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Lock-ups at Cirencester and Bisley: an additional Note

by A. J. Price and D. J. Viner
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By ARTHUR PRICE and DAVID VINER

The nineteenth-century lock-ups at Cirencester and Bisley were discussed in an earlier paper,¹ and their construction dated respectively to *c.* 1804/5 for Cirencester, based upon a contractual memorandum dated 2 October 1804,² and 1824 for Bisley, based upon the date-stone on the building. For the latter, further information supports the evidence of the date-stone. The Bisley Overseers' Accounts list a series of extra payments from 6 September to 4 October 1824:

<i>Pd Wm Laurence for hauling stone and tile from the old blind house</i>	£1.18.6
<i>Pd Wm Restall for building a new place of confinement, as per bill</i>	£33.11.6
<i>Pd James Whiting for taking down the old blindhouse, and putting a foundation to the new one, as per bill</i>	£2.12.6
<i>Thos and John Hazle for hauling stone from Brown's Hill and Calfway, 11 and a half days at 21/- per day</i>	£12.1.6
<i>Pd Wm Pike for going to Brown's Hill to wheel out the stone for the building of the prison</i>	£0.10.0

Not only does this record give a clear indication of the allocation of tasks and costings for construction, but also defines the period of construction closely to within a few weeks in the autumn of 1824. Construction of the new building was primarily the responsibility of William Restall. Members of this family are recorded in the area in later directories from the 1830s. A William Restall, builder and contractor of Bisley, is recorded in 1863.³ At an earlier date, James Whiting is recorded as a mason in 1839.⁴ Bisley lock-up is constructed entirely of Great Oölite Weatherstone, an oölitic shell detrital limestone. There are several such quarries at Brown's Hill, which is some 3½ km SSW of Bisley. Roof tiles came from Calfway, some ¾ km NNE of Bisley, and were therefore of Througham Tilestone, part of the Stonesfield Slate Series, which outcrops at Calfway Farm.

For the Cirencester lock-up, the missing link is any confirmation of the date of removal of the building from its original siting in Gloucester Street to provide a new function at the town workhouse in Watermoor, which opened early in 1837. However, a few years earlier in 1831, the same family of Cirencester builders who had constructed the building originally in 1804/5 were responsible for another rebuilding contract in Cirencester. George and John Mills (was this the same John who submitted the 1804 memorandum to build the lock-up?) took down and rebuilt one of the town's most significant buildings, the Town Hall or Parish Church Porch, and did so according to an agreement which reveals a remarkable attitude to careful reconstruction:⁵

All the carved stone which is sound and good must be replaced, and the front left as much as possible in its present state without reworking or cleansing any part of it, as it is expected that the building when completed shall appear as much as possible as it does now, with all the marks of antiquity about it.

It is tempting to assume that the same builders who erected the town lock-up were also on hand to remove and restore it to its new position *c.* 1837, and to do so with an appreciation of careful

restoration of which they had proved themselves capable elsewhere in Cirencester only a few years before.

Notes

1. David Viner with Christopher Powell, 'Lock-ups at Cirencester and Bisley, with a note on Bibury and Great Barrington', *TBGAS* 109 (1991) 207-17.
2. Glos. R.O. D2525 box 50.
3. *Post Office Directory of Gloucestershire*, 1863.
4. Robsons' Gloucestershire Directory, 1839.
5. Glos. R.O. D1070/1 48. Agreement for rebuilding Cirencester Town Hall.

*Frocester and Cirencester,
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