

**WILLIAM FRANCIS AND THE PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH
OF GREAT MARLOW**

BY
SUE CHEETHAM



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William Francis (1774–1843) lived in Great Marlow for 28 years until his death in 1843. He was the headmaster of Borlase Free Grammar School for almost 20 years. He was jailed twice; for one week in 1830 for a breach of the peace, and for three months in 1834 for libelling the wealthy Marlow brewer, Thomas Wethered. These incarcerations may have dented Francis's otherwise impressive reputation in society, but there are several more layers to his story.

After Francis's death, the *Reading Mercury*

remembered him in this way. "Of capricious intellect and various acquirements he contributed to literature and science, and energetically promoted the establishment of public rights and privileges having been mainly instrumental in opening the borough in which he resided."²

EARLY YEARS

With the benefit of a gentleman's education, William Francis became skilled in mathematics,

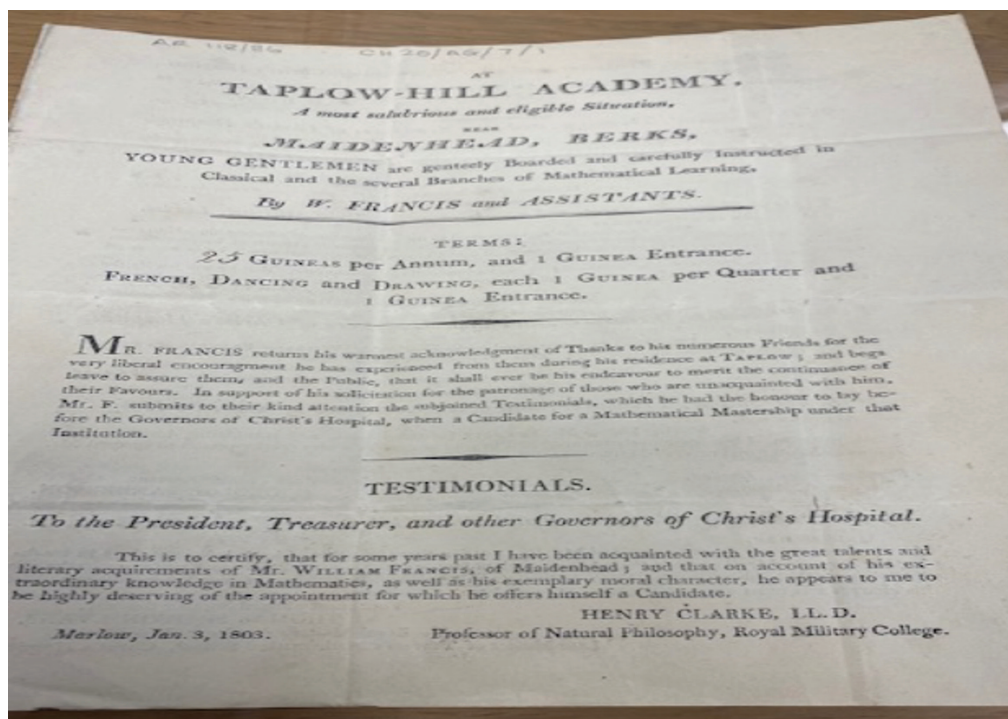


FIGURE 1 Opening page of William Francis's application for the position of maths teacher (Buckinghamshire Archives)

literature, and classics. Teaching ran in the family, and by 1794 he tutored 'penmanship, classics, mathematics, bookkeeping, drawing, and literature' alongside his father at Hungerford Grammar School³. After marriage to Elizabeth Banbury in July 1800 in Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, the couple moved to Maidenhead, where he became Master of Taplow Academy.⁴ In 1802 their son, William Emerson was born, and in 1813 their daughter, Sarah Ann. Francis was clearly an astute self-marketeer. When he applied for a new teaching position he produced a four-page document of testimonials.⁵ His twelve referees were all prominent clergy members and mathematicians and they wrote glowingly of his accomplishments and 'exemplary moral character.'⁶

By 1804 Francis was contributing and solving mathematics problems in a journal called *The Mathematical Repository*. Also known as "Leybourn's Repository", it was established by Professor Leybourn, a Professor of Mathematics at the Royal Military College in Marlow.⁷ In 1806 Francis wrote a book, *The Gentleman's, Farmer's & Husbandman's*

Most Useful Assistant, in Measuring and Expeditionously Computing the Amount of Any Quantity of Land, at Various Given Prices Per Acre.⁸ It must have been popular, as he added a chapter on Timber and Wood Measuring to a later edition. When Francis applied for the Master's position at Borlase Free Grammar School in Marlow in 1814, Thomas Wethered was head trustee and offered him the post. Francis ensured that Wethered possessed a great deal of evidence of his experience and credentials. He sent him a copy of his testimonial document along with his application letter. The two men might also have shared friends and acquaintances at the Royal Military College, located in Marlow, between 1802 and 1812.⁹ When Francis started at the school around Easter 1815, he enjoyed a reputation as a successful teacher and family man.¹⁰ At least his initial decade in the town appears to have been uneventful.¹¹

THE PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH OF GREAT MARLOW AND THE 1826 ELECTION

Great Marlow was the name of a parish, town, and parliamentary borough for centuries, and as Figure 3 shows, it was home to several political families during Francis's time there. The borough elected two Members of Parliament between 1624 and 1868 and then one Member until 1885.¹² But many aspects of the system as it was then are entirely unfamiliar to us now. Today the median size of a parliamentary constituency in England is around 73,000, and all those over 18 have the right to vote in general and local elections¹³. In the early 19th century, the Borough of Great Marlow was geographically small, with an electorate of only 400 men (women did not have the vote) and a reputation for political corruption. Borough MPs were prepared to pay for voters' support to keep their seats. Some voters were open to their influence and prepared to accept patronage in this way. Some voters were, of course, independent and voted for whom they believed in. Until 1872, there was no secret ballot. So, if a man was paid to vote a certain way but did not, retribution might follow.

