The Survey of English Dialects Notebooks

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1. Introduction

This paper results from a study of the dialect of the county of Gloucestershire, as found in the Survey of English Dialects (SED). The fieldwork for the SED was completed in the 1950s, and its results published as the Basic Material (BM) during the 1960s. The fieldworkers recorded their findings in notebooks, copies of which were examined for the seven SED localities in Gloucestershire and adjacent ones in neighbouring counties. During the course of this study it soon became clear that the notebooks are an important resource in their own right, containing as they do both extra and different information from that published in BM. What follows is an attempt to indicate some of the ways in which a consideration of the notebooks is valuable; examples are taken from the records made by the fieldworkers in Gloucestershire and adjacent localities. The informants will be referred to by initials, as they are in BM, though the notebooks give their names and sometimes a fairly clear indication of their address; exceptions are where the informant’s name is given in a quotation or, as in Section 3 below, where the name of the informant is shown on a copy of the notebook page heading. The structure of the notebooks can be seen from Figures 1 and 2 below: the left half of the page records the answer to the question posed by the fieldworker; the column on the right allows the fieldworker to record incidental material (i.m.), some of which was subsequently included in the published Basic Material.

2. The continuing relevance of the SED

In 1998, roughly fifty years after the commencement of the Survey of English Dialects (SED), a conference was held at the University of Leeds, part of whose purpose was to celebrate the centenary of the Survey’s founder, Harold Orton. Papers from the conference were published as Leeds Studies in English, XXX (Upton and Wales, 1999), and in the Editorial Preface the editors observed: “What is noteworthy is that time and again the SED and its related publications continue to be cited, in ever expanding fields” (1999, p. vii.). Stanley Ellis, principal fieldworker, was quoted as saying that the Survey “still ... provides material that scholars will use and enlarge on for further work” (1999, p. vii).

Examples of such work can be found, both in the years immediately following the publication of the SED Basic Material, and in more recent volumes. An example of the latter is Urban Voices (Foulkes and Docherty, 1999), a work whose very title might set it at a far remove from the SED, whose localities were deliberately chosen from small rural villages, and yet the writers often use SED data. Trudgill, for example, observes: “During the course of the twentieth century, the dialects of Norfolk have abandoned their original clear [l] in syllable final position, as revealed by the Survey of English Dialects ...” (1999, p. 140.) Discussing their Dialect Levelling project, Williams and Kerswill describe their collection of data in three towns, concluding: “Survey of English Dialects (SED) materials ... were used for comparison (for Reading: Berkshire site 5, Swallowfield; for Milton Keynes: Buckinghamshire site 2, Stewkley; for Hull: Yorkshire sites 25 and 28, Newbald and
Welwick)” (1999, pp. 141-142). They are conscious of the SED records as being the speech of individuals: “In addition, transcriptions of speakers born in the 1870s and 1880s were available in the form of SED data collected in the 1950s in the village of Stewkley, now on the outskirts of Milton Keynes” (1999, p. 151); but they also observe of Hull, “where T-glottalling does not form part of the original dialect nor of the dialect of the surrounding East Riding, according to the SED” (1999, p. 159).

These examples illustrate the tendency for scholars to use the SED data to establish a historical “baseline” – a term from The Linguistic Atlas of England (LAE – Orton, Sanderson and Widdowson, 1978) – for the dialect of a locality, or even of a wider area, such as the East Riding around Hull; however, at one level what the SED fieldworkers recorded was the speech of a number of individuals, and the question of how far that represents anything more will be taken up at different points of this paper.

3. The informants

An issue that follows from this is the case of those localities where all or most of the responses were made by a single informant. Two examples occur in this region, Gl 7, where JT answered Book II and FW all the rest, and So 1, where the whole questionnaire was answered by EH, with help from his wife in Book V. Since Mrs H. was born some miles away in Wiltshire, only coming to Weston (So 1) at the age of 18, her authority as a source of the dialect of Weston might be questioned. Can one draw a valid isogloss between So 1 and the Wiltshire localities on the basis of this evidence? A further issue is the suspicion that the So 1 data is less dialectal than might have been expected, but there is no other informant from this locality with whom to compare the speech of EH. Indeed, the fieldworker himself acknowledged in his notes the difficulty of finding dialect speakers at this locality.

An even greater problem occurs if one wishes to draw an isogloss between Wo 6 and Wo 7, since one informant is used at both localities. This is admitted in BM, where the introductory remarks on localities and informants say:

D.R.S.’s i.¹ (informant one) at 16.6 Offenham was also P.W.’s i¹ at the neighbouring 16.7 Bretforton (3 SE), which was investigated during the experimental survey in 1951. Since the dialects of the two localities in question seemed to show, on examination, no significant difference, we have reproduced the information given by this informant at the appropriate places in each locality. Incidentally, he was not asked to answer the same questions in both localities. (Orton and Barry, 1969, p. 12)

Informants at other localities are sometimes gathered from the immediate area, not necessarily the village itself, so the principle of taking an informant from three miles away is not in itself inappropriate; the problem occurs when subsequent researchers wish to draw lines between them.

Furthermore, despite the final sentence quoted above, the locality details (1969, p. 34) show that there is some overlap in questions answered: at Offenham RS answered Books I and II, at Bretforton Books I, VII.1.1 – 6.4 and VIII. However, the answers given to Book I
differ quite considerably on the two occasions, as a glance at the first page of the notebooks reveals. The name heading at the top of page one of each notebook leaves no doubt that RS is giving the responses, albeit four years apart, and yet the answers would give rise to the supposition that the dialect was quite distinct. The illustrations below show the respective notebook entries for page 1 at Wo 6, Offenham and Wo 7, Bretforton.

