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NAMES OF SPRINGS AND WELLS IN SOMERSET*

In Somerset (a county not yet covered by the EPNS Survey) the OE terms brōc, lacu, pyll are used for streams while w(i)ella normally refers to a spring. In cases where only a modern form in well is available, the feature in question is usually a natural spring: the writer has been able to check many sites mentioned below. The collection towards a Somerset place-name survey is by no means complete, and early forms are still lacking for many of the names. Any conclusions drawn here must therefore be regarded as entirely provisional.

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1. Categories of Name

Those names, major and minor, which have been traced as referring to springs and wells in Somerset can be categorized as suggested by Smith, and, more recently, by Gelling.¹ A fair proportion turn out to be unremarkable and found in common with other counties. However, from this collection, perhaps as many as a quarter have superstitious or religious associations. This preponderance must be due in part to the number of 'holy wells' in the county, as recorded by Home.² Nevertheless, the searching of other sources, of various dates, has more than doubled the number which were known to him. The major part of this paper will therefore be concerned with holy wells of one type or another.

Descriptive or topographical terms form the first element in about half the names in the collection. One in particular has an unusual development, perhaps encapsulating the superstitious regard in which Somerset people have tended to hold springs, even into modern times. Chilkwel in Glastonbury (Chalkwelle 1302: Turner, 90, from OE cealc 'chalk, limestone'; Blood Spring 18th cent.) is currently known as Chalice Well, and is linked to legends of Joseph of Arimathea. It was the water-supply for the town and abbey of Glastonbury and is one of the few 'holy' wells to have been excavated.³

The third large category of these names consists of those having a personal-name as first element. This frequency of association with people underlines the economic and social significance of a constant source of pure water and confirms Gelling's findings amongst major names generally. One example from this category is Nempnett Thrubwell (Trubewel 1201: DEPN, 337; Turner, 28) which is perhaps from an OE pers.n. Trub(b)a or a ME surname (cf. Walter Trubbe 1327 SRS). Turner (loc. cit.) thought it unlikely that spring water here would be 'bubbling' under pressure (cf. ModE throb). However, fieldwork is needed to identify the spring concerned.

One particular sub-type may be noted: instances where the name appears to be elliptical for 'spring on the boundary of X's estate'. For instance, the name Kimmerinwell (OE Cynemær + -ing⁴-) which appears in the medieval bounds of Kilmersdon.⁴ Elsewhere, Wormesleighe welle on the boundary between North Wootton and Worminster parishes could contain the OE pers.n. Wurm (with OE lēah, torr); although it could alternatively contain OE wurm 'reptile, serpent'. Turner (109) suggested comparison with the Herefordshire river-name Worm (ModW gurm 'dun, dark-blue'). Richard de Wormeswelle of Bruton should also be noted (SRS). Conkwell (partly in Wiltshire; PN Wilts., 124) is to be connected with (on) cunuca leage 957 (12th) (BCS 1001, Sawyer 643), nearby. There is a strong spring in the centre of the village which must drain downhill into the River Avon. A hill-name Cunec, or comparison with W cawnog 'reed-bed' have been suggested if the first element cannot be considered a stream- or personal-name.⁵

The first element can also be a word for a group of people, as opposed to an individual's name.⁶ Examples include Charlwell (Wedmore par.), Salterewell 1386 Pat (on the boundary between Devon and Somerset), and perhaps Folkewelle (pers.n.) from Wilton. The importance of hunting and, at the same time, the isolated position of many springs is reflected in Hunteneswell 1204; Huntewellediche 1275 (Bathford), and Huntwell 16th cent. (Weston nr. Bath), and confirmed by the first elements of a group of Somerset settlement names: 'boar', 'buck', 'hart', 'hind', 'hawk'. Deadmanswell (Denesmodeswelle 1086 GDB; DB 1/1) is adjacent to Huntstile, possibly 'the stile of the huntsman' (DEPN, 258).

