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Abbreviations

CRO	Cornwall Record Office
D & C	Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral
DHC	Devon Heritage Centre
EFP	*Treman's Exeter Flying Post*
EPG	*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*
PWDRO	Plymouth and West Devon Record Office
TDA	*Transactions of the Devonshire Association*
TNA	The National Archives
WDM	*Western Daily Mercury*
WEH	*Western Evening Herald*
WMN	*Western Morning News*
WT	*Western Times*

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The Legend of Saint Budoc

DAVE WILDMAN

Thou wast miraculously preserved from the ocean's fury
and, being sustained by the hand of God,
thou didst devote thyself to His service, O Hierarch Budoc.
Being showered with both temporal and spiritual honours both in Armagh and in Dol,
thou didst labour to win souls for Christ,
therefore we implore thine aid, begging Christ our God that He will save our souls.

Troparion of St Budoc, Tone 4.[1]

The recorded history of St Budeaux begins with the very first name in its history: St Budoc. The legend stretches back to the fifth century when Budoc sailed from Brittany across the English Channel to arrive in Plymouth Sound, where he then moved further up the Tamar before deciding to land at Ernesettle Creek to establish a small church. However, such is the distance in time and the scarcity of sources that 'the details of his life are shrouded in legend'.[2] All of this means that the narrative has become distorted, blurring truth and fiction together.

The story begins before the birth of Budoc. His mother was 'the beautiful and holy' Azenor, a daughter of the King of Brest in Brittany. Azenor is an interesting character, with one writer comparing her to the likes of Mary

[1] cited in Ambrose Mooney, 'St Budoc of Dol'. Available at: http://celticsaints.org/2018/1209a.html (Accessed: 24 November 2018).

[2] I. F. Barnes and C. R. Bevington, *A Safe Stronghold: A Short Historical Sketch and Guide to St Budeaux Parish Church* (Plymouth: St Budeaux Parish Church, 1963), 3.

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Magdalene, due to both having 'had a dissolute past prior to a strong conversion to the Faith'.[3] The legend highlights the close bond between the King of Brest and his daughter, as recounted by Doble in one version:

> Her father, while hunting, was bitten by a serpent, which fastened on his bare arm and hung there, draining all the life-blood of its victim. Azenor came, and, to deliver her father from the serpent, anointed her breast with oil and milk. The serpent left her father and sprang at Azenor, fixing its fangs in her breast, which she cut off with a sharp knife and flung, together with the serpent, into the flames.[4]

But the tale doesn't end with the discarding of the serpent; to 'reward her for filial piety, God healed Azenor, and gave her a breast of gold'.[5]

After this event, Azenor's hand was desired in marriage by the neighbouring King of Goello; called 'a petty ruler … on the outskirts of the northern Frankish dominions'.[6] The King of Brest, needing a new wife himself, also married; however, Azenor's stepmother has been portrayed as a wicked woman who was jealous of the bond shared by the King and his daughter. The new queen concocted lies of adultery which poisoned the minds of the royal family. The King of Brest responded in an extreme manner: Azenor was bundled into a cask and tossed into the sea, with differing versions having the pushing hands belonging to either the stepmother or the King of Goello. Whilst in the cask the helpless Azenor 'invoked the aid of her patron saint Brigit': 'Soon a bright light shone in the dark cask, and the angel of the Lord … appeared, comforting her, bringing her food and bidding her eat'.[7] Azenor survived for five months at sea and managed to give birth to her baby son: the future St Budoc. Doble continues the legend:

> His mother took him in her arms, made the sign of the cross over him, and prayed to God. No sooner had she finished her prayer than the Lord opened the mouth of the new-born babe, and he said, 'Be of good cheer, dear mother,

[3] Unam Sanctam Catholicam, 'Bishop of Dol'. Available at: http://unamsanctamcatholicam.com/history/sancti-obscuri/90-history/sancti-obscuri/563-budoc-of-dol.html (Accessed: 25 November 2018).

[4] G. H. Doble, *Saint Budoc* (Shipston-on-Stour: The 'King's Stone' Press, 1937), 2. Available at: http://bibliotheque.idbe-bzh.org/data/cle_82/Saint_Budoc_.pdf (Accessed: 28 November 2018).

[5] *Ibid*., 2.

[6] Unam Sanctam Catholicam, 'Bishop of Dol.'

[7] Doble, *Saint Budoc*, 2-3.

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> we have nothing to fear, God is with us, we are near the end of our voyage, and the time of consolation God promised us by His angel is at hand'.[8]

They washed up on Irish shores, close to the Abbey of Beau Port, near Waterford, so the legend goes. It is said that a villager first spotted the cask and mistakenly thought it was a barrel of wine; 'he was just going to drive a gimlet into it when he heard a child's voice from within bid him have a care'.[9] The villager asked for help from the nearby abbey, with the abbot responding by coming to the waterside to find 'a beautiful woman and a little baby smiling and kissing its hand to them'.[10] The child was baptised the following day and the name given to him was 'Beuzec'; the name supposedly meaning 'by the water', thereby highlighting Budoc's link to the sea (the Celtic translation of 'Beuzec' is rendered to 'Budoc'). Budoc and his mother remained on Irish soil for many years whilst Azenor worked as a washerwoman and Budoc attended the abbey school to find his religious calling.

Meanwhile, back in the Kingdom of Brest, Azenor's stepmother fell ill, and on her deathbed recanted the evil lies she had spread. The King of Goello took a ship to venture out to find his wife, eventually coming to Waterford to find Azenor and his son. Doble, however, notes that he died before they returned to Brittany; with mother and son remaining in Ireland where Azenor eventually passed away.[11]

Budoc became a monk at the local abbey, and such was his devotion that, on the death of the abbot, he was chosen to become his successor. However, Budoc wanted to return to his ancestral homeland of Brittany, with Doble noting that he was 'despairing of ever being able to civilize his barbarous flock' in Ireland.[12] Being unable to find a ship to secure a passage home, Budoc took the drastic step of utilising a stone coffin that 'quickly wafted over the sea' to land him near Brest.[13] The Musée de Bretagne (Museum of Brittany) displays a granite sarcophagus dated to between the fifth to eighth centuries, engaging with the legend by stating that Budoc used this artefact: 'As he didn't have a boat, he lay down in this great stone trough, and ended up on the Armorica coast'.[14]

[8] *Ibid.*, 3.
[9] *Ibid.*, 3.
[10] *Ibid.*, 3.
[11] *Ibid.*, 3.
[12] *Ibid.*, 4.
[13] *Ibid.*, 4.
[14] Musée de Bretagne, *Landmark Objects in the Museum Collection*. Available at: http://www.musee-bretagne.fr/fileadmin/Musee_de_Bretagne/image/E_Musee_et_collections/Parcours_Landmark_Objects.pdf (Accessed: 25 November 2018).

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Doble notes that on first returning to Brittany, Budoc moved to Plourin where he built a chapel and hermitage. However, his relationship with the parishioners was rocky to say the least: 'irritated at his censure of their vices, they resolved to slay him, and to avoid bringing on them the guilt of such a crime, he left'.[15] After this point there are various stories of Budoc living as a hermit on different islands; the Life of St Winwaloe describes Budoc as living in almost isolation on the Isle of Bréhat (or Laurea), where he gathered 'around him disciples whom he instructed in the faith' (including St Winwaloe).[16] He has been further described as 'an angelic minister, richly endowed with learning, conspicuous for righteousness, whom all people of that time regarded as a bulwark of the Faith, and a most firm pillar of the Church'.[17]

Despite the differences in the various accounts all stories appear to coalesce in Budoc arriving in Dol, where he was persuaded by the retiring bishop to succeed him to continue on with the good work started by his predecessors St Samson and St Magloire. Budoc was Bishop of Dol for over a quarter of a century, and was eventually buried there. Doble notes that 'before his death he absolved his former rebellious parishioners at Plourin', and commanded his chaplain to remove his right arm to take to the old parish.[18] All of which gave the church in Plourin the odd distinction of proudly boasting the preservation of Budoc's arm.[19]

The link with St Budeaux comes in the time before Budoc's death, when he is reputed to have sailed to the south English coast and into Plymouth Sound until he found an inlet on the Devon side of the River Tamar. The modern name given to this inlet is Tamerton Lake, and the place where Budoc landed is stated to be where the industrial estate in modern-day Ernesettle is found.[20] Budoc came with the aim of establishing stronger connections with the Christian Church, and is one of many saints who travelled in the Celtic world of the Dark Ages promoting the Christian religion. On reaching the land that would later be named after him, Budoc founded a settlement and built 'a little wattle church'.[21] From these modest beginnings came the

[15] Doble, *Saint Budoc*, 4.
[16] Unam Sanctam Catholicam, 'Bishop of Dol'.
[17] cited in Doble, *Saint Budoc*, 5.
[18] *Ibid*., 4.
[19] Other places have also laid claim to relics of Budoc, including a tooth that was removed from the Abbey of Léhon to Paris during the tenth century Viking attacks on Brittany (Doble, *Saint Budoc*, 10).
[20] Local sources, such as Ware (1981), note this.
[21] Barnes and Bevington, *A Safe Stronghold*, 3.

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formation of a permanent settlement, and then a church, and eventually the erection of the present-day church in the Elizabethan period.

Local historians, over the course of a century or more, have repeated the same origin myth of Budoc's arrival. In the 1930s Bracken, in his history of Plymouth, stated that Budoc landed to form 'a sanctuary field near Warren Point, and by a little well, henceforth "holy", in Ernesettle Wood, erecting (as some hold) a rude cross that it might serve as a baptistery for his flock'.[22] This story continued with later local historians, including those who principally focussed on producing pictorial histories of St Budeaux, such as Marshall Ware in the 1980s and Derek Tait in the present century. In 1981, Ware commented thus on Budoc's landing in the area: 'He erected a crude stone cross in Ernesettle Wood, to serve as a baptistery for his flock … near where the first chapelry was built'.[23] In 2007, Tait issued the next book on St Budeaux's history, in which his brief recounting of Budoc's origins is virtually identical to that of Ware and Bracken; Budoc arrived and 'a crude stone cross was erected by him in Ernesettle Woods and a chapel was built near to Warren Point. The original building was just a small wattle church'.[24]

All of this demonstrates that the narrative of Budoc's arrival in St Budeaux has been wholly accepted by generations of local historians, without any clear evidence to support it but supposed allusion. If this narrative is to be believed then understanding of the context of the period makes it all the more astonishing; especially if we consider that the mission of St Augustine – the 'Apostle to the English' and founder of the English Church[25] – to Canterbury was undertaken a whole century later in 597 AD. However, the various conflicts in the sources and the dubious truth of these adventures mean that scepticism must be employed when considering Budoc's life and his mission to Ernesettle. As Doble notes, the legend is 'one of the most charming stories in Celtic hagiography, but the incidents it contains are not, of course, historical'.[26] There are many eyebrow-raising moments in these stories, notably Azenor surviving for five months at sea in a cask, and Budoc's method of transport on a stone trough from Ireland to Brittany. Such stories are reminiscent of those from Herodotus' epic *Histories* from the ancient world, with an interesting link established between Budoc's water travel on the trough and Arion's rescue

[22] C. W. Bracken, *A History of Plymouth And Her Neighbours* (Plymouth: Underhill, 1931), 8.
[23] Marshall Ware, *St Budeaux: Yesterday's Village* (Plymouth: Arthur Clamp, 1981), 2.
[24] Derek Tait, *St Budeaux* (Plymouth: Driftwood Coast, 2007), 7.
[25] John J. Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980), 67-68.
[26] Doble, *Saint Budoc*, 5.

from a watery death after summoning a dolphin with his lyre.[27] However, no modern historian would take such stories for literal truth.

In terms of Budoc's own legend, there are three clear areas of debate: firstly, his origin story; secondly, whether or not the myth has become so confused that what is credited to Budoc was actually the work of several people; and thirdly, in terms of the local context, whether or not the visit to St Budeaux was real or a complete fabrication.

As for his origin story, the sources appear to stretch back as far as the ninth century, with further additions in later centuries. However, Budoc is shown in a supporting role in the wider hagiographies of the lives of St Magloire and St Winwaloe, each of whom appear to add their own spin of Budoc for future generations to read. The myths are confused and intertwined; some write of Budoc living in West Cornwall and possibly of being an Irish traveller, such as Leland in his visit to Budock in Cornwall in the 1500s: 'this Budocus was an Irisch man, and cam into Cornewalle, and ther dwellid'.[28] He has been honoured across the Celtic world, in Brittany and Wales (in the parish of Steynton in Milford Haven), as far afield as Oxford (in the parish church of St Budoc in the Middle Ages), with even the Abbey of Glastonbury once containing a relic of him.[29]

It could be theorised that Budoc was an intrepid traveller, whizzing from place to place, as speculated in his voyaging on the trough from Ireland to Brittany. There are versions of the legend that expand on this feature, with Budoc supposing to have journeyed as far as Rome to be officially confirmed as Bishop of Dol by Gregory the Great.[30] However, was all of this travelling the work of one man, or rather of several? As Mooney notes, 'it is entirely possible that there are two or more saints of this name whose histories have been confused'.[31]

This merging of people and myths could explain the active travels of Budoc: these were the actions of different saints. This could also help explain the confusion surrounding the discrepancies in the dates provided of his birth and death. Local sources – such as from Bracken, Ware, and Tait – list Budoc as being active during the fifth century (with his arrival at Ernesettle taking place in 480 AD). However, other sources from outside the locality list St

[27] Herodotus, *The Histories* (London: Penguin, 2003), 11.
[28] cited in Doble, *Saint Budoc*, 7.
[29] *Ibid*., 8.
[30] *Ibid*., 4.
[31] Mooney, 'St Budoc of Dol'.

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Budoc as being active a whole century later.[32]

So, what does this all mean for St Budoc's connection with St Budeaux and Plymouth? If we are to believe that Budoc was the energetic traveller as the legends portray, he would have had little difficulty in travelling back across the Channel to land at Ernesettle. However, if we employ greater scepticism the legend starts to unravel. Although some local sources, such as Barnes and Bevington, are confident that Budoc came to the area to 'preach and teach',[33] there is no actual evidence about his landing in Plymouth. Other sources are charitable in offering further suggestions, with Gerrard noting that although there is 'no proof' that Budoc visited the area, 'his supporters may have done'.[34]

If we are to believe that Budoc did travel to Ernesettle – or at the very least sent followers – the question must be asked: why this location? Perhaps it was simply pot-luck that guided him up the Plymouth Sound, as if God directed him to that spot for a reason; similar to the notion of the 'Protestant Wind' that guided William of Orange to Torbay in 1688. Or it could be argued that the location was geographically chosen so as to be shielded from attacks and the attentions of others, therefore offering a good starting point on which to spread the word of Christianity to the heathen Celts who lived there.

The more probable explanation is that neither Budoc – nor his followers – ever travelled to Plymouth. It is possible that the logic has been applied backwards for centuries: rather than the saint arriving at Ernesettle and then giving his name to the location, it is far more likely that the people of St Budeaux utilised the name and myth of Budoc for their own place-name. This tactic has been employed thousands of times elsewhere, with the popularity of St Francis serving as a useful example: his name has been used by settlements across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, with the most notable being San Francisco in the United States. In more modern times we have seen cities named or renamed after leaders, such as Stalingrad in Soviet Russia, or, to provide a local example, the towns and villages named after Queen Victoria in the United Kingdom: Victoria in London or Victoria in Cornwall. It could be theorised that early St Budeaux utilised the Budoc name to promote itself and highlight its Christian links and identity, similar to the prevalence of St Francis in the Christian world.

It is possible to develop this argument one step further by elaborating on

[32] Local sources provide the date of 480 AD, whilst other general sources utilise the death-date of 585 AD.
[33] Barnes and Bevington, *A Safe Stronghold*, 3.
[34] John Gerrard, *The Book of Plymouth* (Buckingham: Barracuda Books, 1982), 12.

the very name of Budoc. As mentioned above, Budoc was named due to his connection to water, and the water theme is prominent throughout the legend: Azenor is tossed into the sea; Budoc is born in the cask on the ocean; he had travelled via water on the trough; even Azenor's job as a washerwoman highlights a connection. Water is a dominant theme in mythology: 'water is spoken of as the source, the healer and the essence of plant life. The regenerative ability of water, its power to fertilise and bring about new birth, is the pattern of life itself'.[35] Furthermore, in specific relation to Celtic myths, Ross has outlined how rivers are 'associated in Celtic tradition with fertility and with deities such as the divine mothers and the sacred bulls, concerned with this fundamental aspect of life'.[36] All of this suggests that water was a dominant feature of Celtic thought, and the link was continued when conversion to Christianity happened in the Dark Ages. Also, water was the dominant method of the Celtic regions communicating with one another; travel by land was too timely and costly, but by sea Brittany could connect easily with Cornwall, with Wales, and with Ireland. Therefore, the Budoc name itself – with its strong association with water – provides greater insight into the origins of the name given to St Budeaux. As Doble notes, the majority of places associated with St Budoc are beside water, as seen with our St Budeaux and Budock in Cornwall.[37] Similarly, this could explain why Azenor is attached to other waterside locations, such as Zennor in Cornwall. Therefore, it could be speculated that our understanding is back-to-front: rather than actually arriving in Ernesettle, the place of St Budeaux used the vibrant myth of Budoc as a sign of their connection to the wider Christian and Celtic world.

Ultimately, the legends can never be fully unpicked and the uncertainty of Budoc's life and connections with the churches across Britain – including that of St Budeaux – will never be fully known. As Doble himself explains:

> The early history of Cornwall and Brittany is like a jig-saw puzzle, many of the pieces of which have been lost. It needs repeated and patient efforts to make ever fresh combinations of the pieces that remain, till we can finally get them into the right order, and form some idea of what the shape of the missing pieces must have been.[38]

[35] Walter L. Brenneman and Mary G. Brenneman, *Cross the Circle at the Holy Wells of Ireland* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 15-16.
[36] Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (New York: Routledge, 1967), 20.
[37] Doble, *Saint Budoc*, 13.
[38] *Ibid*., 16.

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Perhaps it is best to heed Gill's advice, who has told us to 'forget the legends, that his mother had a breast of gold, that he crossed from Ireland in a stone coffin', and instead acknowledge that Budoc was 'a great teacher'.[39] However, there is one thing that is certain: Budoc – either directly or indirectly – became associated with the future settlement of St Budeaux. His name was utilised to name the area, the church, and the prominent manor in the area – Budshead Manor. His association with St Budeaux has endured for a thousand years, whether the legend is fictitious or truth.

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[39] Crispin Gill, *Plymouth: A New History* (Tiverton: Devon Books, 1993), 9.

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The Classification of Devon Roodscreens: A Re-Assessment

MICHAEL AUFRÈRE WILLIAMS

This article is based on the Bond-Camm classification system for identifying Devon roodscreens,[1] augmented by the present author. This system may also be used to answer questions concerning geographical distribution by type. It can throw light on whether or not one type is concentrated in one particular area, the output and location of workshops, and whether or not it is possible to build up a picture of stylistic development suggested by the dating of a screen (and, by implication, other screens within that group) or whether stylistic development is teleological in nature.

It is possible for each extant Devon screen (and, where appropriate, a parclose) to be identified within this classification system. No two screens, of course, are completely alike and, although many can easily be identified within the Bond-Camm classification criteria, there are some whose identification has to be approached subjectively and which therefore may be subject to dispute. These identifications have been attempted and are listed with the details of the original twelve classification types expanded. A complete listing of types and examples may be found at the end of this article, along with photographs of each type (Figures 1-24), together with a map (Figure 25) showing the geographical distribution of the major stylistic groups (types 4 to 12). Types 1, 2, and 3 have not been mapped because their distribution is haphazard, in that the screens of these types are too geographically widespread to indicate any definite pattern, while types 4, 6,

[1] Frederick Bligh Bond and Dom Bede Camm, *Roodscreens and Roodlofts*, 2 vols. (London: Pitman, 1909), ii, 279.

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and 12, although mapped, are arguably too small in number (2, 2, and 3 respectively) to be statistically useful.

Examples of how geographically widespread types 1, 2, and 3 are may be illustrated by examples from each type. Type 1 screens are found throughout the county: in the north at Braunton, in the east at Burlescombe, in the west at Exbourne, and in the south at East Budleigh (although it should be noted that no screens of this type are to be found in the Dartmouth and South Hams area). Type 2 screens, the most common, are also found throughout the county. Combe Martin in the north, Cullompton in the east, Broadwoodwidger in the west, and Harberton in the south exemplify this. Finally, type 3 screens, while not found in the north of the county, have representatives in the east (Awliscombe), the west (Plympton St Maurice) and the south (Stokenham).

The first type (1), early (that is dating from the fourteenth century) flat-headed screens with rectangular compartments and no vaulting (but occasionally coving) has no recognizable pattern of distribution. The provision of new screens throughout Devon in the period *c*.1450–1540 was common, and it is quite possible that many older screens (of this early type) were removed to make way for new, improved ones. Some older screens of this type may have survived into later times because parishes could not afford a new screen or because their parishioners were satisfied with the screen that they already possessed. Those that remain (a total of 15) include examples at Braunton, Burlescombe (and Ayshford chapel), Calverleigh, East Budleigh, East Ogwell, Exbourne, Huxham, Nymet Tracey, Parracombe, Sheldon, Stokeinteignhead, Welcombe, Willand, and Woodbury. Illustrations of this type are shown in Figures 1 and 2. All the remaining types of screens date from after *c*.1400, and the question of their chronology will be addressed later in the article.