The following table of sample differences shows the variation within just one page of the notebooks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>6 Offenham</th>
<th>7 Bretforton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>29.4.55</td>
<td>17.6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fields</td>
<td>[fiːldz]</td>
<td>[fiəlzd]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place where pigs are kept</td>
<td><em>piggery; pigsty</em> also used</td>
<td><em>pigsty</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>form of pigsty</td>
<td>[staɪ]</td>
<td>[staɪ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dove-house</em></td>
<td>['dɔfəhuːs]</td>
<td>['dɔfəs]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place where cows are kept</td>
<td><em>cow-house</em></td>
<td><em>cow-shed</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yard where cattle are kept</td>
<td><em>fold-yard</em></td>
<td><em>straw-yard</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>form of yard</td>
<td>[jaːd]</td>
<td>[jaːd]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>form of barn</td>
<td>[bæn]</td>
<td>[bæn] i.m. [bæːn]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no need to labour the point that a researcher wishing to know, for example, how *barn* was pronounced in southeast Worcestershire would be hard put to offer an answer, not only for the area, but also for the individual locality and even for the individual speaker. These details call into question a fundamental assumption of the dialectologist, that data is fixed. Clearly speakers at a locality may give evidence of different dialectal features, and moreover an individual may give different answers to the same question on different occasions. There is a yet further point that only the notebook reveals: the informant details on page 34 of BM say of RS “b. Bedfordshire; moved to loc. at 18”. This would in itself render the use of this informant very surprising. However, the notebooks say no such thing. The Bretforton entry says: “b. 1868 at Offenham, lived in village all his life” (see Fig. 2), and this is expanded in the Offenham biographical notes as: “Born in Offenham village of Offenham parents” (Wo 6 notebook p. 90).

Nor is it always possible to assume that the evidence of a given informant is purely his. At GI 6 (Slimbridge) BM lists three informants, who are identified, with sections answered, as follows:

1 CL I, II, III, IV, VII
2 TY V, VI, VIII
3 ST Helped at interviews with i.

There is no mention of Book IX, though the first page of the notebook shows that Book IX, like VIII, was answered by TY. This page does not name a third informant, though it refers to the biography of an informant 3 at the end of the notebook. The biographies give a rather
Fig. 1. Wo 6 notebook entry, top of page 1

Fig. 2. Wo 7 notebook entry, top of page 1
confused picture of the role of ST. He is described as a publican, as was his father, and his address the Tudor Arms in Slimbridge. The general remarks give him a grade A and say: “All material attributed to [TY] was recorded with [ST] present and helping. He really appreciated the investigation. ... he is a real local character” (Gl 6 notebook p. 91). However, ST is mentioned, not in the biography for TY, but in that for CL: “Broad, appreciates investigation ...” (Gl 6 notebook p. 90). The BM editors have assumed that the fieldworker made a slip in writing “material attributed to [TY]”, putting a question mark beside it in the notebook and adding “[CL] (see biog.)”; hence the reference in BM quoted above says that ST “Helped at interviews with i.”, i.e. CL (Orton and Barry, 1969, p. 44). Presumably this was confirmed with the fieldworker during the editorial process.

The present concern, however, is with the idea of a dialect identity. The concept of an identity for the locality is questioned in several parts of this paper in favour of the importance of considering the speech of an individual, but in the circumstances of this set of records even that cannot be relied on. In the study of Gloucestershire dialect the voicing of initial fricatives was examined, and a percentage of possible instances established for each informant. At Gl 6 the amount of voiced usage varies considerably between the two recorded informants, with TY at 42% and CL 54%, while the figure for Gl 6 in the general survey is 52%. However, it is impossible to know the status of CL’s part of the questionnaire: were all the responses his, with perhaps additional information from ST, or did they both chip in with answers to the questions? On the phonological level, is this 54% voicing figure that of CL alone, or an amalgam of the responses of both informants?

Variation between informants at a locality can be illustrated at the grammatical as well as the phonological level. Thus, at Gl 2 there is considerable variation in the use of a present participle preceded by a-. For informant JB only one example of this was noted out of eleven present participles; there were two in seventeen for HP, which is roughly in the same area of magnitude; however for TW there were ten examples in forty two, a not insignificant difference of a tenth to a quarter.

4. Stylistic variation

It has been noted by sociolinguists that stylistic differentiation is evident in the speech of individual informants. It is impossible to know to what extent the “observer’s paradox” (Labov, 1970, 47) may have affected the SED results, but the overwhelming success of the whole enterprise suggests that the fieldworkers were successful in eliciting genuine samples of dialect. However, some qualifications need to be made to that simple assertion. First, there is certainly variation within the usage of individual informants, and sometimes this takes the form of two responses, one more standard and the other containing more nonstandard dialect. What is significant is that the former is often the one delivered in answer to the basic question, while the latter emerges in an incidental remark, which may or may not be reproduced in full in BM. An example of this occurs at Gl 6, with the question designed to produce ask (IX.2.4). Here the informant first offers [aːsk], but when pushed gives [ɛks]; opposite this in the notebook there is an incidental expression [æɪ ɛkst n əʊ wət] (p. 79). BM simply prints
leading one to assume that the informant would naturally use *ask*, and only offers *eks* when the fieldworker presses him. However, the full i.m. expression, with its natural use of *en* for *him*, suggests that *eks* is the more genuine form for the speaker, and he offered *ask* in a slightly selfconscious way.

Another example from Gl 6 reveals how the incidental material often contains more nonstandard dialect than the answers to the questionnaire items. In contrast to some localities, very few NORTH \(^2\) words have *[æː]* in BM. *Corn*, for example, is *[ka:ˈn] in one answer (II.5.1), but *[ko:ˈn] in another (III.5.3). *Morning* occurs several times, on its own or in phrases such as *this / tomorrow morning*; all of these have *[əː]*. *Smorning* occurs twice in longer phrases: in one of them (VII.6.26) *[əː]* occurs, but the notebook has an incidental observation – *[əɪ ʒʊd ə jəː smaːˈnan] (p 29) I saw a hare’s morning – giving one of the very few examples of *[əː]* for *[əː]*. Here the incidental, and longer, nature of the remark is striking. The element *[ʒʊd]*, for example, has three nonstandard features in it: the form of the past tense *seed*, the shortening of the vowel to *[ɪ]*, and the voicing of the initial consonant. It is also significant that it is here that we get *[æː]* in *[smaːˈnan]*; note also the *[ən]* ending contrasting with the more standard *[un]* in the other examples of *morning*.