This was the world in which William Francis became involved in during the 1826 election. His superior, Thomas Wethered, supported the two established Members of Parliament, Owen Williams and his son, Thomas Peers Williams.

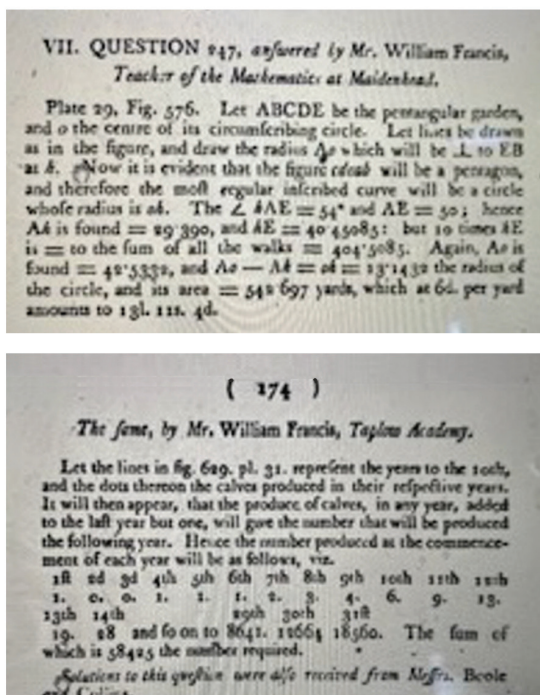


FIGURE 2 Examples of Francis's contributions to Leybourn's Repository

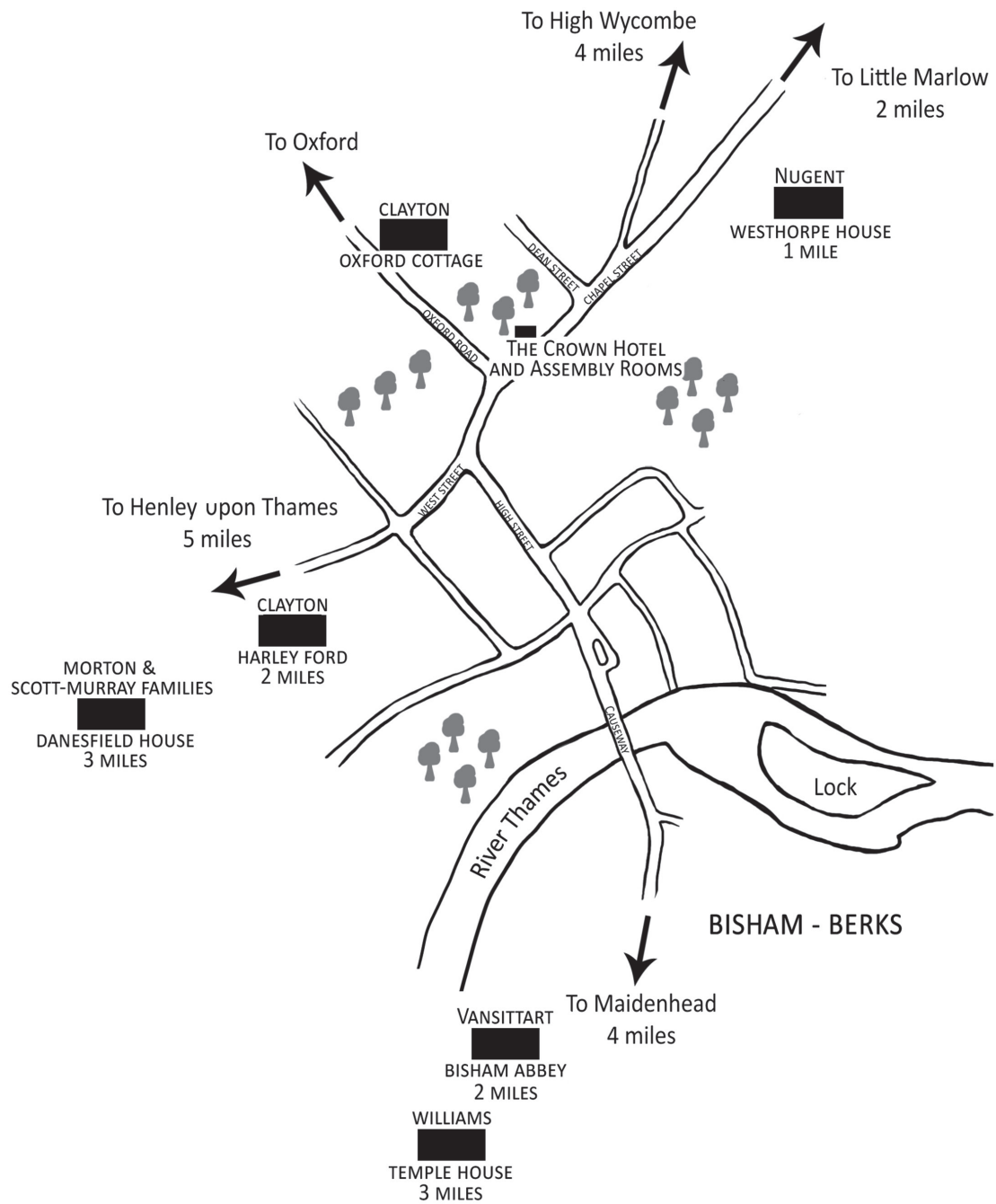


FIGURE 3 During Francis's time in Marlow, the area was home to several Members of Parliament for the borough and county. The map shows where they lived: distances are given from the *Crown Hotel and Assembly Rooms* in the centre of Marlow

This family and their associates had been substantially unopposed during elections since 1790. That is another long-forgotten aspect of the parliamentary system of that time. There were constituencies where it was possible for Members to be elected to the House of Commons because nobody stood against them. This was true for Owen and Thomas

Peers Williams. So when one James Morrison, a wealthy London merchant, stood in Marlow in the 1826 election, it was a significant event for those who objected to the absence of free and fair elections, including Francis.¹⁴

It was not that Francis necessarily disagreed with them on issues of philosophy and policy.