The second and third types of screen (types 2 and 3), while being far the most numerous in the county, are the types most open to analysis. The second type, that of the ordinary Perpendicular design, found with minor variations all over Devon, and the third type, like that of the second but more enriched and with superior detail, can often – especially on the classification borderline – be indistinguishable. Nevertheless an attempt has been made to list, and to separate, the two types. Both are found widely throughout the county, making it difficult to perceive any pattern of distribution. As with type 1, two illustrations from each type are included (Figures 3 and 4 [type 2] and Figures 5 and 6 [type 3]). Type 2 screens may be found at Abbotskerswell, Alphington, Ashton, Bampton, Berry Pomeroy, Bovey Tracey, Broadhempston, Broadwoodwidger, Buckerell, Buckland-in-the-Moor, Chagford, Chawleigh, Chudleigh, Clyst St Lawrence, Cockington, Combeinteignhead, Combe

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Martin, Cullompton, Dartington, Dunchideock, Exminster, Harberton, Heanton Punchardon, Iddesleigh, Kenn, Littlehempston, Manaton, Membury, North Bovey, Northleigh, North Molton, Payhembury, Plymstock, Poltimore, Powderham, Rose Ash, Staverton, Stoke Gabriel, Talaton, Westleigh, and Widecombe (a total of 36). Type 3 screens survive at Awliscombe, Exeter (St Mary Steps), Ipplepen, Kenton, Littleham (Exmouth), Plympton (St Maurice), Rattery, Stokenham, Torbryan, Totnes, Whitchurch, and Wolborough (a total of 12).

Some of the other classification types contain only one or two examples, but in all these instances the screens are confined to very local areas. Type 4, described by Bond and Camm as the Hartland-Burrington type, has lights which are divided by a heavy moulded standard running into the apex of the arch and whose vaulting spandrels are richly embossed and which have very fine cornices. Only two screens, at Hartland and Burrington, fit into this type, of which an illustration is given of the former (Figure 7). Other very small groupings are those of type 6 (which includes two examples at Halberton and Uffculme), type 11 (with three survivals at Brushford, Coldridge, and Colebrooke), and type 12 (represented by two examples, at Pilton and Swimbridge). The screens of type 6 are of a massive appearance, Perpendicular though relatively plain (Figure 8). Type 12, the Pilton type, has an affinity with those screens of type 6, but is richer than the latter. Type 12 screens (see Figures 9 and 10) exhibit a number of exuberant, detailed, decorated forms which distinguish them from the earlier type 6 screens. The type 12 screens also exhibit a sense of the massive, but alleviated by the intricate decoration of almost the entire screen: the dado, the mullions and muntins, the spandrels and the cornice. It could also be argued that these type 12 screens are not dissimilar to the type 4 screens, but only Swimbridge exhibits the heavy moulded muntin running into the apex of the arch which is characteristic of the type 4 screens. Swimbridge and Pilton are, geographically, not far from the two type 4 screens of Burrington and Hartland, but the differences are sufficient to designate them differently by type.

Type 10, whose examples are mostly parclose screens, is the Holbeton type of screenwork. This type (along with type 11, shortly to be discussed) is so different to anything else in the county that the possibility of a foreign carver or carvers has regularly been suggested.[2] The main feature of these

[2] For example, John Stabb, *Some Old Devon Churches: their rood screens, pulpits, fonts, etc.*, 3 vols. (London: Simpkin Marshall & Co., 1908–16), i (1908), 24, ii (1911), 51, 53; Bond and Camm, *Roodscreens*, ii, 306-7; Aymer Vallance, *English Church Screens* (London: Batsford, 1936), 54; Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1991), 221, 274, 276.

screens is the intricate and unusual bay tracery carving. This type may be found at Cornworthy, Dittisham, Dodbrooke, Holbeton, Kingsbridge, South Milton, and Ugborough (Figures 11 and 12), all in the South Hams. The type 11 screens, again so different to the rest of the county, might also perhaps be ascribed to foreign carvers. They appear more delicate than the type 10 screens, yet simpler. It is, again, the bay tracery carving that is so idiosyncratic and, also, it is clear that these remaining survivals were never intended to support a rood loft (Figures 13 and 14). This type may be found at Brushford, Coldridge, and Colebrooke.

Types 5, 7, 8, and 9 differ in containing a greater number of examples, which allow a more confident analysis. Type 5, the 'Exe Valley' type of Perpendicular screen, is characterised by the 'tilting shield' ornament within the tracery. This survives at seven places in Devon: Bradninch, Chulmleigh, Feniton, Kentisbeare, Pinhoe, Plymtree, and Rewe (Figures 15 and 16). Type 7, the Dartmouth type, which, according to Bond and Camm, 'has a distinctive type of tracery containing foliated canopies within the arcaded window heads and has vaulting of a special character' is represented by eight examples at Blackawton, Chivelstone, Dartmouth (St Saviour), East Allington, East Portlemouth, Sherford, Slapton, and South Pool (Figures 17 and 18). Type 8, the Bridford type, which is a highly enriched variety of late Perpendicular, particularly noticeable on the carved muntins, spandrels, and dados, and with an impression of Renaissance feeling as expressed by the dress of the carved figures on the Bridford screen. This type has 10 examples (Figures 19 and 20), at Bridford, Cheriton Bishop, Christow, Down St Mary, Gidleigh, Hennock, Holne, Ilsington, Trusham, and (possibly) Lustleigh. Finally, Type 9, the Lapford type of screen, which has a tracery system of Perpendicular character, with cornices chiefly of native design, but in which the fillings of the vaultings and other members exhibit a strong Renaissance feeling, that is as expressed, for example, on the Lapford and Atherington spandrels and the Marwood dado (Figures 21, 22, and 23). These Renaissance motifs can take the form of abstract or vegetable or floral ornaments, or sometimes carved heads, or even *putti*. There are 11 examples of this type, at Atherington, Bishop's Tawton, East Down, King's Nympton, Lapford, Marwood, Monkleigh, Morchard Bishop, Sutcombe, Tawstock, and West Worlington. It is, then, argued that while screen types 1, 2, and 3 are to be found throughout the county, types 4-12 have specific geographical locations.

We can now proceed to answer three questions about screen types. Can they be seen as representing the output of distinct workshops? What does this distribution tell us about the possible location of these workshops? And, where screens can be dated, and by implication the other screens in this

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group too, can we construct a history of stylistic development? The first and second questions may be considered together. The geographical distribution and the artistic similarities of screen types 5 (mainly, but not entirely east Devon),[3] 7 (Dartmouth and the South Hams),[4] 8 (the Teign Valley and the fringes of eastern Dartmoor),[5] and 9 (mid and north Devon),[6] may point to the existence of distinctive craftsmen or workshops. What must also be borne in mind, however, is the practice of emulation within local areas; raising the possibility that one local workshop may well have copied the work of a nearby workshop, arguing for a number of small workshops rather than a centralized one. Equally, this wish to copy and better a nearby screen might have led to the expansion of a workshop already in existence. Development of a certain style of screen might very well be based on the wish of a parish to have a screen very much like a nearby model, but one which, with certain improvements and embellishments, might appear more costly, perhaps more modern, perhaps bigger and better. Of course, the size and wealth of the parish would be an important factor here, as would the experience and artistic abilities of the carver. Indeed, the same carvers may very well have worked on similar screens, although there is no direct evidence for this except, almost certainly, the presence of one of the Stratton carvers at Atherington in the mid-1540s. Unfortunately the disappearance of the Stratton rood loft makes it impossible to consider any stylistic similarities between the two parishes, although the likely presence of the same carver, the relative closeness of the two parishes (30 miles), and the possibility of copying or emulation makes the idea of screen similarity not unlikely. The Stratton contract indicates clearly that John Pares of Northlew (Devon) was involved in the indenture of agreement for the making of a rood loft in Stratton church (29 May 1531) and the bond agreement of 14 July 1531 (where he is described as a carver), and that (almost certainly) the same man, John Parrys of Northlew (described as a carpenter, carver and joiner) was the co-author of a complaint concerning unpaid money for his work on the Atherington rood loft (the document of complaint being dated 1544–47).[7]

The third question, the construction of a chronology of screen styles, is made difficult to answer by the scarcity of definite dates for screens. Atherington,

[3] For example at Feniton, Kentisbeare, and Pinhoe.
[4] For example at Chivelstone, East Allington, and South Pool.
[5] For example at Hennock, Holne, and Ilsington.
[6] For example at Bishop's Tawton, Monkleigh, and Morchard Bishop.
[7] CRO P216/25/215, transcribed by R. W. Goulding in *Records of the Charity known as Blanchminster's Charity in the Parish of Stratton, County of Cornwall until the year 1832* (Louth: J.W. Goulding, 1898), 91-4; TNA C1/111649.

Bridford, Marwood, Pinhoe, and Totnes have the only documented dates. Datings given by Bond and Camm are based mainly on stylistic features rather than documentary evidence, such as the badges of kings, queens, and noble families. Such features are less chronologically precise. The stylistic development postulated by Bond and Camm begins with the early, square-headed type (type 1), through the massive early Perpendicular type (types 4 and 6) to the far more numerous, less massive Perpendicular type which is common throughout Devon (types 2 and 3). Bond and Camm maintained that the earliest specimens of the Perpendicular type (type 6) date from about 1420 while the majority were probably erected between the years 1470-1520.[8] This stage was followed by the embellishment of this type, and then by the later, sixteenth-century phase which saw the introduction of certain Renaissance elements like the characteristic carved spandrels of the vaulting to the final, flamboyant style apparent in screens like that of Atherington. Bond and Camm argued that the best test of a screen's age lies in the character of the detail and of the execution of the carving, seeing a development in these characteristics that leads to the 'full development' and 'ultimate decadence' in screen carving which leaves, so they argue, 'a surprisingly accurate record of the time of a screen's construction'.

While having some merit, this is too subjective a way of assessing the dating and development of a screen. 'Development' may well be the result of money available (as at Totnes) rather than of an assumed linear progression. Far simpler screens than that of Totnes may well have been constructed later, their relative simplicity relating chiefly to cost, for example at Broadwoodwidger (Figure 24), thus arguing against Bond and Camm's teleological approach. It may be possible to date the Broadwoodwidger screen to 1529, as one of the bench ends there, which appear to be contemporaneous with the screen, has that date carved upon it. Indeed, these bench ends, which portray the instruments of the Passion, could be the products of the same workshop which produced the screen. Further possible aids to the dating of the Broadwoodwidger screen are the spandrel carvings, one of which appears to be an angel with wings and a spear. Cherry and Pevsner commented that the bench ends are 'of the usual Devon type of *c*.1530, some with mid-sixteenth century heads'.[9] Changes over time may be observed in the appearance of screens, but these changes do not *per se* have to represent development (or decline). The factors of copying, emulation, the experience and artistic abilities of the carvers, would lead to slow change. The work of the carvers

[8] Bond and Camm, *Roodscreens*, ii, 277.
[9] Cherry and Pevsner, *Devon*, 219.

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of screen types 11 (and most of 10) is so different and startling as to almost prove the otherwise unrecorded presence of foreign carvers.

Can dating a screen then help to build up a picture of stylistic development? That a late screen like that at Bradninch is superior in form and execution to an early one (like that at Welcombe) is undeniable, but it seems that the concept of 'stylistic development' is too burdened with subjective analysis and too limited in the existence of actual evidence for any firm answer to be given. Embellishments and flamboyant elements in later (i.e. sixteenth-century) screens certainly indicate chronological change. Bond and Camm's picture of stylistic development over the period *c*.1380–1545 may have some value, but the paucity of evidence concerning dating (i.e. only five screens can be positively dated, although others may be given reasonable dating) renders much argument about stylistic development *based on dating* otiose.

Nevertheless the obvious differences between many screens in Devon point to a development of fashions, dissemination of those ideas through copying and emulation, the existence of local workshops served by local carvers with their own individual skills and preferences, the introduction of new motifs on, for example, spandrels and dados (possibly taken from other media), and the influence of foreign carvers (although only in relatively small areas). We should build the history of stylistic change on these elements, and on the small body of documentary evidence, rather than on subjective views of what constitutes 'development' and 'decline'.

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TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

Type 1. Early flat-headed screens with rectangular compartments and no vaulting (but occasionally coving).

Type 2. Ordinary Perpendicular design with minor variations.

Type 3. As Type 2 but with more enriched and superior detail.

Type 4. Having lights divided by a heavy moulded standard running into the apex of the arch. Richly embossed vaulting spandrels. Fine cornices.

Type 5. Exe Valley type, characterised by the 'tilting shield' ornament within the tracery.

Type 6. Early plain Perpendicular, but massive in appearance.

Type 7. Dartmouth type, having a distinctive type of tracery containing foliated canopies within the arcaded window heads. Vaulting of a special character.

Type 8. Bridford type. Highly enriched variety of later Perpendicular, particularly noticeable on the carved muntins, spandrels, and dados and with an impression of Renaissance feeling as expressed by the dress of the carved figures on the Bridford screen.

Type 9. Lapford type. Tracery of Perpendicular character, but in which the vaulting spandrels and other members exhibit a strong Renaissance feeling as expressed, for example, on the Lapford and Atherington spandrels and the Marwood dado.

Type 10. Mostly parclose screens. The main features of the screens are the intricate and unusual bay tracery carving, which is different to anything else in the county.

Type 11. More delicate than Type 10 screens, but also simpler. Idiosyncratic bay tracery carving which is, again, different to anything else in the county.

Type 12. Massive, but with intricate decoration of the entire screen: dado, mullions, muntins, spandrels, and cornice. Not dissimilar to Type 4 screens.

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TYPES 1-3

Type 1	Type 2	Type 2 (cont)	Type 3
Braunton	Abbotskerswell	Dartington	Awliscombe
Burlescombe	Alphington	Dunchideock	Exeter (St. Mary Steps)
(Ayshford chapel)	Ashton	Exminster	Ipplepen
Calverleigh	Bampton	Harberton	Kenton
East Budleigh	Berry Pomeroy	Heanton Punchardon	Littleham (Exmouth)
Exbourne	Bovey Tracey	Iddesleigh	Plympton (St. Maurice)
Huxham	Broadhempston	Kenn	Rattery
Nymet Tracey	Broadwoodwidger	Littlehempston	Stokenham
Parracombe	Buckerell	Manaton	Torbryan
Sheldon	Buckland-in-the-Moor	Membury	Totnes
Stokeinteignhead	Chagford	North Bovey	Whitchurch
Welcombe	Chawleigh	Northleigh	Wolborough
Willand	Chudleigh	Payhembury	
Woodbury	Clyst St. Lawrence	Powderham	
	Cockington	Rose Ash	
	Combeinteignhead	Staverton	
	Combe Martin	Stoke Gabriel	
	Cullompton	Talaton	
		Widecombe	
(14)		(37)	(12)

TYPES 4-7

Type 4	Type 5	Type 6	Type 7
Burrington	Bradninch	Halberton	Blackawton
Hartland	Chulmleigh	Uffculme	Chivelstone
	Feniton		Dartmouth (St. Saviour)
	Kentisbeare		East Allington
	Pinhoe		East Portlemouth
	Plymtree		Sherford
	Rewe		Slapton
			South Pool
(2)	(7)	(2)	(8)

TYPES 8-12

Type 8	Type 9	Type 10	Type 11	Type 12
Bridford	Atherington	Cornworthy	Brushford	Pilton
Cheriton Bishop	Bishop's Tawton	Dittisham	Coldridge	Swimbridge
Christow	East Down	Dodbrooke	Colebrooke	
Down St. Mary	King's Nympton	Holbeton		
Gidleigh	Lapford	Kingsbridge		
Hennock	Marwood	South Milton		
Holne	Monkleigh	Ugborough		
Ilsington	Morchard Bishop			
Lustleigh	Sutcombe			
Trusham	Tawstock			
	West Worlington			
(10)	(11)	(7)	(3)	(2)

Figure 1. Type 1 roodscreen – Braunton.

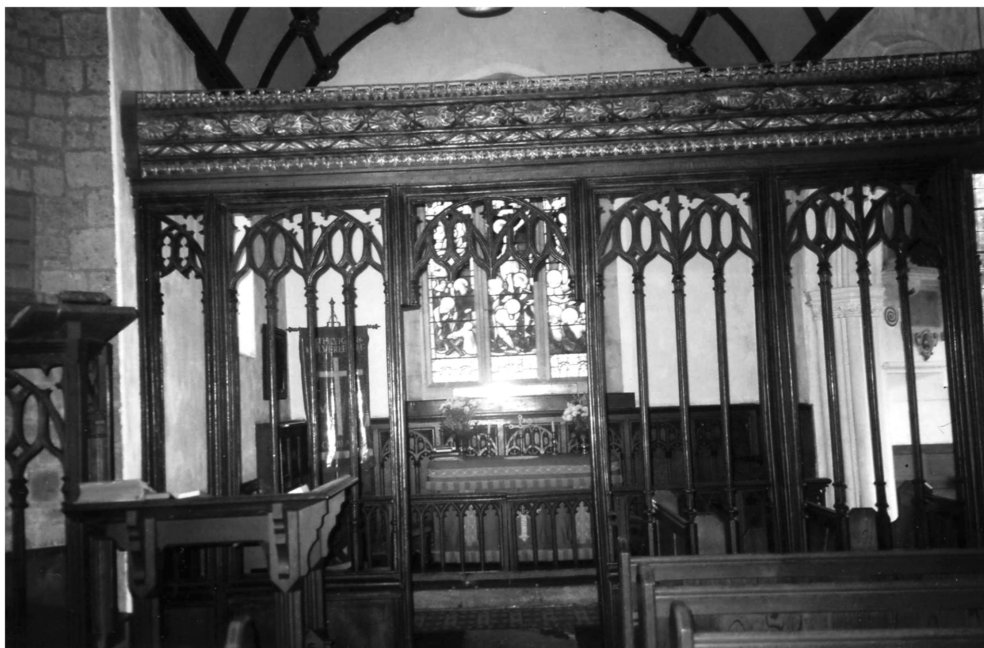

Figure 2. Type 1 roodscreen – Calverleigh.

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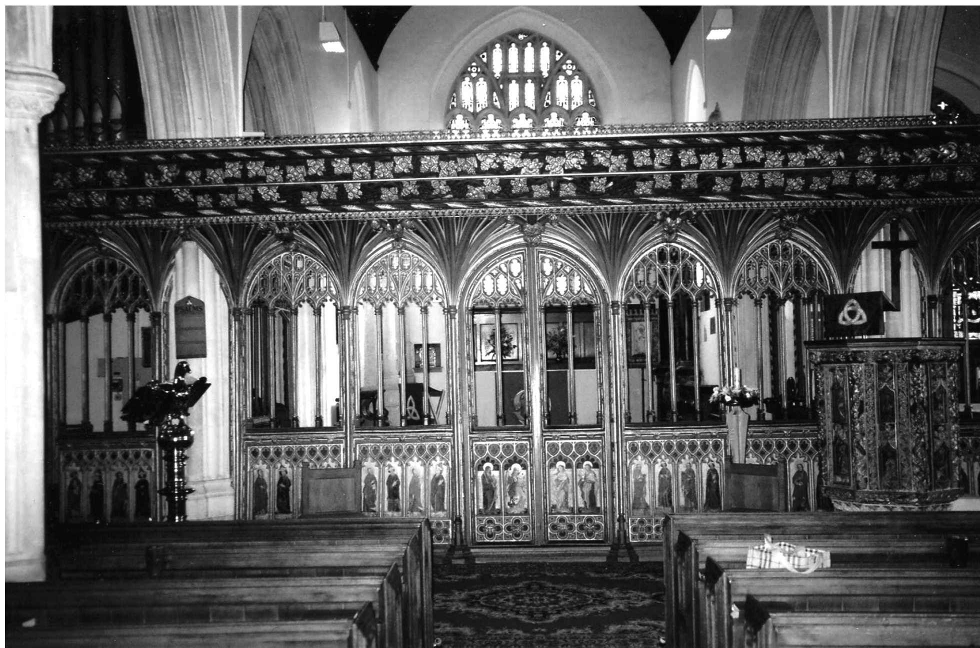

Figure 3. Type 2 roodscreen – Bovey Tracey.

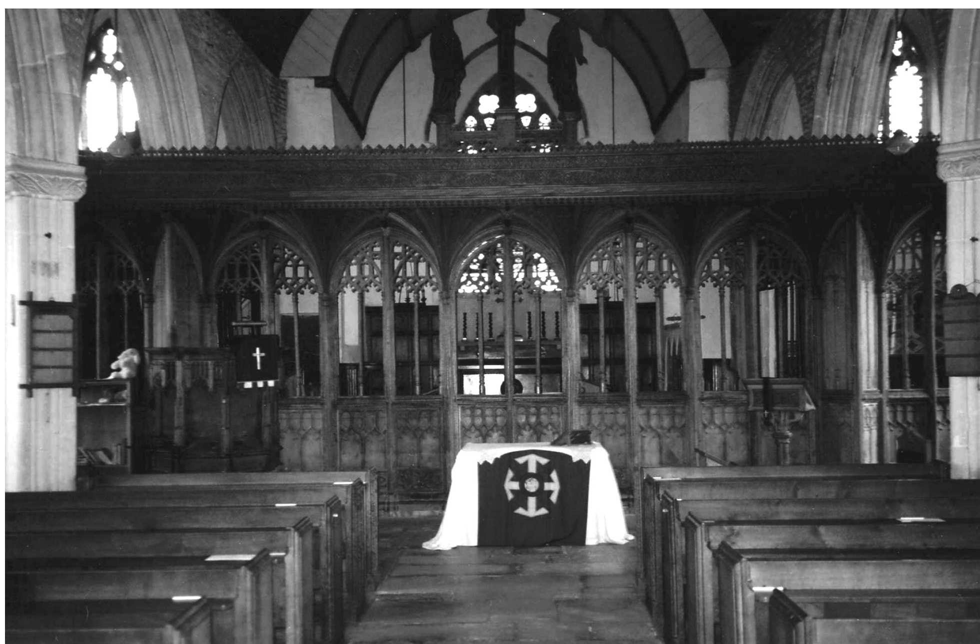

Figure 4. Type 2 roodscreen – Broadhempston.