One in twenty of the names so far collected refers to a feature on an Anglo-Saxon estate boundary. Only a few actually reflect this in their names. For instance, merewelle(n) occurs at both Marksbury and Wrington (936 (14th) BCS 709, Sawyer 431; 904 (14th) BCS 606, Sawyer 371). One which might have a particular significance on a boundary is (on) halgan welle at Ruishton, south of Taunton (854 (12th) BCS 475, Sawyer 310); this name survived at least into the thirteenth century as a surname Halgewill in the tithing of Henlade at Ruishton (SRS). In what sense was this a holy spring or stream? As Hooke has noted: 'The demarcation of estate boundaries attained a religious significance at a very early date':⁷ on the other hand, superstition cannot be ruled out, in view of the phrase quendam fraxinum quem imperiti sacrum vocant, 'an ashtree which the ignorant call holy', mentioned in the bounds of Taunton itself (854 (12th) BCS 476, Sawyer 311).

II. Recurrent Compounds

Particular compounds seem to be more common in some regions than in others. Butterwell occurs several times in Somerset (also in Berks., Essex, Gloucs., Herts., and Wilts.); e.g. William de Buterwelle 1327 SRS; Butterwell Fm (Chilton Polden); Butter Well (Shipham). It could refer to particularly sweet-tasting water or to water used in the butter-making process. A similar compound Milkwell has not yet been found in Somerset but occurs in Gloucs., Herts., Staffs., Warks. and Wilts.; its water may have been sweet or cloudy, or alternatively used by cattle or for cooling milk.

Whatever the characteristic in question, compounds like Butterwell and Milkwell are mostly likely to occur in a dairying economy. In this connection, it is intriguing to note an apparently unique reference to a Skimmington Well, at Curry Mallet.⁸ 'Skimmington' and its ritual (involving a wife beating a husband, or surrogates acting out the humiliation) seems to have originated, in the early seventeenth century, from Somerset and North Wiltshire, 'straight out of the cheese country, for the implement used in the beating is a skimming ladle - used by women in the making of butter and cheese'.⁹ The well-name implies some sort of gathering or revelry, including the 'skimmity ride', which perhaps explains Skimmerton Lane (Wembdon, Som.) and Scummington hill (Chedworth, Gloucs.; PN Gloucs., I, 152). An engraving of 1639 shows a wife beating her drunken husband with a ladle, under an apple tree. Is it mere coincidence that he also seems to be up to his knees in a small stream, the source of which is clearly depicted?¹⁰

Ringwell (e.g. hring wylle 955-9: PN Gloucs., IV, 186) seems to imply something circular, but must it always refer to the same characteristic? From Somerset we have Ryngwell 1463 Pat, Ringwell (Ditchat; Martock; and Pilton); and perhaps Ringers Well (Somerton). Ringswell at Marshfield (Gloucs.; Ryngeswell 1575) has recently been excavated and the spring 'proved to have a walled spring-head around it, of a hollow "beehive" shape'.¹¹

Bridewell (Devon, Dors., Gloucs., Kent, Surrey, and Wilts.) has so far been traced as a field-name in Batcombe, Churchill and West Coker. Smith (PN Gloucs., III, 50) originally explained the form to bryde wyllan 972 as 'the bride's well' implying a fertility spring. Hence we may have another example of a superstitiously-named spring. However, Smith subsequently added a reference (*ibidem*, xi) to Löfvenberg's suggested word OE *brȳd 'surging, welling'. Löfvenberg himself had cited Henry atte Brude 1327 of Evercreech (Som.) in

evidence.¹² Fieldwork in Evercreech might help to pinpoint the feature in question.

Turner (137) suggested a derivation from either 'bride' or '(young) bird' or St Bridget, when discussing Bridewell Lane (Loxton). Certainly Bridewell Lane (Shapwick) was Burdwell in 1764, and there is a Birdwell in Long Ashton. Nowhere, however, is there such a clear link with St Bridget as that in seyntebriwell 1330 referred to by PN Northants., 24. One Somerset site which does have a strong traditional claim on St Bridget is Beckery near Glastonbury (Becory alias Bryde 1570 Pat; f.n. The Brides). The chapel there (dedicated to St Mary Magdalene and supposedly visited by St Bridget in A.D. 488) has been excavated; her relics were exhibited there from the twelfth century to the fifteenth.¹³ The stone erected in the 1920s to mark the site of St Bridget's Well is today relocated on the bank of the River Brue.¹⁴ Gresswell noted a field-name St brides (Cannington) which he related to the site of a lost church.¹⁵