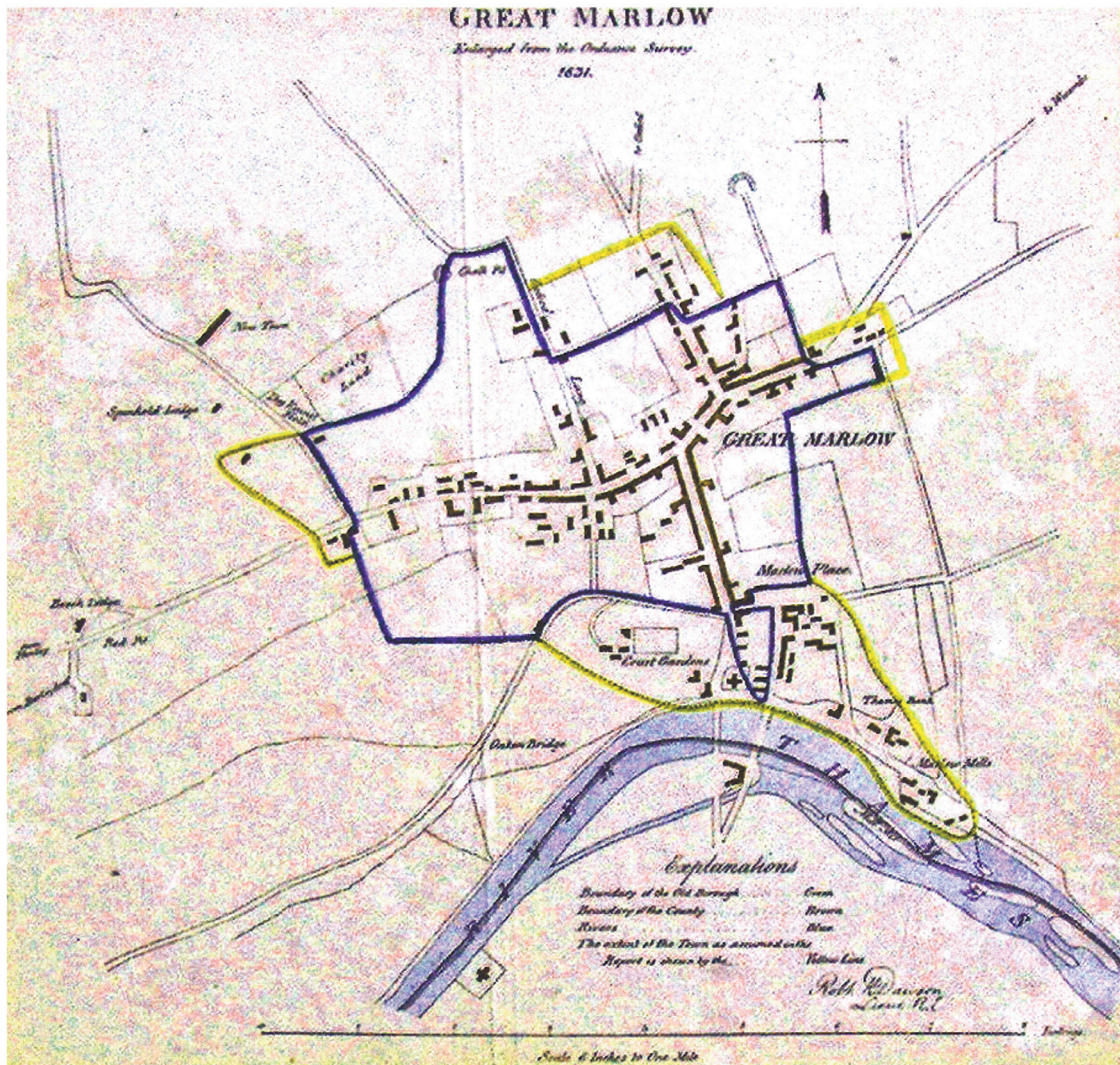


FIGURE 4 Map of the 'old borough' of Marlow, probably prepared for the report which led to the changes introduced in the 1832 Reform Act. Houses inside the yellow areas but outside the blue were in the town of Marlow but not the Borough. The Borough of Great Marlow was increased in size in 1832 (UK Parliamentary Papers; UKPP 1831–1832 (141), Parts I–VIII)

Instead, like other borough voters, he believed Great Marlow should have a candidate free from the influence of the Williams family, someone who was interested in the affairs of Great Marlow and the House of Commons. Owen and Thomas Peers Williams rarely visited either borough or chamber.¹⁵ Predictably, James Morrison was unsuccessful in winning the seat, although the result was closer than expected. At his request, Morrison's solicitor, William Ashurst, consulted with around thirty parishioners after the election. His investigation notes show that Thomas Wethered had bribed and intimidated several voters into supporting the Williamses. Also, many who had voted were not eligible to vote in the borough. These findings indicate that with better election practices, it might have been possible for an independent candidate to win a seat in Great Marlow.

In 1827, William Francis completed a docu-

ment he named "Index to the Plan of the Borough of Great Marlow" which showed who owned and lived in each house in the streets that made up the 'old borough.'¹⁶ It is not known if he was asked to do this by Mr Morrison or Mr Ashurst. But as they had both committed to staying in touch with their supporters in Marlow, which they did for some years, it is possible.¹⁷ James Morrison may have considered Marlow again before eventually standing for St Ives in Cambridgeshire in 1830, where he was elected. The details in Francis's census clarified who lived in the borough of Great Marlow, who was qualified to vote, and would have been helpful to an independent candidate. Also, in 1827, several Marlow voters, including Francis himself, suggested meeting with one of the Buckinghamshire MPs, Robert Smith, to raise their concerns about the state of the borough. However, nothing further was found in the local newspapers about the matter.¹⁸ It seems reasonable to wonder whether the course of the election created tension between Francis and Wethered.

