30pm*  
**Spring Talk; '900 years at the Old Deanery'** by Jerry Sampson  
£5 per ticket

*Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 9.45am-11am*  
**General Meeting**  
Old Deanery

*Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 10am-4pm*  
**Spring Garden Open Day**  
Seed Sale & Refreshments

*Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 9.45am-11am*  
**General Meeting**  
Old Deanery, coffee in the Garden

*June, July & August, every Wednesday, 10.30am-12.30pm*  
**Garden open to the public**

*Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 10am-4pm*  
**Summer Garden Open Day**  
Herbalist, Plant Sale & Refreshments

*Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 9.45am-11am*  
**General Meeting**  
Old Deanery, coffee in the Garden

*Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 9.45am-11am*  
**General Meeting**  
Old Deanery

*Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 10am-4pm*  
**English Heritage Open Day**

*Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> November, 9.45am-11am*  
**General Meeting**  
Old Deanery

*Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 10.30am-12pm*  
**Friend's Winter Event**  
Old Deanery

Deadline for the next newsletter is **Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> June**

**Contact Details**

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