

Minchinhampton

The newsletter of Minchinhampton Local History Group

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Editor: Martyn Beaufort

Editor's note:

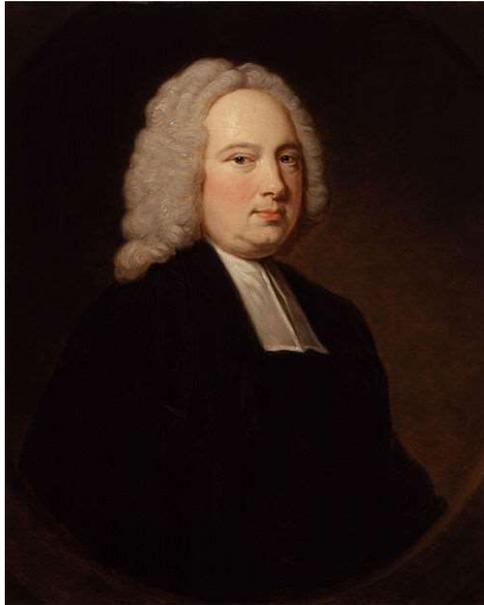
Welcome to our first newsletter of 2026. The Market House have got a great new projector which is great as those who saw Howard Beard's talk would testify. However, on the downside as it cost a huge amount of money, the Market House are being stricter on charging for its use. They have given us a special rate and also are not increasing our general fee even though it is increasing for any new users of their facilities. Our costs are therefore increasing but your committee have met and decided that they will not increase the ticket price. So, tickets remain at £5 for the public and £4 for members. This I would say is an absolute bargain. It will be reviewed at the end of the year, and like every organisation we would base any increase on the effects to our "war chest." So please support us and come to our talks so that we can keep ticket prices stable into 2027. The next talk was meant to be "Radical Stroud" but unfortunately something came up for the speaker and with apologies he cancelled.

You all by now know my interests so I will now be putting on "The Bisley Patricide" which tries to explain why Frederick Wyndham murdered his father in 1893. I would love you to be there so please buy a ticket to avoid disappointment. They will be on sale shortly at M&B stores. Future events will be found at the end of the newsletter so please put in your diaries.

We are also in talks about revamping our website so that it is more in keeping with modern technological needs.

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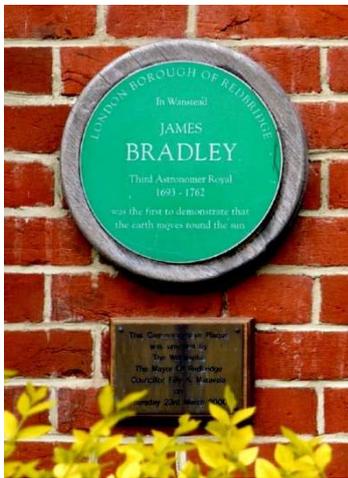
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JAMES BRADLEY (1692 – 1762)

Savilian Professor of Astronomy (1721 – 1762)

Third Astronomer Royal of England (1742 – 1762)



James Bradley was the third son of William Bradley (b. 1657) and his wife Jane Pound (b. 1656) baptised 3 October 1692 and raised in the village of Sherborne in Gloucestershire.

In 1711 Bradley left to join his maternal uncle Dr. James Pound, the Rector of Wanstead in the county of Essex. In the same year Bradley matriculated at Balliol College Oxford as a commoner, having attended Westwood's Grammar School in Northleach. He graduated with a BA degree in 1714 and with an MA degree in 1717.

Pound was one of England's leading observational astronomers and often made observations on behalf of Sir Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727) and Dr. Edmond Halley (1656 – 1742) following the breakdown in relations with the first Astronomer Royal, John

Flamsteed (1646 – 1719).

[Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900/Pound, James - Wikisource, the free online library](#)

Bradley observed the motions of the four Galilean satellites of Jupiter on behalf of Halley, as a method of locating the longitude at sea and became the first to discover that these moons were in gravitational resonance with one another in accordance with Newton's universal law of gravitation.

