

# HISTORY OF BRIDGWATER, 1889

BY

SYDNEY GARDNOR JARMAN.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION by TONY WOOLRICH

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SYDNEY GARDNOR JARMAN.

AUTHOR OF "A HANDBOOK OF SAINT MARY'S CHURCH, BRIDGWATER," "WEST SOMERSET SKETCHES," "TIVERTON CASTLE," ETC., ETC.

London

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, E.C.

St Ives

JARMAN & GREGORY, "Hunts County Guardian" Offices.

1889



The research and writing occupied Jarman for seven years. It was published in 1889, after he had left Bridgwater to edit the *Hunts County Guardian*, at St Ives, Huntingdonshire, (now Cambridgeshire, having lost its county status in 1974.)

Jarman was a working newspaper-man, so his writing is very clear and succinct. It is a prime source of information of Bridgwater's history. He deals with the well-known events: the coming of the Danes and the Normans, the Castle, the Siege of Bridgwater (1645), Robert Blake and the Battle of Sedgemoor, but the book is especially valuable for the Nineteenth Century, and includes chapters on topics not covered by later writers, such as Journalism, Freemasonry, Friendly Societies, the Nonconformist places of worship and Charities. Throughout the book are inserted chapters of *General History*, each containing short snippets of often anecdotal information in chronological order.

Jarman noted in his Preface that he had much help from individuals, including the editors of his newspaper rivals, *The Bridgwater Mercury* and the *Bridgwater Independent*.

Throughout the book are also extracts of verse (often satirical) by local poets, such as George Parker, and Edwin H. Burrington. This topic is discussed in more detail in Tony Woolrich *Bridgwater Poets & Poems*, on this website.

## References

Like many writers of history then, Jarman was very sketchy in his references, as they tended to use a short-title form. The authors' names and book titles were noted skimpily and usually without page numbers.

Thus on p. 5, \*Wright, "*Celt, Roman and Saxon*", is in fact Thomas Wright, *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*. London, A. Hall, Virtue & Co., 1852.

For his readers then, who might be expected to be familiar with the relevant historical literature, this was not such a problem, but as they only survive now in larger Reference or University collections, it can cause difficulties for modern readers. But many can be readily found online at electronic sources such as the Internet Archive, or the Hathi Trust.

There are page references, each designated by \*, or † or ‡ In this version they have been moved to the chapter ends in order and re-marked \*, \*\*, \*\*\*. etc, as required.

## Illustrations

The list of illustrations will be found in the section including the Preface, Chapters and Illustrations.

They are all mostly heavy black engravings so have been omitted in this version, as they do not add materially to the narrative.

Jarman published after he left Bridgwater: *The Bridgwater Infirmary: A record of its rise and progress*, 1890. This may also be found in this website

He also wrote about other places he was involved with, Tiverton, St Ives and Wrexham. It is possible he also wrote on local history for periodicals then but nothing more has so far been traced.

Tony Woolrich, 10/01/2020