

JOHN WESLEY'S BRISTOL PRINTER:
ANOTHER W GATHERING

IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA are two copies of an English-Welsh Dictionary printed in Bristol in 1753 by Felix Farley, one of the pre-eminent family of newspaper printers from Bristol and south-west England. Farley, a committed Methodist, was the friend and the Bristol printer of John and Charles Wesley.

The title-page of the book given in full is as follows (not quasi-facsimile):

Antiquæ Linguæ Britannicæ Thesaurus: Being A British, or Welsh-English Dictionary: Containing Some Thousands of British Words more than any Welsh Dictionary hitherto published. All the Authorities or Examples which the learned Dr. Davies gives, in his British-Latin Dictionary, from ancient Poets, Historians, &c. are inserted in This, as they are accurate Proofs or the Significations assign'd to those Words; and the Words which are added, are often exemplified in the same Manner. And to make this Work more compleat, besides the Explications and Etymologies of Words, many valuable British Antiquities are interspersed through all the Parts of it. To which is prefix'd, A compendious Welsh Grammar, With all the Rules in English . . . And there is likewise added, A large Collection of British Proverbs. By Thomas Richards, Curate of Coychurch. Bristol: Printed and Sold by Felix Farley in Small-Street: Sold also in London, by Messrs. Knapton, Innys, Hitch, Davis, Clarke, Owen, &c. — By R. Raikes in Gloucester; W. Williams, Bookseller in Monmouth; And by all the Booksellers of the Principality of Wales. — MDCCLIII. — [PRICE 6s.]¹

The collation is as follows:

8⁰: a⁴ b-c⁴ *A*-*B*⁴ A-H⁴ I², ²A-U⁴ W⁴ X-2U⁴ 2W⁴ 2X-3D⁴ ²a-g⁴ χ²

As is the case with most eighteenth-century dictionaries and bibles, the main body of the text is unpaginated. Since the ESTC recorder underestimates or mis-states the length of the dictionary text, as witnessed by the National Library of Australia copies, I give the full statement of the pagination for the copies I have viewed: 292 leaves; pp. *i-iii* iv-v *vi-vii* viii-xvii *xviii-ix* xx-xxiii, [17] 1 2-68 [476].

a4-c4 contain the title-page, Dedication to the Prince of Wales, the Preface and a Welsh Introduction (signed Thomas Richards); *A*-*B*⁴ contain the list of subscribers (among them were both John and Charles Wesley); A⁴-I² (pp.1-68) contain the Introduction to the Welsh language and the Grammar; ²A-3D⁴ contain the lexicographical text of the dictionary in two columns throughout; ²a-b⁴ contain a 'Botanology', listing the names of herbs, plants and fruits in both Welsh and English; ²c-f⁴ contain the British or Welsh proverbs: this section has a separate half-title; g⁴ contains a list of 'names of the British Authors and the Times wherein most of them flourished'; g^{4b} contains proposals for 'Printing by Subscription . . . an Extract of Fox's Book of Martyrs, Elegantly Translated into Welsh; as publish'd by the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. in his Christian Library' — the proposal is dated January 28 1753, a scant three months before the printer's death; χ² contains a list of errata.

The book is decorated with woodcut ornaments and headpieces between sections and utilizes framed initial letters to head major sections of text.

Felix Farley was a member of a considerable dynasty of printers in south-west England, whose roots dated back to the seventeenth century, spanning the cities of Exeter, Bath and Bristol. His father, Samuel II, was born in Exeter in 1699.³ From the early eighteenth century Samuel II was printing the *Postman, or Weekly Intelligencer* and probably also the *Bristol Journal*, since this paper was carried on by his sons, Felix and Samuel III. These two are said to have joined their father's business in 1718 when the *Postman* was still being printed.⁴ Another son, Edward I, is to be found printing in Exeter later in the century.⁵

For a period of thirty years the Farley family held the monopoly of newspaper printing in Bristol, and the two brothers, Felix and Samuel III, remained pre-eminent in this area until their deaths, both in 1753. The relations between the brothers, however, was problematic, probably due to religious differences: Samuel III was a Quaker, while Felix became an active and passionate Methodist. Samuel initially remained in business with his father, while Felix from 1734 to 1739 was printing at the Shakespeare's Head, upper end of Castle Green, Bristol; at the same sign, Westgate, Bath; and by 1741 he was also established at St Peter's Churchyard, Exeter. He was later to print from Small Street, Bristol.