In 1718 Halley proposed Bradley as a Fellow of the Royal Society and he was duly elected by the Council chaired by Newton, who described Bradley as the finest astronomer in Europe. Bradley was able to determine the longitudes of New York, Lisbon, London and Wanstead using the motions of the innermost of the satellites, Io. His observations also implied the finite velocity of light and the motion of the Earth.

Because of his considerable observational and mathematical skills Bradley was invited to join Samuel Molyneux, the personal secretary of the Prince of Wales (the future King George II), at Kew in November 1725, in search of the annual parallax of γ (gamma) Draconis using a zenith sector (a suspended telescope) constructed by George Graham, the Master of the Clockmakers Company. Graham was the finest scientific instrument maker in London. Bradley observed the motions of γ Draconis for a year, identifying “a new discovered motion” never before located.

Bradley suspended a smaller zenith sector in Wanstead observing 70 circumpolar stars in order to examine the laws of this new motion. The phenomenon was explained by the effect of the motion of the Earth in its orbit around the Sun relative to the velocity of light. It confirmed the velocity of light giving it a value within 1% of the modern figure and firmly established the motion of the Earth for the first time. The phenomenon became known as “the aberration of starlight”. It was the most important discovery of eighteenth-century astronomy and laid the foundations of the exacting science of positional astronomy.

With the same instrument Bradley continued his observations of the 70 circumpolar stars from August 1727 until September 1747 leading to his further important discovery of the nutation of the Earth’s axis, a small wobble induced by the Moon’s gravitational tugging effect on the Earth’s equatorial bulge. This meant that for the first time since the ancient Greek astronomer Hipparchus discovered the precession of the equinoxes about 130BC, astronomers were able to calculate the exact annual precession, a vitally important factor in the determination of the location of stars and the location of the longitude by astronomical means.

In August 1719 Bradley was ordained as a priest in the Church of England by the Rt Rev Benjamin Hoadly, the Bishop of Hereford, obtaining a modest living near Ross on Wye, and becoming Hoadly’s personal secretary. Bradley’s clerical career was cut short when he was elected as the Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. The conditions of office demanded by the founder of the chair, Sir Henry Savile in 1619, included the loss of all church livings.

[The Savilian Professorships — A History | New College](#)

Bradley also later became Lecturer (later Reader) of Experimental Philosophy (Physics) from 1729 to 1760, giving 79 courses of 20 lectures that were influential and immensely popular.

In February 1742 Bradley was appointed as the third Astronomer Royal and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by a rare procedure, an indication of how much he was admired. He was a brilliant mathematician who thoroughly understood and analysed Newton’s great work “The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy” (*Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*), often referred to as the *Principia*.

After finding that the Royal Observatory at Greenwich was in such a poor state when he took over in June 1742, Bradley attempted various programmes of research before recognizing that the instruments were incapable of being used to the high standards of his observational skills. Bradley undertook a root and branch reform of the Royal Observatory in conformity with contemporary practice. He repaired many of the old instruments and commissioned new ones and constructed a new observatory, the building through which the Prime Meridian now passes. The observatory, with its famous Octagon Room, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, though beautiful, was already completely obsolete when it was built in 1675. Its design made

it impossible to measure the right ascension and declination of the stars, being constructed to locate celestial objects by the outmoded practice of triangulation.

The Astronomers Royal up to and including Bradley used temporary outhouses or observed in the open air. James Bradley and his assistants, John Bradley (his young nephew), Charles Mason from Sapperton in Gloucestershire, and Charles Green from Yorkshire, set new standards of continuous, precise and accurate observation. Between 1750 and 1762 they made over 60,000 of the most accurate observations ever made.

Bradley's final legacy was the foundation of Europe's finest observatory, which continued unabated, even after his death. Charles Mason, who later found fame as the surveyor of the Mason – Dixon Line in America, reduced the positions of 387 stars, that were later included in the 1773 Nautical Almanac.