The second qualification is an awareness sometimes expressed by the fieldworker himself that the informant is on his best linguistic behaviour. Gl 6 also provides an example of this with the fieldworker’s observation in his notes that one of the informants is occasionally polite. On p. 89 of the Gl 6 notebook, informant TY is described. In the reference to his wife the note reads: “Has been in service, polite speaker but knows dialect.” This presumably means more than that she says “please” or brings the fieldworker a cup of tea. Rather, it suggests that her speech shows little, or less, evidence of dialect, though one would want to know more about this. Does it mean that it contains fewer instances of nonstandard grammar? On a lexical level, is she less inclined to use dialect words but knows them when asked? Does her speech lean towards RP, e.g. in containing a lower percentage of voiced fricatives? For TY himself the only use of the word “polite” comes in the general remarks at the bottom of the page. The fieldworker for Gl 6, S.E., graded his informants; here he awarded ST and TY A and CL A-. His reasons can be appreciated from his summary of TY: “A very good and helpful informant. Sees exactly what is wanted and is delighted to help. Alert and intelligent. Misses A+ rating only because he is occasionally ‘polite’ ” (Gl 6 notebook p. 89). Note S.E.’s use of quotation marks; this suggests, perhaps, that the informant occasionally becomes more selfconscious and uses a feature that is more standard than is his norm. This in turn would imply – as would, indeed, be expected – that the informant has different styles of speech; but it also suggests that a skilled fieldworker can be alert to such variation. Whether he can do anything about it, or even indicate in his records that it is happening, is, of course, a different matter. The BM editors translate the fieldworker’s comments into a more explicit statement: “Dial. broad, but occ. abandons regional dialect” (Orton and Barry, 1969, p. 44). While fine as a general statement, this also raises more questions than it answers: one would like to know how occasionally, and whether this is manifested on a lexical, grammatical or phonological level. It is rarely possible to offer.

- *ask n., p. eks [ɛkst] (with a symbol denoting a p.t.),
any quantification of a speaker’s degree of nonstandard usage, but in the case of voicing of initial fricatives a study of the patterns of each informant has been made. One can at least say for Gl 6 that the amount of voiced usage for TY at 42% is considerably lower than CL’s 54%, which may be one measure of this occasional “politeness”.

A further feature of modern sociolinguistic studies is their recognition of different styles of speech; they often make an attempt to record casual speech, formal speech, reading passage style and wordlist style. Some elements of the SED correspond to these different styles, as can be seen in the differing forms of the negative auxiliaries. At many localities the vast majority of those recorded are i.m. responses, which tend to produce the more reduced forms; the fuller forms, such as [ʃæːnt] for shan’t and [kæːnt] for can’t, tend to come from the single responses where these forms are tested in Book IX, and these are the equivalent of the single word utterances, though elicited by question rather than read from a list. Forms such as [dən] for don’t, or even [doː] before [n], can be seen as the more natural conversational forms, since they occur in casual, longer remarks. Similarly, at Gl 1 CW uses old in old-fashioned and in four noun phrases such as old woman; in each case (and all five are from i.m.) it loses the [d]; however, [d] is retained in older than and so old, both questionnaire answers.

5. Fieldworkers and editors

The notebooks reveal an often fruitful dialogue between fieldworker and editor. In the field the interviewer has to make an interpretation of what he hears, rendering it phonetically. The BM editors – in each case Orton plus one other – then have to interpret the written form to get back to an understanding of the speech that underlies it. This means that the primary data is the speech that the fieldworker heard; the notebook is secondary to that and BM at best tertiary. Even if we regard the notebooks as primary, it is important to recognise that BM is secondary.

5.1. Phonological examples

5.1.1. /r/

Certain changes were made to the notebooks as a matter of course. An example is the representation of r-colouring in the Southwest, where the retroflex r-colour is indicated by the fieldworkers by a small line attached to the vowel; presumably this was simply a matter of ease of annotation. Thus our in our own appears as [ə] in the notebook, [æ] in BM. It is also noticeable that at VI.4.1 ears is [ʃæːz] at Gl 4 where the fieldworker was D.R.S. and [ʃæːz] at Gl 6 (S.E.). Both are normalised to [ʃæːz] in BM; presumably the editors accepted both [ə:] and [æ] as representing the same sound.

Assuming that that is the case, such changes are not contentious. What is more of an issue is a further change in our own, where the fieldworker’s [sɪəʊn] becomes [sɹəʊn] in BM. A further discussion is necessary to examine this issue fully, but one example can be mentioned here. At Gl 1 the expression your hair in have your hair cut appears in the notebook as [ʃə ʰæːz], but [ʃæːz] in BM. The r-colour on hair is, as expected, retroflex, but on your BM uses [ɹ]. What this appears to represent is a linking-r; the /r/ has become pre
vocalic and therefore takes on the normal form of pre-vocalic /r/ in Gloucestershire. A supporting detail is the presence in the notebook of the stress mark, a feature used extensively by D.R.S. but not carried over into BM, possibly because not all fieldworkers used them. Their value can be indicated when considering the loss of initial [w]; in the case of a word like wood there is no doubt when this feature is operating, as [ʊd] clearly alternates with [wʊd]. In the case of would it may be less obvious, since [ʊd] might merely represent unstressed would, as in he’d. The use of the stress mark makes it clear that this is the phonological feature operating – he would [t 'ʊd].

5.1.2. STRUT at Gl 6

An example of the way judgements are being made at different levels comes from the study of vowels at Gl 6. Here STRUT words have either [ʌ] or [ə]. There are nearly sixty STRUT words represented here by [ə] (not including situations that are likely to be unstressed, such as gee up or big uns). In about fourteen words [ʌ] is used. In some cases these are the same words, though not always the same informants:

- tumpy (hilly) [tʌmp] (CL p. 26); emmet-tumps (ant-hills) [ɛmət tʌmp] (CL IV.8.13); tump [tʌmp] (CL II.4.6);
- brush [brʌʃ] (CL p. 4); [bɾʌʃ] (TY V.2.14).

In tip him up (CL I.11.6) up has [ə], and could be unstressed, but in the similar tie it up (CL II.6.2), up has [ʌ]. Rubber (CL II.9.10) has [ə]; rubbish (TY V.1.15) has [ʌ]. The shovel part of spud- or spade-shovel has [ə] (CL I.7.6) but [ʌ] (TY p. 71).

So is there a genuine difference, or is it a preference of the fieldworker? This is a topic that clearly exercised the editors, and provokes a discussion in the notebook. The fieldworker seems to be clear that he is hearing two different sounds. In his phonetic notes on page 88 of the notebook he writes:

“ME ŋ = ə regularly, but also [ʌ] (RS?) and [o] after certain consonants”

and on page 10 he notes in his i.m.:

“stɔk – stook – differs from [ə] stressed”.