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Figure 5. Type 3 roodscreen – Stokenham.

Figure 6. Type 3 roodscreen – Torbryan.

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Figure 7. Type 4 roodscreen – Hartland.

Figure 8. Type 6 roodscreen – Halberton.

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Figure 9. Type 12 roodscreen – Swimbridge.

Figure 10. Type 12 roodscreen – Pilton.

Figure 11. Type 10 (parclose) screen – Kingsbridge.

Figure 12. Type 10 (parclose) screen – Holbeton.

Figure 13. Type 11 (parclose) screen – Colebrooke.

Figure 14. Type 11 roodscreen – Brushford.

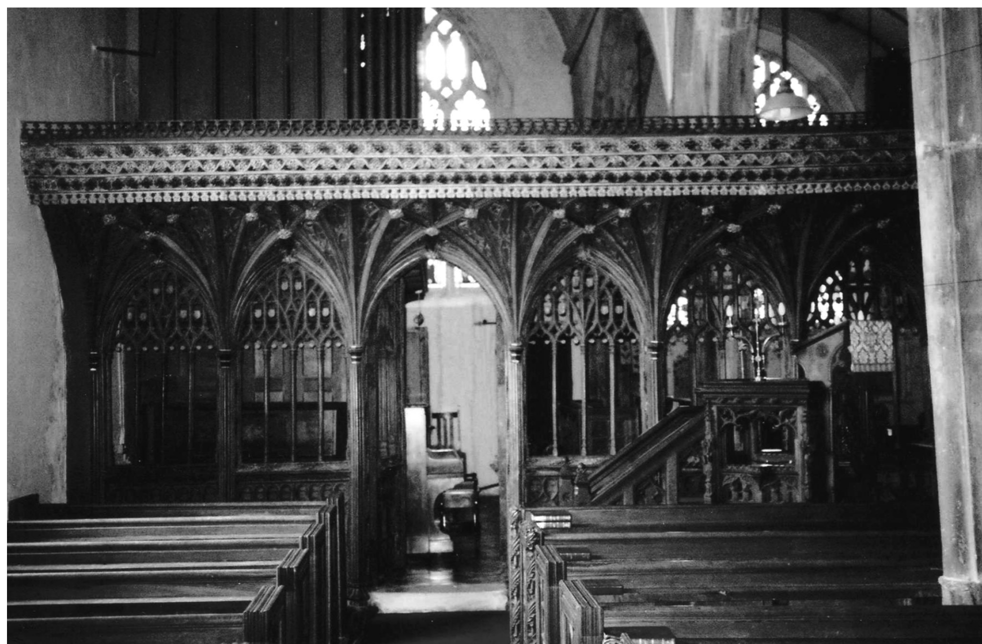

Figure 15. Type 5 roodscreen – Chulmleigh.

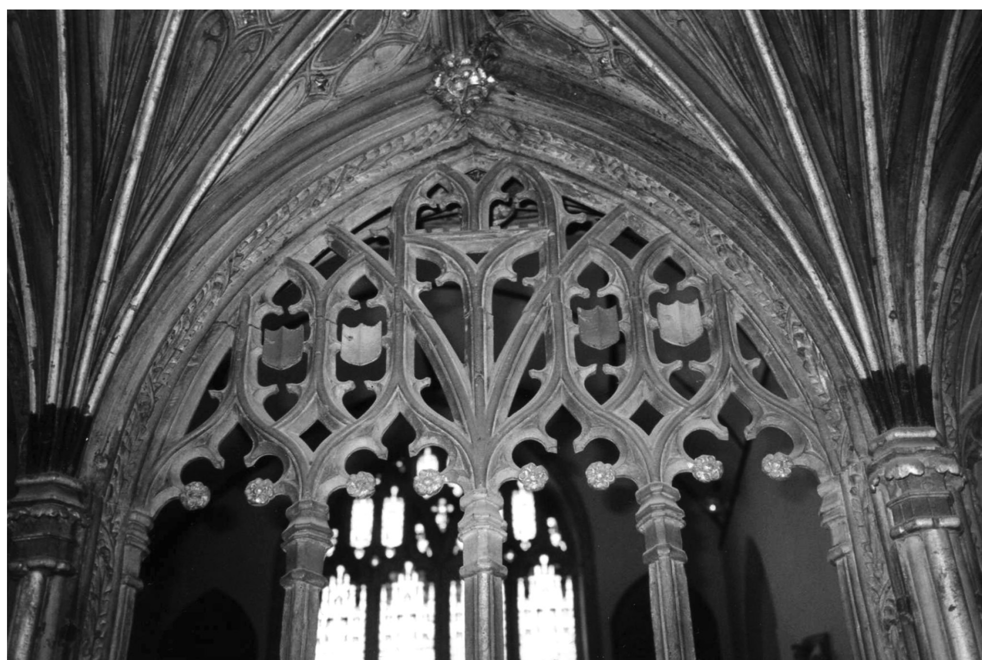

Figure 16. Type 5 roodscreen – Kentisbeare.

Figure 17. Type 7 roodscreen – Dartmouth (St Saviour).

Figure 18. Type 7 roodscreen – Dartmouth (St Saviour).

Figure 19. Type 8 roodscreen – Bridford.

Figure 20. Type 8 roodscreen – Cheriton Bishop.

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Figure 21. Type 9 roodscreen (spandrels) – Lapford.

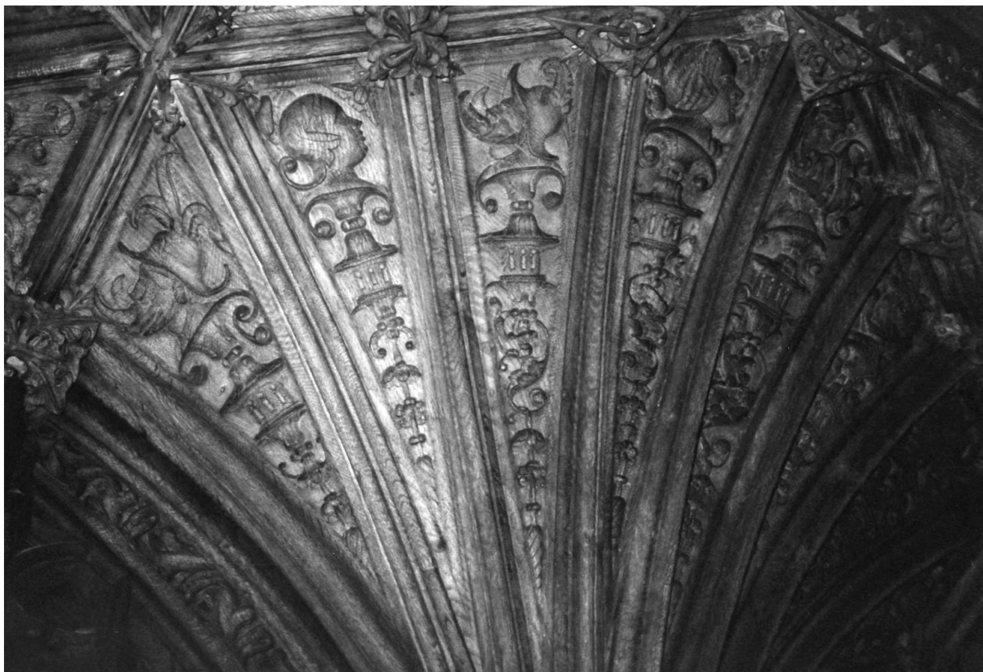

Figure 22. Type 9 roodscreen (spandrels) – Atherington.

Figure 23. Type 9 roodscreens (dado) – Marwood.

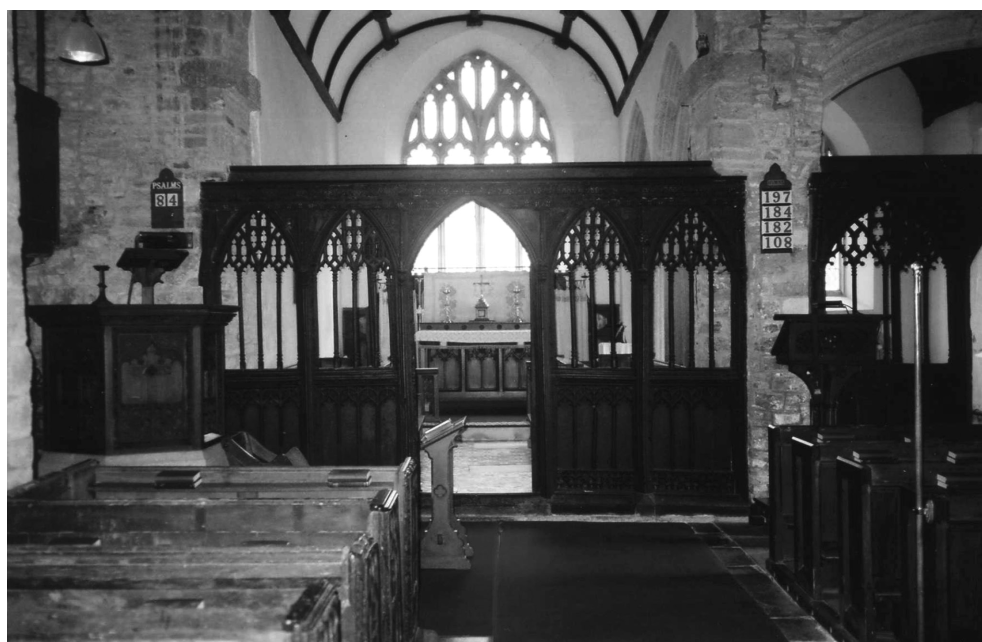

Figure 24. Type 2 roodscreen – Broadwoodwidger.

(All photographs: M. A. Williams)

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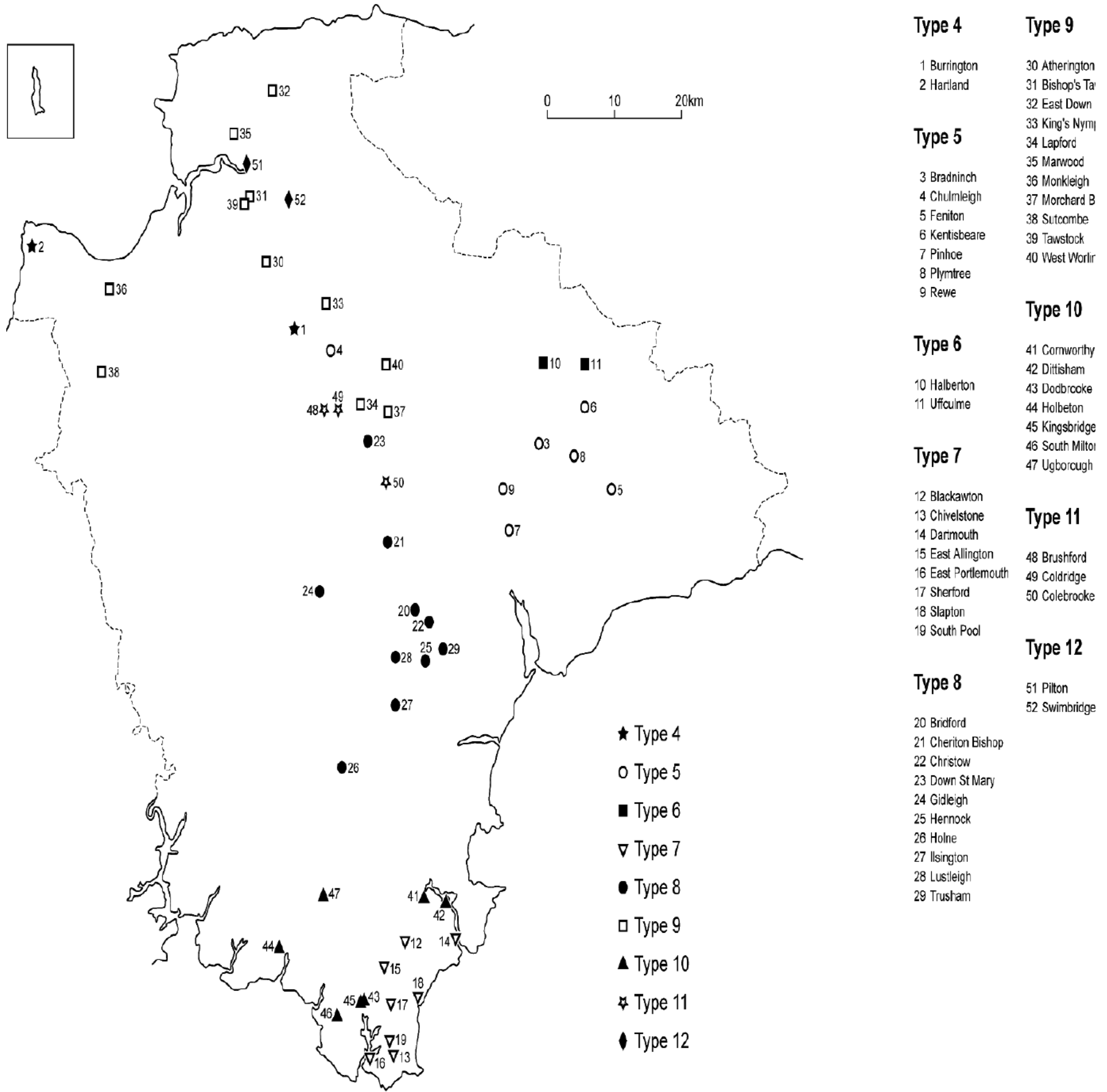

Figure 25. Map of Devon roodscreens – Types 4-12.

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A Hydraulic Landscape in Branscombe

JOHN TORRANCE

Manor Mill and The Old Forge are well-known National Trust properties in the middle of the East Devon village of Branscombe, linked by picturesque streams. An investigation of these watercourses on the ground and on old maps indicates that they are remnants of an artificial hydraulic system. This article presents the results of research showing that the system was designed to harness the water flowing from two of Branscombe's valleys to turn the wheels of two mills – a grist mill and a fulling mill. The existence of a fulling mill in the parish has not previously been noticed. Estate and other documents in the Exeter Cathedral archives and the Devon Heritage Centre show that the hydraulic system and the fulling mill were in operation between the early sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries. This allows their origin to be dated tentatively to the fifteenth or very early sixteenth century, and medieval records, while suggesting that there was a fulling mill much earlier, support the conclusion that the hydraulic system was not in existence in the fourteenth century. Documents and observation provide some evidence for alternative sites of medieval mills.

Walking eastwards through the middle of Branscombe, you cross two watercourses some fifty yards apart. The first is small and easily missed: it emerges from under bushes beside the Old Forge on the left, reappears under bushes on the right, flows under a slab bridge leading to the Old Bakery tearooms, continues through an orchard, and runs away into a field. The second, a wide, lively stream, which drains the largest of Branscombe's three valleys, the northern (or central) valley, tumbles in from the left just before the Village Hall, runs under the road, and then along beside it on the right before plunging into a culvert beside Mill Lane, leading to Manor Mill. The first

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stream is clearly an offshoot from the second. However, streams rarely divide naturally, and this article will show that the only natural thing about these two streams, at this point, is the water – everything else is due to hydraulic engineering. So three questions arise: what was done, why and when?

Figure 1. From Alexander Law's estate map of Branscombe, 1793.

The two streams show clearly on Alexander Law's estate map of Branscombe, made in 1793 for the lords of the manor, the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral.[1] The map not only provides a terminal date for 'when', but also shows what was done and, partly, why.

The main stream, towards the upper left corner of the map section, was, clearly, artificially channelled off to the east at 90 degrees, then taken round another right-angled bend to the south and through orchards to the road. It then ran eastwards, north of the road, which it crossed with a ford and a footbridge at a crossroads, and continued beside Mill Lane to the mill.

The smaller branch ran, as now, along the bottom of a slope to the west,

[1] D&C 98/8785. There is a link at http://www.branscombeproject.org.uk/page21a.html.

past the Old Forge, under the road and beside a cottage, now the Old Bakery tearooms, and through a large orchard. At the end of the orchard it bent sharply east, ran along the far side of a field formerly called Hole Meadow, and joined a stream from the western valley which rises near the Fountain Head Inn and runs down behind Branscombe Church. Both streams, before joining, have been embanked on the downhill side to contain the water (as can be seen on the ground). They were man-made leats, in fact, and once joined became a single leat serving the mill.

The northern valley stream was divided, therefore, at some time before 1793, to create a leat to augment the flow from the western valley stream, bringing more water to the mill. The two branches will be referred to from now on as ‘the leat’ and ‘the stream’.

A probable reason for wanting a stronger flow of water appears in the lower right-hand corner of the map section, where two distinct mills are shown fronting the millrace in line, both attached to the farmhouse of Mill Tenement (referred to from now on by its present name, Manor Mill Farm). This explains why, when the millwright Martin Watts restored the waterwheel

Figure 2. From the tithe map of Branscombe, 1840.

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of the grist mill in the 1990s, he found traces of what he thought had been a second wheel in line with it, to the east.[2]

The division of the northern valley stream was made on land belonging to Bridge Farm, which by 1793 was no longer an independent farm, its fields being let to other farmers. The property's best asset was Bridge Meadow (now a sports field), the large enclosure immediately north of the division of the stream, which had by then been channelled along its west side. One effect of the division was to drain a rectangle of land by the road, enclosed on three sides by the watercourses. In the late eighteenth century, and probably earlier, this plot was let to the blacksmith, and contained, beside his house (the former farmhouse of Bridge Farm) and orchard, the smithy (now known as the Old Forge), situated on the road and next to the leat, with the water being used to cool the hot metal.

The hydraulic landscape depicted in 1793 appears to have been the final phase of a system, which later changes modified in minor ways or partly dismantled. The tithe map of 1840 shows only a small change to the stream – which was culverted under the crossroads, replacing the ford – made by a decision of the Vestry in 1810,[3] but a big change at the mill: there was now only one mill, still on its original site but detached from the farmhouse, which had been rebuilt.[4]

Ordnance Survey maps bring the story up to the present. The 1906 map shows that the stream no longer ran eastwards and under the crossroads, but directly under the road and *then* eastwards alongside it to a culvert beside Mill Lane, as today. Also, a sluice had been inserted in the combined leat upstream from the mill enabling some water to be channelled off through Hole Meadow – a necessary move to deal with excess water in times of flood.

These changes can be seen in the 1958 map, which also shows that the leat from the northern valley stream had been closed off altogether. At the end of the orchard, now much smaller, it was diverted into a pre-existing drainage ditch (visible on the 1906 Ordnance Survey map) running through Hole Meadow towards the mill. This was done some time after regular milling ended in the 1940s. Nowadays, when the National Trust operates the mill for tourists, the wheel is driven by water from the western stream only, which proves sufficient.

[2] Personal communication, 2016.

[3] DHC 239A/2/PV1. Branscombe Vestry Minutes, 10 August 1810. 'W. Parrott & Ellis Northcott to repair bridge which carries the water from Bridge and orchard into Hole Meadow and to prevent water [illegible] Hole Meadow and road adjoining.'

[4] DHC 8180M. Digitised copy at www.branscombeproject.org.uk. An 1810 estate map shows the remodelling of the farm in progress, the second mill already demolished.

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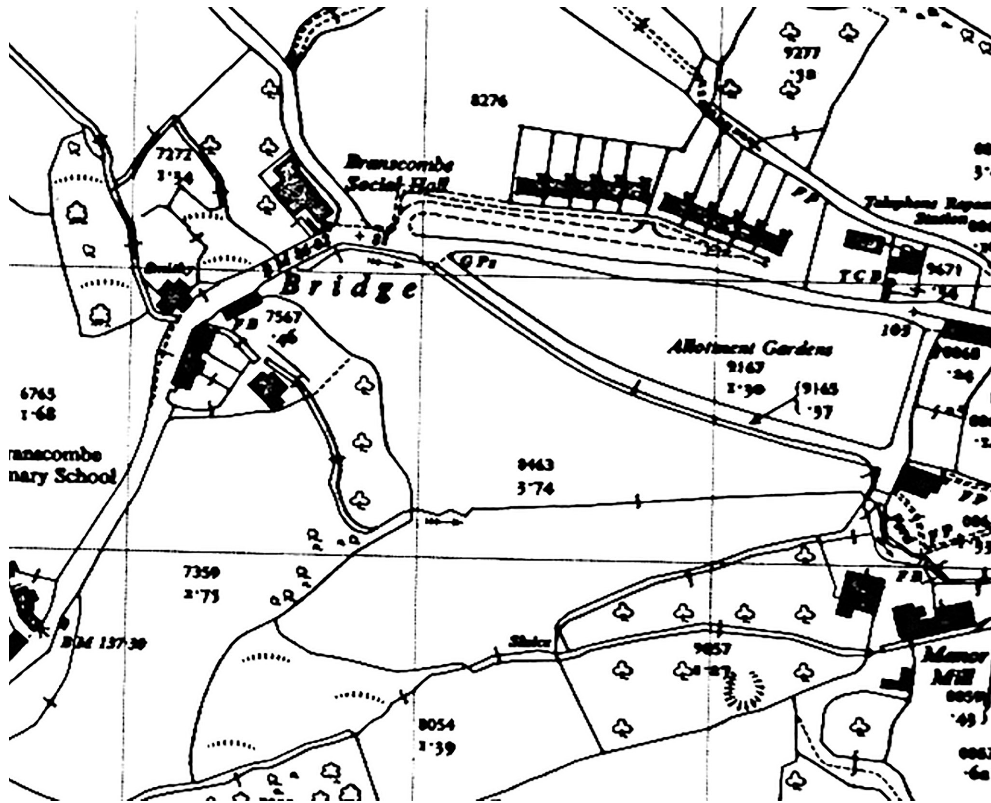

Figure 3. From the Ordnance Survey map, 1958.

