Accents, dialects and languages of the Bristol region

A bibliography compiled by Richard Coates, with the collaboration of the late Jeffrey Spittal (in progress)

First draft released 27 January 2010
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Introductory note

With the exception of standard national resources, this bibliography includes only separate studies, or more inclusive works with a distinct section, devoted to the West of England, defined as the ancient counties of Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire.

Note that works on place-names are not treated in this bibliography unless they are of special dialectological interest. For a bibliography of place-name studies, see Jeffrey Spittal and John Field, eds (1990) A reader’s guide to the place-names of the United Kingdom. Stamford: Paul Watkins, and annual bibliographies printed in the Journal of the English Place-Name Society and Nomina.

Web-links mentioned were last tested in summer 2011.

Thanks for information and clarification go to Madge Dresser, Brian Iles, Peter McClure, Frank Palmer, Harry Parkin, Tim Shortis, Jeanine Treffers-Daller, Peter Trudgill, and especially Katharina Oberhofer.

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Academic and serious popular work

General English material, and Western material not specific to a particular county


Britton, Derek (1994) The etymology of modern dialect 'en, 'him'. *Notes and Queries* 41.1 [239 of the continuous series], 16-18.


Ellegård, Alvar (1953) *The auxiliary DO: the establishment and regulation of its use in English*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell (Gothenburg studies in English 2).


Halliwell, James Orchard (1848) *A dictionary of archaic and provincial words.*
London: privately published.

Harris, W. Gregory (1923) *West-Country volk. Sketches in prose and verse with an introduction on West-Country dialects and dialect literature.* London: John Lane. [Also contains selected literary work.]


Milroy, James, and Lesley Milroy, eds (1993) *Real English: the grammar of English dialects in the British Isles.* Harlow: Longman. [The book has little specific on the West, but includes a preliminary bibliography of dialect material organized by county, and a list of other resources. See Edwards (1990) and (1993), above.]


Wakelin, Martyn F., and Michael V. Barry (1968) The voicing of initial fricative consonants in present-day dialectal English. *Leeds Studies in English* (new series) 2, 47-64. [There is an extensive previous literature on this topic, referenced in this article.]


Wright, Joseph (1898-1905) *The English dialect dictionary*, 5 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Online at www.archive.org/stream/englishdialectdi01wriguoft/englishdialectdi01wriguoft_djvu.txt. [Vol. 5 was originally also published separately as *The English dialect grammar*, and is available online at www.archive.org/stream/englishdialectgr00wriguoft/englishdialectgr00wriguoft_djvu.txt.]

Wyld, Henry C. (1913-14) Old English *short and long* y in the dialects of the south and south-western counties in Middle English. *Englische Studien* 47, 144-166.

**Dialect, education and literature**


Trudgill, Peter (1975) *Accent, dialect and the school*. London: Arnold. [The major text of its time in educational debates about dialect.]
There is a considerable amount of discussion about (especially urban) accent and dialect on blogs and other web-resources, which should be investigated by anyone seeking evidence for popular attitudes to, and perceptions of, language use. The letters columns of local newspapers such as the Bristol Evening Post can also be a rich source.

Bristol

*County material is divided between General, Lexis, Grammar and Phonology, but in individual works there is often overlap.*

Bristol: General and historical


Shortis, Tim. See anon., Accentuating the positive.

**Bristol: Newspaper articles**


Clensy, David (2011) Putting accent on faith. *Evening Post*, 27 October 2011, 21. [About a Bible-reading in Bristol accent/dialect, featuring Julie Loxley. The Bible-reading may have been serious in intent, but the article contains humorous material.]


Iles, Brian (2011a) The Bristol dialect is being wrongly portrayed by using the words “Brizzle” and “Bristle”. [Letter.] *Evening Post*, 03 November 2011.


**Bristol: Some relevant webpages** [all accessed 10 October 2011]


Bristol University: “All talk”: [http://www.bris.ac.uk/sml/media/german-goinglocaltshirts.mov](http://www.bris.ac.uk/sml/media/german-goinglocaltshirts.mov).

**Bristol: Research materials, questionnaires and suchlike**

Blacker, Chas (1993) *Features of Bristol Speech*. Handout for students in A-level English courses at the City of Bristol College.


**Bristol: Lexis**

morrish-all-right-my-lover-no-it-certainly-is-not-my-cocker-536098.html. [About forms of address preferred by Council leader.]


**Bristol: Grammar**

No separate entries.

**Bristol: Phonology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“… the absolute absence of h’s among the multitude …”</th>
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<tr>
<td>(American visitor to Bristol’s Royal Show in 1878: George E. Waring, jr, Harper’s New Monthly Magazine 58 (January 1879), 218)</td>
</tr>
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</table>


Sanigar, W. T. (1924) Bristol word lore. (1) Eccentricities of local diction (i and ii); (2) A study of the letter L; (3) The disappearing R. Western Daily Press 18 and 20 March 1924; 14 July 1924; 23 August 1924. [Note Bristol Record Office, Great Western Cotton Factory MS collection no. 13423/37 (1924-1962), paper book, small octavo grangerized, Bristol word lore by W.T. Sanigar, articles from the Western Daily Press 1924, letters from the same, 1951 & 1962, Bristol dialect. MS notes & index. Probably notes and sketches for published material. See also the folder at BRO 44829 - The W. T. Sanigar Collection.]


*Some works of theoretical linguistics use pronunciation data from Bristolian, including especially the so-called intrusive <l>:*


Not at all relevant to dialect, but a matter of some local interest, is that the subjects for the experiment(s) reported in the following famous paper were students at Bristol Polytechnic:


Howard Giles taught (social) psychology at the University of Bristol from 1975-88, and some of his team’s well-known studies on the social psychology of language were carried out there.

**Bristol’s other languages**

Bristol is well known as a city where many “community” languages, i.e. originally the languages of immigrants, are now spoken. Readers may be interested in the web-page of Bristol Metropolitan College which deals with issues of bilingualism and community language teaching, focusing on Somali: formerly at ourlanguages.org.uk/working/case-studies/CaseStudy115.

The city library service’s range of community language collections in stock includes: Arabic; Chinese; Gujarati; Hindi; Punjabi; Vietnamese; Pashto; Farsi; Kurdish; Serbo-Croat; Bengali; Urdu; Albanian; Czech.

Bristol City Council adopted the British Sign Language (BSL) charter in 2003.

Bristol City Council’s translating and interpreting services are profiled at www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/ translating-and-interpreting-services/.

Bristol has occasionally been the site of expressions of disagreement with language policy in other places: //news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bristol/3687499.stm.