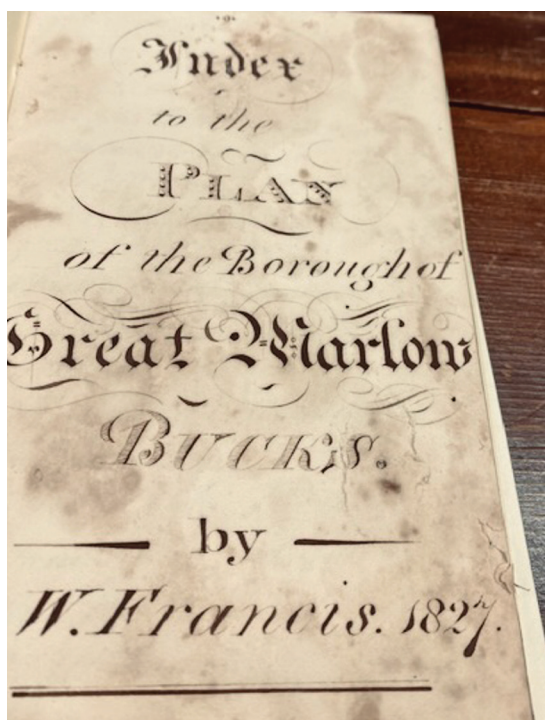


FIGURE 5 Front page of the document prepared by Francis in 1827, listing every owner and occupier in the 'old borough.' Reproduced by kind permission of Lord Margadale and the Trustees of the Fonthill Estate

THE NEW SUSPENSION BRIDGE

On May 14 1829, a Parliamentary Act approved a new suspension bridge over the river Thames at Great Marlow.¹⁹ This was a significant town improvement initiative and involved rebuilding the structure in metal and repositioning it to the bottom of the High Street. William Francis was quickly drawn into what became a heated exchange of letters in the *Bucks Gazette* with the bridge engineer, John Millington. As was usual for the time, he initially used a pseudonym, 'Veritas', the truth-teller. In his letters, Francis drew attention to the slow pace and poor quality of the work and the amount of money spent. Mr Millington refuted all his allegations in a letter dated September 12 1829. The *Bucks Gazette* sided with Mr Millington until the problems with the bridge became apparent when the Magistrates appointed to manage the works met. Shortly afterwards, Mr Millington "left for Mexico" and William Tierney Clark, credited with the successful construction, took over. In January 1830, the *Bucks Gazette* updated their readers on progress, "We owe, in common with others, a debt of justice to Mr Francis of Marlow, for his bold and fearless attempt to unmask the pretensions of our Trans-Atlantic engineer (Mr Millington) and showing to the public the value of

claims, which had not one atom of sound science to support them."²⁰

THE 1830 TOWN MAP AND THE TUMULTUOUS EVENT INVOLVING BAKER MR HATCH

By 1830 William Francis had completed a map of the town.²¹ It seems probable that the 1827 Plan of the Borough provided the information to enable him to carry this out. The drawing is significant as it shows the position of the new suspension bridge,

which was completed in 1832. The old bridge was still in use when he drew up his map. It is worth noting that the picture indicated the predominant owners of land and property in the town; inevitably they were Thomas Wethered and Owen Williams.

That year, an event occurred that probably changed William Francis's life. He was 56 years old in 1830, an older man by the standards of the time, when he was involved in a fight with local bully, baker William Hatch²². Disrupting the peace was considered a significant transgression. The trial at Bucks Quarter Sessions hinted at political motiva-



FIGURE 6 1830 map of Marlow prepared by Francis, now in Marlow Museum

tions. Sir T. Freemantle, the judge, presiding over the case in summing up, said, “This is one of those distressing cases in which two on one side and two on the other had sworn so contradictorily, leaving no doubt but that one party or other had perjured themselves. It was much to be regretted that party feeling could lead to such gross indecency.”²³

After a quarter of an hour, the jury decided that Francis had struck the first blow and, in so doing, was guilty of disturbing the peace. He was sentenced to one week in the House of Corrections in West Street. The Borlase trustees attempted to dismiss Francis from his headmaster position. The Charity Commission, which regulated the school, recorded that William Francis disregarded the attempt to remove him.²⁴ After taking legal advice that specific charges would need to be made against him, the trustees declined to take further action.

THOMAS WETHERED AND THE CRIMINAL LIBEL CASE

According to William Francis, Thomas Wethered involved himself in electioneering in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire and in the boroughs of Aylesbury and Windsor during December 1832.²⁵ On Christmas Eve that year, Wethered’s son, Captain Edward Wethered, aged 32, died in Brighton, a terrible tragedy for the close-knit, well-respected Marlow brewing family. On January 12 1833, a letter from an anonymous Francis hiding behind the pseudonym ‘Mentor’, was published in the *Windsor & Eton Express*. He accused Thomas Wethered of deceitfulness, and untrustworthy behaviour in election matters. In the published letter, William Francis concluded by writing, “although the laws of the land cannot reach such odious misconduct the laws of the Almighty will, and relying upon the scared truths of the Decalogue, I think I already see the iniquity of the Sire has been visited upon the head of the son. At all events, let us not in the future be incredulous to inconsistencies when filthy lucre excites thereto. MENTOR.”

Thomas Wethered acted quickly. Three weeks later, on February 2 1833, the *Bucks Gazette* reported that Thomas Wethered had been granted a ‘criminal information’ that a formal charge could go ahead against William Francis, whose identity was uncovered. An affidavit was read from the editor of the *Windsor & Eton Express*, Mr Reydell.