Bradley's executors, including Samuel Peach who was head of the family Bradley had married into, retained all of Bradley's papers and observations in a dispute with the Board of Longitude from 1762 to 1776. All, but his private papers, including his registers, were surrendered to Oxford University to be published. This proved to be a slow process, before being published in two volumes in 1805.

It was left to the great German mathematician and astronomer Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel, to reduce the positions of 3,222 stars published as a catalogue in his *Fundamenta Astronomiæ* in Königsberg in Prussia in 1818. In reducing all of Bradley's observations, Bessel perfected the mathematical foundations of all positional astronomy, applied even after the introduction of photography and spectroscopy in the nineteenth century. Bessel using the methods pioneered by Bradley, measured the annual parallax of 61 Cygni. By the use of such triangulation techniques the true scale of the stellar universe was established. Bradley's private papers were, sadly, likely destroyed.



Bradley died at the home of Samuel Peach in Chalford, 13th July 1762, and was buried on 16th July in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, near to his wife Susannah, whom he married 25th June 1744 and who was buried 17th May 1757, close to Bradley's mother Jane. [Editor - The picture is of a memorial to Bradley at the foot of James Pound's grave in the church of St Mary the Virgin, Wanstead]

Gloucestershire born and raised, James Bradley is now being recognized as one of the greatest of all astronomers.

See: - John Fisher, *The Life and Work of James Bradley: The New Foundations of 18th Century Astronomy*. Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780198884200, December 2023.

And: *Oxford's Savilian Professors of Astronomy: The First 400 Years*. Edited by Robin Wilson and Steven Balbus. – Chapter 4: *James Bradley*, by John Fisher. Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780198894292 December 2025.

John Fisher PhD FRAS

[Editor's note – In the newspapers of the 1830s I have found two references to the theft of brass plaques from Minchinhampton churchyard. As I have mapped the entire churchyard, you can possibly imagine how frustrating this is when I have attempted to establish the whereabouts of people who were buried and whose location can no longer be established due to the theft of such plaques. Having said that, in the context of the financial doldrums of the area in that period, the thefts maybe considered to be understandable as the perpetrators were thinking of eating, and not the problems of historians some 200 years later! In the Miscellaneous Works and Correspondence of James Bradley [available for free download online] the work has this to say: -

“Some thieves, who made a paltry profit from stealing the brass plates from tombstones, had nearly carried this off: they had loosened all but one of the rivets, by which had been firmly fastened in its place, when the circumstances became known to the Rev W Cockin, rector of the parish, and he immediately removed it into the church, where it was fixed against the walls of the chancel”

In the almost complete demolition of the old church and its rebuilding in the early 1840s, this was moved to the Lady Chapel where it still is.

We are of course very lucky this still exists.]



An update into the investigations into the Baynham monument.

Chiz Harward

A rediscovered memorial to a newborn baby, Anne Baynham †1632, in Holy Trinity, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire



Work in November 2023 to restore the organ at Holy Trinity Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire revealed a “lost” early 17th century memorial to Anne Baynham, who died in the first month of her life in 1632. The memorial includes a fine alabaster effigy of a young girl set within a classical Painswick Stone surround with alabaster patera. A plaque records her short life and her family. The memorial has been lightly cleaned and relocated to the church narthex by Mark Hancock of Centreline Architectural Sculpture where it sits alongside a good collection of memorials.

18th century antiquarian Ralph Bigland recorded the memorial in the chancel, it then included the Baynham and Freame arms (Frith 1990, 652). When the nave, aisles and chancel were demolished by Foster in 1842 the memorial was re-erected (without the arms) high up in the north transept where by 1878 it was obscured by the organ.