**Gloucestershire**
County material is divided between General, Lexis, Grammar and Phonology, but in individual works there is often overlap.

The following places were investigated for the Survey of English Dialects (location code in brackets):

- Bream (Gl3)
- Deerhurst (Gl1)
- Gretton (Gl2)
- Latteridge (Gl7)
- Sherborne (Gl5)
- Slimbridge (Gl6)
- Whiteshill (Gl4)

Gloucestershire: General and historical

Akerman, J. Y[onge], and others (1881-93) Specimens of local dialect. Gloucestershire Notes and Queries 1, 408-9; 4, 434-5, 471, 508-9; 5, 397-8.


Barth, Ernst (1968) The dialect of Naunton (Gloucestershire). Doctoral dissertation of the University of Zürich. [Published in the same year Zürich: P.G. Keller.]


Carnes, Cornelia M. (?1980s) Personal names for Bristol and Gloucestershire from the 1327 Subsidy Rolls. MS, English Place-Name Society library, University of Nottingham.


Lysons, Samuel (1868) *Our vulgar tongue. A lecture on language in general, with a few words on Gloucestershire in particular.* London: privately published.


Mohr, Friedrich (1888) Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu den mittelenglischen Legenden aus Gloucestershire. Doctoral dissertation, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn. [Published Bonn: Georgi (1888). Deals with the so-called South English Legendary, MS Bodleian Library Ashmole 43.]

Nicks, James (c.1872) *A specimen of the vulgar speech of the town of Gloucester.* London: L.L. Bonaparte.


Waters, Ivor (1973a) *Chepstow talk.* Chepstow: privately published. [Just across the county boundary.]


**Gloucestershire: Lexis**

anon. (1851) *Glossary of provincial words used in Gloucestershire.* Privately published.

anon. (1876) *The Gloucester Journal*, 07 October 1876.

“A curious specimen of Gloucestershire dialect came out in an assault case heard by the Gloucester court magistrates on Saturday. One of the witnesses, speaking of what a girl was doing at the time the assault took place, said she was ‘badding’ walnuts in a pigstye. The word is peculiarly provincial: to ‘bad’ walnuts is to strip away the husk. The walnut, too, is often called a ‘bannut,’ and hence the old Gloucestershire phrase, ‘Come an’ bad the bannuts.’”


Huntley, Richard Webster (1868) *Glossary of the Cotswold (Gloucestershire) dialect, illustrated by examples from ancient authors*. London: John Russell Smith. [Available online at www.archive.org/stream/glossaryofcotswo00huntrich/glossaryofcotswo00huntrich_djvu.txt.]


Smyth, John (1639) *The Berkeley manuscripts ... from 1066 to 1618* (ed. J. Maclean, 1883-5). Gloucester: John Bellows. [There is a list of Gloucestershire dialect words from the early 17th century in vol. 3, 22-33, of the published version.]


Spittal, C. J[effrey] (1977) Gloucestershire dialect word-lists. *Quest (Newsletter of the Avon Local History Association)* 6, unpaginated [article is 4 pp. long].


Way, Albert (1851) Gloucestershire provincialisms. *Notes and Queries* 1.3, 204-205. [Especially about to burl.]

**Gloucestershire: Grammar**

No separate entries.

**Gloucestershire: Phonology**


Note that Richard Solloway Skillern, the author of *A new system of English grammar, or English so illustrated as to facilitate the acquisition of other languages, whether ancient or modern: with an appendix containing a complete system of parsing* (Gloucester, 1802; 2nd edn 1808) was a Gloucester man, and that occasional localisms have been suspected in his work. The book was described as “peculiar” in *Notes and Queries* (1854).

## Somerset

The following places were investigated for the Survey of English Dialects (location code in brackets):

- Blagdon (So1)
- Brompton Regis (So9)
- Coleford (So4)
- Horsington (So11)
- Merriott (So13)
- Pitminster (So12)
- Stogumber (So7)
- Stogursey (So6)
- Stoke St Gregory (So10)
- Wedmore (So3)
- Weston (So1)
- Withypool (So8)
- Wootton Courtenay (So5)

The Ihalainen Somerset Corpus (c.165,000 words) is available at Helsinki University. See [http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/Dialects/somerset.html](http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/Dialects/somerset.html).


*County material is divided between General, Lexis, Grammar and Phonology, but in individual works there is often overlap.*

**Somerset: General and historical**


Garton, J[ames] A[rchibald] (1937) Glowing embers from a Somerset hearth. Wells: Clare, son, & co. [Stories in dialect, but with an essay on the dialect (13-17) and a glossary (117-127).]


Kruisinga, Etsko (1905) *A grammar of the dialect of West Somersetshire, descriptive and historical*. Bonn: P. Hanstein (Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik 18). [Introduction available online at openlibrary.org/a/OL124348A.]

Matthews, W[illiam] (1939) South Western dialect in the Early Modern period. *Neophilologus* 24, 193-209. [Contains material on Somerset (and other counties) from churchwardens’ records.]


Read, John (1914) *Wold ways a-gwain, or, Scenes from a Western Country side*. London: Somerset Folk Press. [Collection of plays in dialect, with an introduction on the subject of dialect.]


Wakelin, Martyn F. (1986a) The “Exmoor Courtship” and “Exmoor Scolding”: an evaluation of two eighteenth-century dialect texts. In Dieter Kastovsky and Alexander Szwedek, eds, *Linguistics across historical and geographical boundaries: in honour of Jacek Fisiak on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter (Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs 32), 741-51. [NB these two texts are now usually attributed to Devon, and no other reference is made to them in this bibliography, except to note Elworthy’s edition (1879), below, which also includes Somerset material.]
**Somerset: Lexis**


Cox, J[ames] Stevens (1974) *An Ilchester word list and some folklore notes: a glossary of words, phrases and rhymes used at Ilchester and recorded before 1925*. St Peter Port: Toucan Press (Ilchester and District Occasional Papers 1). [Paginated as if an offprint from elsewhere and printed from plates, source unknown.]


Gill, W. W. (1935) Dialect words of south Somerset. *Notes and Queries* 168, 188. [Also see same vol., 266: mention of an article in *Bath and Wells Diocesan Gazette*, presumably around the same time.]


Macmillan, A[lexander] S[tuart] (1923) *Popular names of flowers, fruit, etc. as used in the county of Somerset and the adjacent parts of Devon, Dorset, and Wilts*. Reprinted from *Somerset County Herald* (1922); reviewed *Journal of Botany* 61 (1923), 177.
Macmillan, Alexander Stuart (1928) *Popular names of birds as used in ... Somerset, Devon, Dorset and Wilts.* Reprinted from *Somerset County Herald.* Yeovil: Folk Press.