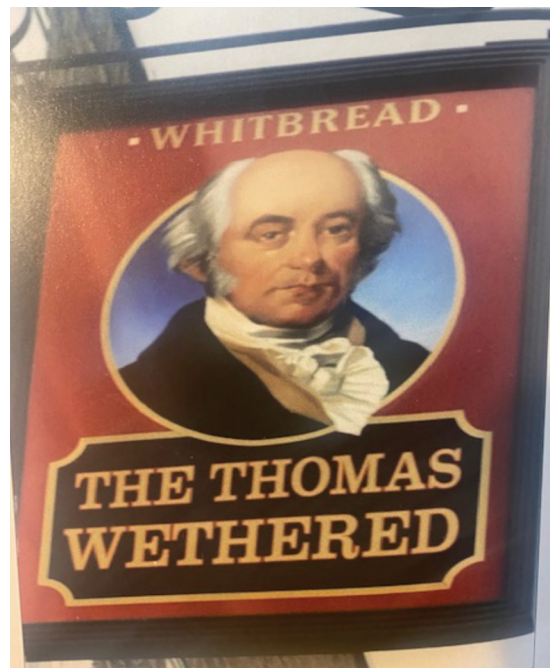


FIGURE 7 Likeness of Thomas Wethered from the sign of a short-lived pub in Rosoman Street, Clerkenwell Road, London (from Evans R 2011, *Wethered’s Brewery*, Hudson & Pearson)

He confirmed that the letter in question was written in Francis’s handwriting and that parts of the original letter were not published in the paper. The newspaper reported that Wethered denied all the allegations Francis made in the letter. The case was heard with a jury in the Court of the King’s Bench in June 1834, sixteen months after the letter was published. The jury found William Francis guilty of libelling Wethered. At the end of November, twenty-two months after the letter was published, a sentencing hearing committed him to Aylesbury Prison for three months.

Anthony Wethered, a family descendant, considered the majority of the content of the letter, although deeply unpleasant and offensive, to be typical of political invective of the time.²⁶ Thomas Wethered’s reaction, and that of his family, to the final sentences of the letter was, however, entirely understandable. Francis appears to have given no thought to their grief at losing Edward and their period of mourning. Perhaps the incident with Hatch, which will be explored in greater detail

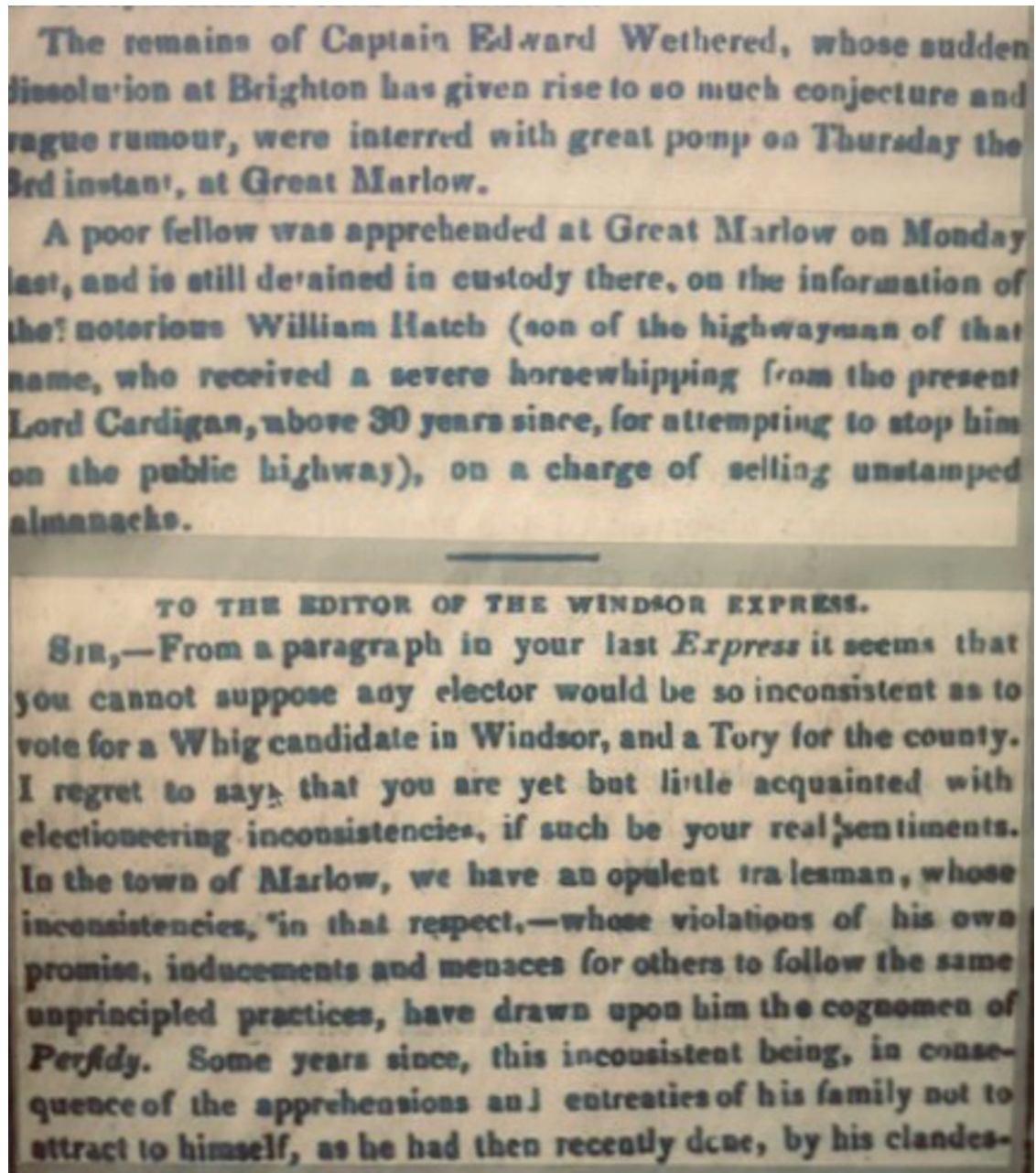


FIGURE 8 Part of Francis's letter, published in the *Windsor & Eton Express* on 12 January 1833. The announcement of Edward Wethered's interment was placed above the letter. The intervening paragraph oddly mentions a 'William Hatch', though probably not the same man (British Newspaper Archive)

shortly, was to blame for his state of mind, along with the role Thomas Wethered played in the 1826 election. The grief of the Wethered family must have been all the more profound after reading the announcement of their son's death, which was placed directly above Francis's letter. This read, "The remains of Captain Edward Wethered, whose sudden dissolution at Brighton has given rise to so much conjecture and vague rumour, were interred with great pomp on Thursday the 3rd instant, at Great Marlow." Whether this unfortunate sequencing and disrespectful announcement of his death were a product of poor editing or something more sinister remains unknown. When Owen Wethered gave evidence in the June 1834 trial, he clarified that 'He [Edward] died of an inflammation of the lungs at Brighton in the early part of 1833.' This was inaccurate, as Edward Wethered had died on December 24 1832, suggesting a lack of attention to detail on the part of the newspaper administrators rather than anything more malevolent.