The two mills shown in 1793 had overshot wheels,[5] like the present grist mill, which stands on the site of one of them and uses the same wheel pit. The mills and wheel pits were built back into a north-facing hill to receive water from the western valley stream, captured as a leat and channelled along the contour of the hillside. Two waterwheels in line, if they were working at the same time, would need twice as much water as a single wheel; hence, perhaps, the need to reinforce the flow with a leat from the northern valley stream, which the contours fortunately made feasible. This leat had to begin far enough up the northern valley stream for its water to join the flow of the western valley leat before it reached the mill-wheel. In fact, the leats meet

[5] With an overshot wheel, water has to be conducted in a leat from a higher point upstream until it is level with the top of the millwheel. It is carried across to the top of the wheel on a wooden trough called a 'launder', setting up a forward rotation by falling into 'buckets' on the far side of the wheel, finally spilling out into a 'mill-tail' to rejoin the stream. Topography, therefore, would determine the height of an overshot waterwheel.

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not far above the 25 metre contour line, which touches the top of the mill-wheel – quite a feat of surveying without modern instruments.[6] In theory, there might at first have been a single mill, run from the western valley leat, to which a second mill was later added, with the northern valley leat added to power it. But having regard to the way the hillside was cut back to accommodate two mills, it seems more likely that the whole hydraulic system was installed at once. If so, the next question is how long ago was this done, and why?

Some answers can be found in a rental of the manor drawn up in 1506.[7] It shows Wilmota Nytheway as the tenant not only of Manor Mill Farm, but also of a corn mill and a fulling mill. Indubitably these were the mills shown on the 1793 map – the first mill then, as now, being the grist mill, and the second the fulling mill.[8] Further evidence of the hydraulic system at this time comes from a field name in the rental. Among the fields belonging to Church Living, a tenement on the village road west of Bridge Farm, was one named 'Waterlette'. This word occurs as a place name at this time elsewhere in Devon, in association with a leat,[9] and there can be little doubt that 'lette' is 'leat', or that Waterlette was the large orchard through which the northern valley leat flowed on Law's map. The orchard is part of Church Living Farm in the parish tithe apportionment of 1840.[10]

Finding a fulling mill at Branscombe throws new light on what the village was like in the early modern period. Perhaps because of the manor's dependence on Exeter Cathedral, it had been drawn into the orbit of Exeter's trade in woollen cloth. There would have been flocks of sheep, spinning would have been a cottage industry, and weavers would have supplied cloth to the fulling mill. However, the eighteenth century saw the terminal decline of the Devon cloth industry, so it is likely that Branscombe's fulling mill went out of use well before 1793.

[6] There is a small weir just after the first 90-degree bend in the northern valley stream, showing that the stream bed *above* the division was artificially raised to start the leat at the height required. It is likely, also, that the course of the stream *below* the mill was altered to facilitate outflow from the mill-tail.

[7] D&C MS 3684, fo. 6.

[8] 'Fulling' or 'tucking' was a process in which woven cloth was beaten, wet, by 'stocks', or heavy wooden hammers, lifted in turn by the waterwheel, which felted and shrank the cloth into a smoother textile suitable for tailoring.

[9] Waterlet Linhay in Brendon was 'Waterlett' in 1525, in J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer & F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Devon*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), i, 60.

[10] Law's map shows the orchard with the leat as a detached part of Margels Farm, but other evidence suggests it was then leased to Margels by Church Living.

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The manor court books reveal some of the history of the mills between 1506 and 1793. Wilmota Nytheway's successor was John Duck according to an annotation that updated the 1506 rental to 1529, and the tenancy of Manor Mill Farm and the mills stayed in the Duck family until the death of another John in 1697. In 1701, the tenancy of the farm and 'one corn mill and one fulling mill' was granted to Samuel Wilson of Farringdon and Samuel Lang of Clyst Honiton, with reversion on Wilson's death to Peter Churchill of Rockbeare, in trust for John Duck's widow Joyce. Wilson paid a fine of £465, so the fulling mill appears to have been still profitable.[11]

From the 1720s the mills and the farm were in the hands of a family called Brown. Abel Brown, originally from Colyton, was miller at 'the customary mill' from at least 1728; in 1738 he was cited at the manorial court for letting his dogs eat meal from the mill trough. In 1753, aged 66, he relinquished the mill and farm to his son John, and became a licensed victualler and beer-seller, and after he died in 1762 his widow Elizabeth carried on the trade until her death in 1780. There is no documentary mention of the fulling mill during the Browns' tenure: suggesting it must have already become redundant as a result of the general decline in the county's cloth production. On the 1793 map the second mill is not shown directly abutting the watercourse, like the first mill, perhaps because the wheel had been removed. Demolition of the mill itself seems to have been postponed long after it had gone out of use, and a possible reason for this might be that Abel Brown had converted it into a brewery. While a brewery would have no use for the wheel, an overhead water supply could have been piped from the leat; however, evidence for this is lacking. The Browns continued as millers until 1850, when John Brown III died from an 'injury from the shaft of a mill, and abscesses'.[12]

If the hydraulic landscape of 1793 was already present in 1506, the next question is: how long had it been there? To trace it back beyond the sixteenth century, the manor's medieval records must be searched for answers to four questions: how many mills were there? Where were they? Was there a fulling mill? Is it possible to determine how the millwheels, overshot or otherwise, were supplied with water?

Among the relevant surviving sources are reports from periodic visitations

[11] DHC Z17/1/3/1-2. I am grateful to David Robinson for a translation of Branscombe manor court books, in Latin until 1732. £465 in 1701 would have the purchasing power of about £50,000 today.

[12] R. Fearnside, *An Account of the Brown family of Middlecombe Manor Mill Farm*, 1995 (typescript in the Branscombe Project archive).

made on behalf of the Dean and Chapter between 1281 and 1336.[13] Only two of the reports, those of 1281 and 1307, actually mention mills, but they do both speak of two mills. It can be assumed that throughout this period there was a grist mill belonging to the manor, to which manorial custom obliged tenants to bring home-grown wheat to be ground.[14] This would have been one of the two mills mentioned, and in 1307 it was here that Richard the miller was granted a curtilage at a rent of 12d a year, 'at the lord's pleasure'. This implies that the mill was on land belonging to the manor home farm, or 'barton land', which puts it on a stream at or near the site of the present mill.[15] Richard's curtilage was the embryo of Manor Mill Farm.

In 1281 neither mill was named, but in 1307 the second – not that of Richard the miller – was called the 'De La Pole mill'. Its site is unknown, although it was probably not on 'barton land'.[16] The 1506 rental mentions an 'olde myll' which was attached to an unnamed farm, listed alongside the farms of Culverwell, Woodhouse and Barnells. This was almost certainly the farm later known as Hooknell, which straddled the northern valley stream near the farms named, some way upstream from Bridge Farm, and adjoining the site of the much later Hole Mill. So Hole Mill, a grist mill dating from the eighteenth century, apparently had a medieval predecessor, possibly the De La Pole mill. A scattered holding called 'Pole londe' in 1506 and Poole Lands in 1840, which may contain the name of De La Pole, included a meadow just north of the site of Hole Mill, and this was probably part of two ferlings of land held in 1339 by Roger atte Pole. However, his holding was not said to include a mill.

In addition to the visitation reports, there is important evidence in a rental and custumal drawn up in 1339.[17] Unfortunately, this document is of no

[13] D&C 3672a, for the visitation of 1281 (translation by R. Bass in Exeter Cathedral archives); for the visitation of 1307, see F. C. Hingeston-Randolph (ed.), *The Register of Walter de Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter* (London: G. Bell, 1892), 193-96, with English paraphrase in F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, 'The manor and the parish 600 years ago', *Newbery House Magazine* (Feb.-Mar. 1890).

[14] The earliest mention of a mill at Branscombe is in *Pleas of the Crown at Exeter* in 1248, when Adam the miller was indicted for murder, cited in H. Michell Whitley, 'Sanctuary in Devon', *TDA, 45* (1913), 308.

[15] Land that had formed part of the home farm of the medieval manor, including the mill and Manor Mill Farm, is glossed 'barton land' in the 1840 tithe apportionments.

[16] William de la Pole, who might have been the tenant of the mill, was a juror at the 1281 visitation. In 1307 the mill needed the large sum of £5 to repair it.

[17] D&C 3683. A transcription by J. Y. A. Morshead is in the Branscombe 'scrapboook' at the DHC.

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help in deciding the number of mills because the word *molendinum* (mill) occurs confusingly in both singular and plural forms in the same sentence. It is however clear, since villeins were required to fetch millstones when required 'for the lord's mill', that the grist mill was functioning as before. The most that can be said about the second mill mentioned in the visitations, and possibly still working in 1339, is that it could very well have been a fulling mill, for fulling mills spread into small towns and villages in sheep-rearing country in Devon from the late twelfth century.[18]

The custumal does, however, prove that the hydraulic system of leat-fed mills was not yet in existence in 1339. The relevant section refers to *stagnum et bedum molendinorum* – 'the pond and dam of the mills', implying that the stream was dammed to create a millpond. Can it tell us more? Unfortunately the sentence containing this phrase is equivocal, with (as mentioned above) both singular and plural forms of *molendinum*. It also lacks a verb: it seems to stipulate that a tenant, with others, will pay '*set in anno stagnum et bedum molendinorum* […] *et ducet aquam ad rotam molendini*' – 'except in a year when the pond and dam of the mills […], and he [with others] will bring water to the millwheel'. J. Y. A. Morshead, transcribing this passage, tried to make sense of it by interpreting the abbreviation *stagnū* (for *stagnum*) as *stagnunt,* and by ignoring the sign for 'and' between *stagnum* and *bedum*. It might then be taken as meaning that tenants will pay 'except when the *bedum* is stagnant, and then they will bring water to the millwheel' – although only by attributing a plural verb, *stagnunt*, to a singular subject, *bedum*. It is hard to see how tenants would 'bring water to the millwheel', but it is true that *bedum* was sometimes used for a millpond. However, a more likely missing verb than *stagnunt* would be one meaning 'to become clogged', in which case 'bringing water to the millwheel' could mean dredging the pond. At Abbots Langley in Hertfordshire in 1355 there was a requirement for tenants to dredge the millpond when necessary.[19]

It seems certain, therefore, that one or both mills were fed by water stored in a millpond retained by a dam, which the tenantry were obliged to keep in working order, and that the hydraulic system of 1506 with its leats could not

[18] Sidbury, which like Branscombe belonged to the Dean and Chapter, may have had a fulling mill in the thirteenth century, according to R.E. Wilson, *Notes on the Watermills of the Otter, Sid and Branscombe Vales*. (MS, Sidmouth Museum, 1973), 58. The Branscombe rental of 1339 lists Walter Webber, with a messuage and a plot of land of half the usual size, who may well have been a weaver, suggesting the fulling mill might still have been working.

[19] M. Watts, *Water and Wind Power* (Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 2005), 21.

have been present. And even though *bedum* is sometimes translated as 'leat', it is noteworthy that the usual medieval Latin word for leat – *lada, lata* or *leta* – which would have applied exactly to the 1506 system, was not used in 1339.[20]

The rental of 1339 contains some information about the lands of Bridge Farm, where the northern valley stream was divided, that also suggests, though not conclusively, that the hydraulic system was not yet present. Walter atte Brygge held a messuage and one and a half ferlings there in 1339 and also some land adjacent containing a one-acre meadow (*pratum*) and two acres of marsh (*mora*). These three acres of adjacent land must have included Bridge Meadow, which in 1793 measured two and a half acres. It would seem that the northern valley stream had created a wide marshy area from which the meadow was reclaimed: one acre of meadow by 1339, and another acre and a half by 1793. This reclamation was what eventually confined the stream to a bed along the western edge of the meadow, and it was this line of the stream that the 1793 map shows as divided to make the leat, its bed having been raised for the purpose. Did the stream already follow this line in 1339? Before the area was levelled for a sports field in the 1970s, the eastern half of Bridge Meadow sloped gently upwards. This suggests that Walter's acre of meadow would have occupied the eastern, sloping part, while the flat western part (together, possibly, with half an acre further north, upstream, even now still marshy) made up his two acres of marsh. If so, reclamation had not yet confined the stream to the western edge of the meadow – the line that was divided to make the leat – and the hydraulic system of 1793 could not have been present.

If the medieval grist mill was near the site of Manor Mill and fed by a millpond, where might this have been? Contours suggest that the western valley stream, before it was made into a leat, flowed down through the middle of Hole Meadow, where the diverted northern valley leat runs now.[21] It would have emerged from Hole Meadow just north of the present mill, where it

[20] N. J. G. Pounds (ed.), *The Parliamentary Survey of the Duchy of Cornwall* (Exeter: Devon & Cornwall Record Society, 1984), ii, vi, in which Pounds comments that the phrase 'bedam mill' in Cornish records of 1650 'clearly derives from *beda molendini* or mill leat' but the assertion is not supported by archaeological or other evidence of leats. Other authors have translated *bedum* as woodwork for guiding water to a mill wheel, or the portion of a mill-stream which turns the wheel and is boarded up to increase the force of water. (I owe these references to Martin Watts.) The British Academy's *Dictionary of Medieval Latin* and Latham's *Revised Medieval Latin Word List* give 'mill-dam' as the preferred meaning of *bedum*.

[21] The ditch into which this leat has been diverted might, in fact, have been part of the western stream's original bed.

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Figure 4. Probable courses of the northern and western valley streams before they were made into leats.

would have joined the northern valley steam, flowing beside Mill Lane. The united flow of the two streams could have been sufficient to drive a mill, and this site on barton land, central to the village, would have been suitable for the lord's grist mill. It is also consistent with Richard the miller's curtilage in 1307 having been the embryo of Manor Mill Farm.

What can be seen there now? The northern valley stream, emerging from its culvert at the end of Mill Lane, widens out into a flat gravelly depression where it is joined by the diverted leat from Hole Meadow. The depression, for which there is no natural explanation, now serves as a ford for vehicles driving to Manor Mill Farm. It could, however, be the remnant of a former millpond fed by both northern and western streams, and the remains of the surrounding embankments, though heavily overgrown, are partly of stone, at least on the east side. A dam would have been needed here not only to store water from the streams and control its supply to the mill, but also to prevent blockage of the mill-race by flints continually carried down from the northern valley. As for the mill-race itself, the stream bends sharply away east from the ford, through an artificially narrowed channel. This is now crossed by a

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bridge, but could once have held a waterwheel.[22] The dam might have been high enough for the wheel to be breastshot – more efficient than undershot in a small watercourse.[23] There is no trace of a building now, but a mill, possibly of wood, can be imagined there.

A lease of the present mill in 1869 required the tenant to take care of 'the millpond'.[24] The 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1888–89 shows a very small pond in Hole Meadow, connected to the ford, which might strengthen the case for a former pond that included both. It may be relevant that in 1307, the visiting canons reported that the manor's fishpond had been drawn – yielding a bream, twelve roach and some eels – because a millpond might have doubled up as a fishpond. Elijah Chick, a local historian, guessed in 1906 that this fishpond was 'where the meadows called Waterlakes are now' and the name 'Waterlakes' was remembered in 1963, when it was put forward unsuccessfully as a name for new council houses at Parkfield Terrace overlooking Hole Meadow and the mill.[25]

Conclusions

Some conclusions can be affirmed with certainty. Law's map of 1793 shows a hydraulic landscape in the middle of Branscombe, constructed to feed water from the northern and western valley streams to two overshot mills in line. A successor to the first mill in line, a grist mill rebuilt in 1865 after a fire, is still extant, and the second mill was demolished between 1793 and 1810. A rental of 1506 lists a tenant with two mills, a grist mill and a fulling mill, so the village economy was then linked to the Exeter woollen cloth trade, and continued to be for the next two hundred years. When the trade declined during the eighteenth century, the fulling mill became redundant.

The fact that in 1506 these two mills were held by the tenant of Manor

[22] There appears to be a footbridge here on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map. Ron Denning, the tenant in the 1970s, confirms that the only change since then has been the installation of a bridge wide enough for vehicles.

[23] A breastshot wheel is one where the water strikes the paddles at the height of the axle, rotating the wheel backwards. An undershot wheel is rotated backwards by water striking the paddles on the lowest section of the wheel. This transmits to the mill only the energy of the flow in the mill-race, and suits a situation of strong flow, e.g. in a river. An overshot wheel is more efficient where the flow is weak, adding to the energy of the flow the potential energy of the falling water, whose weight speeds up the forward rotation of the 'buckets'. Breastshot wheels also gain some potential energy from the difference in water-levels.

[24] DHC 1037M/E1/3. Inclusion of a millpond might have been part of a lawyer's standard formula for mills.

[25] Elijah Chick, *A Short Sketch of the History of the Parish and Church of Branscombe* (Exeter: W. J. Southwood & Co, 1906), 26.

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Mill Farm, together with the field-name Waterlette, indicates that they were versions of the same two mills shown on the 1793 map, and that the leats to feed them were already in existence. The smithy, built in the early eighteenth century or earlier, or on the site of a previous smithy, had been sited beside the leat.

From this point backwards the argument turns on probabilities. There were two mills in the village before 1506, documented in 1281 and 1307. One – 'the lord's mill' – was certainly a grist mill, requiring millstones to be fetched when needed (1339); the second, which may or may not have been still in operation by 1339, was likely to have been a fulling mill. Sheep-rearing, spinning and weaving would therefore have been important in the village economy.

Inspection on the ground suggests a possible former site for the medieval grist mill, just north of the present mill, and an 'old myll' in the 1506 rental may indicate that there had been another mill, perhaps a fulling mill, on the site of the later Hole Mill. The extent of undrained marsh at Bridge Farm in 1339 suggests that the northern valley stream had not yet been divided to make the leat shown on the 1793 map.

The fifteenth century (or very early sixteenth) emerges from this as the likeliest period for the construction of the hydraulic landscape mapped in 1793. This was a time of upheaval and transformation in Branscombe. Demographic collapse meant that the manor's 500-acre home farm could no longer be worked by villein labour, and it was split into tenant farms. The canons' personal stewardship of the manor lapsed and the Dean and Chapter became *rentier* landlords. With the end of villeinage, peasants were free to seek paid labour elsewhere; former strip fields were taken over by tenant farmers, if they could find hands to work them; large areas became waste.[26] The Dean and Chapter, if they were seeking a way to make the manor profitable again, would have found an opportunity to hand. East Devon cloth manufacturing, having declined from the late fourteenth century, revived in the late fifteenth by switching from coarse broadcloth to 'kersey cloth', a lighter, smoother textile, and a profitable export.[27] If they wanted to invest in a new fulling mill to take advantage of this revival, they still had the authority and means, as lords of the manor, to command or hire the labour needed for a big project. Only a project expected to be profitable would seem likely to have justified

[26] The 1506 rental lists numerous holdings that have 'enclosed waste annexed', often referred to as 'bootlands' or 'landboot.'

[27] W. G. Hoskins, *Devon* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978), 126. There is certainly scope for further research to see if the Dean and Chapter archives contain evidence of an interest in the woollen cloth trade.

the level of investment involved in cutting back the hillside, digging leats and building new mills. Simultaneously, this could have provided an opportunity to replace the old grist mill with a more efficient one.

So, although this is a hypothetical origin for Branscombe's hydraulic landscape, and its remnants today, in the present state of knowledge it may be the least improbable story.

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The Boundaries of the County of Devon

J. W. HART

The county of Devon is an Anglo-Saxon creation, with boundaries that remained largely unchanged from Domesday until the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The ancient county was an important entity with its own identity and administration and largely natural boundaries formed by the sea, rivers and hill ridges. This article describes the documented changes to the county boundary from the sixteenth century onwards, which are listed in an appendix, including references to their legal basis and to the relevant maps.[1]

The Ancient County of Devon

Devon is one of the six historic shires of Wessex[2] and its emergence as an Anglo-Saxon shire from Dumnonia has been described by Higham.[3] The boundary between Devon and Cornwall[4] was fixed by King Athelstan as the

[1] The primary legislation (public or local Acts of Parliament) quoted is referenced conventionally (by regnal year and chapter number) without indicating the archives used. The secondary legislation (orders or statutory instruments) quoted includes a reference to the archival source. Some of the latter and the maps referenced may be available in different archives or as multiple copies with different reference numbers within the same archive. The references given are those consulted in the preparation of this paper.