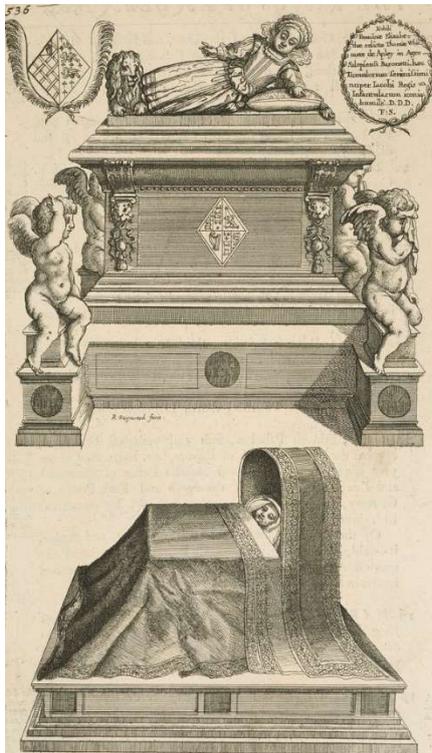
The monument had been broken and clumsily repaired in 1842; to aid reconstruction, the stones of the courses were numbered “3” through to “9” with courses “1” and “2” missing. Setting-out marks and rebates in the top of the memorial confirm an additional tier, presumably the arms.

The effigy is carved from English alabaster and bears traces of gilding and paint. It depicts a recumbent female infant of maybe 2–3 years age dressed as an adult. She wears a plain coif with an ornately decorated cap over, a cloak, and a high-waisted nightdress with a finely

gathered wide ruff. There are four strings of beads around her neck. Her right-hand rests on a skull which sits on a cushion, and she holds a (now broken) palm frond in her left hand. The girl is depicted largely immune to gravity, almost levitating within the cartouche, although the carving is lifelike and there is considerable detail on the depiction of her clothes.

Anne was the fourth daughter of Joseph Baynham and Alice Freame to be christened at Holy Trinity. Alice was born and lived at nearby Lypiatt Manor, then part of Stroud parish. There are no other Baynham or Freame memorials in Holy Trinity.

Joseph and Alice were forty-two years of age with three young daughters when they lost Anne. It is intriguing that Anne is not portrayed as a newborn baby but as a toddler or young girl wearing the fashionable and high-class clothes of the time and this is an area of ongoing research, benefiting from the works of Dr Sophie Oosterwijk and Dr JL Wilson (Oosterwijk 2000, 55–6; Oosterwijk 2010; Wilson 1990, 57–8).



Dr Adam White proposes the source for the general character and pose of the effigy to be Maximilian Colt's 1608 memorial of Princess Mary, daughter of James I and Anne of Denmark, in Westminster Abbey. Colt's memorial shows the 17-month Mary as a young girl dressed in high status adult female clothes. Mary reclines on her left side on a cushion, a lion at her feet. Whilst it is clear that this is the inspiration, it is intriguing that the Baynham chose an effigy modelled on Princess Mary rather than her sister Princess Sophia who had died the day after her birth and was memorialised lying in her cradle.

Colt's Westminster works had a lasting influence on other sculptors including in the provinces (White 1989, 29). Nicholas Stone's alabaster effigy of Thomas Hewer †1617 at Emneth, Norfolk shows young Thomas reclining asleep, his head rests on a pillow partially concealing a skull (Norfolk Churches).





There are also great similarities in the effigies of Lionel and Dorothe Allington (1638) in Bottisham, Cambridgeshire, where the elder child rests their hand on a skull on a cushion and holds a rose; the pose is almost identical to Anne's.

There were accomplished sculptors producing high-quality effigial sculpture in Gloucestershire in the early 17th century, the best known is Samuel Baldwin who is often described as being originally from 'Stroud' but was actually from Lypiatt, moving to Gloucester around 1620. Baldwin produced work of the finest quality for the most affluent and well connected families in the county and was their pre-eminent sculptor in the early 17th century (Gray 1964).

Baldwin's work would have been known to the Baynhams as he had earlier produced a monument to the pirate Henry Brydges (†1615) in the nearby Avening church, and other works nearby at Stroud, Painswick, Sapperton, Cirencester and Gloucester, but also, as a local Lypiatt man. Many fine works have been ascribed to Baldwin's workshop, and there is no doubt that he was often first choice for the best families producing the very finest memorials.