During the trial in June 1834, evidence from William Henry Reydell, the editor of the *Windsor & Eton Express*, revealed that he had altered Francis's letter before publishing, and that he had also received a second letter. Reydell was reported as saying, "I published the contents of part of the letter. I struck part out. What I published in the paper was taken from the letter. I also received another letter."²⁷ Concerned about including parts of the letter because of their offensive nature, he removed them, suggesting that he believed what remained was acceptable. So, during the June trial, the jury heard and saw both the published letter which Reydell had changed and the original letter. The nature of the second letter Reydell received was not revealed in the newspapers or even whether it was from William Francis. What is clear is that the jury considered both versions of the letter in June and not simply the original version that the public had read.

When Francis was sentenced in November 1834, the judge said, "Such expressions showed the deepest rancour in the breast of the defendant. It has been said that the defendant was a schoolmaster and had been so for twenty years; it was evident that he was a most improper man to fill that situation." Francis's letter reveals his resentment towards Thomas Wethered, but did this reveal so fundamental a flaw in him as to render him an

improper man to be a teacher or was this in fact too harsh a verdict? What if William Francis had been unjustly convicted in 1830? Over the next few years Hatch's true colours emerged. In May 1832, he was fined one shilling and ordered to pay costs for driving his cart against the servant of J.L. Clayton, the brother of the new Member of Parliament, Colonel William Clayton. The Chairman warned him about the inappropriateness of his violent conduct. In January 1834, Hatch appeared before the magistrates in Great Marlow for taking a knife from a lad previously in his employ and beating him when he asked for it back. The magistrate ordered him to pay the boy five shillings and all costs. Finally, in September 1835, Hatch, now known as 'Buffer' because of his considerable physical size, was sent to jail following a brutal assault on his wife, which was considered to be an attempt to murder her. The *Bucks Gazette* editor reported, "This is the ruffian who some years since, assaulted the Master of the Free School; and then, with unprecedented assurance, accused him of commencing the attack; and, by means of witnesses as perjured as himself, procured his conviction. His recent conduct is proof of the ill-reports which have for some time past been circulating about him."²⁸ Hatch's propensity for violence alone might have persuaded his witnesses to falsely testify that William struck Hatch first.

Might the Borlase trustees have halted the 1830 dismissal proceedings because they suspected or knew of Hatch's duplicity? It seems there were concerns about Francis's reputation. In 1833 the Charity Commission recorded, 'we are bound to add that the evidence of general reputation confirmed the opinion of those trustees.'²⁹ While at the same time they found the trustees were divided and, 'declined stating to us any facts of such a nature as would have justified his dismissal.' So why did the Trustees not pursue dismissal? After all Francis was a headmaster of a school who had been convicted of a serious crime and jailed. It is curious they did not present the charges to him.

The libel laws of the time did not favour Francis's defence. Parliament knew there was an issue and held debates on this between 1833 and 1843. As Professor J.R. Spencer, an authority on the nineteenth-century libel laws, explains; "The major complaint at this time [by the nineteenth century]... was the rule that truth, though always a defence to a civil action, was no defence at all

to criminal libel.”³⁰ Professor Spencer continues, “It’s [*i.e.* the law’s] only redeeming feature was that it was so unfair that sometimes prosecutors pursued a civil action rather than risk the perception that the allegations were true.” In other words, choosing to prosecute for criminal libel rather than sue for damages was tantamount to admitting allegations were true.

The impact on William Francis’s lawyer, Mr Hill, was significant. He could not present evidence to substantiate that the allegations William made in his letter were true or to mitigate William’s sentence. Of course, if Mr Hill had been able to probe the truth of the allegations, Francis might still have been found guilty of libel. But the jury and the public might have understood Francis’s reasons for writing the letter and the behaviours of both Hatch and Thomas Wethered. Nine years later, the Libel Act of 1843 made the truth of the libel a defence to a prosecution. From that time, the defendant was free to prove the truth of the allegations and that “it was for the public benefit that the said matters charged should be published.”

Little is known about Francis’s defence, including why he wrote the letter during the family period of mourning and what he hoped to achieve from it. Unfortunately it has not been possible to locate the trial papers, which might shed more light.³¹ The National Archives have the indictment, but nothing more was found. The *Bucks Herald* and *Reading Mercury* reported some of what Mr Hill, William’s lawyer, put forward. He explained that the letter had arisen out of the heat of an electoral dispute between the two parties, but no more than that. Mr Hill also thought it would have been better if Wethered had allowed the manuscript to remain ‘in the printer’s office’ rather than be put in front of the public. From these scant details, it is reasonable to conclude that he meant the original letter Francis sent to Mr Reydell should have remained private. Finally, Mr Hill told the court and jury that Francis regretted including his comments about Edward Wethered. It could be construed that William Francis regretted the additional pain his letter had caused Thomas Wethered and his family after the death of their son. Or, to those less partial to Francis, that he regretted including his comments about Edward because they were the cause of the libel action.