[2] e.g. B. Yorke, *Wessex in the early Middle Ages* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1995).

[3] Robert Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon: emergence of a shire* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2008).

[4] H. P. R. Finberg, 'Making of a boundary,' *Lucerna: Studies of some problems in the early history of England* (London: Macmillan, 1964), 171-78. Finberg quotes verses by a contemporary of St Aldhelm in the seventh century which refer to 'grim Devon and bare Cornwall', indicating the presence of a boundary between the two areas at this time.

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left bank of the river Tamar.[5] However, Domesday shows parts of Devon west of the river: the largest areas being the parishes of North Petherwin and most of Werrington. The background for these divergences has been discussed by Finberg.[6] The boundary with Somerset and Dorset may be linked to the formation of the Sherborne bishopric in 705/6 AD,[7] with the Brendon-Exmoor area of Dumnonia, south-west of the River Parrett, becoming part of Somerset. The eastern part of this boundary however was not with Somerset but with three Dorset parishes, Wambrook, Chardstock and Hawkchurch, separating Devon and Somerset, and isolating Thorncombe and a detached tithing of Axminster parish (part of the royal estate of Axminster) from the rest of the county. Stockland and Dalwood (originally the property of Milton Abbey) formed an isolated part of Dorset entirely surrounded by Devon. Devon also included land to the east of the Axe, even though the river would have formed a natural boundary with Dorset.[8]

A charter of Henry VIII of 23 August 1537 created the 'City and County of the City of Exeter', separate from the county of Devon. There was sufficient uncertainty about the boundaries of the new county that an Act of Parliament was needed in 1548 to define them. The new county of Exeter included the parishes within the walls and the parishes of St David and St Sidwell, but expressly excluded the Castle and the Common Gaol of the County of Devon, together with the surrounding buildings. A further charter of 22 December 1550 granted the manor of Exe Island to the city. The need to repair the Devon Gaol resulted in an Act of 1787 which adjusted the boundaries around the Castle, but when land for a new county gaol was bought in St Leonard parish in 1810 a further Act of Parliament was needed to transfer this area to Devon to keep the county gaol within the county.

The changes to the county boundary that occurred in the nineteenth century were largely the consequence of national reforms, introducing more systematic forms of local government. The administrative units of county, hundred and parish often contained detached parts, which led to increasing administrative problems. In 1825 the Home Department published the returns from the county clerks of the peace on 'insulated parcels of land belonging to

[5] C. Thorn & F. Thorn, Introduction to the Phillimore edition of the Devon Domesday book, available at https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:500. Accessed 6 June 2019.

[6] Finberg, 'Making of a boundary', 171-78.

[7] Katherine Barker, 'Aldhelmus episcopus: the making and shiring of the Sherborne bishopric – Saxon, Briton and the Byzantine', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 134* (2013), 113-27.

[8] Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon*, 59. Details of the boundary at Lyme are discussed in Barker, 'Aldhelmus episcopus'.

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each county … but locally situated within some other county'.[9] The Devon and Dorset clerks both replied listing the Devon parish of Thorncombe and a part of the parish of Axminster as detached parts of Devon in Dorset, and the Dorset parish of Stockland and township of Dalwood as detached parts of Dorset in Devon. For the boundary between Devon and Cornwall, the clerks used the Tamar as a measure of whether a parish or part of a parish was 'insulated' from the county. Hence the Devon clerk included the Devon parishes of North Petherwin and part of the parish of Werrington west of the Tamar 'by which it is completely cut off from Devonshire'.[10] The Cornwall clerk also listed a small part of the parish of St Stephen by Saltash, which lay on the eastern side of the Tamar, nearly opposite to the Borough of Saltash, a small part of the parish of St John, and the parishes of Bridgerule, Boyton, and Maker which were partly in Cornwall and partly in Devon.

The 1832 Great Reform Act introduced substantial changes to Parliamentary constituency boundaries. Details were contained in the Parliamentary Boundaries Act 1832,[11] which included annexing the detached parts of counties to the parliamentary constituency of the county in which they were situated. The list of specific boundary changes was based on the information collected in 1825. Thorncombe and the detached part of Axminster were transferred to Dorset, and Stockland and Dalwood to Devon. The Act also 'transferred' North Petherwin and Werrington to Devon, as well as specifying the county for other places along the Tamar. Whilst the 1832 Act transferred these areas only for parliamentary purposes, the Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844 transferred them to the counties 'for all purposes'.

The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act rationalized boundaries of boroughs and unified their constitutions. Exeter had been a borough since at least the early thirteenth century, and Plymouth had received a charter following a petition to King Henry IV, which was granted by royal licence and confirmed by Act of Parliament on 12 November 1439.[12] Both became municipal boroughs with their existing boundaries maintained until altered

[9] 1825 Parliamentary Papers (350) Vol. XXI: County Boundary.

[10] Whilst North Petherwin, Werrington and the chapelry of St Giles on the Heath are in the Devon hundred of Black Torrington, they are ecclesiastically in the Archdeaconry of Cornwall. Maker was partly in the Cornwall hundred of East and the Devon hundred of Roborough, but entirely in the Archdeaconry of Cornwall.

[11] Representation of the People Act 1832 (2 & 3 Will. IV c. 45) and Parliamentary Boundaries Act 1832 (2 & 3 Will. IV c. 64).

[12] C.E. Welch, *Plymouth City Charters 1439–1935: A Catalogue* (Plymouth: Corporation of Plymouth, 1962).

by Parliament. Barnstaple, Bideford, Dartmouth, Great Torrington, South Molton, Tiverton and Totnes also became municipal boroughs under the Act. The Act also contained provisions for the inhabitants of towns not having municipal borough status to petition for a charter. A Royal Proclamation of 28 January 1837[13] acknowledged the receipt of a petition from the inhabitants of Devonport and the borough charter was granted on 13 October the same year[14] – the first borough to be incorporated under this provision.

The Poor Law Amendment Act 1868 extended parish boundaries to include 'the Part of the Seashore to the Low-water Mark'. It also included the 'Bank of every River to the Middle of the Stream' for places where this was not already the case. Whilst this Act, together with later changes in 1878,[15] made little difference to the county boundary for much of the Devon coastline, it did affect areas on the North Devon coast, such as Bideford and Morte Bays.

The 1877 City of Exeter Extension Act annexed the parish of St Leonard to the City and County of the City of Exeter, but excluded the Topsham Artillery barracks and the Judges Lodgings at 'Larkbear'. As with the exemption of the Castle and the Gaol in the earlier Acts, this reflected the need for Devon to retain control of its own institutions (primarily the Courts) within the county town.

Whilst many of the administrative problems relating to detached parts of counties had been dealt with by the 1844 Act, many parishes had detached parts that complicated the work of the Poor Law unions set up under the Poor Law reforms of 1834. Legislation was passed in 1876, 1879 and 1882[16] giving the Local Government Board powers to either make a separate parish of a divided part of a parish or to amalgamate detached parts with other parishes. A detached part of Chardstock (Crawley) lay to the west of Wambrook, but to the east of the River Yarty, which formed the county boundary at that time. This detached part of Chardstock was transferred to the parish of Membury and the county of Devon with effect from 24 March 1884. Whilst a transfer to the neighbouring parish of Wambrook would have kept the area in Dorset, it would have led to a change in poor law union, and therefore complicated the administrative process the change was intended to simplify.

[13] *London Gazette,* 3 February 1837, No. 19463, p. 255.
[14] PWDRO 3642/242.
[15] R. Oliver, 'OS Act, tidelines and growth of a myth', *Sheetlines (Charles Close Society for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps) 91,* (August 2011), 36-51.
[16] The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Acts of 1876 (39 & 40 Vict. c. 61) and 1882 (45 & 46 Vict. c.58), and the Poor Law Act 1879 (42 & 43 Vict. c. 54)

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The Administrative County of Devon

The Local Government Act 1888 created a new administrative county of Devon and three new county boroughs of the municipal boroughs of Exeter, Plymouth and Devonport. The new county borough of Exeter retained its title as City and County of the City of Exeter.

The first changes to the county boundary under the Local Government Act 1894 were a consequence of reforms introduced by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act.[17] This Act united parishes into poor law unions, many of which comprised parishes in more than one county. The Devon parishes of Yarcombe, Morebath, Churchstanton, Burlescombe, Clayhidon, Culmstock, Hemyock and Holcombe Rogus were in Somerset poor law unions, and Broadwoodwidger, Northcott, North Petherwin, St Giles on the Heath, Virginstow and Werrington in unions based in Cornwall.[18] There were also parishes from the neighbouring counties in Devon poor law unions. These included the Cornish parishes of North Tamerton, and Calstock[19] and a small detached part of St Stephen by Saltash,[20] and the Dorset parishes of Chardstock, Charmouth, Hawkchurch, Lyme Regis and Thorncombe.[21] These unions formed a template for the registration and sanitary districts created by later legislation.

The 1894 Act abolished sanitary districts and replaced them with urban or rural district councils. As the sanitary districts had been based on poor law unions, some districts contained either whole parishes or parts of parishes in a different county. However, the Act required that parishes and districts were to be in one administrative county only. Thirteen of the fourteen Devon parishes affected remained in the county. A new rural district, Broadwoodwidger, was created for the six Devon parishes in the Launceston poor law union (Cornwall), and another, Culmstock, for the five Devon parishes in the Wellington union (Somerset). Yarcombe and Morebath transferred to Devon rural districts and poor law unions. Only Churchstanton was transferred from Devon to Somerset and at the same time Chardstock and Hawkchurch were transferred from Dorset to Devon.

[17] The Local Government Act 1894 (56 & 57 Vict. c. 73) and the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 (4 & 5 Will. IV c. 76)

[18] Frederic A. Youngs, *Guide to the Administrative Units of England. Volume 1: Southern England* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1979), 587.

[19] *Ibid*., 578.

[20] Youngs wrongly gives St Budeaux. This detached part of the parish in Devon was transferred to St Budeaux by Local Government Board Order 32169 with effect from 31 March 1895 (TNA OS 24/75).

[21] Youngs, *Guide to the Administrative Units*, 595.

Expansion of the new county boroughs led to a number of boundary changes at the expense of the neighbouring Devon parishes. Plymouth was extended by Acts of Parliament in 1896, 1897 and 1899, Devonport in 1898 and 1900, and Exeter in 1900 and 1913. In 1914, Plymouth county borough was further enlarged both by the addition of East Stonehouse, and by abolishing the Devonport county borough and including it in the Plymouth county borough.[22] Exeter was again extended in 1937 (to provide land for an abattoir) and in 1940, and Plymouth in 1938 and 1951.

In 1963 the Devon and Exeter Order once again addressed issues related to the different roles of the county of Devon and the county of the city of Exeter in the county town. The Order created the 'Devon County Buildings Area', consisting of the 'parish or reputed parish of Exeter Castle', much of Larkbear (the Judges Lodgings, but transferring a small area to the city) and the area where the new Devon County Hall was under construction. However, the 'County Prison and Constabulary Barracks shall remain or form part of the city and the parish of Exeter'.

A review of the boundaries of south-western counties carried out under the Local Government Act 1958 led to several changes to those of Devon in 1966. Changes to the boundary with Cornwall resulted in the Tamar becoming the boundary for almost all its length. One order transferred North Petherwin and most of the parish of Werrington to Cornwall. A second order identified lengths of the river where the 'boundary between the administrative counties of Cornwall and Devon … shall be the line for the time being of the centre of the river Tamar',[23] this realigned the boundary in places where the course of the river had moved. The order left the two Devon parishes of Bridgerule and Pancrasweek and the Cornish parish of North Tamerton still straddling the river. The main change to the boundary with Somerset was the transfer of parts of Chardstock to Chard and Wambrook, whilst other changes were minor. The order also changed the boundary with Dorset by transferring parts of Hawkchurch to its four neighbouring Dorset parishes (including the transfer of Lambert's Castle back to Dorset), and transferring part of Wootton Fitzpaine in Dorset to Axminster. Two orders extended the Exeter and Plymouth county boroughs.

The county borough of Torbay was created in 1968, made up of the urban parts of the boroughs and parishes around the bay. The county borough was

[22] Plymouth was made a City by Royal Charter in 1929 (TNA OS 24/111).

[23] In other places where the county boundary is moved to follow the course of a river, this Order identifies specific areas to be transferred.

extended by the Torbay Harbour Act 1971, by the inclusion of the 'land within the limits of the harbour' as part of the borough and parish of Torquay. The Act interprets the word 'land' as including 'land covered with water', thus bringing the whole of Torbay harbour into the borough.

The Non-metropolitan County of Devon

The Local Government Act 1972 which came into effect on 1 April 1974 created a new county of Devon. The three county boroughs were abolished, and became districts as a second tier of government under the county council. The three new districts were granted Borough Charters in 1973,[24] to come into effect at the same time as the Act. Plymouth district was enlarged in 1986 and Exeter district in 1987, though neither change affected the county boundary. [25]

An Order in 1977 adjusted the boundary between Devon and Cornwall to follow the line of a new 50 metre-long water-course between the parishes of Whitstone and Pyworthy.

After nearly 25 years as a united county, Devon was again divided internally in 1998, when, as unitary authorities, Plymouth and Torbay became separate counties. Exeter was also made a separate county in 2010, with effect from 1 April 2011. However an Act of Parliament preventing the implementation of these changes was adopted on 16 December.[26] As a result, Exeter remains part of the County of Devon.

Other 'Devons'

The three headings used above of 'Ancient', 'Administrative' and 'Non-metropolitan' county of Devon are those used in the relevant legislation. There are however other 'Devons'.

The term 'historic county', whilst apparently similar to the ancient county, is often used to describe counties as they were between 1844 (when detached parts were transferred between counties) and the changes introduced

[24] TNA PC 15/2071, Torbay; TNA PC 15/2085, Plymouth; TNA PC 15/2159, Exeter.

[25] The Devon (District Boundaries) Order, 1986, SI No. 2061 and 1987, SI No. 1576 respectively. The first is available at DHC; the second at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1987/1576/contents/made.

[26] The Exeter and Devon (Structural Changes) Order 2010 SI No. 998 and the Local Government Act 2010, c. 35 respectively, available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/998/contents/made, and https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/35/contents.

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by the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894. It is the term used by the Association of British Counties,[27] which promotes awareness of the continuing importance of the counties as they have existed 'largely unchanged since before 1066'. In reality, the time span covered by the term is relatively short, since it excludes the detached parts of counties that were part of the counties until 1844, and, as the changes in 1877 and 1883 show, some county boundary changes took place before the two Local Government Acts were implemented. The 'historic' county by this definition lasted just over three decades.

'Watsonian Vice-counties' are areas used for natural history recording.[28] Hewett Cottrell Watson (1804–81) devised a system of sub-dividing Great Britain into similar sized areas for plant recording. These are known as 'Vice-counties', and their boundaries are based on the county boundaries as they were in the 1850s. Devon is covered by two vice-counties, one for South Devon (VC3), the other for North Devon (VC4).[29]

'Poor law counties' and 'Registration counties' are concepts that followed the creation of poor law unions under the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 and the subsequent use of these unions as the basis of registration districts created by the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1836. As described earlier, many unions and registration districts included parishes from neighbouring counties, and these parishes were therefore considered to be part of the 'poor law county' or 'registration county'. These parishes are listed in the 1851 to 1891 censuses under their registration rather than their ancient county. These anomalies were resolved by the boundary changes made following the 1894 Local Government Act.

Finally, the Local Government Changes for England (Lord-Lieutenants and Sheriffs) Order 1997,[30] which came into effect on 1 April 1998, specifies that for the purposes of appointing Sheriffs or Lord Lieutenants, 'Devon' means the administrative areas of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. These two offices that, together with the Custos Rotulorum and the Clerk of the Peace, were key posts in county governance prior to the Local Government Act of

[27] http://abcounties.com/about/. Accessed 8 July 2019.
[28] https://nbn.org.uk/tools-and-resources/nbn-toolbox/watsonian-vice-county-boundaries/ Accessed 8 July 2019.
[29] Vice-county boundaries can be found online – follow the link to Vice-county boundaries at https://bsbi.org/maps-and-data Accessed 8 July 2019.
[30] SI 1997 No. 1992. Available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1992/made/data.pdf Accessed 7 June 2019.

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1888[31] have become once more a means of holding together groups of local authorities in 'ceremonial counties',[32] resembling the 'historic' counties of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the above, there is no unique 'Devon', and hence the meaning of the term will depend on the context. For any demographic or other quantitative study it is essential to define the area within which that study takes place. The Appendix documents almost thirty changes to the county boundary made since 1537, and makes it possible to define what exactly is covered by the term at any particular time.

Compared to the changes seen with its neighbours Dorset and Somerset,[33] the external county boundaries remain largely unchanged from the time of Domesday. The boundary changes in 1844, 1896 and 1966 resulted in the loss of four parishes (Thorncombe and a detached part of Axminster,[34] Churchstanton, North Petherwin and most of Werrington) and the gain of four others (Stockland, Dalwood, Chardstock and Hawkchurch). With the exception of the three parishes whose boundaries still straddle the river, the Tamar now forms the boundary between Devon and Cornwall.

Many of the changes to the county boundary have been due to the creation of separate counties within Devon. The city and county of the city of Exeter is shown here as separate from the county of Devon from its creation in 1537. This is consistent with the clear wording of the Acts separating the city from the rest of the county.[35] This in turn led to the necessity for later legislation to resolve the conflicts due to the county town not being part of the county, and for the county of Devon to retain areas within the city. This distinction however does exaggerate to some extent the distinction between Exeter, a county corporate, and the other boroughs of the county. Whilst this is not the place for a longer discussion of the relationship between boroughs and counties prior to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, it is clear

[31] David Eastwood, *Governing Rural England: Tradition and Transformation in Local Government 1740–1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[32] The term 'ceremonial county' is associated with the Lieutenancies Act 1997 c. 23, although this term is not used in either the Act or the Order.

[33] J. W. Hart, 'Changing Boundaries of Somerset', *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 161* (2018), 162-73; J. W. Hart, 'Boundaries of Dorset', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 135* (2014), 316-19.

[34] This detached part of Axminster was amalgamated with Thorncombe by Local Government Board Order 15945, with effect from 24 March 1884 (TNA OS 24/99).

[35] Youngs' *Guide* does not treat counties corporate as separate counties.

that the Devon boroughs all had a considerable degree of autonomy from the county.[36]

The main reference book for administrative boundary changes is Youngs' *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England* (1979). However, as has been shown to be the case with the boundary changes report for Dorset and Somerset, a comparison between the list of boundary changes shown in the Appendix and those reported in Youngs' *Guide* shows a number of discrepancies and underlines the importance of checking the primary material. The University of Portsmouth's *Vision of Britain* website, which is based on the material in Youngs' *Guide,* omits many of the changes and contains additional errors.

It should be emphasised that the changes reported here relate to the civil and not to the ecclesiastical administration of the county. Whilst diocesan and secular structures were originally closely linked,[37] this link has weakened considerably, in part due to the changes reported here.

[36] See V. D. Lipman, *Local Government Areas 1834–1945* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), 8. The Plymouth Borough charter makes it clear that no county official was to act within the borough (see Welch, *Plymouth City Charters*).
[37] Colin Podmore, *Dioceses and Episcopal Sees in England: A Background Report for the Dioceses Commission* (London: Dioceses Commission, 2008).