However, on the following page the editor picks up this distinction and queries it. On the page reproduced below a number of words contain [ə], [ʌ] or [o].
It appears from the initial at bottom right that the editor’s is the thinner hand and the fieldworker’s the heavier writing. The editor has drawn lines between *tuffet* with [ʌ] and *ridge* and *headlands* with [ə]. Beside this he has asked “Distinct?” The arrow then appears to go to the question, “Is this genuine?”, to which the fieldworker replies, “It certainly exists”, which provokes the comment “Not very remarkable really?” There is also separate comment on the “vascellation” (sic) between *furrow* with [o] and [ə]; however, this appears to be a separate issue, and may be a further instance of the point noted earlier, that *furrow* in the short response has the more standard [ə], while in the incidental longer expression it has the older [o]. All this suggests that the editor is much less convinced than the fieldworker that there is any real distinction between [ə] and [ʌ].

5.1.3. [t] or [d] at Gl 1

An example of interpretation occurs at Gl 1, arising from the topic of intervocalic /t/ becoming [d]. At this locality there are no examples of this; words such as *water*, *slaughterhouse* and *Saturday* all retain [t]. However, final [d] becomes [t] in some words, such as *second*, *drowned*, *diamond*. This raises a question about an incidental item (p. 80) transliterated by the fieldworker as “I should put it out of sight.” No context is given, but it is next to the *broke* item, so it could refer to a broken tumbler. The sequence rendered *out of sight* is [əɔt:sət], but given the tendency for final [d] to become [t], this could plausibly be *outside*. In fact in an earlier i.m. instance (p. 19) *outside* appears almost exactly like that – [əɔt:sət].
5.2. Grammatical examples

5.2.1. Verbs at He 4

Another example of discussion between fieldworker and editor is revealed in the notebook for the neighbouring Herefordshire locality of Checkley, He 4. This occurs over certain grammatical issues, including participles preceded by a- and periphrastic do, a feature that seems to have been misinterpreted by the fieldworker. Similar issues arise in those Gloucestershire localities investigated by this fieldworker, D.R.S., but the issue is seen most clearly at He 4. In his grammatical notes he observes that “The past tense is preceded by [ə], as is the present participle” (He 4 notebook p. 89). But preceding the ordinary past tense with [ə], rather than the participle(s), would be odd. There is no doubt about the latter, at least as far as the present participle is concerned: there are regular instances of this, e.g. [əduːn it] “doing it”. However, the usage is variable, and it is an advantage of examining the notebook that this is immediately clear: thus in adjacent questions on page 63 the fieldworker records [ə'guːn] “going”; [t'wəz 'gwɑːn] “he was going”. There is only one clear example of a + past participle, in them’s a-come from there, clear because the auxiliary is already in place. In the other cases where [ə] precedes a past participle, it represents have, as in [ət əsɪn 'wən] I’ve seen one.

Here is where it is important to see the notebooks as having the primary status, while BM remains an interpretation; sometimes it is necessary to get back to the data itself, and consider different possible interpretations. What, for example, is to be made of this, still on the same topic from He 4? In [twaː ɗeː t'wəz s'pʊdʒunz 'kεpt] where there was (a) pigeons kept, the removal of a- from before kept seems odd; could the informant have started with the intention of saying “a pigeon”? In the case of [l'dæt l'did s'kaːl əm 'taunz] they did a-call ’em times, this looks initially like an example of a + past participle, except that the use of did means that call is strictly an infinitive; perhaps in the context of the utterance it seemed to the informant to have the feel of a past participle. We have no indication of conversational features such as hesitation or self-repair in the SED data, so if an informant starts in one way, then changes direction, what is merely a feature of discourse may appear, falsely, to have a grammatical explanation.

5.2.2. Periphrastic do

The issue of how data is interpreted becomes more significant at He 4 when considering periphrastic do. On the first page of the notebook the fieldworker notes the expression [l'dæts 'wʊt'wiːd s'ʃeː] and renders it “that’s what we’d (a)say”. However, would is not followed by a participle, so in this context a + say would be odd. It is much more likely to have been that’s what we d’say – what we (habitually) say, i.e. a normal example of the Southwestern periphrastic do for habitual use. On the following page, also as an incidental item, he records [wiːd s'kaːldɪt]. This is interpreted as “we called it (past tense)”; however, the editor (presumably) has crossed out “past” and written “present”, underlined [d ə] and added “= do”. This fits in with the interpretation offered here, but in this case it is rather odd to have “we d’called it”: a past periphrastic should be we did call it, and we’d a-called it or we’d’ve called it might be possible here.
Although in general the editor’s reassessments are correct, the way this is indicated can be misleading. Thus on p. 7 we find [ə̚ tœ' no: ’wot ðæ:d ə̚ ‘kɑː:l ə̚m] “I don’t know what they call them (past tense)”, and the editor has added “ ‘d” after “they”. This may have been intended to represent periphrastic do, but it has the effect of indicating they’d, i.e. they would. As before, this would call into question the presence of [ə̚], and what they d’call is a better interpretation. In fact, the fieldworker’s original annotation does represent that, since the fieldworkers normally translate into standard English, as can be seen in the use of them to represent [ə̚m]; so I don’t know what they call them is a fair representation of I don’t know what they d’call ‘em. The puzzle is the fieldworker’s addition of “(past tense)”. The word separation in the [ðæ:d ə̚ ‘kɑː:l] sequence also reinforces the point that even the notebook entry is an interpretation of what the informant said, with BM at a second remove.

The next example is on page 9: [wi:d ə̚ ‘kɑː:l t] “we call it”, with quite a large gap between the [wi:d] and the [ə̚], clearly representing in the fieldworker’s mind we’d a-call it. Here the editor has underlined [də] and written “do” above it (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4. He 4 notebook entry p. 9, annotation of fieldworker’s transcription, “we call it”

By page 20 the editor has become rather exasperated: after [ðæ:d ə̚ ‘kɑː:l ə̚m] “they called them” he has underlined the ed of called and written “present!” (fig. 5).

Fig. 5. He 4 notebook entry p. 20, annotation of fieldworker’s transcription, “they called them”

One other place where the interpretation is open to question is on page 44 [ə̚dələʊzd ðə'bizm] “I used the besom” (fig. 6).

Fig. 6. He 4 notebook entry p. 44, fieldworker’s transcription, “I used the besom”

Here the editor has underlined [də], presumably reading it as “do”, though again the periphrastic do with past tense used is odd, and an alternative interpretation makes sense.
This is to see the [ə] as a reduction of have, thus making it I’d’ve used, since this has already been established, as in [ˈwɪ: ən ˈhæv] I’ve seen one, above.