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III. Holy Wells

We have already noted the frequency of spring- and well-names in Somerset with an apparent superstitious or religious significance. Why should this be? Pre-Christian water cults are well-attested in Britain and Somerset contains several sites, some of which show considerable continuity of respect for the water feature. Bath (the abbey almost on top of the hot spring and temple complex); Wells (a mausoleum pre-dating a chapel aligned to St Andrew's Well); the seventh-century glass vessel found in the Romano-British temple well at Pagan's Hill, Chew Stoke; these are striking examples.¹⁶ There was also a Roman building over the spring later known as St Agnes' Well (Whitestaunton).¹⁷ Perhaps this was a humble version of a spring-shrine such as that recently discovered at Littledean (Gloucs.).¹⁸ The former chapel of St Anne's (Brislington), belonging to Keynsham Abbey, was once an important centre of pilgrimage, and indeed religious processions to the well have been revived twice this century.¹⁹ Wilton, near Taunton, 'has a remarkable well dedicated to St George' from which it appears to take its name (DEPN, 521).

According to Morris, 'the worship of wæterwylas was frowned upon by the Church, but it is not difficult to envisage a process whereby pagan well-cults were adapted and nominally Christianized as a means of perpetuating them in ...' ²⁰ It is indeed, generally acknowledged that 'hundreds of

magical springs ... became "holy wells", associated with a saint, but ... were still employed for magical healing and for divining the future. Their water was sometimes believed to be peculiarly suitable for baptism'.²¹ Thus we may expect to find two distinct types of 'holy well': one associated with a religious site, the other perhaps more isolated and retaining a clearer superstitious character. Both types can indeed be found in Somerset.

One common name for a spring to which superstitions were attached is (to) pucan wylle, Pukewelleriche (from OE puce 'goblin' and rīc 'stream, ditch'). Others so far noted have only modern forms: Devil's Whispering Well (Bishop's Lydeard); Sunset Well (Ansford; Wedmore); Wishing Well (Sutton Montis) and Witch's Pool and Well (Pardlestone; Sandhill). A particularly striking reference to a highly superstitious site survives from the year 1634 in relation to one of the two wells in the ramparts of South Cadbury hill-fort:²²

'Cite Joanna Perrie for that she with divers other women of the same p[ari]sh did on a certain sabbath day within this moneth all during prayer time goe up to the castell theare in w[hi]ch being a well they did baptise themselves and named nyne counts and long prickes and such like and signed themselves with the sign of the crosse in time of divine service.'

The two wells at South Cadbury, regarded by Rodwell as examples of cult-centres within hill-forts, are known as King Arthur's Well and Queen Anne's Wishing Well.²³ The latter is the more likely candidate for the site of the events mentioned in 1634: in addition to being a spring rather than a well, and being more secluded, its name is probably the more significant.

Many wells are associated with healing: the names Eyewell (Queen Camel) and Cordial Well (Bitton) no doubt reflect this. The origin of the fame of one typical example was recorded in 1464:²⁴

'within the bounds and limits of the parish Church at Wembdon was a certain well, commonly called St. John's Well, to which an immense concourse of people had resorted within a few days past, and not before resorted, and had there made oblations to the honour of God, the blessed Virgin Mary, and St. John the Baptist; and many who had for years laboured under various bodily diseases, and had found no benefit from physick and physicians, were by the use of the waters (after paying their due offerings) restored to their pristine health ...'

The name Holywell is very frequent in Somerset, though no doubt sometimes confused with Holwell, 'spring in a hollow'. It has so far been noted in Chilton Polden, Ditcheat, East Coker, Edington (but cf. John Holewill 1402/3), Englishcombe (Halywells 1609), Enmore, Glastonbury, Halse, Kingsdon (Halowyll

1563: VCH, Somerset, III, 111), Luxborough, Mudgeley, Pilton, Priston, Roadwater, Shapwick, Taunton, Thorne St Margaret, Watchet, Wellington, West Coker and Yatton. Hollowells (Cricket St Thomas) was Hollywille 1315, Holewyll 1459 (VCH, Somerset, IV, 133) but note should also be taken of Edith atte Holywelle of Cricket (SRS).

The name Ladywell (normally short for Our Lady's Well) has so far been found in Bathford, Bruton, East Brent and Wrington. Comparable modern names include Lady Mary's Spring (Frome); Lady's Fountain (Kilve); Fair Lady Well (Priddy) and Ladyford Meadow (Winsford).