APPENDIX: CHANGES TO THE DEVON COUNTY BOUNDARY

Date	Change	Devon parishes/areas affected *Legal Instrument and maps (where available)* *[reference included, if not an Act of Parliament]*
1537	Devon to City & County of the City of Exeter	Parishes within Exeter city walls, St David and St Sidwell. Creation of a county corporate by charter, with boundaries clarified in subsequent Act. *Charter of Henry VIII, 23 August 1537; DHC ECA Charter 33; An Act concerning the Mayor, Bailiffs and Commonalty of the City of Exeter, touching the Limits and Liberties of the City 1548 (2 & 3 Edward VI, c. 10).*
1550	Devon to City & County of the City of Exeter	Exe Island. *Charter of Edward VI, 22 December 1550; DHC ECA Charter 36.*
1787	County of the City of Exeter to Devon	Devon Gaol repaired and extended. *An Act for making and declaring the Gaol of the County of Devon, called the High Gaol, a public and common Gaol, etc. 1787 (27 Geo 3. c. 59).*
1810	County of the City of Exeter to Devon	New Devon County Gaol (built in St David parish). *An Act to explain and amend an Act of the 27th year of His present Majesty, etc. 1810 (50 Geo. 3 c. 85); Map – TNA OS 27/1196.*
20 Oct 1844	Cornwall to Devon	A small pt of St Stephen by Saltash parish, on the eastern side of the River Tamar, either in Devon or Cornwall; North Petherwin Parish; pt of Werrington Parish, west of the Tamar, Cornwall or Devon; pt of the hamlet of Northcote, West of the Tamar, Cornwall or Devon; pt of Bridgerule Parish, west of the Tamar. *Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844 (7 & 8 Vict. c.61).*
	Devon to Cornwall	Pt of North Tamerton parish, east of the Tamar, either in Devon or Cornwall; pt of the Parish of St John; pt of Maker Parish in the Tithing of Vaultersholme. *Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844 (7 & 8 Vict. c.61).*
	Dorset to Devon	Stockland parish, Dalwood township. *Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844 (7 & 8 Vict. c.61).*
	Devon to Dorset	Thorncombe, pt of Axminster, namely Burhall Downs and Easthay. *Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844 (7 & 8 Vict. c.61).*
1868	Extends boundaries from high- to low-water mark	Coastal parishes. *Poor Law Amendment Act 1868 (31 & 32 Vict. c. 122) s. 27.*

31 Oct 1877	Devon to County of the City of Exeter	Parish of St Leonard with the exception of Topsham Artillery Barracks and Judges Lodgings (Larkbear). *City of Exeter Extension Act 1877 (40 & 41 Vict. c. cxli); Map – TNA OS 27/1197.*
24 Mar 1884	Dorset to Devon	Membury gains detached pt (Crawley) of Chardstock. *Local Government Board Order (LGBO) 15947 Order; TNA OS 24/99.*
1 Apr 1889	Devon to Devonport CB	Municipal borough of Devonport to Devonport County Borough. *Local Government Act 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. c. 41) s. 31, Third Schedule.*
	Devon to Plymouth CB	Municipal borough of Plymouth to Plymouth County Borough. *Local Government Act 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. c. 41) s. 31, Third Schedule.*
	No change	Municipal borough of Exeter to Exeter County Borough, Exeter remains a City and County of a City. *Local Government Act 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. c. 41) s. 31, Third Schedule.*
30 Sep 1896	Dorset to Devon	Dorset parishes of Chardstock and Hawkchurch. *County of Devon (Chardstock and Hawkchurch) Order 1896, and the County of Somerset (Churchstanton) Order 1896, confirmed by the Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 3) Act 1896 (59 & 60 Vict c lxxv).*
	Devon to Somerset	Parish of Churchstanton. *County of Devon (Chardstock and Hawkchurch) Order 1896, and the County of Somerset (Churchstanton) Order 1896, confirmed by the Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 3) Act 1896 (59 & 60 Vict c lxxv).*
9 Nov 1896	Devon to Plymouth CB	Pts of Compton Gifford, Pennycross, Egg Buckland and Laira Green. *Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 15) Act 1896 (59 & 60 Vict. c. ccxxxvii); Map – TNA HLG 6/701.*
9 Nov 1897	Devon to Plymouth CB	Pt of Plymstock. *Plymouth Corporation Act 1897 (60 & 61 Vict. c. l); Map – PWDRO 3020/33, TNA OS 38/353.*
9 Nov 1898	Devon to Devonport CB	Pts of St Budeaux, and Weston Peverell or Pennycross. *Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 10) Act 1898 (61 & 62 Vict. c. ccxi); Map – TNA HLG 6/1121.*

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1 Apr 1899	Devon to Plymouth CB	Pt of St Budeaux. *Plymouth Corporation Act, 1898 (61 & 62 Vict. c. cxxxix); Map- TNA OS 31/210 .*
9 Nov 1900	Devon to Exeter CB	Pt of St Thomas the Apostle. *Exeter Corporation Act 1900 (63 & 64 Vict. c. ccxxxii); Map – TNA OS 31/222.*
	Devon to Devonport CB	Pt of Weston Peverell. *Devonport Corporation Act 1900 (63 & 64 Vict. c. cclxii); Map – TNA HLG 6/1121.*
9 Nov 1913	Devon to Exeter CB	Pts of Topsham & Heavitree. *Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 11) Act 1913 (3 & 4 Geo. V. c. cxxxv); Maps – TNA HLG 23/185.*
9 Nov 1914	Devon, Devonport CB to Plymouth CB	Devonport CB, East Stonehouse UD. *Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 18) Act 1914 (4 & 5 Geo. V. c. clxxxiii); Map – TNA OS 38/810.*
1 Oct 1937	Devon to Exeter CB	Pt of Alphington. *County of Devon and County Borough of Exeter (Alteration of Boundaries) Order 1937; Map & Order – DHC QS/DP/874.*
1 Apr 1939	Devon to Plymouth CB	Compton Gifford, pts of Egg Buckland, Plymstock, St. Budeaux, Tamerton Foliot. *Plymouth Extension Act 1938 (1 & 2 Geo. VI c. xli); Map – DHC QS/DP/886.*
1 Apr 1940	Devon to Exeter CB	Pts of Alphington, Brampford Speke, Exminster, Pinhoe, Sowton, Stoke Canon, Topsham, Upton Pyne & Whitestone. *Exeter Extension Act 1939 (2 & 3 Geo. VI c. xv); Map – DHC QS/DP/890.*
1 Apr 1951	Devon to Plymouth CB	St Budeaux and pts of Bickleigh, Tamerton Foliot. *Plymouth Extension Act 14 & 15 Geo. VI c. lxi; Map – DHC QS/DP/901.*
1 Apr 1963	Exeter CB to Devon	Devon County Buildings Area. *Devon and Exeter Order 1963 SI (1963) No. 687; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Map – TNA OS 38/2261.*
	Devon to Exeter CB	Pt of Larkbear and Devon County Prison and Constabulary Barracks. *Devon and Exeter Order 1963 SI (1963) No. 687; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Map – TNA OS 38/2261.*

1 Apr 1966	Devon to Cornwall	North Petherwin, pt Werrington, pt Northcott, pt St Giles in the Heath (River Tamar becomes county boundary). *Cornwall and Devon (Broadwoodwidger) Order 1965, SI 1965 no. 2087; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Map – DHC QS/DP/940.*
	Devon to Exeter CB	Pts of Alphington, Exminster, Huxham, Pinhoe, Poltimore, Sowton and Topsham. *Exeter Extension Order 1966. SI (1966) No. 135; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Map – DHC QS/DP/941.*
	Exeter CB to Devon	Broad Clyst, Huxham, Poltimore, Sowton, and Stoke Canon. *Exeter Extension Order 1966. SI (1966) No. 135; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Map – DHC QS/DP/941.*
	Cornwall to Devon AND Devon to Cornwall	River Tamar to be county boundary between lines marked on a map in kilometre squares a) SS2716 and SS2910; b) SS2808 and SS2703; c) SS2701 and SX3098; d) SX3197 and SX4361 & SZ4461. *South Western Counties Order 1965, SI (1965) No. 2086; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Maps – DHC QS/DP/939.*
	Dorset to Devon	Pts of Wootton Fitzpaine (Dorset) to Axminster. *South Western Counties Order 1965, SI (1965) No. 2086; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Maps – DHC QS/DP/939.*
	Devon to Dorset	Pts of Hawkchurch to Thorncombe, Marshwood, Whitchurch Canonicorum, Wootton Fitzpaine. *South Western Counties Order 1965, SI (1965) No. 2086; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Maps – DHC QS/DP/939.*
	Somerset to Devon	Pt of Brushford (Somerset) to East Ansty Pt of Churchstanton (Somerset) to Upottery. *South Western Counties Order 1965, SI (1965) No. 2086; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Maps – DHC QS/DP/939.*
	Devon to Somerset	Pts of Chardstock to Chard, Wambrook; Pt of Upottery to Churchstanton; Pts of East Anstey to Brushford & Dulverton; Pt of Clayhidon to West Buckland; Pt of Hemyock to Wellington Without; Pt of Holcombe Rogus to Thorne St Margaret. *South Western Counties Order 1965, SI (1965) No. 2086; Order – DHC Statutory Instruments; Maps – DHC QS/DP/939.*

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1 Apr 1967	Devon to Plymouth CB	Pts of Plympton St Maurice, Brixton, Plympton St Mary & Plymstock. *Plymouth Order 1966, SI (1966) No. 1583; Map and Order – DHC QS/DP/949.*
1 Apr 1968	Devon to Torbay CB	Creation of Torbay County Borough: parts of Paignton, Torquay, Brixham, Churston Ferrers, Coffinswell, Kerswells & Marldon. *Torbay Order 1967, SI (1967) No. 136; Map and Order – DHC QS/DP/948.*
1 Apr 1971	Harbour area to Torbay CB	Tor Bay harbour. *Tor Bay Harbour Act 1970 c. liii; Map – OS 38/2537.*
1 Apr 1974	Exeter CB, Plymouth CB & Torbay CB to Devon	Creation of non-metropolitan county of Devon and abolition of county boroughs. *Local Government Act 1972 c. 70.*
1 Apr 1977	Cornwall to Devon	Pt of Whitstone transferred to Pyworthy. *The Cornwall and Devon (Areas) Order 1977, SI (1977) No. 299; Order and Map – DHC Statutory Instruments.*
1 Apr 1998	Devon to Plymouth	Creation of county of Plymouth. *SI 1996 No. 1865: The Devon (City of Plymouth and Borough of Torbay) (Structural Change) Order. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/1865/made/data.pdf. Accessed 14 September 2015.*
	Devon to Torbay	Creation of county of Torbay. *SI 1996 No. 1865: The Devon (City of Plymouth and Borough of Torbay) (Structural Change) Order. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/1865/made/data.pdf. Accessed 14 September 2015.*

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'Honiton has swallowed all': the Escot (East Devon) estate and the Yonge family

PHILIPPE PLANEL

The illustrated journals of the Reverend Swete record many aspects of the Devon landscape. It is not often, however, in his *Travels in Georgian Devon*, that he witnessed an event that would be a harbinger of change in a part of that landscape. In December 1794 Swete approached Escot House in the Tale Valley and, having described the advantageous position of the house, remarked that:

> On the lawn between the house and the Water, two Marquees were placed, which were productive of festive ideas, ill associated to those which arose from a knowledge that the grounds and seat, were on the eve of passing-away from the family. The whole demesne, which had been possess'd by the Yonge's about 114 years: (for the spot was purchased and the House erected by Grandfather of the present Baronet in the year 1680) had been for some months advertised in the papers; and the sale was due to take place in a week or two.[1]

Swete was witnessing the sale of Escot and the transfer of the property from the Yonges to the Kennaway family. The latter would make great changes at Escot, including the complete rebuilding of the house after a disastrous fire. A rare management survey of the core parts of the estate in the mid-eighteenth century complements what Swete fleetingly observed and helps

[1] T. Gray & M. Rowe (eds.), *Travels in Georgian Devon: The Illustrated Journals of the Revd. John Swete 1789–1800,* 4 vols. (Tiverton: Devon Books, 1997–2000), ii (1998), 95.

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explain why the sale he was witnessing took place. This survey forms the core of the present article.

Swete picked up a dissonance regarding the estate. He took an instant dislike to a pond near the house which 'being of an oval figure, and of no very considerable extent, detracted in a most glaring manner from the beauty', and records that the pond was but a shadow of its earlier existence; the present marsh had once 'assumed the face of a lake – that it was of considerable extent and beauty, and that a Yatch [*sic*] had been kept on it.' On leaving Escot, he proceeds down the Tale Valley and makes a terse comment on the environs: 'Nothing could more strikingly evince the Situation of the Lord of these grounds than their appearance at this spot – the road composed of the roughest materials (and the pastures overspread with rushes and flags)'.[2] Rather a damning comment on the management of the estate.

Sir George Yonge's finances were indeed not in order at this time, despite, or it seems because of, his long career in parliament and government. The editor of Sir Walter Yonge's diaries says of Sir George that:

> He had fallen under a cloud due to some defalcation at the Cape of Good Hope. When possessed of nothing he has been heard to say, that he began life with £80,000 of family property, received a like sum from his lady and has been paid by the government for his services £80,000. 'Honiton' he exclaimed 'has swallowed all'.[3]

Sir George was MP for Honiton between 1754 and 1796; an expensive business as Honiton was a 'potwalloper constituency' in which all male householders not in receipt of alms and with a hearth large enough for a cauldron could vote. Some of his constituents did not feel they were amply rewarded for their trouble and on one visit to Honiton Sir George's wig was set on fire with a candle. Sir George was also spending large sums on the estate and is widely believed to have engaged Capability Brown in the 1760s. The two lakes were the result and the *Exeter Flying Post* in 1775 reports on the quantity of exotic plants at Escot.[4] Spending was not confined to Escot. Together with fellow MP Sir John Duntze he invested in a serge mill at Ottery in 1789, of which the present 'tumbling weir' is a survival. The partnership in the Ottery Mill

[2] *Ibid*., 95.

[3] George Roberts (ed), *Diary of Walter Yonge, esq., justice of the peace, and M.P. for Honiton, written at Colyton and Axminster, co. Devon, from 1604–1628* (London: Camden Society, 1848), 1.

[4] L. Channon & Ottery St Mary Heritage Society, *Escot: The Fall and Rise of a Country Estate* (Ottery St Mary: author, 2012), 19-24.

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Company was dissolved in 1792,[5] but legal actions on unfinished buildings were still rumbling on in 1795, the year after Escot was sold.[6]

The 1763 estate survey emanates from this period of spending and debt, and although the title page is dated 1794 (*A Survey of the several Lordships and Manors with the right of patronage, Rectories, Advowsons and Tythes Impropriate belonging to Richard Kennaway Esq. in the county of Devon*), written in above the title in an informal hand is the following.

> This copy was taken from an old survey made in 1763 – in the possession of George Younge – but it refers only to Escot Barton – Clappentale – Gosford Mow and the manor of Ottery Mohun – Sept. 3 1794. J. Kennaway.

The land at Escot and adjoining Clappentale was farmed, 'in hand' by the Yonges. The purpose of the survey was improvement – as we further read: '*Remarks for Improvement and future management of the land*'. To what extent the survey is connected with the work contracted to Capability Brown at around this time is unclear, but study of the earliest detailed map of the estate[7] reveals that land was taken out of cultivation to create a larger park, though changes in names of fields, orchards and woods between 1763 and 1826 makes exact comparison difficult. In 1826, a wood named Eight Acre Coppice is four acres in extent!

Although the tabulated columns of the copy of the 1763 survey are similar in organisation to those of the later tithe map apportionments, noting tenant, plot name, acreage, etc., the major difference is the inclusion of a short paragraph describing each plot in terms of its present state and possible improvements. We do not know who carried out this survey, but the remarks would certainly indicate it was someone with considerable experience in agriculture and estate management. Neither do we know to what extent the improvements were actually implemented, though we can examine the later O.S. mapped evidence to see what subsequent changes took place.

Some field names in 1763 are evidence of even earlier change, suggesting enclosure from common or moor, and there is perhaps a hint in the survey that, even when land has been taken in, it is not good land. The size of the fields and their rectilinear shape, where they can be identified, also suggests enclosure. A case in point is the 12 acre Hall Moor in Claperntale Tenement:

[5] *The London Gazette*, 13 October 1792, 790.
[6] H. Blackstone, F.W. Meymott & A.M. Bremner, *Reports of cases argued and determined in the Courts of Common Pleas and Exchequer Chamber ... [1788-1796]*, 5th ed. (London: R. Pheney, 1837), 389-391.
[7] DHC 961M add/ E2.

> Part wheat and part fallow the whole to be continued in fallow tillage one more crop and lye down with trefoil etc. for pasture and more proper for pasture than tillage, a dressing of lime and soil when in grass would do well here.

Withy Moor at Higher House, tenanted by Jonah Pinant seems to be similar: 'Pasture but has been hard tilled and is poor proper to be drained and continued in pasture at present'. Is there a suggestion here, in the 'hard tilled', that the land has been inappropriately used to provide a quick return? In many cases the recommendation is for 'short tillage': for example, the 18 acre Morris Down (another name which hints at a pre-enclosure landscape) at Claperntale: 'Part barley part oat part grass proper to be made in summer fallow, marled on the fallow and sowed with turnips and would then be a good piece of land proper for short tillages, clover and trefoil'. A similar, and optimistic, outcome is suggested for Little Broom Park on the same farm: 'Pasture and proper for short tillages and lie sown with clover and trefoil for pasture if marled in its turn would do well'. Helpfully, the surveyor, imbued with the ideas of the eighteenth century agricultural revolution, explains just what he means by 'short tillage': a seven year rotation (but only short in relation to the tillage period); three years under the plough and four years pasture:

> N.B. What is here meant by short tillages, is to plough three years one of which to be a turnip fallow and the other two corn and lain down with grass seeds as are proper for the different lands for three or four years and come into tillage again in the same manner and every field to come its turn in a common course of husbandry – the meadows and some particular fields excepted.

Some names seem to have disappeared since 1763: Capels Heys (fields and house), Higher House, Upedown and Plimplands. They do not feature in 1826 or in the *c*.1840 tithe apportionment. There is often an assumption that the tithe map records a fossilised landscape but in East Devon, wherever there is a late eighteenth century map or survey with which to compare the tithe map, major changes have also occurred, although some elements are indeed fossilised.[8]

Regarding possible mismanagement and underspending on the estate, there is evidence of the neglect of buildings, which are often described in

[8] Woodbury and Northleigh – pers. comm. Gill Selley and Ron Woodcock.

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some detail in the survey. Chandler's tenement (Claperntale) to the South of the main house contains:

> A house of three bays and a workshop of one bay, a stable and barn of two bays, mostly brick building covered with thatch in reasonably good repair. There is an old part of a barn that ought to be taken down, as the timber might be of some use and the stable door and door case put up as they are now entirely down.

Plimplands cottage, divided into two dwellings (Fairmile – on the main Exeter road) is described as in 'bad repair'.

The River Tale, more of a large stream in fact, is clearly an asset in producing good meadow land and, once again, remedial work is required. The use of water, particularly in early spring, to get an early bite, seems to be implicitly recognised: 'Meadow under the advantage of a small wash of water from heavy rains and proper for pasture'. Similarly, the wash from areas where cattle were kept is also valued, as at Upedown: 'Meadow where the wash of yard may be turned over at pleasure'. It is an East Devon tradition that even the water from lanes was diverted into pasture for the animal manure it contained.[9]

We know from the work carried out by the Kennaways in the nineteenth century to water the meadows (brick lined channels, aqueduct, etc.,) how important and productive good meadow management was.[10] It is more likely in the eighteenth century that the meadows were of the catchwork rather than bedwork variety. But both varieties needed maintaining and, here again, there are indications that basic work was not being undertaken: at Clapperntale for example:

> Upper Meadow. Meadow and proper to be drained and the river cleared and continued a meadow. … Middle Meadow. Meadow but at present pastured but proper for meadow only if drained and the river cleared for which there is great conveniency … Lower Meadow. Meadow proper to be continued in meadow and ought to be well drained.

Regarding the subsequent loss of fields to create an extensive park, good land does seem to have been withdrawn from cultivation. West Park comprised 14 acres in 1763 and was:

[9] pers. comm. David Seward.

[10] Tale Valley Trust. *Tale Valley Water Meadow Management Plan* and *Volunteer Training Manual*. Unpublished undated report, kindly loaned by John-Michael Kennaway.

> proper to be dressed with lime and soyle and to be continued in pasture or to be marked and sowed with two crops of corn and all laid down all as level as possible and sowed with grass seed and lye for pasture.

On the 1826 map (p.10) West Park field is only three acres in extent and appears to have lost part of its former self to the 100 acres of the North Park by 1826. West Park orchard was still there in 1826 (p.11) and continued in use in 1888 and 1905 (OS 1st and 2nd Series maps). It was described in 1763 as being 'well planted with fruit trees'. If these trees were already mature trees in 1763 it is likely that the orchard would have needed replanting by 1905. This is interesting because there has been some debate about whether an orchard can be replanted and continue in use in the same place, though Marshall is clear on the subject, albeit when referring to West Devon in 1805.

> In the planting of fruit trees, the orchardmen of West Devonshire excel. A stronger proof of this need not be produced, than the circumstance of their keeping the same ground in a state of orchard, in perpetuity. As the old trees go off, young ones are planted, in the interspaces, without apprehensions of miscarriage.[11]

The very small Chandler's Orchard seems to have impressed the surveyor in 1763 and was still there on the 1826 map: 'A fine young orchard full of fruit. If the grass in this orchard was cut and made in hay in the field adjoining as the orchard cannot be eat with cattle.' The trees were presumably still too small for grazing to take place. Lady's Orchard is described as 'an orchard of good fruit trees and a good piece of land. There is a good crop of fruit this year'. Interestingly, a small plot just to the north of the orchard, described as a 'nursery' and 'proper to be laid open to the orchard that adjoins and planted with fruit trees' is still separate in 1826 but is indeed part of Lady's Orchard in 1888, indicating that the survey's recommendation was sound but was not immediately implemented. There is still an orchard there today.

Woodland seems to have been no better managed than other resources on the estate. Two Moores, which by its name and nature seems to be fit only for forestry is described as:

> A piece of wood land part extremely wet and a bog. Here is a quantity of fine oak timber but little full grown. There is a necessity to cut down the withey

[11] W. Marshall, *Marshall's Rural economy of the west of England: a reprint of The rural economy of the west of England including Devonshire and parts of Somersetshire, Dorsetshire and Cornwall* (New York: Kelley, 1970), i, 218.

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> and other wood which is grown so high that it draws up some other oak and ash plants too fast. There is also some tops of trees fallen which ought to be got out part for use and remainder for fire wood.

Kennel Coppice is the only directly comparable coppice:

> A coppice of young timber proper to stand. There is not much underwood or pasturage here of value. This piece of land might be drained so as to be a wilderness and added to the stew pond garden if that is to be a pleasure garden provided the present road was turned.

Kennel Coppice was still there in 1826 but had disappeared by 1888.