Sweetman, George (1892) *A glossary of words used by the rural population in the parish and neighbourhood of Wincanton, Somerset.* Wincanton: privately published.


**Somerset: Grammar**

Elworthy, Frederic Thomas (1877) *An outline of the grammar of the dialect of West Somerset.* London: Trübner, for EDS. [Reprinted Vaduz: Kraus (1965). Also in *Transactions of the Philological Society* [no vol. no.] (1877-9), 143-257. The dialect specimens are presented in Ellis’s Glossic transcription system.]

Elworthy, Frederic Thomas (1877-9) The grammar of the dialect of West Somerset. *Transactions of the Philological Society* [no vol. no.], 143-257. Reprinted as *The grammar of the dialect of West Somerset illustrated by examples of the common phrases and modes of speech now in use among the people.* London: Trübner, for EDS (publication 19).

Elworthy, Frederic Thomas (1883-4) Further unnoted grammatical peculiarities in the dialect of Somerset and Devon. *Monthly Abstract of the Proceedings of the Philological Society* [no vol. no.], viii-ix.


**Somerset: Phonology**

Giles, Howard (1971) Patterns of evaluation in reactions to R[eceived] P[ronunciation], South Welsh and Somerset accented speech. British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology 10, 280-81. [A great deal more of Giles’s work is important for an understanding of the social psychology of accent. His publications can be found at www.comm.ucsb.edu/sites/www.comm.ucsb.edu/files/sitefiles/people/faculty/gilesh/cv-giles.pdf, accessed 31 October 2011.]


Three entries on Somerset dialect in Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset: also vol. 6, Ambra Books web-page also. Vol. 7 (1901) and 20 (1930-2). [Unclear. To be elucidated.]

**Wiltshire**

The following places were investigated for the Survey of English Dialects (location code in brackets):

- Ashton Keynes (W1)
- Avebury (W3)
- Burbage (W4)
- Fovant (W8)
- Netheravon (W6)
- Steeple Ashton (W5)
- Sutton Benger (W2)
- Sutton Veny (W7)
- Whiteparish (W9)

*County material is divided between General, Lexis, Grammar and Phonology, but in individual works there is often overlap.*

**Wiltshire: General and historical**


Horstmann, Carl, ed. (1883) *S. Editha sive Chronicon Vilodunense im Wiltshire dialekt, aus Ms. Cotton. Faustina B III*. Heilbronn: Gebr. Henninger. [It is generally believed that this Middle English saint’s life (c.1420) is actually from Wiltshire.]

Kjederqvist, John (1903) *The dialect of Pewsey (Wiltshire), with a glossarial index of the words treated.* London: Philological Society. Also in *Transactions of the Philological Society* [no vol. no.] (1903-6), 1-144.

**Wiltshire: Lexis**

Akerman, J[ohn] Y[onge] (1842) *Glossary of provincial words and phrases in use in Wiltshire.* London: John Russell Smith. [See also Skeat (1879).]

Britton, John (1825) See Skeat (1879).


Macmillan, A. S. (1923) *Popular names of flowers, fruit, etc. as used in the county of Somerset and the adjacent parts of Devon, Dorset, and Wilts.* Reprinted from *Somerset County Herald* (1922); reviewed *Journal of Botany* 61 (1923), 177.


Skeat, Walter W. (1879) Wiltshire words from Britton’s * Beauties of Wiltshire* (1825) compared with Akerman’s *Glossary* (1842). In W.W. Skeat and James Britten, eds,
Reprinted glossaries. London: Trübner (English Dialect Society publication B.23; section XIX). [Also includes words from Monthly Magazine 38 (1814), 144.]


Slow, Edward (1908) Glossary of Wiltshire words. Salisbury: R.R. Edwards. [Relation to previous item unclear.]

Wiltshire: Grammar

No separate entries.

Wiltshire: Phonology


Kjederqvist, John (1903) The dialect of Pewsey (Wiltshire), with a glossarial index of the words treated. London: Philological Society. Also in Transactions of the Philological Society [no vol. no.] (1903-6), 1-144.


Humorous works about dialect

An attempt has been made to separate works whose intention is to satirize the dialect or draw out the comic potential in the dialect itself from those which use it to create literary works, even humorous ones. Some readers might prefer to draw the line in a different place, or merge the categories.

Bristol

Clensy, David (2011) Putting accent on faith. Evening Post 27 October 2011, 21. [About a Bible-reading in Bristol accent/dialect, featuring Julie Loxley. The Bible-reading may have been serious in intent, but the article contains humorous material.]


“After 30 years, a team of researchers from the University of Sodding Chipbury tracked down every bit of Bristle, and the results now appear in two mammoth collections. *A Load of Old Bristle* (2002) takes you into the glottal stop and beyond. *Sick Sentries of Bristle* (2004) is a romp through 600 scandalous years.”


## Works of literature in dialect

No claim of completeness is made for this section.

Attention is drawn to the Salamanca Corpus of English dialect literature, [salamancacorpus.usal.es/SC/index.html](http://salamancacorpus.usal.es/SC/index.html), in which the section on Gloucestershire is currently (October 2011) live.

A preliminary list, restricted to book-length works, can be found in James Milroy and Lesley Milroy, eds (1993) *Real English: the grammar of English dialects in the British Isles.* Harlow: Longman, 303-306 [Cotswolds and rest of Gloucestershire], 319-322 [Somerset], 322-324 [Wiltshire].

### General Western


[The works of “Agrikler” are sometimes found bound with James Jennings *et al.* “Zummerzet” rhymes, “Philander Smiff”, and “Tommy Nutty”, see below (Somerset). “Agrikler” is for Latin *agricola* ‘farmer’.]

Harris, W. Gregory (1923a) *Zummerzet volk and Devonshire diversions*. Tiverton: Gregory & Son; Exeter: S. Drayton & Sons.

Harris, W. Gregory (1923b) *West-Country volk. Sketches in prose and verse with an introduction on West-Country dialects and dialect literature*. London: John Lane. [Contains selected literature.]

“Outis”, ps. John Lucas Tupper (1875) *Poems, humorous and philosophical ... with which are included rhymes in the West of England dialect by Agrikler*. Bristol: J. Wright & Co. [See also “Agrikler”. Unclarity about authorship.]

**Bristol**


Bristol Broadsides, eds (1988) *Bristol reflections: a book of memories 1910-88*. Bristol: Bristol Broadsides. [This collection contains some material in dialect, e.g. by Olive Knowland (102), Barbara Boulton (103), and Angela Sims (140-142), with occasional snatches in other pieces. Other Bristol Broadsides books contain very little dialect.]