* * *

IV. Saints and Wells

A convenient source of water supply obviously affected the success or failure of a settlement site. A spring might also be the focus around which a religious site developed. The importance of holy wells in this respect has been 'largely overlooked by modern scholars'.²⁵ At St John's, Frome, for example, there was a 'ryght fayre spring in the churche yard' which was the town water supply. It might also have been the original supply for St Aldhelm's monastery here.²⁶ Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to believe that it was a pagan sacred spring sanctified by use during baptism.

Many wells have a firm link with a particular saint, though it is hard to say how old the traditional connection may be. So far, no Somerset example matches the suggested link of St Eanswith of Kent with eanswype wyllas 931 (e.12th) (PN Gloucs., III, 64).²⁷ There is still much work to be done on the early saints of Somerset. Legends exist associating SS. Benignus (or Beonna), Cadoc, Gildas and Indract with springs or wells but it is not known whether any of these sites are identifiable. St Decuman's Well at Williton near Watchet is the unique example. However, there may be a trace of another Celtic saint, Ernin, not previously known in Somerset, in a field-name at Weare: St Ern's Well 1840 (St Ernes Well 1602).²⁸

Well-known English saints with local Somerset connections are also commemorated in spring-names. St Aldhelm, who died at Doultong in 709, is remembered there and in St Aldam's Ash & Well in Gloucs. (Pucklechurch; PN Gloucs., III, 66); St Dunstan at Stoke St Michael and Witham Friary; and St Alphege on Lansdown above Bath (apud fontem Sancti Alphege 15th cent.).

Sometimes a well-dedication is simply shared with the parish church or a former chapel, now usually lost. Thus the following saints are commemorated: Andrew (Ansford; Stogursey; Wells); Anne (Brislington); Anthony (Bathford); Catherine (St Catherine's; Swell); George (Wilton); Giles (Knowle St Giles); Julian (Wellow); Mary (Chaffcombe; Charlcombe; Portishead); Michael (Minehead); Pancras (Roadwater); Peter (Over Stowey); Winifred (Bath).

Sometimes popular etymology optimistically associated a particular saint with a well: Catherine or Christopher (Kitswell); Luke (Luckwell); Patrick (Patwell); Peter (Pedwell); Rumbold (Rumwell); Ursula (Herswell). Babwell (Cucklington) presumably contains the OE pers.n. Babba (cf. Babcary and Babington, both Som.) but by at least the fifteenth century it would seem to have been associated with St Barbara, to judge by the stained glass in the church.²⁹ Barrow Sidwells (Wick, now a site just inside the entrance to Hinkley Point power station) was visited for eye troubles and scurvy. This could contain OE sīd 'broad, low-lying' but early forms are needed to elucidate the history of the probable link with St Sidwell, whose cult flourished in Devon. The Exeter St Sidwells (PN Devon, 437) is named from St Sidefulle (containing OE sidu 'morality') who was said to have been buried to the north of the city. There is also a Wiltshire example: sidefollewelle temp. Ric. II (PN Wilts., 450). Her name was Latinized as Sativola but she was also associated with a variant of a common decapitation-legend, involving a play on the words 'scythe' and 'well' assumed to be part of her name.³⁰

St Cyprian has been associated with a curious well between Beer Crocombe and Ashill, variously known as St Nipperhams, Kipperans, Nippertons, Skippertons or Skivertons. The place-name involved is Skipperham (Skiberham 16 Henry VII CalInq), presumably from OE hamm with a so far unknown first element.³¹

* * *

V. Wells associated with St Agnes and St Anne

The saints most frequently associated with springs and wells in Somerset are Our Lady/St Mary, St Andrew and St Agnes. St Andrew, the fourth most frequent church-dedication in England, is particularly popular in Somerset because it is that of the cathedral at Wells.³² What was the attraction of St Agnes? She was a Roman virgin martyr of the third century and 'unmarried girls celebrated the eve of her festival with semi-magical rites'.³³ Somerset wells dedicated to her include those at Cothelstone, Doultong, Selworthy and Whitestaunton (the Romano-British shrine mentioned above).