Brick Meadow described in 1763 survives as a name in 1826, but there is no sign of the three acre 'brick fields', described in 1763 as: 'A brick yard at present but ought to be cleared and would be some pasture beside the brick yard.' The older houses on the estate, such as the listed Hawthorn Cottage and Clapperntale Farm, are built from a different brick than the more regular and standard brick used in the nineteenth century hydraulic work on the estate. The question arises as to why the brickyard went out of use? It is possible that the nearby clay resources were exhausted but this is unlikely. More likely is the fact that little or no building was taking place on the estate in the mid-eighteenth century; yet another indication of under-investment.

Parallel to this story of under-investment at Escot is the story of the creation of the extensive emparking and landscaping; featuring lakes, strategically planted copses, stands of trees and gardens. It is widely believed that Capability Brown was hired for this work and John Locke may even also have been an influence. Be this as it may, and the evidence is circumstantial,[12] someone carried out such work and there is no doubt that Sir George Yonge commissioned it. Where did he find the money? Why hadn't he spent the money he didn't have on the productive parts of the estate: the woods, fields and meadows, or indeed the houses and barns?

Philippe Planel is a notable author on many aspects of history and archaeology for educational purposes, and has managed projects for the East Devon AONB and the Devon Heritage Centre.

[12] N. Agg-Manning & J. Phibbs, *Escot Park: A Survey and Restoration Plan for the landscape* (Unpublished report, 1993). Kindly loaned by John-Michael Kennaway.

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The Life and Tragic Death of Simon Levy, a Silversmith from Georgian Exeter

IAN VARNDELL

Introduction

Two silversmiths are known to have been buried in the Protestant Dissenters' graveyard in Magdalen Street, Exeter.[1] One of them was Richard Sams (died 1816, aged 52) who was mentioned as a 'silversmith and jeweller … of Fore-Street-Hill'. He succeeded his father as Assay Master by election on 23 December 1789 and remained in that post until his death.[2] The other was James Berry, who died in 1828. The Exeter Militia List of 1803 recorded a James Berry, aged 'between 17 and 30' unmarried with no children, living in St Mary Steps parish, describing him as a labourer 'willing to serve'.[3] James married Ann Ganacliff at St Mary Major Exeter on 8 June 1806 and they had several children.[4] No evidence that James Berry completed a formal apprenticeship as a silversmith has come to light, and he did not enter a

[1] Exeter Dissenters' Graveyard Trust. The graveyard opened in 1748 and closed in 1854. A recent booklet, *Exeter Dissenters' Graveyard: A brief history of a Georgian burial ground 1748–2018* is available from the Trust's website, www.edgt.org.uk/.

[2] M. Harrison, *Exeter and West Country Silver 1700–1900*. (Hastings: Berforts Group, 2014), 145-46.

[3] W.G. Hoskins, *Exeter Militia List, 1803* (London and Chichester: Phillimore [for the Devon and Cornwall Record Society], 1972), 51.

[4] Parish Baptisms, Exeter St Mary Major and Exeter St Thomas. Accessed at www.findmypast.co.uk. RG4 Piece 1085 Exeter Georges Meeting (Presbyterian) 1824–1837. Accessed at www.ancestry.co.uk 9 November 2018.

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maker's mark in the assay books of the Exeter Goldsmith's Company. The Berry family moved from Preston Street in Exeter's West Quarter to Cowick Street in St Thomas parish at some time between 1818 and 1820. James's death was reported in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* on Saturday 30 August 1828, 'On the 21st inst. after a lingering illness, aged 44, James Berry, many years in the employ of Mr Simon Levy, working silversmith, of St. Thomas'.[5]

The Levy Family

Simon Levy's father, Emmanuel, was a contemporary of Richard Sams and was a well-regarded silversmith and goldsmith whose work was first mentioned in the Assay Book on 30 December 1803,[6] prior to which, in 1796, he had been listed as a pawnbroker in Friernhay Lane, Exeter.[7] He seems to have been a busy broker as in 1800 his unredeemed pledges, together with those of a Mrs R. Bowditch, were the subject of a two-day auction in Taunton. The notice for the sale described 'gold, silver and metal watches … silver tankards … tea-pots … spoons … a large assortment of jewellery and plated goods … N.B. The greatest part of the above goods are new and fashionable'.[8] A year later, in 1801, he was described as a silversmith and pawnbroker.[9] In 1806 Emmanuel's house and shop was located 'at the bottom of Fore-Street-Hill', close to Richard Sams, so they would have been well known to each other.[10] Emmanuel Levy was a member of the Exeter Hebrew Congregation and was named on the reissued lease of January 1803 for the Jews' Burial Ground, which is situated close to the Dissenters' graveyard on Magdalen Street.[11] It seems that Emmanuel was a prominent figure in the Jewish community as he served as administrator for the businesses of at least two deceased Jewish silversmiths; Isaac Wolfe of Barnstaple,[12] and Samuel Jonas, of Exeter.[13] A notice appeared in the *Exeter Flying Post* on 27 October 1803 advertising the sale by auction of Jonas's dwelling house in Cowick Street and his stock-

5 *EPG*, 30 August 1828. James predeceased his parents, John and Elizabeth, who were both buried in the Dissenters' graveyard.
6 DHC ECA AS/1-2.
7 *Exeter Pocket Journal*, 1796.
8 *Sherborne Mercury*, 3 November 1800.
9 *Exeter Pocket Journal*, 1801.
10 *EFP*, 23 October 1806.
11 www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Community/exe/history/groundshistory.htm. The author has seen photocopies of the original leases, courtesy of Frank Gent.
12 *EFP*, 26 May 1808. Wolfe was a retailer rather than a working silversmith, and was described as a pedlar in his will (DHC IR26/338).
13 *EFP*, 29 September 1803.

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in-trade.[14] As Emmanuel Levy's business moved to Cowick Street at some point after 1816 it is tempting to speculate that he bought the assets of Samuel Jonas and eventually relocated to his premises in St Thomas, but this has not been proven.[15]

Emmanuel's will of 1818 named three spinster daughters, one married daughter with a grandchild, and two sons – Jonas who was born at the turn of the eighteenth century, and Simon, a silversmith who, with Emmanuel's wife Elizabeth, were appointed as his executors. The will directed Elizabeth and Simon to continue the business and provided for both of them in the event that they were in dispute or the business ceased.[16] The last mention of Emmanuel's mark in the Assay Book was 12 June 1818, nine days after his death. He was buried in the Jews' Burial Ground at Exeter.[17] Interestingly, analysis of the Exeter Assay Office records shows that the percentage of dutiable silver assayed in the name of Levy declined after the death of Emmanuel (see Figure 1).

The first mention of Simon's assay mark was on 4 July 1818.[18] Simon appears to have retained the 'E. Levy' name as the business was so listed in Cowick Street, St Thomas, in 1822[19] and again in 1827.[20] Simon Levy was a productive silversmith with many items of flatware and other pieces (including tea and coffee pots, jugs, basons/bowls and feeders) assayed at Exeter between 1818 and 1832. Items bearing his mark are frequently offered for sale today on online auction sites and by specialist retailers.[21]

Financial troubles set in early on during Simon's management as in 1823 a notice appeared in the *Exeter Flying Post* headed, 'Office of the Court for

[14] *EFP*, 27 October 1803.

[15] It is interesting to note that no silver items were assayed in Emmanuel Levy's name from 30 November 1811 until 15 March 1816, and yet over 25% of the dutiable silver marked at Exeter throughout 1817 and until his death in June 1818 was attributed to his mark (DHC ECA AS/1-2).

[16] DHC 1078/IRW/L/492.

[17] DHC pB/EXE 6.14.61 DIS, *Discovering the Jews' Burial Ground at Exeter* (Exeter: Exeter Hebrew Congregation, 1998).

[18] DHC ECA AS/1-2.

[19] *Pigot's Directory of Exeter, 1822–23.*

[20] *Exeter Pocket Journal, 1827.*

[21] Examples of domestic silver made by both Emmanuel and Simon Levy are held in the collection of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter; see Royal Albert Memorial Museum's *Exeter and West Country Silver* (Exeter: Exeter Museum, 1978) 48 & 53. An exquisite pair of silver rimmonim attributed to Simon Levy and assayed in Exeter in 1823 was gifted to the Exeter Synagogue by seventeen women of the Jewish community, two of whom were Simon's sisters Esther and Sarah. See also, *The Jews of Devon and Cornwall. Essays and Exhibition Catalogue* (The Hidden Legacy Foundation, 2000). (DHC 296/WES/JEW).

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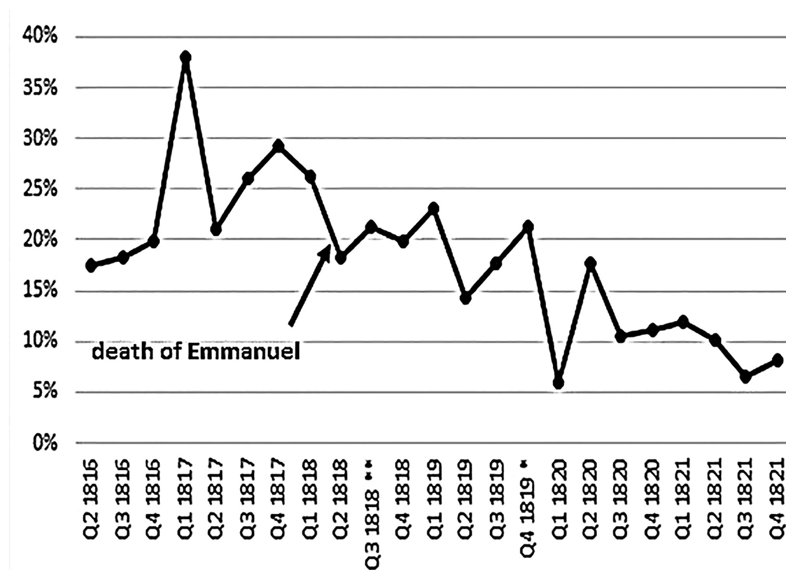

Figure 1. The percentage of dutiable silver attributable to Emmanuel and Simon Levy in the period 1816–21. N.B. *Calculated from partial data. **Simon Levy's mark appeared for the first time.

Relief of Insolvent Debtors', naming 'Simon Levy heretofore of the city of Exeter, and late of Saint Thomas … silversmith and jeweller' which seems to indicate that Levy was then resident in the city, across the River Exe from St Thomas.[22] Presumably, his petition to be discharged must have been successful as Levy continued in business after 1823. Clearly, he had at least one experienced silversmith working with him, but the death of James Berry in 1828 must have affected Levy's ability to produce silver wares.

In February 1830 advertisements appeared in local newspapers announcing that Simon Levy 'being about to decline the business which has been carried on for thirty years' was to sell a complete set of silversmiths tools. 'The (tools) are fitted up with work-boards, skins, &c. in commodious workshops, with melting furnaces, forges, and every other convenience for carrying on an extensive business'.[23] The notice continued

> The purchaser may be accommodated with a commodious DWELLING-HOUSE, situated in a respectable neighbourhood to which the work-shops are connected, with garden, stable out-houses, &c. rent and taxes not exceeding £33. per annum … seventeen years of which are unexpired.

[22] *EFP*, 15 May 1823. Notice placed by Graham and Galsworthy, Solicitors of Exeter.
[23] *EPG*, 13 February 1830; *EFP*, 18 February 1830.

Figure 2. Simon Levy's maker's mark (dated 1819) on a berry spoon from the author's collection.

Three months later another advertisement appeared announcing an auction to be held on 7 June 1830 for the sale of a dwelling house (151 Fore Street, Exeter) and a shop with good facilities (152 Fore Street), plus five tenements in Friernhay Street, Exeter, two of which were occupied by a tenant.[24] Simon Levy's final entry in the Assay Book was on 12 November 1832 and on 28 December 1832 a Fiat of Bankruptcy against him was published.[25] He was declared bankrupt in February 1833. With the exception of entries in the Synagogue's account books,[26] and a notice in January 1834 announcing the sale by auction of a four-storey, 5-bedroomed 'DWELLING HOUSE, which has lately undergone a substantial repair … in Cowick Street … lately in the possession of Mr. Simon Levy',[27] he largely disappeared from the public record.[28]

[24] *EPG*, 29 May 1830.
[25] *The London Gazette*, 28 December 1832. No.19008, page 2847.
[26] DHC MFC/52 fiches 3, 8, 9 and 10 (1818–1839).
[27] *EPG*, 11 January 1834.
[28] H. Fry, *The Jews of Exeter: an illustrated history* (Wellington: Halsgrove, 2013), 38. Dr Fry reported that Simon Levy witnessed the wedding of Solomon Zamoiski and Priscilla Aaron on 22 June 1845. Aaron's father Samuel was a jeweller in Exeter High Street, so they would have known each other from business and from the synagogue.

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A.E. Abraham, Optician

Elsewhere in Exeter in 1828 another member of the Hebrew congregation, Abraham Elisha Abraham, was trading from 264 High Street as an optician and purveyor of 'Optical and Mathematical Instruments'. An advertisement in that year included the statement, 'A. E. A. takes this opportunity of publicly stating, that he has no connection with any Person whatever in his line of business'.[29] Abraham clearly employed people, because in 1833, a 19-year old Cornishman named Robert Rennells who, it was reported worked for Mr Abraham, was found dead in his rooms.[30] In June 1834 his business was located at 255 High Street (Figure 3) but later that year he was declared bankrupt.[31] However, like Simon Levy, Abraham seems to have continued in business as further advertisements appeared in local newspapers. By 1837, A. E. Abraham had relocated twice more to 4 High Street, Exeter.[32] His notice in the *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* intriguingly stated, 'A. E. A. begs to acquaint his friends, that he has no one travelling but himself that has any connexion with his house'.[33] The inference from this statement is that someone was operating as a travelling optician or optical instrument salesman using the name of 'Abraham' with a link to Exeter.

One of the major optical instrument companies operating in the U.K. in the mid-1800s was Abraham Abraham and Company of Liverpool. Abraham Abraham had been born in Exeter *c*.1799 before the family moved to Bath in 1800.[34] Whether Abraham Abraham and Abraham Elisha Abraham were related has not been established as yet. Both men made infrequent financial donations to the Exeter Synagogue.[35]

A. E. Abraham married in Exeter in 1824[36] and although his wife, Sarah, was recorded in the 1841 Census living in Castle Street, in Exeter, he was not.[37] A notice in *The London Gazette* of 29 February 1840 informed that A. E. Abraham, late of 40 Paris Street and of the High Street, was an insolvent

[29] *EPG*, 31 May 1828.
[30] *EFP*, 26 September 1833.
[31] *WT*, 6 December 1834. A.E. Abraham was declared bankrupt again in 1840.
[32] *Besley's Exeter Directory, for 1835*. In 1836 AEA opened a business in High Street, Cheltenham, but it is not known how long this enterprise lasted.
[33] *EPG*, 9 September 1837.
[34] See http://microscopist.net/AbrahamA.html for more details.
[35] DHC MFC/52 fiches 3, 8, 9 and 10 (1818–1839).
[36] *EFP*, 18 March 1824.
[37] 1841 England Census Devon>St Lawrence>District 4. Accessed at www.ancestry.co.uk on 22 November 2018. The Census was enumerated on 6 June 1841.

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Figure 3. A.E. Abraham's shop at 255 High Street in *c*.1834, from T. Shapter, *History of the Cholera in Exeter in 1832* (London: John Churchill, 1849), 251.

debtor in gaol in Exeter. Later in the same publication he was summoned to appear at the Court House on 30 March 1840.[38]

By June 1846 A. E. Abraham's health had declined to the point that he had to relinquish his business. His stock included optical, mathematical and philosophical instruments as well as 'spectacles, variously mounted, and adapted to every sight … eye-glasses of every description … and telescopes, microscopes and landscape glasses'.[39] He died in 1848.[40]

A murder is announced

A column-length article appeared in the 17 January 1846 issue of the *Western Times* headed 'Appalling Murder'. It recounted an incident that took place in the early hours of 9 January in St Helier, Jersey in which Thomas Nicolle, a hatter, shot and killed one man and injured a woman by discharging his

[38] *The London Gazette*, 3 March 1840, No. 19832, p. 546, and 6 March 1840, No. 19833, p. 583.
[39] *EPG*, 27 June 1846.
[40] www.findmypast.co.uk Accessed 28 November 2018.

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musket through the shutters of Seward's Café in the Square, following an apparently drunken row with the café owner.[41] The victim was identified as 'Simon Levi, well known as Mr. Abrahams, the travelling optician, from Exeter' who died at the scene. It was said that he was in the café playing cards with the landlord and four others whilst waiting for a steamboat.[42] An inquest commenced at 1 p.m. on the day of the killing and depositions were taken from several witnesses. The Coroner and Attorney-General insisted that a *post-mortem* examination be carried out and the inquest was adjourned until the following day. Three doctors conducted the autopsy and reported that three small bullets (buckshot) had entered the victim's body and one had lodged near his heart occasioning his death. A verdict of 'Wilful Murder' was reached and Nicolle was removed to gaol to await his trial.

The murder was widely reported in newspapers across the UK in late January and early February 1846, but little information about the victim was forthcoming. The initial report published on the day after the murder stated

> *[Levy] allant sous le nom d'Abraham, d'après celui de son beau-frère, lié d'affaires avec lui, sous la raison "Abraham et Cie". Il était domicilié au Salon,* âgé *de près de 60 ans, et né à Lyme-Regis, dans le comté de Dorset.*[43]

Later, the English newspapers reported Levy to have been 'well known for some years, throughout the counties of Cornwall & Devon',[44] 'known for many years in the Channel Islands which he visited occasionally',[45] 'he (Samuel Levi [*sic*]) having assumed the name of Abraham, from a firm with which he was connected in Liverpool', and 'the unfortunate deceased … possessed an exceedingly inoffensive disposition'.[46] Finally, 'he was consigned to the dust on Sunday morning, the whole body of Jews resident in Jersey attending him to the tomb'.[47] His resting-place was Westmount Cemetery, St Helier.

The identity of Thomas Nicolle's victim

Could Simon Levy, one of the most celebrated silversmiths of Georgian Exeter, have been the innocent victim of a scattergun attack in Jersey? No

41 *WT*, 17 January 1846.
42 *WT*, 28 February 1846.
43 *Chronique de Jersey*, 10 January 1846. Whilst it is possible that Levy was born in Lyme Regis, there is no evidence that he lived there.
44 *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 23 January 1846.
45 *Kentish Independent*, 17 January 1846.
46 *Illustrated London News*, 17 January 1846.
47 *Dublin Evening Mail*, 21 January 1846.

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records of a marriage[48] or death of Simon have been discovered in Exeter or in surrounding Devonshire towns to date. Simon's mother was named Elizabeth and she was buried in the Jews' burial ground in Exeter following her death on 28 September 1852, aged 91 years and 9 months, so she was born *c.* December 1760.[49] Her memorial stone is visible in the Jews' graveyard in Exeter and is inscribed, 'Wife of the late Emanuel Levy of this city'. The 1841 Census shows an Elizabeth Levy, aged 80 (and so born *c.*1760), of independent means, living in Bartholomew Street.[50] Listed with her was Simon/Simiond[51] Levy, 'Optician', aged 45, born in Devon. This is highly likely to have been her son Simon, as during a court case in 1831 (see footnote 48) Simon and his sister Charlotte were stated to be living at that time with their widowed mother in Exeter.

Could Simon have become an optician in the years following his bankruptcy? The link between the trades of silversmith and optician were close in the 1800s, so much so that a monthly trade journal, *The Watchmaker, Jeweller & Silversmith. Devoted to the Interests of Watchmakers, Jewellers, Silversmiths, Opticians and kindred Trades*, launched in June 1875, contained many advertisements for 'silver-framed spectacles' etc. There was also a family connection: Mr A. E. Abraham, optician, had married Simon's sister Sarah in 1824, so Simon Levy's brother-in-law was a purveyor of spectacles and optical instruments. There is no firm evidence that, '(Levy) assumed the name of Abraham, from a firm with which he was connected in Liverpool' as reported during the inquest,[52] rather it is more likely that his alias was gained from his own family connection. Strangely, however, A. E. Abraham was cited as the petitioning creditor of Simon Levy in 1832, forcing the latter's second bankruptcy.[53] It would seem that there was a degree of disharmony between Simon Levy and Abraham Elisha Abraham, even though they were related by marriage. The report of the 1831 court case involving Simon's sister

48 *Morning Advertiser*, 11 April 1832. Simon was not married in 1831. In the report of a court case involving his youngest sister Charlotte he wrote to her fiancé, '… I shall consider myself most fortunate should I meet with a partner so likely to promote my happiness as she [Charlotte] is yours'

49 https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Community/exe/tombstones/grave010.htm

50 1841 England Census Devon>St Mary Arches>District 14. Accessed at www.ancestry.co.uk on 7 November 2018. Their names did not appear in the decennial census of Jews in the south-west of England for 1841 published by Rabbi Bernard Susser in 1995 (DHC p929.3/WES/1841), but he wrote that entries, '[were] very indistinctly written in census returns', so it is likely he simply missed them when compiling his survey.

51 Although the name clearly begins with 'Sim', the ending could be 'eon' or 'iond'.

52 *Dorset County Chronicle*, 29 January 1846.

53 *Perry's Bankrupt Gazette*, 5 January 1833.