City Sightseeing Bristol: poems in *Bristol dialect*. Online at www.citysightseeingbristol.co.uk/dialect.html (accessed 02 August 2011).

Humphries, Stephen (1981) *Hooligans or rebels? An oral history of working-class childhood and youth 1889-1939*. Oxford: Blackwell. [There are some hints of local usage in the quotations from Bristolians, but not much. Dr Humphries deposited audiotapes of his material for this book at Bristol Reference Library, now catalogued under “oral history”.]

[To be checked. Not clear how much of these are written in, or record, dialect. Relevance of all to be established, and other Broadsides books of working-class history checked; some are listed for ex. at www.wensstyle.com/Books/Publisher/lookup/BRISTOL%20BROADSIDES/page-1.html, but I have not found an authoritative complete list.]

Check out 820.908 at St Matthias.

Podcasts:

itunes.apple.com/hn/podcast/bristols-dialect-radio/id354377126

Gloucestershire


anon. (no date; c. 1886) *Roger Plowman’s second excursion to London, with his marriage to ‘Sairy Jane’.* London: Kent.

[It has been suspected that “Roger Plowman” was a pseudonym of Adin Williams, on the grounds of the title of Williams (1879a).]


[The above two items were republished together by Forest of Dean Newspapers (1977).]


Williams, Adin (1876) *Legends, tales and songs in the dialect of the peasantry of Gloucestershire. With several ballads, and a glossary of words in general use*. London: Kent, Cirencester: Savory, and Gloucester: Davies. [Available online at [www.archive.org/stream/legendstalessong00londiala/legendstalessong00londiala_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/legendstalessong00londiala/legendstalessong00londiala_djvu.txt).]

Williams, Adin (1879a) *Roger Plowman’s garland of merrytales*. London: Kent


[Note: Theodore Hannam Clark was an acknowledged expert on Gloucestershire dialect, and was well known for his radio role as “Gaffer Dones” during the 1930s. For additional biographical information about him see the obituary by Brian Frith in *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 79 (1960), 310-11.]

**Somerset**


Brown, Harry W. (1941) “*Gi’e’s a dip*: a bit o’ wold Zummerzet, history and humour.” Publisher unknown. [Contains a history of Milborne Port.]

Clark, Roger: see Lovell.


Elworthy, Frederic T., ed. (1879) The “Exmoor Scolding” and “Courtship”. Two dialogues of the beginning of the XVIII century. Also “The Somersetshire Man’s Complaint”. A poem of a full century earlier. London: Trübner, for English Dialect Society. [The “Exmoor” poems are now generally reckoned to be from Devon.]

Garton, J[ames] A[rchibald] (1937) Glowing embers from a Somerset hearth. Wells: Clare, Son, & co. [Stories in dialect, with an essay on the dialect (13-17) and a glossary (117-127).]


Harris, W. Gregory (1923) West-Country volk. Sketches in prose and verse with an introduction on West-Country dialects and dialect literature. London: John Lane. [Contains selected literature. Largely deals with Cornwall and Devon.]

“Hodger, Barney”, ps. (1924) Down whoâme. London: Somerset Free Press. [This author has not been identified, but he may (or not) be the same “Barney Hodger” who contributed the following article: The old Bristol Tolzey, Gloucester Countryside 7 (1951), 388.]


[All of W.M. Jones’s early works were reprinted Frome: Ellenbray Press (1960-7??).]


Mackie, John (1925) *Dialect poems and a play.* London: Somerset Folk Press.


Parker, George (1879) *Tom Balch: an historical tale of West Somerset during Monmouth’s Rebellion; amusing and other poems: some of them in the Somersetshire dialect.* Bridgwater: Robert Brodie.


[Note: Evelyn V. Clark (1933) *Walter Raymond – the man - his work and letters*. Published bound with Raymond’s *Somerset and her folk movement*. Raymond’s collected works were published posthumously London: Dent (1933-4). Reprinted (2007); details not known.]

Read, John (1914) *Wold ways a-gwain, or, Scenes from a Western countryside*. London: Somerset Folk Press. [Collection of plays in dialect, with an introduction on the subject of dialect.]

Read, John (1916) *Latter-Lammas*. Taunton. [Play in Somerset dialect, like the following.]


Read, John (no date) *Readings and recitations in Wessex dialect; Farmer Wangle’s field-talk*. London: Somerset Folk Press.

Rees, Phoebe M. (1931) *That there dog*. xxxxx [now Colwall]: Kenyon-Deane. [One-act comedy.]

Rees, Phoebe M. (1947) *The last straw*. xxxxx [now Colwall]: Kenyon-Deane. [One-act farce.]


*The Somerset Folk Press series: volumes as bound (not all relate to dialect)*
Gregory, R R C; Gass, David J; Raymond, Walter; Munford, G F; Macmillan, A S; Palmer H P; Mackie, John; Horne, Dom. Ethelbert and many others: Somerset Folk Series Number 1 to 24 - bound in 6 volumes -

London, Somerset Folk Press Ltd., 1922-26. (24 issues) Rarely, available uniformly contemporary-bound with 4 issues to each binding, in blue-grey cloth with gilt titling to spine.

Nr 1 “Selected Poems in Somerset Dialect, suitable for recitation” Nr 2 “The Land of Summer” Nr 3 “Ghosts and Legends of South Somerset” Nr 4 “Idylls of Mendip”

Nr 5 “Poems in Dialect” Nr 6 “Down Along Talks” Nr 7 “Somerset and the Drama” Nr 8 “Tales of the Polden Hills”

Nr 9 “Two Men o’ Mendip, a play in four acts” Nr 10 “Somerset Composers, Musicians and Music” Nr 11 “Cluster=O’=Vive” Nr 12 “Somerset Holy Wells and other named Wells”


(ex inf. the web-site of Keeble Antiques, Langport, www.keebleantbks.co.uk/, accessed 2010)


as *Lost words in the Somersetshire dialect*. Monmouth: Oakmagic Publications (2004).]


**Published sheet music (highly selective)**

*Down Zummerzet Way Or We Dont Do Things Like That In Zummerzet* Words and music - Bert Lee and T. C. Sterndale Bennett, *20th Century Songs*.


*I Love Someone In Zummerzet* Words and music - Bert Lee and T. C. Sterndale Bennett, *20th Century Songs*.

*Zummerzetshire - Old song* George Parker, arranged by Ernest Newton, *20th Century Songs*.