It has been observed elsewhere that the SED BM is not a particularly good source of examples of periphrastic do (Payne, 1995, 77). Because it was based on a questionnaire, the responses are usually short; longer expressions are particularly interesting, but are not as frequent as might be hoped. Potential sources would be questionnaire items such as What do good people do on Sundays? How do you see in this room when it gets dark?, which might have produced They d’go to church; we d’switch the light on. Yet in most cases all we get is the simple present – They go to church. However, there are plenty of examples in the incidental material, not all of which get into BM. In particular, very few examples of the past form appear. One informant at Gl 3 produced seven examples, all incidental, and the one question that might have been expected to produce it did not – her wears the trousers, not her d’wear. Incidental phrases in the localities that use this feature include: if you d’tell lies the devil’ll have ee; or in the past they did poke fun at I; not just “they did it on one occasion”, but “that’s what they habitually did”. The function of periphrastic do in the past is carried in Standard English by used to. One informant actually combined these forms: my uncle d’used to [ma ˈʌŋkI dˈju:st] (GW, Gl 4).

A further example where it is necessary to examine the recorded form occurs at Gl 6. The question is: A dog buries a bone because he wants to? (VIII.7.6) The BM response is simply hide it, but the question is about habitual activity and opposite the main answer is an incidental item which fits naturally enough – He d’want to hide it [i: da ˈwɒnt tə ˈhed ut]. Below this is another sentence: He d’never bury bones [i: da ˈnɛvə bəˈbɪənz]. This is also a habitual statement about a dog’s normal behaviour, but it is much more unusual to find examples of periphrastic do with negative verb phrases like this. Nevertheless, a parallel example occurs at Gl 4 – we d’never seen ‘em – so this begins to look like a regularity in the grammar of this feature. On the other hand, the fieldworker’s entry may be misleading, since it is still DRS. In the Gl 4 example we d’never seen ‘em (Fig. 7), the fieldworker links the [d] with we as much as [ə] – [ˈwɪ: d ə ˈnɛvə ˈsi:n əm].

His transcription, as always, renders the utterance into standard English, therefore not representing periphrastic do, and giving “we never see them”, suggesting that he understands it as a do example; however, it is possible to interpret the schwa as a reduced have, in which case it could be we’d have never seen them. These are only tentative suggestions, and the fieldworker’s gloss has the authority of his presence during the interview.
5.2.3. thou and verb inflections

Another case where the interpretation of the BM editors can be questioned is at Gl 7. Here, for Let me have a turn the informant has said [les 'ʌv ə go: ...] (VII.5.8). BM has a note which reads: “the imp(eratorative) at 24.7 seems to represent LET’S.” However, let’s normally means let us, which would make sense in the context were it not for the presence also of I, which makes us redundant. More likely is it that [les] represents lettest, just as [wɔts] in [wɔts du:] represents what dost do. Dost is often reduced to [st], and can be simply [s], especially in consonant clusters, as evidenced by [dəs ət:]. In those reduced situations, thou / thee often disappears completely, the verb inflection sufficing to show what is going on – which dost want, how bist getting on, etc. Assuming that the utterance was well-formed, lettest is a preferable interpretation here.

6. Interpreting what the fieldworker wrote or intended

Another issue of interpretation occurs in the He 4 data at IX.7.2. Here BM has [bi:s ət mnud] for bis / be thee (standard are you) married. In the notebook the fieldworker has written b (something) s, crossed out the (something) and written i: over the s (see Fig. 8).

Fig. 8. He 4 notebook entry IX.7.2 “bis / be thee married”

The editor has taken it that only the vowel, the (something), was crossed out, but the crossing-out line extends to the top of the s, and with the position of the i: it may be that it was the fieldworker’s intention to cross out the s as well, leaving bi:. That certainly makes better sense: [bis] never occurs; it is always either [bi:] or [bis], and there is a clear [ði: bi:] only five questions further on at IX.7.7. While the conjectured -st forms are used by informants BG and TG, Book IX is answered by JG, who would seem to use only be not bis(t).

Another problem arising from the nature of the record made occurs at Gl 1. At IV.6.20 the method of killing chickens is [kɔt əm in də nek / ɪz nek]. The BM response list has only cut him, not cut them, and represents this [kɔt əm in də nek], [kɔt əm in ɪz nek]. However, as can be seen in Fig. 9, “cut ... in” does not appear twice in the notebook:

Fig. 9. Gl 1 notebook entry IV.6.20 “cut ’em in the neck”
From its appearance on the page it is a little uncertain what WR actually said, but the “his neck” could have been an afterthought when he realised the original question was singular. He clearly had a plural situation in mind, because this is a second response, following snobbles ’em. The [əm] after snobbles is accepted by BM as ’em; despite the different form, [əm] rather than [əm], this example should be cut ’em rather than cut ’im, since both [əm] and [əm] are used by all three informants for ’em, and [əm] is overwhelmingly the normal form of the informant for ’em. Him in pick him in the very next item is [ɪm]. The expression cutchy-bonnet occurs at Gl 3; cutchy is queried in the BM wordlist; D.G.R. records it on this authority only, with a note that it is queried. It would appear that the fieldworker has written bonnet as the response, then added cutchy in front, though it is stressed, suggesting that the informant perhaps said bonnet, then cutchy-bonnet (see Fig. 10); cutchy is probably a version of kerchief.

7. The importance of context

It is not always easy to make judgements purely from incidental material, however, since there is not always a context for the remark. This can make interpretation uncertain, so that They did say that could be an example of periphrastic do, but might be an emphatic form. On the other hand, the notebooks sometimes supply a context for an utterance that may be missing in BM. An instance occurs at Gl 7, where BM records houses, with housen as a suggested form (V.1.1); it does not record the informant’s remark that it was used in the old days but not now (though BM does usually note such observations).

At Gl 3 [wɪː d ˈɛdən] is rendered by the fieldworker “we should have had one”; this is in isolation on the right-hand side of the page, with no context for interpreting the expression in the items opposite. However, it is unusual to see one reduced to a syllabic consonant; one is more usually [ʌn] or [ən], while a syllabic [n] usually represents en, and a more likely interpretation is “we should have had him / it”.

8. The relationship between BM and its source material

It is almost inevitable that occasional errors should slip through into BM. In a work of such magnitude and technical complexity, printed in a pre-computer age, it is a great tribute to the editors and the printers that there are so few errors. However, occasional examples do crop up. So, for example, at Gl 4 BM reads the standard [ˈɑsk əm] (IX.2.4), while the notebook clearly has [ˈaks əm] (see Fig 11).
BM reads ['i:ðə] for Gl 3 and 4 (VII.2.13; Fig. 12) –

- but the Gl 4 notebook has ['iːdə] (see Fig. 13), and the same informant uses [d] rather than [ð] in further and rather.