AFTER 1835 AND THE GREAT MARLOW ELECTION COMMITTEE OF 1842

William Francis left prison at the beginning of March 1835. A letter from *Mentor* was published in *The Bucks Gazette* on September 26th, entitled ‘Marlow Licenses – Impartiality of Magistrates.’ The letter concerned granting a beer licence to a man with no previous experience in the trade. It included a personal attack on Thomas Wethered, whom Francis now referred to as ‘the opulent brewer.’ The language of Francis’s letter remained critical. By early September, Hatch was jailed for failing to make his bail payments. His final fate is unknown. By 1840, Hatch’s bakery was not listed in the latest edition of Pigot’s trade directory, suggesting whatever his sentence, which might have been hanging, the business was rendered unfeasible.³²

A few years later, in 1841, Francis became involved in an argument between two rival muslin manufacturers, Mr Barton and Mr Flint, who paid locals, mainly women, to produce needlework in their homes. Barton alleged that Flint, a long-standing Marlow resident, had made payments to his workers in goods such as tea rather than money.³³ The laws requiring that wages be paid in cash were complicated at the time and this might have been a breach. Whether that was the case, local shopkeepers loathed the practice as parishioners had less money to spend in their shops. While Francis shone a light on this practice, the exchange of letters between him and Barton became unpleasant and eventually, the editor of the *Bucks Gazette* warned both men that nothing further would be published.

Between his release from Aylesbury Prison and his death, Francis maintained informal oversight of annual voter registration within the Borough.³⁴ Exactly which men were entitled to vote was an impediment to fair elections, as had been revealed to Mr Ashurst after the 1826 election. After 1832, each year the provisional list of voters was prominently displayed on All Saints’ Church door for two weeks in August to allow for objections before the 25th of that month. Francis became a regular objector, frequently appearing before the revising barristers. They usually met in the *Crown Inn* on Marlow High Street in September or October. The barristers heard from each objector and the man whose vote was being challenged. Finally, the

barristers agreed the list of those who could vote should there be an election that year.³⁵

In 1841, Sir William Clayton retained one of the borough seats by just one vote in the election. Three local men, Alexander Higginson, Robert Hammond, and William Grant, raised a petition to Parliament, the necessary process at the time. The *Bucks Herald* reported that the case would have collapsed, had Thomas Wethered not paid the substantial legal costs.³⁶ The petition alleged that Sir William Clayton had engaged in electoral malpractice. As was required, an inquiry was convened, and the Committee heard evidence in the House of Commons from many prominent Great Marlow inhabitants.

Francis was cross-examined several times, and the final report of the proceedings was published on April 14 1842.³⁷ The report sheds light on how Great Marlow Members of Parliament kept their seats, and the challenges of holding fair elections. To ensure voters supported the candidates they employed a variety of practices in their properties. These included low rents, renting to political supporters, moving gardens between properties to establish £10 householders and moving tenants into empty houses before election time.³⁸ This short extract from the inquiry shows that Francis contributed significantly toward fair and proper elections, even if he was not always politically impartial.³⁹



FIGURE 9 Photograph taken before 1886 at Church Cottage, Winchcombe, Glos. The lady standing to the right of the bench is Sarah Ann Francis, daughter of William and Elizabeth Francis (White R 2003, 'Where did the Vicar of Winchcombe Live before the Old Vicarage Was Built? *Gloucs Hist* 17, 2–7)

Are you in the habit of signing these objections?

William Francis – Yes, Sir.

A great many?

William Francis – I have signed a great many of them for three or four years past.

You are the objector-general?

William Francis – The general objector.

I suppose to bad votes?

William Francis – To those I consider bad votes.

This is the blue votes [Whig], I suppose?

William Francis – No, the coppers [Tory]; when I have considered them bad, and occasionally to the blues when I considered them very bad.

William Francis died less than a year after giving evidence to the inquiry, following a lingering illness, and his wife Elizabeth died shortly after him. He is buried in Great Marlow. William Emerson Francis, their son, had died, aged 40, almost exactly a year before his father. Their daughter Sarah Ann Francis died aged 73 in 1886, aged 73, leaving a substantial sum of £845 10s (over £100,000 in 2022) in her will, the remains of the legacy from her brother and mother. Neither William Emerson nor Sarah Ann had children. They were buried in Winchcombe, rather than Great Marlow, opposite the church where their parents married.

In his book, *Ask a Historian*, Greg Jenner states, “The past, meanwhile, is sprawlingly uncontrollable and frustratingly unknowable. True accuracy simply isn’t possible.”⁴⁰ It is impossible to know exactly what the *Reading Mercury* meant when they described William Francis as possessing a capricious intellect. This research found that at times, he used his intellect as might be expected, to solve a mathematics puzzle, draw up a borough plan, and instruct his pupils in complex subjects. And yet at other times, especially when he wrote the fateful letter, he appears to have been impulsive and self-righteous, even curmudgeonly.

But is this so surprising? The available evidence suggests that his behaviour became unpredictable after the events of 1830. After he became the victim of a man who might have persuaded his witnesses to lie on oath in court. This does not mean that William Francis’s conviction was unsound, he might have thrown the first blow, but rather the truth of the events remained unclear. Contemporary libel laws were being discussed in Parliament and concerns had been voiced about their unfairness which was particularly harmful to the expanding

newspaper sector. Francis was prevented by these same laws from putting his side of the story of the fateful 1833 letter. And then, in November 1834, a judge who did not know him offered an opinion that he was an improper person to carry out what had been his life’s work, a teacher. Only after his death did the *Reading Mercury* recognise Francis’s contribution to free and fair elections in the borough of Great Marlow. Despite great personal hardship, he had drawn attention to rotten election practices and during the last years of his life sustained a long campaign to ensure voters were properly registered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks for your help with this article; Adam Baxter, Graham Cheetham, Stuart Mitchell, Amanda Robson, Janet Smith, Barbara Wallis and Rob White.