**Wiltshire**


Hill, Geoffrey (1904) *Wiltshire folk songs and carols*. Bournemouth: W. Mate. [Sometimes dated to 1898. An earlier edn?]
Kite, Edward (c.1861) *The Song of Solomon in the Wiltshire dialect, as it is spoken in the northern division: from the Authorised English Version*. London: for Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte.

Morrison, Jean (no date) *Wiltshire folksongs*. Avebury: Wiltshire Folk Life Society.


[Relation between the previous two items unclear. Probably the same work.]

Slow, Edward (c.1871) *Voices from Salisbury Plain; or Who’s to blame? A dialogue on the Franco-Prussian War. Between Willum and Jeames ... / / by the author of “Poems in the Wiltshire dialect”*. Salisbury: Frederick A. Blake. [?Later edn London?]


Slow, Edward (1900) *A humorous tale in the West countrie and Cockney dialects, entitled “Jan Ridley’s new wife”, with an account of her London nephew Mister Dick Dasher.* Salisbury: R. R. Edwards. [New edn 1913?]

Slow, Edward (no date, c.1900) *Ben and Nancy Sloper’s visit to Zalsbury Vair, what they seed and how they enjoyed themselves (being a description of this noted pleasure fair as it appeared in the last year of the nineteenth century).* Salisbury: R. R. Edwards.


Slow, Edward (1907) *Tha military manoeuvres in tha nayberhood a Zalsbury Zeptember, 1907, by Measter Benjamin Sloper, being an account of the various operations, also the reception of the Wiltshire regiment by the city of Salisbury.* Salisbury: R. R. Edwards.


[For Slow, see also Chandler. The publication history of Slow’s work is sometimes unclear, especially as to dates, and the list above (taken mainly from library catalogues) appears incomplete and sometimes contradictory. There have been modern reprints. Slow (1841-1925) was an alderman of Wilton borough, and mayor of Wilton in 1892 and 1905.]
Medieval and early-modern local works and records attributable to the West (literary and legal/administrative)

Latimer, John (1900) *The annals of Bristol in the seventeenth century*. Bristol: W. George’s Sons.

Latimer, John (1908) *The corporation of Bristol in the olden time*. [More familiarly now known as *Sixteenth century Bristol*]. Bristol: Arrowsmith, Simpkin [etc.].

[All of Latimer’s *Annals* (1600-1900) were reprinted Bath: Kingsmead Publishers (1970.).]


Pabst, Felix (1889) Die Sprache der mittelenglischen Reimchronik des Robert von Gloucester, 1: Lautlehre. Doctoral dissertation, Berlin 1889-90, no. 241. [The MS used by Pabst for his study was the earliest one, but inferior to that used by Wright for his edition. The connection with the city of Gloucester is not fully certain.]


Wadley, T[homas] P[rocter], ed. (1886) *Notes or abstracts of the wills contained in the volume entitled The Great Orphan Book and Book of Wills in the Council House at Bristol*. Bristol: C. T. Jefferies and Sons, for the Bristol and Gloucestershire Society.


_Churchwardens’ presentments (formal accusations before the Archdeaconry Court, often about breach of the Sabbath, failure to attend church, or sexual_
misbehaviour) can be a rich source of near-verbatim local speech, but do not survive in large numbers for all counties.

Wiltshire presentments are catalogued at D4/10 in the county archives at Trowbridge.

Depositions taken by the clerk of the peace at county quarter sessions are often a rich source of near-verbatim local speech.

Gibson, Jeremy (2007) Quarter sessions records for family historians, 5th edn. Bury: Family History Partnership. [Useful guide to the nature and whereabouts of such records.]

For Bristol records before 1700, see: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=002-jqs&cid=0#0

For Gloucestershire records before 1700, see: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/subjectView.asp?ID=O41908

For Somerset records before 1700, see:


For Wiltshire records before 1700, see:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/subjectView.asp?ID=O42048

[To be completed.]
Middle English Compendium HyperBibliography

There follows a list of late Middle English texts identified by the LALME project as originating in the counties of our region, mainly using linguistic criteria. There is some duplication between counties where there is uncertainty about the precise place of origin. The links lead to bibliographical information and information about where the relevant documents are to be found.

1. LALME search in Middle English Compendium HyperBibliography: Gloucestershire with Bristol

70 matches.

- All Saints' City Deeds, Bristol
- Cartulary of the Manor and Church of Great Chalfield, Wiltshire (the Thomas Tropenell Cartulary)
- Devotion to the Cross
- Doomsday
- Eleven Pains of Hell (1)
- The Five Wits
- Floris and Blancheflur
- The Fox and the Wolf
- Robert of Gloucester, Chronicle, Version A
- Robert of Gloucester, Chronicle, Version B
- Great Red Book of Bristol
- Harrowing of Hell
- ?John Trevisa, Higden's Polychronicon (1) (ME translation of book 6, chapters 15-26)
- Register of the Lady Chapel in the parish church at Cirencester, Gloucestershire
- "Edi beo þu..." (incipit)
- "Fiftene toknen..." (incipit)
- "Hit bilimpeð..." (incipit)
- "Loue is sofft..." (incipit)
- "Moder milde flur..." (incipit)
- "Stond wel moder..." (incipit)
- "Sucte ihu king..." (incipit)
- "Why werre..." (incipit)
- "Y wandryng..." (incipit)
- Jacob and Joseph
- Little Red Book of Bristol
- Maximian
- Memoriale Credencium
- William Langland, Piers Plowman, C Version
- The Proverbs of Hendyng
- Our Lady's Psalter (How Our Lady's Psalter Was Made)
- Sayings of Saint Bede
• Sayings of Saint Bernard
• South English Legendary: unanalyzed portions
• South English Legendary: Temporale ("Expanded Nativity," parts 1 and 3, in BL MS Egerton 1993)
• South English Legendary: Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury
• South English Legendary: Blaise, Bishop of Sebastea
• South English Legendary: St. Brendan
• South English Legendary: St. Bridget of Ireland (2)
• South English Legendary: St. Cecilia
• South English Legendary: Temporale (Conception of Mary, extracts)
• South English Legendary: Legends of the Cross
• South English Legendary: St. Edmund Rich of Abingdon
• South English Legendary: Edward the Confessor
• South English Legendary: Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins
• South English Legendary: St. Eustace
• South English Legendary: St. James the Greater
• South English Legendary: St. John the Evangelist
• South English Legendary: St. Juliana of Cumae
• South English Legendary: St. Kenelm
• South English Legendary: St. Lucy
• South English Legendary: St. Michael the Archangel
• South English Legendary: Temporale ("Expanded Nativity," part 2, in Egerton 1993 and Bodley 779)
• South English Legendary: Temporale (Nativity of Mary and Christ)
• South English Legendary: St. Nicholas of Myra
• South English Legendary: Temporale (Passion of Christ)
• South English Legendary: St. Patrick's Purgatory
• South English Legendary: Temporale (Prologue to the Conception of Mary)
• Speculum of Guy of Warwick
• Life of Saint Alexis (1)
• St. Eustace
• Legend of Pope Gregory
• The Thrush and the Nightingale
• The Siege of Jerusalem (Titus and Vespasian)
• John Trevisa, Defensio Curatorum (ME translation)
• John Trevisa, Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk on Translation
• John Trevisa, Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum (ME translation)
• John Trevisa, Epistle to Berkeley
• John Trevisa, Higden's Polychronicon (ME translation)
• Thomas Wimbledon, Redde rationem villicationis tue (sermon)
• An Exposition of the Pater Noster (Wycliffite tract) (2)