Dr Cottle has suggested that dedications to St Agnes and St Anne might be one and the same.³⁴ Although this is not tenable on hagiographical grounds, it is true that forms of the forenames were easily confused in medieval and early modern times.³⁵ This confusion was perhaps being perpetuated by a turn-of-the-century writer when she described how 'some distance up [Seven Wells Combe] there is a little well, stone covered and mossy, a sacred well, dedicated perhaps to St Anne, or St Agnes ...'.³⁶

Different counties will no doubt reflect different saintly preferences. Nevertheless, 'it would seem ... that S. Anne is generally regarded as in some special sort the patron of wells'.³⁷ Why should this be? Very probably because St Anne interceded for the childless and was therefore an apt dedication for springs thought to aid fertility. According to Withycombe, the cult of St Ann(e), the supposed mother of the Blessed Virgin, is first noted in England in 1218, and did not take general hold until the fourteenth century.³⁸ This may perhaps explain why Nottingham's example was Seynt Anne Well in 1551 but had been Brodewell in 1301 (PN Notts., 20). A large proportion of known ecclesiastical dedications are to chapelries rather than to churches; that of Buxton (Derbys.), recorded by 1280, was one of the earliest such dedications and was probably a well-chapel. The cult of St Anne may have coincided with an expansion of interest in superstitious visits to wells and springs. On the other hand, might it not be in honour of Buxton that others were so named?

Buxton was Aquae Arnetiae 'the waters of Arnetia', a goddess whose name contains the British elements ar(e) 'in front of' and nemet- 'sacred grove' (PNRB, 254). According to Alcock, 'it is possible that the first Christian missionaries, rather than argue ineffectively with a Celtic goddess, Christianized her as St. Anne and diverted the worship of her followers into more acceptable channels'.³⁹

Some recent writers have tended to follow the suggestion that 'Anne' replaces an earlier name of similar sound, referring to another mother goddess, perhaps the same as the Irish Anu or Aine.⁴⁰ Names like Queen Anne's Wishing Well (above), Ann Boleyn's Well, Carshalton (Surrey) and Lady Anne's Well, Howley (Yorks. W.R.), though they may be the result of the Reformation, seem to hint at a vaguer persona. The answer to the problem may lie however in Cornwall and Brittany, where St Anne also attracted a cult.

There is only one St Anne's Well in Somerset, the well-known one at Brislington already mentioned, called St Anne in the wood in 1502. However,

there is a little group in south-east Gloucestershire which may have been influenced by Brislington's proximity: Hamswell; Siston (a shared church-dedication); a possible lost well at Horfield; and a chapel (only) at Oldland.⁴¹ Interestingly, the chapel-name St Anne in the wood is echoed in church-dedications at Southowram near Halifax (St Anne's in the grove or St Anne's in the Briars) and Aldersgate, London (St Anne in the Willows).⁴² Was there then a feeling that St Anne was a suitable dedication for a wooded site? The Gloucestershire locations were in or near the forest of Kingswood. Is this another link with Arnetia and her sacred grove?

* * *

The compound names of springs and wells so far noted in this preliminary survey of Somerset normally have OE w(i)ella as the generic and a descriptive or topographical term, or an OE personal-name, as the specific. However, a significant number also have specifics with superstitious or religious connotations, reflecting local legends, folklore or the supposed healing qualities of the water.

To judge by the frequency of the compound Holywell alone, it would seem that most parishes in Somerset could once boast such a feature. In a few cases there is even archaeological or historical evidence confirming the involvement of a spring with a Christian or perhaps pre-Christian cult-site. Association of a well with a saint may not imply any special significance. However, such dedications do vary from region to region and would repay further comparative study. Archaeological investigation might also shed light on the origins of some sites with suggestive names.

Generally speaking, early references to springs or wells are rare unless the feature itself gave rise to a settlement-name or unless it served as a boundary-mark to an Anglo-Saxon estate. However, in view of the importance attached to a constant supply of pure water, the names of this particular feature in the landscape are not without interest.

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NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

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A growing collection of place-name material for the former county of Somerset has been gathered at the University of Bristol since the late 1970s, co-ordinated by the Extra-Mural Tutor for Somerset, Michael Costen. Where no sources are given, references have been taken from those files in the care of the writer and of Michael Costen.

BCS = W. de G. Birch, ed., Cartularium Saxonicum, 3 vols and index (London, 1885-99); cited by number.

CalInq = Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem (PRO), in progress.

DB = C. and F. Thorn, eds, Domesday Book, 8, Somerset (Chichester, 1980); cited by chapter and section number.

