

WHO FIRST TAUGHT THE SWANS TO RING A BELL FOR FOOD?

Research was carried out in August/September 2018 to see if it was possible to determine conclusively which bishop's daughter (Lord Hervey's or Lord Auckland's) first taught the swans to ring a bell for food.

The information gathered is detailed below. Whilst the 'evidence' is not definitive, it points strongly to one of the daughters of Lord Auckland, first teaching the swans. There is no information to say which of Lord Auckland's five daughters was responsible. His daughters were: Eleanor Eden (1826-1879), Emily Dulcibella Eden (1832-1893), Emma Mary Eden (1833-1895), Florence Selina Eden (1835-1909), Maria Harriet (1836-1909).

It is possible that the swans needed to be re-taught in the time of Lord Hervey which would account for the belief that this practice was started during his tenure here.

'EVIDENCE' FOR DAUGHTERS OF LORD AUCKLAND

1. Poem by William Catcott, 'Baker Bard of Wells', (1802-1870). This was written and published in Wells Journal in 1858 in response to a swan's death on the moat. An article reporting the swan's death is replicated below:

"Last week some evil-disposed person or persons cruelly beat one of the swans on the moat and the bird has since died.

What could have actuated the perpetration of such a wicked act? It is too difficult to conceive.

A reward of 2 guineas is offered by the Lord Bishop, the owner of the birds, for the apprehension and conviction of the offender and we sincerely trust the scoundrel or scoundrels will not long evade detection as this is not the first act of cruelty that has been committed upon the swans on the moat which surrounds the palace."

Wells Journal June 1858

The poem refers to a **dinner bell**

LINES ON A BEAUTIFUL SWAN BARBAROUSLY BEATEN TO DEATH ON THE PALACE MOAT

No more upon the water clear
Wilt thou sweet bird, thy form display,
Nor to the slippery margin steer,
To take the offered crumb away;
Nor e'er again, with instinct rare,
Thy daily wants and wishes tell,
Making the wondering gazers stare,
By striking out thy dinner bell.

No more beneath the shady trees,
Wilt thou unfold thy snowy wing,
And glide along with graceful ease,
To beautify the spot, poor thing!
No more around the turrets grey,
Wilt thou thy morning's circuit take,
Nor fold thy wing at close of day,
Upon the bosom of the lake.

William Catcott, 1858

2. Copy of card from Balch's card index, Mendip & Wells Museum. Balch (1869 – 1958), founder of Wells & Mendip Museum. This notes: 'His daughter is remembered locally as the lady who taught the swan to ring for their food: Her swan 'pupil' is present in Wells Museum'.

Robert John Eden
Baron Auckland
Bishop of Bath & Wells

George Henry Sacheverell Johnson 1854
Dean

Henry Bernard
Mayor

Bishop Auckland was translated from Sodor & Man.

Dear Johnson in 1835 tutored Archbishop Tait. *Sont NQ Vol II p 278*

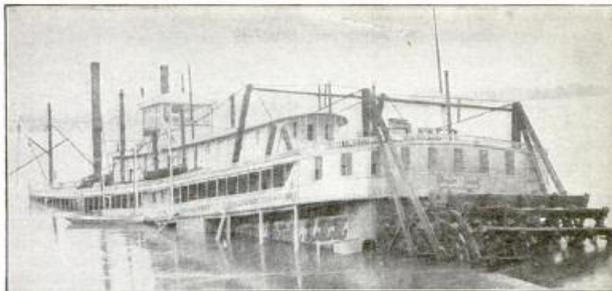
On the death of Dean Jenkyns, his family spent £16000 to build St Thomas Church Vicarage & Schools as a memorial of him *(in succession through Eyham, Heringfordbury & Battersea Born in 1799 he had been ordained in 1824 & was advanced)*

Baron Auckland (as Dr Eden) had been appointed bishop of Sodor and Man in 1847. His daughter is remembered locally as the lady who taught the swans to ring for their food: Her swan "pupil" is preserved in Wells Museum.

The old road from the No. 1 mile stone on the Bristol road, over Pirnis Hill to the end of Haydon Drive, was never conveyed to the Thurston estate & though this year the lawyer to the estate tried to secure a conveyance from the Turnpike Trust, it was not granted, though the Trust intimated that they did not now claim the road. (Bishop's Hallhouse claimed & regularly used it as a public road.) } T Trust Minute 31 July 1854

His correspondence with the Turnpike estate is preserved in Wells Museum

3. Popular Mechanics November 1909 – Article refers to one of Lord Auckland's daughters teaching the swans. This could be hearsay but it is interesting that it is written only 15 years after the demise of Lord Hervey.