2. LALME search in Middle English Compendium
   HyperBibliography: Somerset

65 matches.
Accounts of Bridgwater Castle and Demesne, Somerset
Churchwardens' Accounts of Yatton, Somerset
Arthur
Terms of a Carver in Ashmole 189
Femina
Inventory of vestments at St. Katherine's Church, Bridgwater, Somerset
"Almy3ty godde conserue..." (incipit)
"Cryste made mane..." (incipit)
"Fadyr & sone..." (incipit)
"Fadyr and sone & holy gost..." (incipit)
"Looke well..." (incipit)
"Man in Heuyn..." (incipit)
"Man benke here on..." (incipit)
"O mors..." (incipit)
"Regem regum..." (incipit)
"Solomon seyth..." (incipit)
"Swete lady now..." (incipit)
"be iove of oure herte..." (incipit)
"The masse..." (incipit)
"Thou synfull man..." (incipit)
"Throwe a towne..." (incipit)
"Thys mayden..." (incipit)
"Timor mortis..." (incipit)
"Who carpsy..." (incipit)
"Who that maketh..." (incipit)
"With fauoure..." (incipit)
Lavynham, A Little Treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins
Layamon, The Brut
John Lydgate, Right as a Ram's Horn
Northern Passion
Partonope of Blois (1)
Prognostications From Thunder (2)
Short Charter of Christ
South English Legendary: unanalyzed portions
South English Legendary: St. Andrew the Apostle
South English Legendary: Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury
South English Legendary: St. Brendan
South English Legendary: St. Christopher
South English Legendary: Legends of the Cross
South English Legendary: Miracle of the Devil in Service
South English Legendary: St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury
South English Legendary: St. Edmund Rich of Abingdon
South English Legendary: St. Edmund, King of East Anglia
South English Legendary: Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins
South English Legendary: St. James the Greater
South English Legendary: St. John the Evangelist
South English Legendary: Judas Iscariot
South English Legendary: St. Katherine of Alexandria
South English Legendary: St. Kenelm
South English Legendary: Miracle of the Jewish Boy
- South English Legendary: St. Lucy
- South English Legendary: St. Margaret of Antioch
- South English Legendary: St. Michael the Archangel
- South English Legendary: St. Nicholas of Myra
- South English Legendary: Miracle of the Oxford Scholar
- South English Legendary: Temporale (Passion of Christ)
- South English Legendary: Pilate
- South English Legendary: St. Swithun
- South English Legendary: Miracle of Toledo
- South English Legendary: Miracle of the Monk Who Could Learn Only Ave Maria
- South English Legendary: Miracle: Our Lady Comes to the Devil
- Speculum Christiani (1)
- Treatise on Gardening
- De Visitacione Infirmorum, ME version (2)
- Will of Giles Daubeney, Knight

3. LALME search in Middle English Compendium
   HyperBibliography: Wiltshire
   26 matches.

- Agnus Castus
- Apostles' Creed
- Deed concerning lands in Wiltshire purchased by Sir Renaud of Ramsbury
- Robert of Gloucester, Chronicle, Version C
- Robert of Gloucester, Chronicle, Version C (with prose insertions)
- "Al fram ehvuele..." (incipit)
- "Bi bis tokninge..." (incipit)
- "Hure wader hat is..." (incipit)
- "No god..." (incipit)
- "Pryde wraþ..." (incipit)
- "Schrude and fede..." (incipit)
- "Py lorde..." (incipit)
- "Vre fader in heuene..." (incipit)
- "Welcome lourerd..." (incipit)
- Verses on the Kings of England (third redaction)
- Richard Coeur de Lion
- South English Legendary: Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury
- South English Legendary: St. Brendan
- South English Legendary: St. Cecilia
- South English Legendary: Mary Magdalen (2)
- South English Legendary: Temporale (Ministry and Passion of Christ)
- South English Legendary: Temporale (Nativity of Mary and Christ)
- Short Metrical Chronicle of England
• John Trevisa, *The Gospel of Nicodemus (ME translation)*

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**Other media: section under development**

The information below is presented with no pretension to completeness.

**Collections of material, audio/video, press cuttings, etc.**

[Section being developed]

[Cotswolds and the rest of Gloucestershire], 319-22 [Somerset], 322-4 [Wiltshire].

**Audio material using pre-digital technologies**

[Needs extensive work. Not yet placed in an order.]

The basic material of the Survey of English Dialects.

Other recordings held by NATCECT.

**Vinyl discs**

Cotswold characters. Saydisc SDL 222 LP.

Fred Wedlock, The folker. Saydisc VTS-7 LP. … and another?

Adge Cutler and the Wurzels.

Sounds of Bristol: a portrait of Bristol in sounds, dialect and song. Saydisc 33 SD 245.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel and other comical saga’ls from our area’l. Saydisc 33 SD 279.

George Woodruff live. Saydisc 33 SD 259.

Old Pete’s Christmas story. Saydisc 33 SD 260.

British Drama League dialect records: 2(a) Somerset (Mendips), LYN 662, spoken by James A. Garton; 3(a) Gloucester, LYN 664, spoken by T.Hannam-Clark. [With accompanying booklet of IPA transcriptions, undated (reprinted 1960). Thin acetates.]
Down to earth. Saydisc CSDL 247.

Forest talk. Saydisc CSDL 316.

Cotswold craftsmen. CDSL 247.

Cotswold voices. Saydisc CSDL 267.

While I work. Saydisc CSDL 300.

**Audiotapes**


The vly on the turmuts. Wiltshire village music. Folktracks cassettes 45-406.


All brought up on cider. Traditions of Glos-shire 2. Folktracks cassettes 45-416.

The sailor’s horse. May Day festival, Minehead. Folktracks cassettes 60-216, and video cassette V2.

