

Oxford DNB: March 2023

Welcome to the ninety-sixth update of the *Oxford DNB*, which adds nine new articles, accompanied by one portrait likeness, with a special focus on lives with a global dimension, as well as examples of lives connected with a specific locality.

From March 2023, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*Oxford DNB*) offers biographies of 64,571 men and women who have shaped the British past, contained in 62,176 articles. 11,933 biographies include a portrait image of the subject – researched in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Most public libraries across the UK subscribe to the *Oxford DNB*, which means that you can access the complete dictionary for free via your local library. Libraries offer 'remote access' that enables you to log in at any time at home (or anywhere you have internet access). Elsewhere, the *Oxford DNB* is available online in schools, colleges,

universities, and other institutions worldwide. Full details of participating British public libraries, and how to gain access to the complete dictionary, are available [here](#).

March 2023: summary of new articles

Master Gregory [Magister Gregorius] (fl. after 1140)

was the self-declared name of a traveller and writer of presumed Anglo-Norman origin working in the second half of the twelfth or early thirteenth century. He wrote the *Narracio de mirabilibus urbis Romae* ('Narration of the marvels of the city of Rome'), a first-person account of monuments and statues in Rome. His identity remains obscure, and his name may have been pseudonymous, but his manuscript is dateable to after 1140 and identifiable with the 'twelfth century Renaissance'. The surviving letter-book of the Norwich merchant and textile manufacturer **Thomas Baret (1636–1711)**, covering the period 1672-7, reveals the extent of his international trade, and modifies existing conclusions about early-modern trading patterns. He exported Norwich 'stuffs' (cloth) to the Dutch Republic, and imported other commodities from Westphalia, Belgium, Sweden, and

Spain, before acquiring a Norfolk estate. The Scottish surgeon and inoculator, **Charles Maitland (1667/8–1748)**, who was born at Methlick, Aberdeenshire, became in 1717 a surgeon in attendance to the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, whose wife Lady Mary Wortley Montagu arranged for him to inoculate her four-year-old son. In London in 1721 he inoculated her three-year-old daughter in the first recorded inoculation in England. In 1726 he performed several inoculations in Aberdeenshire, and was credited with introducing the practice to Scotland. The schoolmaster, antiquary, and local historian **Samuel Garbet (1685–1756)**, who is the subject of a new account, concentrated on researching and writing the history of the market town of Wem, Shropshire, for which he is best known. It was in manuscript at the time of his death, but was eventually published in 1818. New research also illuminates the life of the Birmingham innkeeper and political ballad writer **John Freeth [pseud. John Free] (1731–1808)**, who from 1763 published songs in local newspapers, and by 1768 had succeeded his father as landlord of the Leicester Arms. This became one of the most celebrated taverns in England, and was also known as a respectable place to do business as well as a venue for

nonconformists and radicals. While the tavern was associated with Freeth as landlord and host, the work of running the tavern and its kitchen was handled entirely by his wife and daughters. The physician and philanthropist **William Ogle (1824–1905)**, who was elected physician to the Derbyshire General Infirmary in 1860, founded the Derby Medical Society with colleagues as a means to discuss case histories and papers on medical science. He was the driving force behind the Derby and Derbyshire Nursing and Sanitary Association which was recognized as one of the leading nursing institutions in the country. The sculptor **Francis John Williamson (1833–1920)** settled in Esher, Surrey, where his monument to Princess Charlotte and her husband Leopold, later king of the Belgians, cemented his reputation as a favourite sculptor of Queen Victoria. His numerous commissions for public statuary and busts, particularly in Birmingham and Liverpool, reflected the new-found 'statuemanía' craze. His career highlight was his fifteen monumental statues of Queen Victoria. His Sister Dora statue in Walsall was Britain's first public sculpture of a non-royal woman. The civil servant and banker, **Sir Clinton Edward Dawkins (1859–1905)**, started his career in the British civil service

before finance appointments in Peru and Egypt. In he became head of the Morgan investment bank in London, where he was involved in raising loans for the British government to finance the war in South Africa. He was a leading figure in the national efficiency movement at the turn of the twentieth century. The artist and designer, **Christopher Ironside (1913–1992)** specialized in creating three-dimensional models for promotional and instructional uses, shown at exhibitions and trade fairs, including the Festival of Britain (1951). Subsequently he focused on medal and then coin designs. He remains best-known for his six reverse designs for Britain's decimal coinage, which went into circulation between 1968 and 1971. He also designed coinage for newly-independent Commonwealth nation states.