To that degree, findings on these issues would be inaccurate if BM was the only source.

Sometimes a close look at the notebook suggests a misreading by the BM editors. One instance of this occurs with on- and off-glides at Gl 2: at this locality there are a number of cases where what appears in BM as a full [i] or [o] is probably intended by the fieldworker to be a raised glide.

Examples with [uiː]:

- at VII.2.10 the ['i] in piece (of string) is only marginally raised (Fig. 14) and about the same size in the fieldworker’s hand as a full [i] or [o] is probably intended by the fieldworker to be a raised glide;

- at VII.4.8 and 9 Easter, both in isolation and in Easter eggs, has [uiː] in BM, but the first item, though quite large, is raised and is here taken as a glide, since, as can be seen in Fig. 15, the ['i:] sequence in Easter is virtually identical to that in piece above;

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Fig. 11. Gl 4 notebook entry IX.2.4, “aks him”

Fig. 12. BM entry VII.2.13 for Gloucestershire localities

Fig. 13. Gl 4 notebook entry VII.2.13, “either”

Fig. 14. Gl 2 notebook entry VII.2.10, “piece of string”

Fig. 15. Gl 2 notebook entry VII.4.8, 9, “Easter, Whit Sunday, Easter eggs”
• at VIII.7.5 steal in burglars steals 'em has a tiny on- and off-glide (Fig. 16), as it has in BM – [stɨiːl]; steal in isolation immediately above has a slightly larger first element, appearing in BM as [stuiːl]; yet on close inspection the [ɨ] appears to be raised, and is likely to be the same as the next instance.

![Fig. 16. Gl 2 notebook entry VIII.7.5 “steals, burglars steals ’em, stole, stole”](image)

Examples with [oaʊ]:

• in the same item (VIII.7.5) the two versions of stole appear in BM as [stʊoʊə. stʊʊəl]; yet in the notebook both schwas are fairly large, both are clearly raised, albeit slightly, and the first appears smaller than the second.

Examples with [ouː]:

• at IX.5.3 a-doing is [ə dʊ:uːn] in BM; in the notebook (Fig. 17) the [ʊ] is slightly raised, and at 5.1 do is clearly [dəuː], suggesting that a-doing would more correctly be [ə dəuː:uːn];

![Fig. 17. Gl 2 notebook entry IX.5.1 “does, he does, we do”, IX.5.2 “don’t, they don’t”, IX.5.3 “a-doing”](image)

• at IX.8.6 father’s boots (notebook entry Fig. 18) is [bouːts] in BM, yet three items further on BM recognises [ɨ] as a glide in who [əuː] and whose (Fig. 19), though there is little difference from the boots example; the glide
in *who* is slightly more raised than that in *boots*, but rather larger, and it would seem that *boots* should also have ["u:"].

\[fe: \bar{\text{i}}a \ z \ b\text{ou}: \text{z}\]

Fig. 18. Gl 2 notebook entry IX.8.6, “father’s boots”

\[g/1 \ \text{oun}: \text{z} \ 2 \ z \ \text{r}\text{u}:\text{z}\]

Fig. 19. Gl 2 notebook entry IX.9.1 “who”, IX.9.2 “whose it is”

In the *a-doing* example, the BM reading would create a diphthong [ou:] not noted elsewhere; similarly, the only examples of [i:] are those that are here under dispute. At IX.3.5-7 break, *make(s), made* and *take(s)* each has [e:] followed by an offglide [], and is so represented in BM; but in *makes* the [] is larger than in the others, as large as those cases where BM has used full [i]. This raises the question as to whether there are any full [e:i] diphthongs either: eleven *FACE* words were identified at Gl 2 with [e:i], but perhaps they should all be regarded as cases of [e:] with an offglide, like *make*, since most of them are words with <aCe>.

Gl 3 and 4 offer further examples. At III.10.4, *cows moos, moos* in the Gl 3 notebook is written twice and neither is completely clear (Fig. 20).

\[\text{ke} \text{a} \text{z} \ \text{mou}: \text{z} \ \text{mou}: \text{z}\]

Fig. 20. Gl 3 notebook entry III.10.4 “cows moos, moos”

BM has [mou:z] for Gl 3 and 4 (Fig. 21),

\[3-4 \ x_mou:z\]

Fig. 21. BM entry III.10.4, Gl 3 and 4, “moos”

but the fieldworker may have intended it to be ["u:] at Gl 3, since this is the form for all <oo> words, e.g. *roots* on the same page (Fig. 22).

\[\text{wou}: \text{ts}\]

Fig. 22. Gl 3 notebook entry p. 20, “roots”

There seems no doubt that the notebook entry for Gl 4 is an on-glide, though raised only slightly (Fig. 23), and it is likely that this was the intention for Gl 3.
On the [ui:] issue, at Gl 3 in *Easter* and *Easter eggs*, the [i] is fairly large, but it does look slightly raised (Fig. 24).

BM, however, reads [ui:]. In *Christmas Eve* the fieldworker has written the whole entry rather smaller than that for *Easter* (Fig. 25), but the [i'] and [i:] elements are about the same size, as they are in *Easter*.

Yet here BM reads [i:], in contrast to the *Easter* entry, and to Gl 2, where *Eve* is presented as [ui:].

9. Information not used in BM

Sometimes BM does not record an item because that was not the focus of the question. Although this information may be picked up elsewhere, it does not always give the flavour of the speaker’s usage. So, for example, the extent of the use of *en* for *him* or *it* at Gl 3 is not represented at points where verbs are being tested, even though the informant gave these objects in responses recorded by the fieldworker. Although the informant said *find en* (where the object referred to is a knife), *catch en* (a mouse), and *rode en* (a bicycle), in each case only the verb appears in BM.

