

Notes and Queries (2)

Brautin

A good many entries in Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (*EDD*) are followed by bracketed initials abbreviated from the names of correspondents arranged alphabetically in the List of Correspondents at the end of volume six. Usually, though not always with absolute certainty, one can identify the initials by referring to this List of Correspondents. Thus, to take examples at random, the West Yorkshire item *washer* followed by "[H.H]" can be traced to the Yorkshire correspondent H. Hey, while "[W.F.S.]" against the Kent and Wiltshire *mouthy* clearly stands for the Kent correspondent W. F. Shaw. On the other hand, the "[H.R.]" against the Hampshire *wiggle-waggle grass* for the Quaking-Grass *Briza media* does not exactly match anything in the List of Correspondents. In that list we do, however, find a correspondent for Hampshire named E. H. Rycroft, who is most likely the contributor we are seeking.

Since many of the names featuring in Wright's List of Correspondents are absent from his Bibliography, we may generally assume that entries in the body of the work that are followed by initials matching the names of such persons were not published elsewhere, and can thus be a valuable, even unique, source of information. Here is an example. The Cumberland entry against the "obsolescent" or "obsolete" word *brautin*, "a girdle-cake sandwiched with cheese" is followed by the initials "[J.P.]". These we identify, with the help of the List of Correspondents, as belonging to Wright's Cumberland correspondent J. Powley, who does not feature in the Bibliography. His contribution is thus particularly valuable, since it is unlikely to have been published elsewhere than in *EDD*. It runs as follows:

"Much used in former days at churn [harvest] suppers. It was made by putting a layer of yeasted cake, then one of rich cheese, and repeating these layers four or five times. It was cut into slices and eaten with sweet sauce flavoured with rum. Now [1898 or somewhat earlier] scarcely known."

Of course there are other citations against the headword *brautin*, but all of these are from published sources. Note also the headword *braughwam*, apparently unrecorded later than 1790, for a Lancashire dish "made of cheese, eggs, bread, and butter, boiled together". We are not told on what occasions this was enjoyed. According to Brockett in his *Glossary of North Country Words* of 1846, a dish called *brautin* was "formerly prepared for mowers in hay-harvest", but was also provided as a repast on Midsummer eve and St Thomas's night (December 20th-21st). In his *Northumberland Words* of 1892-92, R. O. Heslop informs us that, in Rothbury parish, cakes called *brautin* were given to mowers "for their noon, or luncheons". North of the Border in Roxburghshire, *braughtin* or *braughtin-cake* stood for "green cheese-parings, or wrought curd, kneaded and mixed with butter or suet, and broiled in the frying-pan" (*EDD*). Perhaps more widespread in southern Scotland were *butter-braughtins* or *butter-brughtins*, provided as part of the entertainment for the Lammas feast.

An oatcake or bannock was first toasted, then crumbled down, and, being put in a pot over the fire, had butter poured over it. The *butter-brughtins* resulting from this were “used as a sort of potage” (*Scottish National Dictionary*).

J. B. Smith
Independent Researcher, Chester
johnbersmith@gmail.com