Herchard of Taunton Dene. Village music from Somerset. Folktracks cassettes 60-405.


**GUNTER, Jim** – Gloucestershire\dialect talk\ 1952 - age 63 - born Lydbrook, worked in mines at Waterloo & Cannop colliery 1913-39 - was injured as a result of fumes after a fire in the mines so doing light jobs - all family lived in Forest of Dean but originally from English Bicknor - see Malcolm WATKINS – *rec by PK, Lydbrook, Forest of Dean: RTR-0871*

**PALMER, Roy**

*The Folklore of Gloucestershire (Hillman, From 1994)* - words of 25 songs, tunes for 9, plus many snippets.

PRICE, Michael David Kean

*Songs, Stories and a Mummers’ Play from Gloucestershire* (own publication 1972) - 5 songs (but the musical notation is incorrect).

The books of Fred Archer of Ashton-under-Hill, which was part of Gloucestershire until 1931, contain many references to folksongs, especially the Ashton carols.

The Gloucestershire Countryside Vol 2, No 4, July 1935 - article by David Tod on The Mummers’ Play - some notes about the wassail.
The Gloucestershire Countryside Vol 8, No 11, Apr-June 1955 article on Seven was the Keys of Heaven with words of song.

The Cheltenham Looker-On, 21st December 1912 - article on Some Gloucestershire Songs, and Old Time and Present Day Christmas Customs - words of 2 songs plus fragments of mummers’ play.

**Folktracks 45-415**
**THE OLD Stable JACKET**
Cassette of 1957 recordings of Gloucestershire singers - 8 songs and background talk; includes "The Outlandish Knight".

**Folktracks 60-416**
**ALL BROUGHT UP ON CIDER**
Cassette of Gloucestershire singers 1974-1987 - 25 songs, including several wassail songs and other carols.

**Folktracks 60-504**
**THE BITTER WITHEY**
Cassette of folk carols including 2 from Gloucestershire.

Saydisc CD-SDL 407
VARIOUS SINGERS
Songs of the travelling People Saydisc CD-SDL 407 (1994) - 1 song.

Saydisc SDL 222
VARIOUS SINGERS

Saydisc SDL 267
VARIOUS SINGERS
Cotswold Voices Saydisc SDL 267 (1975).

Saydisc SDL 300
VARIOUS SINGERS
While I Work I Whistle: Songs and Humour of the Cotswolds Saydisc SDL 300 - 9 songs.

Important site: [http://www.glosfolk.org.uk/research_information.html](http://www.glosfolk.org.uk/research_information.html)
BRIAN ILES (45-50) is researching The Bristol L and is in correspondence with the Bristol Linguistic Centre of the University of the West of England (UWE) about its origins and extent. Brian has turned to KOSA NEWS to ask if any of our readers can assist in his research. Can you help? We will report progress in later editions:

The Bristol L is a unique freak. Even linguists have no idea of its origin. Neither do they know why Bristolians are the only people in the world ever to have said ‘No idea-L’ or ‘No idea-L-of’.

Experts know plenty about the other well-known ‘intrusive’ letter - R (idea-R and ‘idea-R-of) which, probably originating from Cockney, is spoken so widely these days that one top linguist, John Wells, considers it RP (received pronunciation). Yet, even though we now have the Bristol Linguistic Centre on our doorstep, an intriguing local linguistic puzzle is nowhere nearer solution.

I think it’s about time locals did something about the mystery. And who better than us ex-KGS scholars to start the ball rolling. Educated at a grammar school, in a hotbed of the Bristol L – because Kingswood is just that - we should be its ideal researchers. The evidence is still out there. I myself have many examples of the intrusive L, and, as recently as January, John Darville on the Radio Bristol phone-in, said he was ‘hearing it all the time’ Linguists attest to its continuing existence, and I’m sure that some of you must have come across it too. So, why not contribute to a dossier and get some action?

To be fair, the Bristol L has been touched on in two academic studies. John Wells’s Accents of English, Volume II, pages 344-5 (1982) and Peter Trudgill’s Dialects in Contact, pages 78-81 (1986). However, they were mere drops in an ocean of more wide-ranging research by non-local linguists. From my own knowledge when studying the few relevant pages, I felt that the Bristol Broadsides tapes (quoted by Trudgill but now lost) of locals talking were not comprehensive, or perhaps representative, enough to give a full and accurate picture.

Researchers should have local experience, and must have proper evidence. Many more examples of the intrusive L as spoken by Bristolians with a working class background are required.

I’m probably such an obsessive about the Bristol L because when I worked in Worcester for eighteen months in my late teens in 1951-2 I was teased rotten for it. So when I read Professor Trudgill’s conclusion, on the evidence of the ‘dodgy dossier’, that the Bristol L was only sounded after ‘schwa’ - the neutral vowel ‘a’ (as in ‘idea’) - I knew he was wrong. It has also, quite definitely, been heard following ‘aw’ (as in ‘draw-L-ing’), after ‘u’ (as in ‘mum’) ’a’ (as in ‘bra’), and even after ‘ye-’ (short for ‘yes’). Moreover as most of these examples are recent (see the list at the end) the forms must have been around in Trudgill’s day.

Equally due to paucity of evidence was the conclusion of both Trudgill and Wells that the L was only sounded after a vowel-ending word at the end of a sentence (eg idea-
L). As my list shows, nowadays the Bristol L is predominantly a link between vowels (eg idea-L-of).

There’s a dearth of knowledge about its origins too. Some people think that the quirk influenced the modern spelling of our city’s name. This would put the L’s first-ever pronunciation round about the 1620s when ‘Brestol’ evolved from ‘Bristowe’. A key academic dates it back much further, but can’t be sure until it is confirmed that earlier words spelt with end-L are in fact English (and not Latin or French).

After my Worcester experience my ear was always tuned in for the Bristol L. Sixty years of experience and plenty of retirement reading have given me a pretty good idea of what it’s about. Consider that last phrase. The L-user would say ‘idea-L-of’ - often sounding like ‘idill-of’. Crucially, this all smacks of working class speech. The ‘vowel shift’ from ‘eel’ to ‘ill’ – a Cockney import - certainly is. More importantly, the ‘intrusive’ L is also working class. A lay definition of the Bristol L might be: ‘Used by Bristolians of working class background of an L-sound in pronunciation following a vowel-sound; with a modern emphasis on its use as a link between vowels’.