DEPN = E. Ekwall, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names, 4th edn (Oxford, 1960).

EPN = A. H. Smith, ed., English Place-Name Elements, 2 vols, EPNS XXV-VI (Cambridge, 1956).

EPNS = English Place-Name Society.

GDB = Great Domesday Book, cited here from the printed edition of 1783 reproduced in DB, above.

JEPNS = Journal of the English Place-Name Society.

Pat = Calendar of Patent Rolls (PRO), in progress.

PN + county abbreviation = the relevant county volume(s) of the English Place-Name Society.

PNRB = A. L. F. Rivet and C. C. Smith, eds, The Place-Names of Roman Britain (London, 1979).

PSANHS = Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

Sawyer = P. H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography (London, 1968); cited by number.

SRS = Publications of the Somerset Record Society.

Turner = A. G. C. Turner, 'The Place-Names of North Somerset', unpublished Ph.D. thesis; Jesus College, Cambridge, 1951.

VCH = the relevant volumes of the Victoria History of the Counties of England.

1. EPN, II, 250-3; M. Gelling, Place-Names in the Landscape (1984), 30-2.

2. E. Horne, Somerset Holy Wells and other Named Wells, Somerset Folk Series 12 (1923).
3. P. Rahtz, 'Excavations at Chalice Well, Glastonbury', PSANHS CVIII (1964), 145-63.
4. PSANHS XXX (1884), 76.
5. R. Coates, 'Remarks on "pre-British" in England: with special reference to *uentā, *ciltā and *cunāco-', JEPNS XVI (1984), 1-24; O. J. Padel, personal communication.
6. A. H. Smith (PN Gloucs., III, 50, 51, 61, 232; IV, 185-6) notes herdsmen, sheepshearers, clerks, merchants, outlaws, beggars, maidens, salt-merchants, and masons.
7. D. Hooke, Anglo-Saxon Landscapes of the West Midlands: the Charter Evidence, BAR British Series 95 (Oxford, 1981), 126, 171.
8. R. L. Tongue, Somerset Folklore, County Folklore 8, Publications of the Somerset Folk-Lore Society CXIV (1965), 22-3.
9. D. Underdown, Revel, Riot and Rebellion (1985), 102.
10. Ibidem, Fig. 7B, 'Skimmington beats her husband', from Bodleian, Douce L.4, frontis. (John Taylor, Divers Crabtree Lectures [1639]).
11. V. Russett, Marshfield: an Archaeological Survey of a Southern Cotswold Parish (Bristol, 1985), 77-8.
12. M. T. Löfvenberg, Studies on Middle English Local Surnames, Lund Studies in English XI (Lund, 1942), 26-7.
13. P. Rahtz and S. Hirst, Beckery Chapel, 1967-8 (Glastonbury, 1974).
14. It is presumably coincidental that this is a British river-name related to W bryw 'brisk, vigorous' (DEPN, 70) and that la Brutasche, a boundary point of the twelve hides of Glastonbury, lay to the south, on the road to Street.
15. W. H. P. Gresswell, Dumnonia and the Valley of the Parret (Taunton, 1922), 45.
16. B. Cunliffe and P. Davenport, The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, I, Oxford Committee for Archaeology, Monograph 7 (Oxford, 1985); W. Rodwell, 'From mausoleum to minster: the early development of Wells Cathedral', in S. M. Pearce, ed., The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland BAR British Series 102 (Oxford, 1982), 49-59; L. S. Colchester, ed., Wells Cathedral: a History (Shepton Mallet, 1982), Plate 5, shows a possible depiction of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral c.1040. In the foreground, two barrels symbolize the wells themselves; P. A. Rahtz et alii, 'Three post-Roman finds from the temple well of Pagan's Hill, Somerset', Medieval Archaeology, II (1958), 104-11.
17. R. W. Carter, Parish Surveys in Somerset (4): Whitestaunton (Taunton, 1981), 4.