The existence of *en* also gives rise to a question at Gl 6. Here the BM entry for *break*, its past tense and past participle (IX.3.5) are [bue:k bue:k bue:kn] indicating standard grammar. However, the notebook entry for the participle is [bue:k n] with a gap as indicated and a note beneath, “broken it”. The context of this question allowed an object for the past participle: *So I had to tell my wife that I had ... it*, the supposed situation being the breaking of a tumbler. The informant had been using *en* in the form [n] in a series of answers leading up to this point – *lose en, find en* for a knife at IX.3.1 and 2, for example – and *en* for *it* is a normal form. It is therefore more likely that the correct description of the grammar of *break* is that *broke* is both past tense and past participle here, and that the [n] was an object, not a verb morpheme.
10. Lexis

10.1. Words missing from the SED lexical stock

There are several important issues concerning lexis in the notebooks. First, words the fieldworkers came across in conversation, and recorded incidentally, may not have made it into BM, especially if the item was not linked to an SED questionnaire concept. An example is *clavey* (mantelpiece), recorded in two Gloucestershire localities, showing that it was still a living word sixty years ago, and yet unknown to anyone checking for it in the SED Dictionary (DGR; Upton, Parry, and Widdowson, 1994). Another is an interesting set of words from Gl 1 associated with threshing, supported by a drawing made by the fieldworker (Fig. 26). Such drawings are quite frequent, and another valuable item in the notebooks; only now, with the advent of the Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture (https://library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-leeds-archive-of-vernacular-culture), is this information starting to enter the public domain.

![Fig. 26. Gl 1 notebook entry p. 11, threshing words](https://example.com/fig26.png)

The details provided here, and some of the words, are not known from BM or its derivatives.

Another item missing from the SED lexical stock in BM and DGR is *ettles*: this appears in the English Dialect Society (EDS) Glossary as *ettles, hettles*; presumably misanalysis of a *nettle* as an *ettle*, with hypercorrection to *hettle*. At Gl 3 *ettle roots* is offered for *nettle roots*; the source is i.m. on p. 20 and it is recorded in BM at IV.12.1, but the issue there is *roots* rather than *nettles*, and the way it is represented in BM – “[ɛtʰːɫɹ ɷuːts] (sic) nettle-ers.” – suggests that it is not regarded as an independent form. That this is a genuine dialect word is supported by a reference in *A Cotswold Village*, set in Bibury / Ablington, i.e. east Gloucestershire: “’Ettes [nettles] is good for stings. Damp them and rub them on to a ‘wapse’ sting, and they will take away the pain directly” (Gibbs, 1929, p. 53).
10.2. Separate word or phonological variation

The question of what makes an item a separate word is interpreted differently by the editors of the four BM volumes, and further judgements are made by the DGR editors. This can be genuinely problematic. For example, at Gl 3 the notebook contains a reference to the Tack – “the low-lying fields on the banks of the River Severn are known as the ‘Tack’.” The fieldworker clearly takes this as a proper noun; BM has tack as a word for low-lying ground at this entry on the strength of this response alone, and it is carried over to DGR as a separate entry with this item only. Tack is, of course, also a word for hired pasture in Gloucestershire and surrounding counties – Sa, He, Wo, Mon, Wa, W – and this would seem to have mistakenly created a dialect word that probably never existed. At Gl 2 the entry for spring, autumn, has an i.m. entry which the fieldworker has transliterated as “the rise and fall of the year (= spring & autumn)”. BM, which has these as separate items, VII.3.6 and 7, records rise as an alternative for spring on the strength of this expression alone, though that does not suggest that the informant would use rise on its own as some might use fall, rather than the rise of the year. DGR makes a similar judgment – “the rise of the year Gl abstracted from phrase the rise and fall of the year” – but records rise only in the quoted phrases.

At Gl 4 grass-nail (II.9.9) has [nɒɪɫ], the same (apart from the glide) as II.8.3 nile [nɒɪɫ]. This raises the question of whether nail and nile are basically the same item. At Gl 5 there appears the item quinet – “iron wedge to hold blade on stick; sb 1 EDD (n.r. Glo)”. Despite the latter observation it appears in the EDS Glossary with almost exactly the definition recorded by the fieldworker: “An iron wedge driven into the pole-ring of a scythe, to hold it tight”. The informant also gives the term pole-ring, “ring to hold blade on stick”. Quinet was not added to BM for Gl 5, but appears for grass-nail (II.9.9) at O 4, and hence in DGR. OED uses a spelling with double <n>, marks it dialectal, and defines it as a wedge, though the examples show very much the given usage, e.g. that from the Wiltshire EDS Glossary: “Quinnet, a wedge, as the iron wedge fastening the ring of the scythe nibs in place, or the wooden wedge or cleat which secures the head of an axe or hammer” (Dartnell and Goddard, 1893, quoted in OED, 1991, p. 128).

Of course, even the notebooks are not a complete repository of the knowledge held by the SED informants. The Gl 5 notebook produces the word yelm [jɛɫm], which the fieldworker defines as “elm vb. a process in preparing thatch”. The editor cites EDD under YELM, though the word is not in the Glossary under either form. Klemola and Jones cite this word as an example of a dialect word that might occur in the SED tape recordings: “a technical term, one which is used across large parts of the country with reference to a particular field of activity, e.g. the thatching term [*jɛɫm*], a layer of cut straw, which occurs frequently across the country when thatching is discussed” (1999, p. 23). It is not in DGR, suggesting that, although Klemola and Jones have come across it often in the taperecordings, it did not appear in BM in any locality.

When a word has no accepted standard form it is sometimes difficult to know how to refer to it. Thus at Gl 5 [ɒɡɹɩmɔː] “a tool for cutting the sides of a stack” is interpreted as hoggerdemow, with the note “sb. 2. EDD”. The fieldworker provides a sketch (Gl 5 notebook p. 77); the Glossary has hoggery maw, which matches the SED pronunciation, “an implement
for trimming a rick”, adduced from Bourton only three miles away from Gl 5. No such forms appear in OED.

The point at which a pronunciation diverges sufficiently to make something a separate word is a matter for lexicologists. Sometimes the editors of BM allow lexical status to an item that is rather surprising. An example is *dripples*, which appears in DGR as a word for both cart-ladders (I.10.5) and cart-frame (I.10.6), with citings in He, Mon and Gl. However, *thripples* is also listed with the same meanings in Wo, He, Gl, Sa and St. This suggests that *thripples* and *dripples* are simply pronunciation variants of a single word, appearing in that group of West Midland counties, with initial [θɹ] voiced to [dɹ] according to the normal rule in the counties listed for *dripples*.