NOTES

1. During the 19th century both ‘Marlow’ and ‘Great Marlow’ were used to identify the parish and town. The Parliamentary Borough was known as Great Marlow.
2. *Reading Mercury*, 8 April 1843.
3. <https://www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk>. *Reading Mercury*, 21 Jan. 1793, 11 March 1793, 21 July 1794.
4. Gloucestershire Archives, Marriage Licence, GDR/Q1/1800/entry number 75.
5. Buckinghamshire Archives, AR 118/86 CH20/AG/7/1.
6. All the mathematicians who provided testimonials for William Francis are listed in E.G.R Taylor, *An Index to the Mathematical Practitioners of Hanoverian England 1724–1840*, London, Harriet Winter Ltd, 1980.
7. T. Leybourn, *The Mathematical Repository*, Vol 111, London, W. Glendinning, 1804.
8. W. Francis, *The Gentleman’s, Farmer’s & Husbandman’s Most Useful Assistant, in Measuring and Expeditionously Computing the 8 Amount of Any Quantity of Land, at Various Given Prices Per Acre*, 1806 and London, Wetton & Jarvis, 1818.
9. No evidence was found that the two men knew each other before Francis moved to Marlow. However, Thomas Wethered was involved

- in most matters in the parish and it seems reasonable that Francis would be known to him. This might explain why Wethered relied on testimonials that were written 12 years before, although written references he took in 1814/15 might not have survived. See also; Dr Anthony Morton, *From Flanders to Waterloo; The Origins of The Royal Military College*, Sandhurst Occasional Papers No. 28, Central Library, RMC Sandhurst, 2019.
10. See J.C. Davies, *A History of Borlase School, Aylesbury*, G.T. De Fraine & Co. Ltd, 1932, pp 26–31.
 11. For further information on the school, see Nicolas Carlisle, *A Concise Description of the endowed Grammar Schools in England II and Wales*. London: Printed for Baldwin, Cradock & Joy, Paternoster Row, by W. Bulmer & Co., Cleveland Row, St James. 1818. This gives details of the Trustees of Borlase School, including Thomas Wethered.
 12. <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org> gives details of constituencies and Members. For further information, Frank O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England, 1734–1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Norman Gash, *Politics in the Age of Peel: A Study in the Technique of Parliamentary Representation, 1830–1850* (London: Longman, Green & Co Ltd, 1953). Rosemary Sweet, *The English Town 1680–1840* (Singapore: Pearson, 1999).
 13. <https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/elections-and-voting/constituencies/>
 14. Caroline Dakers gives some information on James Morrison involvement in the 1826 election. Caroline Dakers, *Genius for Money: Business: Art and the Morrisons* (Padstow: TJ International 2011).
 15. *Aylesbury Chronicle*, April 1827.
 16. Details of the 1826 election and the 1827 ‘Plan of the Borough’ are included by permission of Lord Margadale and the Trustees of the Fonthill Estate; Reference; A/15/0593.
 17. James Morrison continued to distribute canisters of tea to his supporters. *Bucks Gazette*, 23 Jan. 1830.
 18. *Aylesbury Chronicle*, April 1827.
 19. U.K. Parliamentary Papers 1829 (Local and Personal Acts 1794–1834) An Act for raising Money to defray the Expenses of rebuilding Marlow Bridge [14 May 1829.]
 20. *Bucks Gazette*, 21 March 1829, 16 May 1829, 23 January 1830.
 21. The map is in the safe hands of the Marlow Museum. <https://www.marlowmuseum.uk>
 22. *Pigot’s Directory of Buckinghamshire, 1830–31* (London: Pigot, 1831)
 23. *Bucks Gazette*, 23 October 1830.
 24. UKPP (1833), Reports of the Charity Commissioners, Vol. 26. Vol. XIX. The Trustees were Edward Sawyer, Thomas Gibbons, Thomas Wethered, William Townsend, John Simmonds, Henry Lovegrove, James Deane, Thomas Rolls, John Hone, Joseph Heath, Robert Lunning, John Cozens and their heirs.
 25. Stated by Francis in the letter published in the *Windsor & Eton Express* on 12 Jan. 1833.
 26. Anthony Wethered, *Edward Wethered, and the Politics of Hate*, The Marlow Historian, published by the Marlow Society, 2003, pp 24 9–15.
 27. *Windsor & Eton Express*, 28 June 1834. See also, *Morning Herald*, 23 June 1843, *Reading Mercury*, 30 June 1834 and *Bucks Herald*, 28 June 1834, *Bucks Gazette*, 29 Nov. 1834.
 28. *Bucks Gazette*, 5 September 1835.
 29. See footnote 22. UKPP (1833), Reports of the Charity Commissioners, Vol. 26. Vol. XIX.
 30. Professor J.R. Spencer’s essay was very informative; “The press and the reform of criminal libel” (in Glazebrook, ed.), *Reshaping the Criminal Law: essays in honour of Glanville Williams* (Stevens 1978) pp 266–286.
 31. Unfortunately no legal papers were found with the indictment, The King vs Francis (1834) held by The National Archives, Kew. KB 10/75/1834East. Description: 1834, Easter term. Indictments etc., were removed from inferior courts in London and Middlesex. No 3 Easter Term in the third year of the reign of King William IV.
 32. *Pigot’s Directory of Buckinghamshire, 1830–31* (London: Pigot, 1831)
 33. *Bucks Gazette*, 27 March, 1841. Also see other letters in the same paper around this time.
 34. Annual voter registration was introduced in 1832. For a full explanation of the changes introduced in the 1832 Reform Act see Philip Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work, Local Politics and National Parties 1832–1841* (London/Woodbridge: The Royal Historical Society and

- The Boydell Press, 2011).
35. See Salmon 2011 (note 35).
 36. *Bucks Herald*, 16 April 1842.
 37. UKPP 1842 (174) Committee on Great Marlow Election Petition: Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence. Also see, Arthur Barron and Alfred Austin, *Notes from Reports From cases of Controverted Elections: In the Fourteenth Parliament of The United Kingdom, 1844*, London, S. Sweet, Maxwell & Son; V.R. Stevens & Norton. This edition includes several of the Great Marlow votes that the inquiry considered.
 38. The concept of the £10 householder was introduced in the 1832 Reform Act. In the Boroughs if a man's property, which included gardens and other constructions, was valued at £10, he was eligible to vote. Hence the expression, the £10 householder.
 39. Great Marlow Election Report, p.45.
 40. Greg Jenner, *Ask a Historian*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2021. p.289.