18. The Guardian, 24.viii.85.
19. Home, Somerset Holy Wells, 11-15; A. Richardson, 'St. Anne's Chapel, Brislington', PSANHS XLIV (1898), 188-97.
20. R. Morris, The Church in British Archaeology, CBA Research Report 47 (1983), 67.
21. K. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (1971), 54.
22. Somerset R.O., DD/CC Bishop of Bath and Wells Consistory Court Act Books, South Cadbury, 22 July 1634. I am grateful to Michael Costen for this reference.
23. W. Rodwell, ed., Temples, Churches and Religion: Recent Research in Roman Britain, BAR British Series 77(1) (Oxford, 1980), 236.
24. Home, Somerset Holy Wells, 43.
25. W. Rodwell, The Archaeology of the English Church (1981), 142.
26. M. McGarvie, The Book of Frome: a History (Buckingham, 1980), 21.
27. However, a Kentish saint seems less likely than a more local woman such as the Eanswið who was granted land by the bishop of Worcester in return for the upkeep of the church's ecclesiastical vestments; see C. Fell, Women in Anglo-Saxon England (1984), 42.
28. M. Costen, 'A Celtic saint at Weare', Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries XXX (1979), 219-20.
29. Home, Somerset Holy Wells, passim; F. W. Weaver, 'On a painting of St. Barbara in the church of St. Lawrence, Cucklington, Somerset', PSANHS XXXIX (1893), 43-54.
30. M. Forster, 'Die heilige Sativola oder Sidwell', Anglia LXII (1938), 33-80.
31. One spelling is not sufficient evidence on which to base a derivation, but the similarity to OW scipaur, W ysgybor, Corn skyber 'barn' is intriguing. O. J. Padel points out the word skipper-³ NED 'barn, outhouse or shed, used as a sleeping place for vagrants' from 1567.
32. E. G. Withycombe, The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names, 2nd edn (1950), 22.
33. Ibidem, 6-7.
34. Dr B. Cottle, personal communication.
35. Withycombe, 6.
36. B. F. Cresswell, The Quantock Hills, Homeland Handbooks 35 (Bristol, 1904), 45.
37. F. E. Arnold-Forster, Studies in Church Dedications, I (Skeffington, 1899), 99.

38. Withycombe, 24.
39. J. P. Alcock, 'Celtic water cults in Roman Britain', Archaeological Journal CXXII (1965), 1-12; C. Porteous, The Beauty and Mystery of Well-Dressing (Derby, 1949), 77, records that the earliest medicinal treatise on Buxton's waters (1572) mentions 'vayne invencions about St. Anne found in the Well'. A Latin inscription to the goddess Arnetetia might have been retrieved from the well at some time and might easily have been misread as 'Anne'.
40. A. Ross, 'Chartres: the locus of the Carnutes', Studia Celtica XIV/XV (1979-80), 260-9; P. MacCana, Celtic Mythology, rev. edn (1983), 132. For Anu, see PNRB, 250, s.v. Anava. She was an Irish goddess of prosperity.
41. R. C. S. Walters, The Ancient Wells, Springs, and Holy Wells of Gloucestershire (Bristol, 1928); F. Bingham, An Account of Horfield from Early Times to 1900 (Portsmouth, c.1905), 31.
The writer has also noted the following wells dedicated to St Anne: Caversham (Berks.); Hessenford, Landulph, Whitstone (Cornw.); Exeter (Devon); Aconbury (Herefs.); Chertsey (Surrey); Hove (Sussex); Malvern (Worcs.); Welton (Yorks. E.R.); Llanmihangel (Glam.); Trellech (Mon.); cf. also Anneiswell (13th cent.), PN Cambs., 351 and Ennis Well, PN Gloucs., III, 221 (which look like 'Agnes'); Annwalle, PN Staffs., I, 179; and Annet-well Street (Carlisle). A church of St Agnes was early consolidated with St Anne, Aldersgate (Arnold-Forster, Church Dedications, I, 116-17). Roman coins were found in the eighteenth century at St Agnes-le-Clair's Bath, Finsbury, nearby. W. Addison, English Spas (1951), 37-8, quotes a popular tradition for the origin of the name, from The Pleasant Walks of Moorfields [1607]:

'COUNTRY GENT. But, Sir, here are stones set upright; what is the meaning of them?
 CITIZEN. Marry! where they stand runs a spring called Dame Annis le Cleare, after the name of a rich London widow, Annis Clare, who, matching herself with a riotous Courtier in the time of Edward I, he vainly consumed all her wealth: there she drowned herself, being then but a shallow ditch of running water.'
42. Arnold-Forster, Church Dedications, I, 99, 116.

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