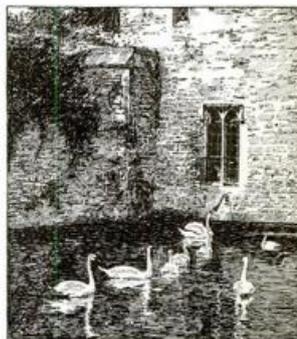
Weak Cable Caused This Accident

WRECK OF A TENNESSEE STEAMBOAT

This photograph of the "Georgia Lee," one of the steamboats of the famous Lee line plying on the Ohio and Tennessee rivers, was taken just after she was wrecked at Paducah, Ky. She was being drawn up on the ways to receive repairs when one of the cables broke, letting her slide back into the water. Her bow struck a number of heavy timbers and was torn partially off.

SWANS RING BELL WHEN HUNGRY

The swans that swim on the moat surrounding the Bishop's palace at Wells, in England, call for food when hungry, by ringing the bell shown just under the window in the illustration. They were first taught this trick by the daughter of Lord Auckland about 1854, and have always continued the practice.



Swan Ordering Dinner

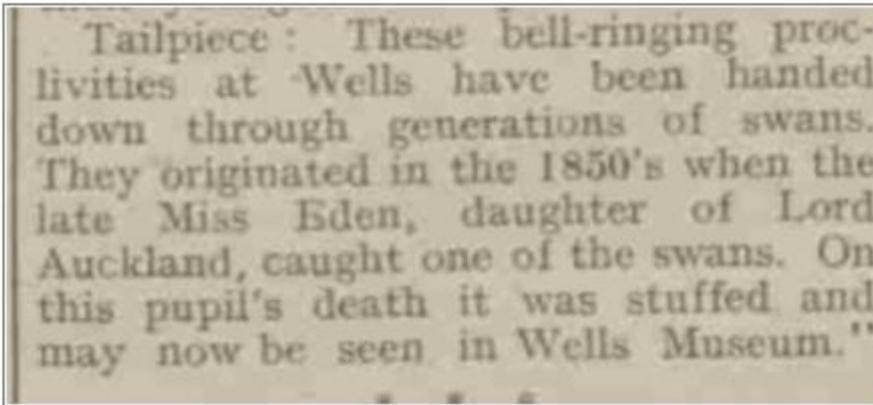
the younger generations of swans learning from the elder.

PAINTING IMMENSE GAS TANK

Painting the great expanse of outer surface of a huge gas tank is a task of considerable magnitude. The great gas tank in Los Angeles, said to be the second largest in the world, is 230 ft. high—which is 56 ft. higher than the tallest building of that city—and 195 ft. in diameter. The amount of paint upon its surface is 1,485 gal., and the cost of painting it was \$5,000. Had the work been left to one man, his services would have been required nearly two years.

The Cunard line will build a sub-ship to take the place of the "Mauretania" and "Lusitania" should either of them have to miss trips.

4. Wells Journal article January 1945. This article could also be based on hearsay.



5. Framed pre 2014 postcards and information – to left of window at top of BP staircase. Refers to swans being taught by daughter of Lord Auckland (no attribution/source) – again, possible hearsay as no attribution for the statement.

EVIDENCE FOR DAUGHTERS OF LORD HERVEY

1. Wells & Mendip Museum's documentation relating to the stuffed swan comprises an entry in the register started in the 1960s: RN.100, 'First swan to ring bell at Bishop's Palace, Wells in middle of 19th c. taught by daughter of Bishop (Lord A.C. Harvey (sic))'

A more recent notice of similar text is with the swan, referring to the 'Bishop (Lord Arthur Hervey)' and again with no mention of which daughter.

(Source: David Walker, Curator, Wells & Mendip Museum)

2. W.I Stanton, in his article for Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society, 1987-1988 Reports, on The Ancient Springs, Streams and Underground Watercourses of the City of Wells, refers to a daughter of Bishop Hervey training the swans:

Although many religious houses had their own fishponds (for example the Abbot's Fish House at Meare served Glastonbury Abbey) there seems to be no record of the Moat being reserved for this purpose. For at least a century swans have lived on the Moat. One pair after another have been taught, originally by the daughter of Bishop Hervey (1863-1894) to pull with their beaks a cord on the Gatehouse that rang a bell, after which they might be fed. Children were brought from far away to 'see the swans ring the bell'. Now in 1989 the lawns at the

3. Various guides, etc produced by the Palace but with no sources given.

Lord Hervey had 6 daughters – Sarah Elizabeth Harriett (b? – 1877 – married 1874), Eliza Augusta Caroline Hervey (1845-1861), Georgiana Katherine Patience (1848 – 1951 – married, date?), Patience Mary (1853-1914 – married 1873), Caroline Augusta (1857-1940 – unmarried), Frederica Mary Lucy (1859-1860). Sarah, Georgiana, Patience and Caroline would have been with him at the Palace. It is unknown which of these 4 daughters may have taught the swans to pull the bell.