No less a personage than your Editor, Mike Bendrey, himself has questioned whether there even is a Bristol L. And several Post correspondents have written likewise. All sorts of vowel end-sounds have been mooted instead, such as ‘a’, ‘ugh’ and ‘aw’. I think that this is simply confusion caused by the wide range of L-pronunciation; this grades from a very ‘clear’ L with the blade of the tongue pressed firmly against the teeth ridge and the front of the rest lifted up towards the hard palate - to a very ‘dark’ L when it is curled right back to the soft palate. With this swallowed L we’re back to typically working class speech, expressed as ‘be-ugh’ for ‘bell’ (in the absence of the phonetic alphabet). It can seem more like a vowel than a consonant, leading to comments like Mike’s above.

The Bristol L and the London R are technically ‘intrusive letters’. They are called ‘terminal’ if sounded on the end of a word or phrase, eg ‘idea-L-’ and ‘idea-R-’; and ‘linking’ when followed by a vowel as in ‘idea-L-of’ and ‘idea-R-of’. The London terminal R is common-place, the Bristol terminal L is not. I do still hear it, as shown in my examples, but the ‘unbelievers’ have a good excuse for not picking up L at the end of a word terminating a phrase or sentence. For example, in the phrase, ‘A good idea-L’ ending in a full stop the L can seem ‘dark’ to the point of being almost unsounded. (You can’t swallow the R sound though, which could be a reason it has survived and flourished as an intrusive sound).

With the linking L it is quite different. And this is where the Bristol L comes into its own as a legitimate linguistic device. In that phrase ‘idea-L-of’, a vowel follows ‘idea’, and the L sound can be very clear. This is the same with the London R; also with other letters in other languages. Some of you must remember the likes of FROGGY DAVIES at KGS teaching ‘Y a-t-il?’ – the interrogative of ‘Il y a’. The Bristol L is working class, so is the London R, historically. But the French intrusive ‘T’ is written into their grammatical rules. (And, similarly, so is ‘N’ in ours, as the spelling of the indefinite article when followed by a vowel). These linking consonants are a way of easing the pronunciation of adjoining awkward vowel sounds. They
belong to the process known as ‘sandhi’, which is a word from India where there are all sorts of such devices in Sanskrit and other languages.

Modes of pronunciation arise and change in lots of ways, and it’s not always a filtering downwards from ‘good’ speech, as the spread of the Cockney R clearly shows. But it seems very likely that the Bristol L – however legitimate its sandhi credentials – started, remained, and still hangs on as a working class habit. This linking L (eg ‘idea-L-of’) seems hard to avoid for those from a certain background who still harbour the incipient Bristol L in their sub-conscious minds. As defined above, it eases the pronunciation of adjacent vowels. Try an empathetic leap, those of you, working class or not, who either deny, look down on, or couldn’t care less about the Bristol L. If you say ‘Is there?’ in French you’ve got to say ‘Y a-t-il?’ – it’s official grammar. If you speak RP you’re quite likely to say ‘idea-r-of’. And if you speak any old way you’re sure to say ‘an idea’. So now think of L in the same way. ‘Idea of’ is easier to pronounce if you sound ‘R’ or ‘L’ between the two words, one of which ending with a vowel, the other starting with one. If this is hard to swallow because it seems to be just slovenly and plebeian, remember English RP ‘idea-r-of’ and French grammatical ‘Y a-t-il?’ All three, including L, are examples of ‘sandhi’.

Make no mistake, the Bristol L is still with us, in parts of Greater Bristol. It is more easily heard as a linking letter, because between vowels it doesn’t serve its ‘sandhi’ purpose, unless made ‘clear’ by tongue against teeth ridge. But you can still hear it terminally if you’re tuned in. It’ll usually be a dark L, as there’s no following vowel, but real die-hards may still say it fairly clearly, even when no vowel follows. This, for me, is one of the most intriguing parts of the mystery. By definition, sandhi explains the linking L. It can’t do the same for the terminal L.

Now at last I come to a selection of the examples I’ve recorded since 2009. Bearing in mind what I’ve said, I hope some of you can add to the list. If so, give me a ring on 0117 960 7425 or email me (brianiles@btinternet.com). I really do think that, considering all the arguments about the value of grammar schools, our great old school would really come into its own if its old scholars could help encourage the academic study of the Bristol L. Obsolescent, slovenly, plebeian speech it may seem now, but it is nonetheless a real phenomenon, not something made up (like ‘gert lush’ for example – or the execrable ‘Bristle’) and as such must have evolved from linguistic causes which may or may not have something to do with the evolution of the word ‘Bristol’. It is therefore of both linguistic and heritage importance.

Then one day the ultimate question may be answered: Why has it always been confined to such a tiny area of the globe – why is it The Bristol L?

LIST OF EXAMPLES OF THE BRISTOL L SINCE 2009

Linking Ls

Sparra-L-‘awk. Man, 65, artisan, Kingswood.
Schwa-ending of sparrow, when followed by vowel [due to dropped ‘h’] invites L which ‘ow’ vowel-diphthong wouldn’t.
I gotta-L-’ave. Man, 50, MA, born w/class, Filton. Slovenly Gotta schwa-ending invites linking L. MA wasn’t in English!

A lotta-L-people. Man, 75, phone-in. (Me! – I heard a tape) This is a brilliant example of overpowering habit – difficult to suppress. Here slovenly ‘lotta’ produced an L (admittedly very dark) even though it was a consonant not a vowel following.

I draw-L-out once a week. Man, 70, working class, Bristol East. Draw-L-ing was my favourite subject. Lady, 50, Warmley.

I got no bra-L-on. Teenager at Bristol club (second hand report)

Our mu-L-ain’t comin’. Boy, 10, Keynsham. Another striking example of the strength of the Bristol L. Here the slovenly-dropped ‘m’ invited L. Very unusual too after ‘u’. NB also, these last two show the tenacity of the L, being examples of young people using it.

Ye-L-I know Hanham woman, 60s. Another slovenly letter-drop. Such speech creates novel vowel-endings which encourage the linking L. Only real die-hards would sound any L in the above instances if the word (eg area, sparra) wasn’t followed by a vowel.

Now to end with, a few ‘terminals’ still to be heard, though usually with a dark L, sometimes to the point of being difficult to pick up.

Terminal Ls

That’s a good idea-L. Old man phoning-in from Nailsea 2013.

A good idill. Lady, old, phone in; also lady, 50, Hanham. Terminal L, plus vowel-shift similar to Cockney ‘mill’ for ‘meal’. This is the most common example of all terminals, and a double indication of w/c background.

He lives in America-L (sounds equally like Americle). Lady, old, Hanham.

Reception is poor in this area-L. TV engineer overheard by linguist from UWE. Nowadays there are far fewer examples reported of the terminal L than of the linking L. One reason could be that they are harder to pick up because they are usually very dark ie almost unsounded.