The two brothers seem to have been more or less in significant cooperation during the years 1742 to 1746, although Felix would appear to have been the dominant partner. They brought out two papers, *F. Farley's Bristol Journal* and *Farley's Bristol Advertiser*, which appeared on alternate Saturdays. The *Advertiser* came out under the imprint 'Felix Farley and Comp. at Shakespear's Head in Castle Green'; the *Journal* was printed by Felix alone. The *Advertiser* ceased regular production in 1746 and, from 1748 to 1752, Samuel rejoined Felix at the Shakespeare's Head; together they produced the *Bristol Journal*.⁶

A rupture took place between the brothers around 1752 and they began to produce rival newspapers, Felix producing from the Small Street address *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, while Samuel III continued to print the *Bristol Journal*. The rivalry, probably due to or exacerbated by religious differences, continued until the deaths of the two brothers in 1753. Under the terms of his will, Felix left one guinea to his brother as a token that he died in 'peace, in love and in charity with him', going on to add that:

I pray God that his eyes may be opened that he may see the injury he has done me and my poor family and that He would soften his heart and conscience to end the partnership affair with justice, honour and integrity.

Samuel III seems not to have taken the point, for in his own will, proved only a few months later, he left only a shilling each to his sister-in-law Elizabeth and her three children. The printing business he bequeathed to his niece Sarah, daughter of Edward II, the publisher of the *Exeter Journal*, on the strict condition that she should remain a Quaker and 'if she enter into the state of matrimony she is to take a husband who professes to be a Quaker'.⁷

Felix left the bulk of his estate to his wife Elizabeth and his three surviving children, Hester, Samuel IV and Elizabeth. All except daughter Elizabeth continued in the printing business after him.

Felix also left a guinea each to John and Charles Wesley, 'my honoured and much esteemed friends and pastors.' George Whitefield had invited John Wesley to join his 'open air' ministry in Bristol in 1739. Though Wesley's own itinerant ministry took him all over the British Isles, Bristol remained a vital centre and Methodist societies flourished in the region. Wesley also established a school for collier's children at nearby Kingswood.⁸

Farley seems to have been a long-standing friend. Wesley's journals note meetings for prayer and singing, visits and talk, in addition to 'correcting for Farley'. The fullest incident described is to be found in Wesley's record of his visit to Farley's death-bed:

Mon 5 [March 1753]. I called on [poor Mr Farley, whose has just buried three sons within this year (one of whom caught the consumption by lying with the other), and is very likely to follow them shortly. If he follows them to Paradise, it is enough.]⁹

Of the 114 items in the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue listed as printed by Felix Farley, or by F. and S. Farley, some 85 are written, abridged, edited or translated by John or Charles Wesley,¹⁰ two are by George Whitefield, a number by John Cennick, Master of the school at Kingswood, and others are of a general evangelical or religious nature. Many are listed as to be sold through Methodist centres, such as the Foundery, in London. Very few are of a secular nature.

Books printed before 1739 are also very scarce: a few poems and some city items of a jobbing nature, such as the *Bristol City Charters* of 1736.¹¹ The statistics suggest that, prior to the connection with the Wesleys, book printing was very much a minor sideline to the serious business of newspaper production. Felix also collaborated with Samuel in bringing out some religious material, suggesting a certain early ecumenism, or at least tolerance. In 1738 they printed Benjamin Holme's Quaker pamphlet *A Serious Call in Christian Love to all People*, while in the previous year they collaborated in bringing out one of Whitefield's sermons, *The Nature and Necessity of Society in General, and of Religious Society in Particular*.¹²