Dr Adam White has kindly commented that the main inscription panel could well be from the workshop of Samuel Baldwin, with a similar panel on the monument to Giles Savage (†1631/2) and his family at Elmley Castle, although White cannot see a real comparison in the effigy with Baldwin's work which may have been provided by another workshop. Despite his importance and relative prominence as a sculptor the work of Samuel Baldwin is relatively undocumented and is in need of further research, the work of lesser regional workshops is even less well understood.



[Editor] [Samuel Baldwin – Sculptor – Stroud Local History Society](#)

Any further information on 17th century parallels would be greatly appreciated. In addition, the inscription is filled with a dark brown-black pigment, this appears to have a crystalline structure and smears to a brown colour. Could this be shellac or similar?

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Rev. Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch, Dr Sophie Oosterwijk, Caroline Stanford, Alison Taylor, Dr Adam White, and Dr J L Wilson who generously provided additional examples of memorials to newborns and recommendations for reading which have all benefitted this article. The interpretation of their papers, and any misinterpretation, is however all the author's!

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An update into the Location of George Brews House

By Martyn Beaufort

Sometimes, as a historian, you have that lightbulb moment, where information you have gathered over a period of time gives you the solution to a mystery.

When Maggie Elder provided details of her relative George Brews -a golf professional at Minchinhampton Golf Club, I remember walking with her up Windmill Road trying to identify where her ancestor had lived. All that was known was it was called "Glenroy" and was in Windmill Road. We could not find any such place of course and assumed it may have been renamed or even knocked down as part of the redevelopments of the street.

On reading the "Souvenir" of the hundredth anniversary of the Baptist Church, which was published in 1924, I found this comment on Page 12.

"In the same year the Rev. S. J. Ford became pastor, and distinguished himself by hard and devoted service in a variety of ways"

This I knew was true as in Howard Beards talk, he produced a copy of this picture which I reproduce with his permission: -



This shows Rev Ford working on a building project believed to be the Chapel.

The excerpt then continued thus: -

"He was mainly instrumental in the erection of the Institute, which was brought into being largely by Voluntary labour [Including it seems his own!] The chapel was re-seated, the gallery front reconstructed, the Manse in High Street sold, and the house in Windmill Road purchased with the proceeds. Mr Ford resigned the pastorate in 1920"

No date was given for the sale of the Manse in the High Street which I had not even known had been there. However, in looking at the censuses it became very evident that the Manse in High Street was in fact what we know today as the "Cotswold Club" This gave us a very probable date which was 1920/1 when that became what is now the Royal British Legion.

Using that fact with the earlier search for a property in Windmill Road, combined with the definite fact that George Brews died in September 1920, and his family moved to South Africa not long after, it seemed worth looking again at the Censuses and looking at the progression of occupants to see whether this matched with the Brews living at a property which would be in keeping with that property becoming the Manse.

Not surprisingly most properties could not be matched with the names of houses in the censuses, but Summerhill did and was lived in by a Mr Horsfall [Presumably of Horsfall House fame]. The Brews lived a couple of doors down from that and this was a close enough match to make it a 95% certainty that the Manse was Glenroy.

I will now see if I can find enough evidence to make that 100% so watch this space.

2026

Mar 20 – The Market House – Martyn Beaufort – The Bisley Patricide

Apr 17 – The Market House – Ian Mackintosh – Life and Times at: Longford Mills and Ham Mills

May 22 – The Market House – The Shop at No 6 High Street – Robert Smith

Jun 19 – The Market House – Stroud Workhouse – Charles Townley

Sep 25 – The Market House – Minchinhampton and the Civil War

Oct 30 – The Market House – John Putley – Witchfynder - History of witches and tales of Gloucestershire witches

Nov 6 – The Market House – Andy Meller – The Glosters at Waterloo.

Dec 11 – The Market House – Patrick Furley – Magic Lantern Christmas Show followed by AGM.