The grammatical status of a word is also sometimes a matter of interpretation. For example, at Gl 1 the question “What’s your word for standing like this?” (VI.9.8) produces the response [stɹɒdɹ]. The corresponding word in the BM response list is *stroddling*, but Gl 1 is within an area where some TRAP words have [b], and given that *stroddling* also appears in the BM list of responses, this could simply be a phonological alternative. This is particularly likely, since in the notebook the fieldworker records the expression [t ðoːn æːf stɹɒdɹ ɪːz ɬɛɡz əʊt], translating it as “he doesn’t half straddle his legs out”. This suggests that he accepts that [stɹɒd] represents *straddle*, and BM would seem to agree with this, since next to the entry it gives [stɹɒd straddle inf]. [b] forms occur within the expected area; further south and east, at Gl 5 and 6, forms with [a] occur. So far this is another example of identifying a phonological variant as a separate word. DGR follows BM in accepting these two as separate words, so that *stroddling*, with Gl entry [stɹɒdɹ] from Gl 6, appears on page 401 of the *Dictionary*, and *stroddling*, with Gl entry [stɹɒdɹ] from Gl 1, appears on page 405. Both words are classified as adverbs, since the BM headword is *astride*, but one might suppose that the response of *stroddling* in answer to the question is intended by the informant as a verb parallel to “standing” rather than an adverb.

Conversion of the phonetic form into what is conventionally deemed to be a separate word is not always as clear an issue as might be supposed. Whether a gap in the notebook transcription is intended by the fieldworker is also not certain. For example, when *one* is added to another word, does it become a compound or not? A useful test for compounding is stress, whereby two stressed syllables indicate two words, one stress that a compound has occurred. *Big ones* is not conventionally accepted as a compound, but may behave like that for an individual speaker – *biguns*. *Somewhat* is a compound, and a headword in BM and DGR, but might be more readily rendered *summat*. At Gl 2 there is an apparent gap between the two parts of the latter word – [ˈsʌm ət] – which might have made some sort of sense, though the value of this fieldworker’s indication of stress is seen here as it suggests a single word (see Fig. 27).

Fig. 27. Gl 2 notebook entry VII.8.14 “nothing”, VII.8.15 “summat”
On the other hand, the apparent gaps in *nothing* – [n əʊ ən] – are presumably mere accidents in the fieldworker’s process of writing; the gaps are rightly closed in BM. However, when he writes *which one* as [wʊfən], BM’s version with a gap – [wʊfən] – suggests that *one* is a separate word, whereas the fieldworker may have meant it as an unstressed final syllable, a point reinforced by his use of the stress mark.

11. Discourse

The SED is based on a questionnaire, which provides mostly short responses; these are inevitably poor sources of features dependent on whole utterances, such as syntax and discourse. One feature that occurs in Gloucestershire and more widely in the West Country is the use of *you* as a tag at the end of a question. This is an interesting issue for interpretation as to its status: it is regarded by some people as a personal habit, but examining a range of data shows that it is used by many speakers, and widely enough to be seen as a feature of West Country dialect. But dialect what? Perhaps dialect discourse, a concept, one might suggest, that is under-explored.

To search for examples in the SED is not easy. Examples can certainly be found in the BM, though one tends to come across them by chance; for example

Ha 3 - *Which way's the wind coming now, you?* (VII.6.26)

but more instances are hidden in the notebooks and not recorded in BM. The question about the wind also yields an example at Gl 5, where the informant’s response was: *which way is the wind, you*; to which the fieldworker added the note: “This final [ju:] is often used after a question.” But when we go back to BM we find that the only part that was printed was *which way is the wind*: clearly a missed opportunity.

12. Use made of SED data

Books based on SED materials often make the assumption that the nature of speech at a locality can be inferred from a single example. The misleading nature of this can be indicated from the data for the use of initial /h/. This is mapped in the Oxford Atlas (Upton and Widdowson, 1996, pp. 46-47, Map 23) using the word *house*; in LAE map Ph220 considers *hand*, and Ph221 *hearse*. All three maps show the retention of /h/ as a feature of most of Somerset, in an area extending east into Wiltshire. The *house* map also includes Gl 7 (though it appears to exclude So 1); *hearse* includes Gl 7 and So 1; *hand* excludes both. From this evidence it would be legitimate to conclude that Gl 7 is in the /h/-retaining area, and perhaps to link it to Somerset, or to see it as belonging in Avon as opposed to Gloucestershire. However, my study of the Gloucestershire localities shows that /h/-dropping is normal in the county, and detailed examination of the data from Gl 7 shows very little difference from the more northerly localities. Even in the case of *house* the results vary according to whether the word occurs on its own or in a compound, as [h] occurs in *house, houses, housed*, but not *house-crease or fowl-, cow-, wagon-, slaughter-house*. The only other words in which [h] was retained were *herrings* ([hɛɹɪŋz], [jɛɹɪŋz] old); *hundred* and *hearse*. These are possibly occasions where the informant gave particular attention to pronunciation, since he also used it
in three hypercorrect situations, on *oven, eight and ask*; in the case of *hearse* formality may have played a part, while in some of the compounds the [h] ceases to be initial. Despite the mapping, therefore, it is probably wrong to regard /h/-retention as normal at Gl 7.

The concept of the county of Avon, created in 1974 out of South Gloucestershire and north Somerset, shows another way in which subsequent use is made of SED data. The localities in SED were chosen to fit the counties of England as they existed at the time of the survey; subsequent publications show how the localities fit into other geographical identities, notably the counties that were formed after local government reorganisation. In the area around Bristol this became quite complex, with first the creation of the county of Avon in 1974 and then its division into the administrative areas of South Gloucestershire, City of Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, and North West Somerset. Avon contained Gl 7 (Latteridge), the only locality in South Gloucestershire, So 1 (Weston) and So 2 (Blagdon). Deductions are sometimes made about the dialect of Bristol or the Bristol area, but SED provides no evidence for the city itself; only the surrounding localities in the area that became Avon can be used, and any questioning of this evidence weakens such extrapolation.

The foregoing discussion aims to emphasise the importance of the SED notebooks. To what extent their contents can be accessed is another matter. It has to be acknowledged that any researcher wanting to make a basic reference to an SED finding needs to be able to use the Basic Material and its offshoots and cannot be expected to trawl through further sources in the way that the study of the Gloucestershire notebooks did. Nevertheless, it would be a shame if the authority and the extra material of the notebooks were not seen as an important resource.

**Notes**

1. For the SED Basic Material, see References: Orton et al.
2. Words in small capitals, such as NORTH and STRUT, refer to the Wells keywords system (Wells, 1982).
3. The English Dialect Society produced glossaries of dialect words for many counties during the nineteenth century. That for Gloucestershire is Robertson, 1890.

**References**


The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), 2nd edn on CD-rom, 1994, 2nd and 3rd editions online.