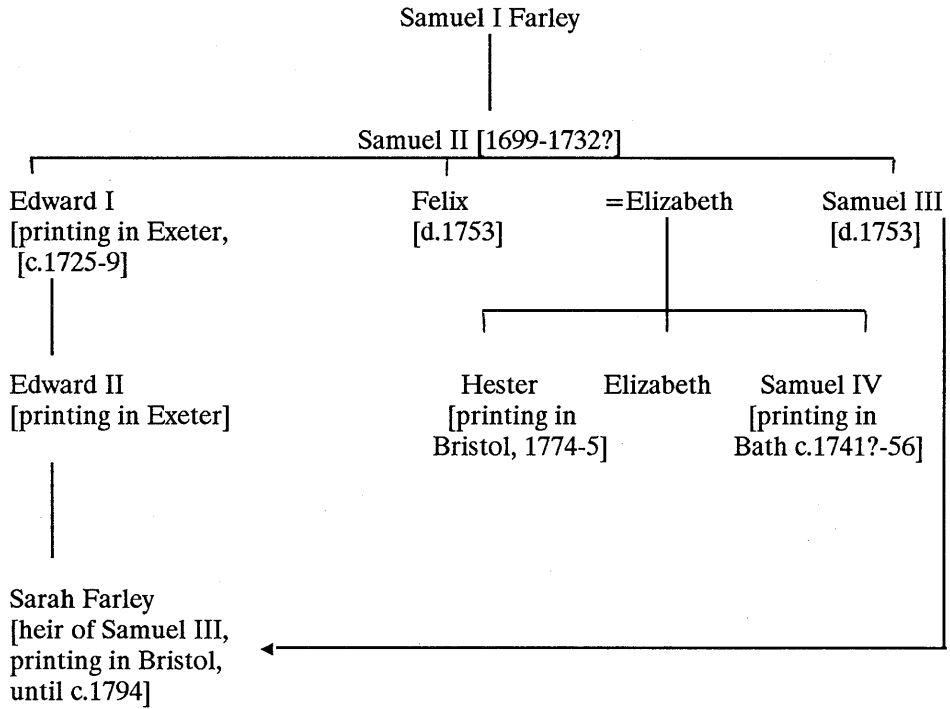
Without examining the books themselves little can be said about the composition of these items from the British Library collections. ESTC does list one item in which even page numbers occur on rectos, which might support the suggestion that Farley maintained a certain unconventionality in norms of composition.¹³ Apart from this there is little evidence to account specifically for the use of a W gathering in this provincial English-Welsh dictionary.

L.M. Rutherford,
University College,
Australian Defence Force Academy.

NOTES

1. ANL RB 491.663 (Accession numbers: A copy G 480/1; B copy 96837:53); ESTC tO66971; Helen Emanuel, 'Geiriaduron Cymraeg 1547-1972', *Studia Celtica* 7 (1972): 143. The work was also reissued in 1759 with a new title-page: see ESTC tO8O6O2.
2. This section was also issued separately in 1753 as *A Brief Introduction to the Ancient British of Welsh Language: Being a Compendious and Comprehensive Grammar . . . By Thomas Richards . . .* (Bristol, Printed by Felix Farley 1753) (ESTC tO66972). The National Library also holds a copy of this work (RB 499.665 R5181).
3. In the register of St Paul's, Exeter is recorded the baptism of 'Sam^{ll}s.[on] of Sam^{ll} ffardey' on 9 April 1699: see D.F. Gallop, 'Chapters in the History of the Provincial Newspaper Press, 1700-1855', M.A. thesis, University of Reading, 1952, p. 27.
4. Gallop, 'Chapters in the History . . .', p.27.
5. See Table I.
6. Gallop, 'Chapters in the History . . .', p.30.
7. A.B. Beaven, 'Felix Farley and Bristol Journalism' and 'The Brothers Farley: Curious Provisions of Samuel's Will', *The Bristol Times and Mirror* 15 and 22 April 1911; Gallop, 'Chapters in the History . . .', pp.32-33.
8. See V.H.H. Green, *John Wesley* (London, 1964), pp.66ff.
9. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Standard Edition, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (1909; reprinted London, 1938), vii, p.160; see also ii, pp.186, 207, 226, 408, 410; iii, pp.254; iv, p.54; viii, pp.165, 167.
10. This figure does not include the twenty-five volumes of *The Christian Library*, which were printed by Farley and are listed as one item. Elizabeth Farley seems to have continued the series after the death of her husband: see ESTC tO17825.
11. ESTC t143949; see also the *Bristol City Poll Books* of 1734, ESTC tO41O31.
12. ESTC tO64921, tO14264. Felix himself had printed in 1732 what may have been an uncontentious item, a poem entitled *The Line of Beauty: or the Fair Quakers of Bristol*: ESTC nO25701, Foxon L 188.
13. *The Principles of a Methodist*. By John Wesley . . . 1742, ESTC nO2O823.
14. The sources for this table are H. R. Plomer et al., *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers who were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1726-1775* (Oxford, 1932); and Gallop, 'Chapters in the History . . .' Conjectural printing dates are suggested by dates of imprints held in the British Library and in the Bristol County Library. According to John Wesley's *Journal* Felix Farley had at least three more sons who predeceased him of the same illness which carried off the printer himself: see note 9.

TABLE I:
A GENEALOGY OF THE FARLEY PRINTERS¹⁴



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