

The
Butleigh

Revel

1906

The copyright of all images in this book remain with the owners

R. C. Senior The Tower, Butleigh Court

2012

INTRODUCTION

This volume is the result of my work on the genealogy of all inhabitants who have lived in Butleigh, Somerset, since 1500. This information has been given a wider audience through my website www.butleigh.org which includes transcribed Parish records, census information and as much family history material that I could discover. The most notable event to occur in Butleigh was the pageant or **Revel** of 1906 in which a great many villagers took part. This was a pageant organised by a trio of the squire, Robert Neville-Grenville, Mary Albinia Berkeley the daughter of the vicar, and John J. Bradden the schoolteacher. Around half the villagers took parts in the Revel and a great many photographs survive which were taken of the event by various professionals and amateurs. Most of these are of sufficient quality to allow enlargement and enable identification of the actors/villagers.

Herein is an account of the Revel, which attracted national attention, and which was seen over a period of four days by something in excess of 8,000 people. It includes transcriptions of the original script and all newspaper and other articles which mentioned the Revel both before and after the event. Many of the images are from my own collection but other material and photographs have been kindly loaned for copying, or copies supplied, by: the Somerset Record Office (Taunton) [who retain their copyright], Ann Heeley, Jenny Stock, Peter James, [the late] Dorothy Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Wyllie, [the late] Brian Forsey, Mrs. J. Higman and Adrian Pearse. The most important sources were Ruth Bevan (a descendant of the Bradden family) and Peter Awdry (the great-nephew of Daniel Mildred the Revel director) who both had albums of photographs compiled by their relative. Daniel Mildred above all gave us the names of most of the people that he photographed and thus facilitated their identification. To the aforementioned people I am indebted for their kindness and generosity

A single copy of an earlier version of this volume was printed from my computer and bound in October 2008 and then a PDF version put out on my internet site for all to see. This copy was then revised when Adrian Pearse and Mrs. J. Higman (whose aunt's scrapbook of the Revel was given to the Rural Life Museum, Glastonbury, and who, with her permission allowed me to copy some of the images therein) provided me with some more images and information subsequent to the original work. A few copies of the enlarged version were bound and one copy donated to the Somerset Heritage Centre but then the Daniel Mildred album surfaced and now this third and final version has been produced. There is always the possibility that more images may surface and no doubt the Squire, Robert Neville-Grenville and some principal actors may have had albums too but I have been unable to track them down. There are still photographs of villagers who are as yet unidentified and they may for ever remain so after the passage of over a century. Though this whole work would be non-viable to print commercially, a shorter, selective booklet might be a possibility at some future date.

ROBERT C. SENIOR
Butleigh Court 2012

CONTENTS

	Page
1 The Revel's conception	1
2 The Principal organizers	3
3 The village and stage	11
4 The Revel preparations	18
5 The Revel text	27
6 The Cast	75
7 Reports on the Performances and more images	194
8 The Balance and Presentations after the Revel – the tenor bell	274
9 Epilogue	283