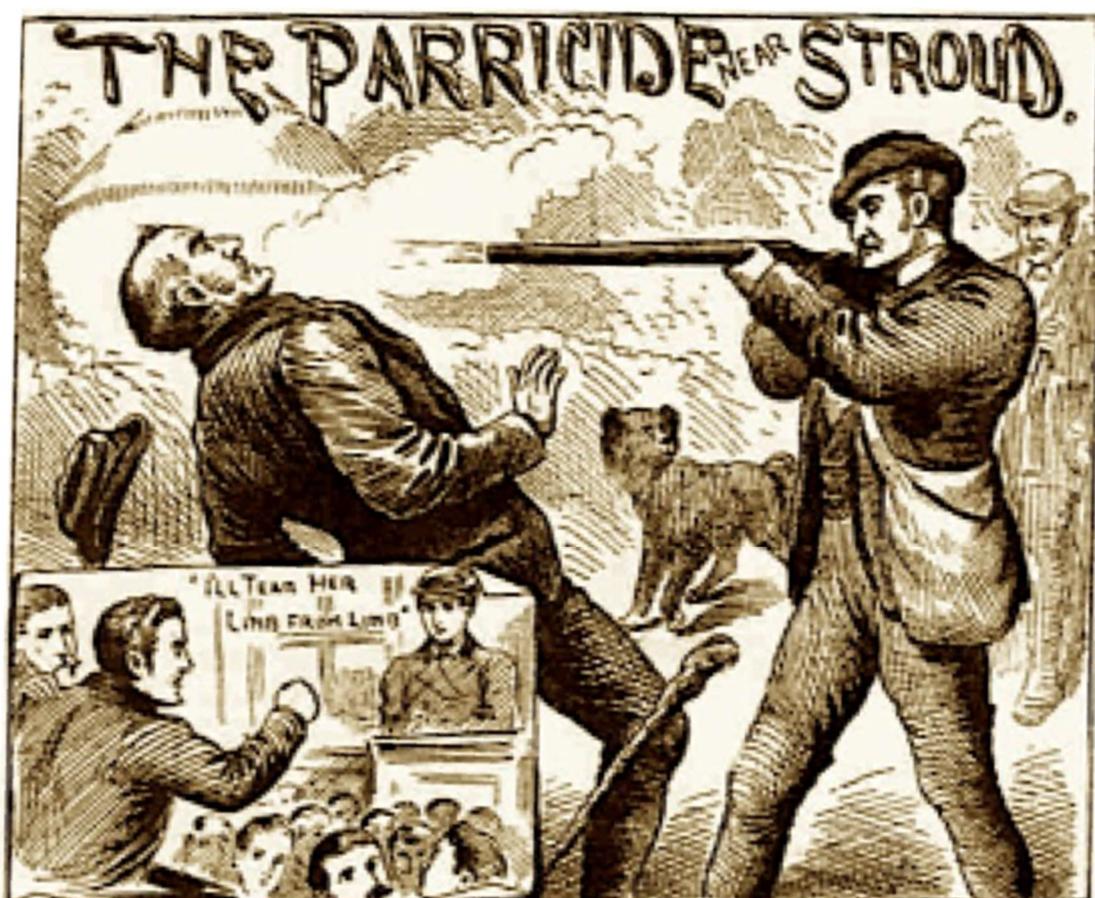
2027

January - Howard Beard – Talk TBA

Feb 19 – Gareth Howell – Medieval Medicine -

May 21 – The Market House - Titanic - A 1912 magic lantern show and associated commemorative material

Dec 10 – The Market House – Kirsty Hartsiosis – Christmas Ghosts of Gloucestershire



Parricide: (noun) **the murder of a parent or near relative**
(Chambers Dictionary)

The judge:

“May the Lord have mercy on your soul”

The prisoner: “Thank you, my Lord”

MURDER AT BISLEY

1893: How Frederick Wyndham came to shoot his own father, as told by author and historian Martyn Beaufort

Friday March 20
Minchinhampton
Market House

Tickets £5 cash only from the Premier Market Store, Minchinhampton, (£4 for members of MLHG) or on the door, cash or card. Licensed bar. Doors open at 6.45pm, talk starts at 7.30pm.