Charlotte mentions that Mr Abraham of Liverpool 'our friend' was known to both Charlotte Levy and to Grenville Jones, her suitor at the time, as was 'Mr. Abraham, of Bath'. Whether Levy's alias was intended to deceive clients, by passing off as a member of one of the Abraham optician families, is unknown. Another Abraham (Moses Abraham) was recorded as an optician living in Halkett Place, St Helier in the 1841 Census, but no links to the Abraham families of Exeter, Bath and Liverpool, or to Simon Levy have been established. Perhaps Levy was compelled to work for A. E. Abraham in some capacity in order to repay a debt and simply travelled using his creditor's name.

A decade later, and five years after the death of Simon Levy in Jersey, the 1851 Census recorded Elizabeth Levy, then aged 89, widow and annuitant residing at 31 Bartholomew Street, alone.[54] Her next-door neighbour was Sarah Abraham, widow and annuitant; possibly Elizabeth's daughter, the widow of A. E. Abraham (died 1848).

The evidence so far presented that the murder victim was Simon Levy, former silversmith of Exeter, is circumstantial, but is significantly strengthened

Figure 4. Gravestone of Simon Levy located in Westmount Cemetery, St Helier. The Hebrew inscription reads, 'Reb Simon the son of the Haver Reb Menachem [i.e. Emmanuel] of the Jewish community of Exeter'.

(Photograph © Anna Baghiani. Courtesy of CemeteryScribes.com).

[54] 1851 England Census Devon>Exeter All Hallows on the Wall>16. Accessed at www.ancestry.co.uk on 7 November 2018.

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by a fascinating article that appeared in the *Western Times* on 28 February 1846, headed 'The Jersey Murder, and Legal Extortion'.[55] The correspondent launched a tirade against the Jersey authorities for passing a bill for £13 12s 6d to the friends of the deceased for ordering an inquest into his death,

> But the most monstrous thing of all is a *post mortem* by three doctors at two pounds each. There could have been no pretence whatever for the *post mortem* examination. The man was sitting in good health in the midst of a company; the murderer fired a gun, and he was killed … and yet three doctors are called in to make a *post mortem* examination. A more rapacious transaction was never recorded.

Earlier in the piece, Simon Levy was described as a respectable member of the Hebrew community, carrying on business 'in this city' (Exeter) as an optician, and travelling in the course of his business.[56] It can be shown that Levy read Hebrew and was one of three members of the Exeter Synagogue who translated the Rules of the Jewish Congregation into English in 1823, and was listed in the Congregational Ledger in 1827, along with his mother, Jonas his brother and Esther, then the wife of Jacob Jacobs.[57] No other 'Simon Levy' was mentioned as being associated with the Exeter Hebrew Congregation, and the final relevant entry in the financial accounts of the Exeter Synagogue was on 19 October 1845 which read, 'from Mr Simon Levy his Bill for the year £10 5s 10d'.[58]

The *Western Times* article reported that, 'He was a man of very regular and sober habits … An aged mother, between eighty and ninety, had been maintained solely by him for the last twenty-five years'. As shown, in 1846 Elizabeth Levy was in her eighty-sixth year, and lived, at least in 1841, with Simon, who was born in Devon and was almost certainly her son. Her husband, Emmanuel, died in June 1818, some 27 years before the article was written, in accordance with the newspaper report.

The murder victim's body was identified by Simeon Jewell and Samuel

[55] *WT*, 28 February 1846. The proprietor of the Western Times in 1846 was Thomas Latimer, a strident critic of the 'chamber-cathedral establishment' and a passionate advocate for penal and parliamentary reform, the abolition of the death penalty and who wrote against all forms of injustice and oppression – see www.exetermemories.co.uk/em/_people/latimer.php.

[56] Whether this article was a deliberate attempt to counter anti-Semitic sentiment, widely found in British newspapers in the 1840s (see James Sack, 2008. The Nineteenth-Century Conservatives confront Anti-Semitism and Race – www.bu.edu/historic/conference08/jsack.pdf), by a liberal and campaigning editor cannot be proven.

[57] Fry, *The Jews of Exeter,* 23.

[58] DHC MFC 78/19.

Marks, both of whom appear to have been residents of Jersey, and Jewell was a well-known hotelier and businessman who was also buried in Westmount Cemetery, St Helier. It seems likely that they were associated with the local Hebrew community given that an article in the *Jersey and Guernsey News* on Thursday 20 May 1843 reported on the laying of the foundation stone for the New Synagogue in Upper Grove Place, St Helier,

> on the Tuesday before that date, at four o'clock in the afternoon; … the ceremony was performed by the … founder, and Mr. Marks, the President. A benediction was invoked by the Rev. Mr. Franklin, presumably the congregational *factotum*, after which the congregation repaired to their new place of worship for the evening service. Afterwards, the whole society met at Mrs. Jewell's, in Hope Street, where they spent the remainder of the evening with becoming hilarity.[59]

It is proposed here that Thomas Nicolle's victim was definitely Simon Levy the Exeter silversmith, but there is some variance in reports of his age which needs to be considered:

Source	Date	Given age	Calculated age at death	Ref.
Burial ground lease	January 1803	*c*. 12 years	55	11
Burial ground lease	Sept 1827	*c*. 36 years	55	11
Census	June 1841	45 years	50-55	37, 60
Susser, B.	Born 1791		55	61
Memorial stone	January 1846	59 years	59	62
Newspaper reports	Various		60/61	43-47

[59] Cecil Roth, (1950). The rise of provincial Jewry. The early communities – Section 4 – Jersey to Nottingham. Accessed at www.jewishgen.org 11 November 2018.
[60] G. Swinfield and E. Churchill, (2017) Guide Three: Census Records. Society of Genealogists, www.sog.org.uk/learn/help-getting-started-with-genealogy/guide-four/. Accessed 11 November 2018. Enumerators were instructed to 'round down' the ages of people over the age of 15 to a multiple of 5 (i.e. from 63 to 60; 49 to 45 etc).
[61] B. Susser, *The Jews of South-West England* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993), 228. Levy's birth year was probably calculated from the age stated on the burial ground deeds.
[62] The burial record for Westmount Cemetery, St Helier, Jersey, states his age as 59 without giving a date of birth (see Figure 4). This might suggest that the headstone simply reiterated the burial record without actual proof of the deceased's age. Source – www.jewishgen.org. Accessed 11 November 2018.

Although a birth date for Simon Levy has not been established it seems unlikely that he was as old as 61 (and thus would have been born in *c*.1785) as was reported in some newspapers following the inquest. In 1803 his family was living in Exeter and his name did not appear in the Militia List, though his father's did, suggesting that he was younger than 17 in 1803. As referenced previously, Simon's age was reported to be 'about twelve' when the burial ground lease was executed in 1803. Perhaps the age of the deceased was guessed at during the inquest – it would be somewhat surprising if Simon Levy had disclosed his age in the café shortly before his demise. The greatest potential disparity is his age as recorded in the 1841 Census. However, with the 'rounding down to the nearest fifth year' guideline applied, and which the enumerator appears to have followed, he could have been as old as 49 years and several months in 1841. He would then have attained the age of 55 years in 1846.

Monomania, mercury and the debonair Sovereign

Thomas Nicolle's trial commenced on 18 March 1846 in front of the Bailiff, Sir John de Veulle, and seven other judges. Nicolle's defence counsel, Mr Hammond, told the court that Nicolle was drunk, angry only with the landlord, had no intention to shoot Levy and was suffering from monomania so should not be found guilty of murder.[63] The jury of 13 jurats, by majority, disagreed and late in the evening of Friday 20 March Nicolle was sentenced to death by hanging.[64] One of the seven judges opined that 'it was high opinion that the punishment of death had not answered the purpose for which, in olden time, it had been instituted and that, in his opinion transportation for life was better calculated to punish a criminal'.[65] A second judge agreed, but the decision to hang prevailed. The prisoner was granted three weeks

[63] Monomania – a nineteenth century psychiatric term for one who has an exaggerated or obsessive enthusiasm for, or preoccupation with, one thing but is otherwise of sound mind. The term has an interesting usage with variable meaning in Victorian literature, see L. Stewart, (2018). *Monomania: The Life and Death of a Psychiatric Idea in Nineteenth-Century Fiction 1836–1860*. PhD thesis, The Open University. Perhaps Mr Hammond used the term to describe Nicolle's behaviour knowing that its clinical meaning was poorly defined and would not be properly understood by the jurats. 'Diminished responsibility' is a current legal equivalent.

[64] *WT*, 28 March 1846.

[65] *Morning Advertiser*, 27 March 1846. This lengthy article commenced, 'The most remarkable, and, indeed, the most significant demonstration against capital punishments that has ever taken place in this empire, was witnessed at the end of the trial of THOMAS NICOLLE, for murder, on Wednesday, at Jersey'.

to appeal and in early April 1846 his advocate, Mr Hammond, secured a conditional pardon from Queen Victoria, via Sir James Graham the British Home Secretary, 'on Condition that he be Transported beyond the Seas for and during the term of his Natural Life',[66] on the grounds that there had been a fight (provocation), that Nicolle had been in a state of unusual excitement and that there was a suggestion of 'mental alienation'.[67] Thomas Nicolle was transported to Maria Island, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), arriving on 17 February 1847.[68]

An article appeared in the *British Medical Journal* late in 2012 in which the author Theodore Dalrymple (a *nom-de-plume* of Anthony Malcolm Daniels; writer, retired prison doctor and psychiatrist) concluded that Nicolle was suffering from erethism caused by mercury poisoning.[69] Nicolle was a hatter and mercurous nitrate was routinely used in the process of curing felt. During the time he spent in Guernsey learning his trade he was reported by his landlady to have shown some bizarre behaviour, to the extent that he was known as 'Mad Nicolle'. Waldron (1983), also cited by Dalrymple, described the principal psychotic features of erethism as timidity, anxiety and a desire to remain unobtrusive.[70] Victims also demonstrated a pathological fear of ridicule and often reacted with an explosive loss of temper when criticised. Whilst Nicolle clearly lost control by firing his musket into a café where he must have known there were customers, there is no conclusive evidence that he was suffering from the neurological effects of mercury exposure. His prison record included a previous conviction for riotous behaviour, and the comment, 'Temper violent and habits vicious', but this is not diagnostic of erethism.[71] A medical assessment conducted on Nicolle before he was transported reported no overt signs of mental alienation,[72] which suggests that the physiological and behavioural signs of chronic mercury toxicity (including confusion, depression, and tremors) which would have been familiar to Victorian medical

[66] Jersey Heritage D/AP/AE/2. Conditional pardon from Queen Victoria dated 4 April 1846.

[67] T. Dalrymple, *The Policeman and the Brothel.* (Monday Books, 2012), 17.

[68] www.hawkesbury.net.au/claimaconvict/shipDetails.php?shipId=872. Accessed 8 November 2018.

[69] T. Dalrymple, 'The Policeman and the Brothel', *British Medical Journal, 345* (2012), e7835.

[70] H. A. Waldron, 'Did the Mad Hatter have mercury poisoning?', *British Medical Journal, 287* (1983), 1961.

[71] England & Wales Crime, Prisons and Punishment, PCOM2. Accessed at www.findmypast.co.uk, 26th July 2019.

[72] *Chronique de Jersey*, 15 August 1846.

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staff were not manifest.[73] Nicolle was certainly not 'insane' as reported in some newspapers.[74]

Whatever the cause of Nicolle's reaction that night in 1846 that ended the life of Simon Levy, he was spared execution partly because there was a question about his mental state at the time of the shooting, and the exceptional commitment shown by his advocate to have the sentence commuted. Dalrymple evidenced that only five of sixty murders reported in Jersey in the period from 1807 to 1907 ended with the perpetrator being executed, so Nicolle's case was not exceptional. Furthermore, he wrote

> Also of interest … is the fact there was not the slightest hint of anti-Semitism in the official, journalistic or legal response to Simon Levi's [*sic*] murder: that, for example, his killer had been leniently dealt with because his victim was considered of less account than anybody else.[75]

Whilst this might be true, and transportation for life to the Antipodes even in the 1840s, with permanent separation from family, friends and all that was familiar to a hostile and inhospitable land, was not an easy option, an odd response to Nicolle's reprieve appeared in the *Chronique de Jersey*, 'This merciful act of our *debonair* sovereign has caused a general satisfaction in the country, where it is very rarely that public executions have taken place' (author's emphasis).[76] Perhaps this was a subtle message that the victim was an outsider and his killer, a Jerseyman, did not warrant retributive execution.

In this article evidence is provided that Simon Levy, a well-respected member of Georgian Exeter's Jewish community and talented silversmith, whose wares are regularly traded to the present day, was unlawfully killed on the island of Jersey in January 1846. His killer, Thomas Nicolle, was spared execution partly on the grounds of 'mental alienation' and the case contributed in a small way to the call for the ending of capital punishment.

[73] A. Stock, 'Die Gefährlichkeit des Quecksilberdampfes', *Zeitschrift für angewandte Chemie, 39* (1926), 461-66.

[74] *The Era*, 29 March 1846.

[75] Dalrymple, *The Policeman,* 111.

[76] *Chronique de Jersey*, 11 April 1846. The choice of 'debonair' is interesting, perhaps illuminating and possibly uniquely applied to Queen Victoria. In Old French *de bon aire* ('of good race, lineage').

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The Bridestowe Peat Sett

MICHAEL MESSENGER

Peat has been cut on Dartmoor for centuries, and possibly millennia. Large tracts of the moor are covered in deposits of this partly decomposed vegetable matter, in depths ranging from one metre to nearly seven. Wet conditions in the ground and in the air are necessary for its formation, which occurs particularly at the higher altitudes in the remote heart of the moor. It has been cut, dried and used as domestic fuel until quite recent times but also converted to charcoal for metal smelting, principally tin.[1] There have been many attempts to exploit Dartmoor's peat commercially but all have been doomed to failure. Some sources say the peat on Amicombe Hill, in the west above Bridestowe, was the best and it was in this area, around the head of the Rattle Brook, that the most extravagant attempt was made. It was a spectacular failure, but one which has left a lasting legacy on the face of the moor.

Various people were looking at the Walkham Head location, to the south, in 1873, and a lease was granted late that year. It was claimed that the Admiralty had tried peat fuel and orders for thousands of tons would be forthcoming. There was little progress and it was only in August 1875 that the lessees visited the site for the first time, and realised just how remote it was. That there had been some work is evidenced by the distress sale of plant in 1878 which included six retorts (for drying peat), much of it was bought by a John Howard who then took a lease but did little.

[1] For background information I am indebted to Helen Harris, *Industrial Archaeology of Dartmoor* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972), and Phil Newman, *Domestic and Industrial Peat Cutting on North-Western Dartmoor: An archaeological and historical investigation* (an unpublished report for Dartmoor National Park, 2010).

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The Dartmoor Peat Coal Company Ltd was incorporated in 1873 with a capital of £50,000 to take over a lease previously granted to Joseph and William Mathews in 1867. In fact the company never raised capital or traded and what little was done was in the name of the Dartmoor Peat Company.[2] A forced sale of the assets took place in November 1874.[3]

Four years later another scheme arose, this time accompanied by well organised publicity. On 15 January 1877 Frederick Thomas, a hat manufacturer of Exeter, had acquired a 21-year lease from the Duchy of Cornwall of 640 acres of moorland around Rattlebrook Head. The *Mining Journal* in July carried flattering reports of the prospects for Dartmoor peat and referred to a new invention by a certain John Howard.[4] Howard took out his patent in September and the *Exeter Flying Post* reported that he had 'discovered a cheap and expeditious mode of preparation of peat'. One could conclude from the newspaper report that the peat practically threw itself into the machine and came out instantly, compressed and dried and looking almost like coal. The patent description was rather thin and lacking in detail. It describes how the peat was to be passed between rollers to squeeze the water out and dropped into a receptacle from which the water escaped. A reciprocating arm then compressed the peat and ejected it from the receptacle. The peat is then transferred to shelves mounted on a vertical shaft which revolved rapidly to assist evaporation of the remaining water.[5]

Howard appears to have come to Devon in the 1860s as an agent for a London contractor named Jackson who was building Exmouth Docks.[6] Jackson had taken £75,000 in shares for the work so had effectively gained ownership. The dock opened in 1868 and Howard soon became harbour-master (by 1872)[7] then Managing Director. He had been elected to an Associateship of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1867, having been proposed by Eugenius Birch, the dock engineer. His qualification to join the Institution is given as 'because by his scientific acquirements as a mathematician and electrician he is enabled to concur with Civil Engineers in the advancement of professional knowledge'.[8] On the strength of this rather

2 TNA BT 31/1823/7060.
3 *EFP*, 28 October 1874.
4 *EFP*, 11 July 1877.
5 Patent No 3536 of 1877.
6 As stated in *EFP*, 5 February 1873.
7 *EFP*, 8 May 1872.
8 ancestry.co.uk – UK Civil Engineer Records 1820–1930.

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tenuous qualification he subsequently described himself as a Civil Engineer. The dock company was wound up in 1873 with Birch's fees still unpaid.[9]

Howard's work at Exmouth would have brought him into contact with the London and South Western Railway, which had a branch into the docks, so, with his interest in peat extraction, it is no surprise that he accompanied the L&SWR's chief engineer, William Jacomb, on to the moor on 30 September 1877. Realising the importance of access, the purpose of the visit was for Jacomb, Howard and a band of local officials to inspect the route of a proposed tramway from Bridestowe station.[10]

In the following March the West of England Compressed Peat Company Ltd was registered with an authorised capital of £50,000. It was to purchase the Duchy lease from Frederick Thomas for £8,330 in fully paid shares, and in exchange for his patent and all rights to it Howard was to receive £8,335 in shares, also fully paid. Most of the promoters were from Exeter and active in commercial life there.[11] The prospectus was issued in May, and claimed that the peat beds were superior to anywhere else and the supply 'practically inexhaustible', over five million tons being available. It would be half the cost of coal. Orders for 80,000 tons of peat fuel were already in hand and favourable terms had been agreed with the L&SWR. Negotiations were in hand with an 'eminent railway contractor' to build the tramway for under £6,000. Needless to say, dividends of 20 to 25% were expected rapidly.[12] By the end of May it was reported all shares were subscribed, but another prospectus was issued in July. This contained all the claims of the earlier one but added two pages of glowing reports from the press. Peat would produce 11,000 cubic feet of gas per ton compared with 10,000 from Wigan coal. It was an excellent fertiliser and had potential for 'sanitary purposes'.[13]

A tramway of 2ft 6in gauge was initially planned but the L&SWR suggested a standard gauge line would be better, saving transhipment costs on the thousands of tons of peat fuel expected. In June engineers from the L&SWR District Engineers Office at Exeter commenced surveying the line.[14] It would appear the L&SWR had faith in Howard and anticipated good business. It was said that they had agreed a trial of peat fuel on the Exmouth branch.

[9] *EFP*, 25 June 1873.
[10] *EFP*, 3 October 1877.
[11] TNA BT 31/2405/12046.
[12] *EFP*, 1 May 1878.
[13] DHC 4242B/A1.
[14] *EFP*, 12 June 1878.

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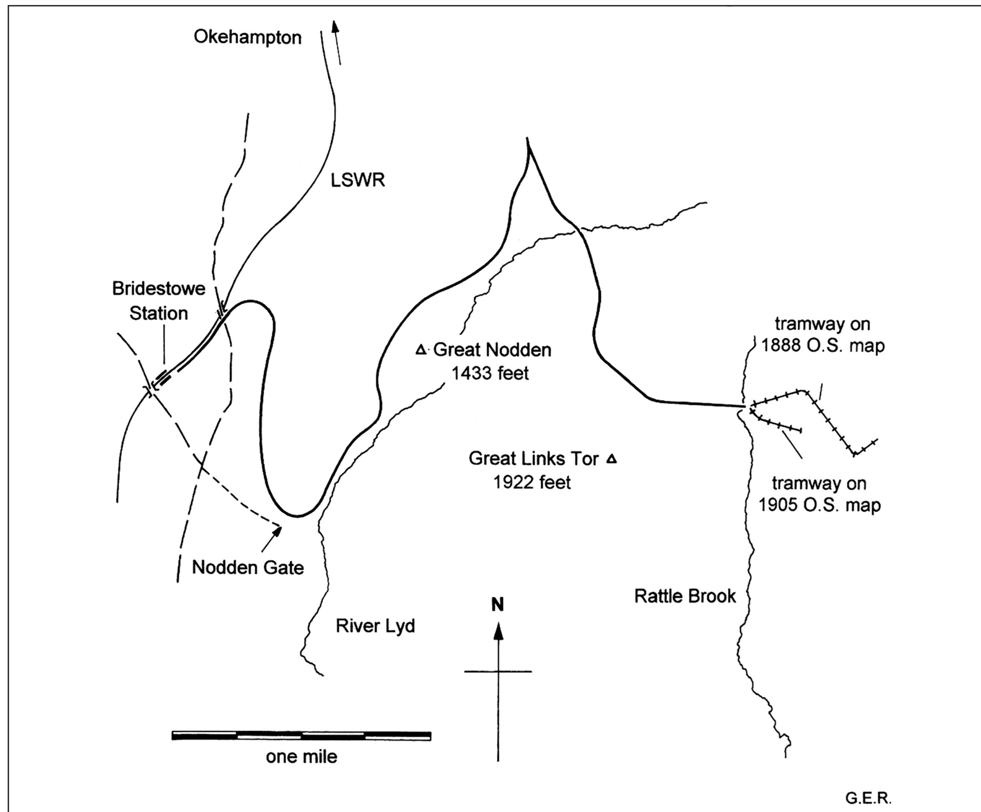

Figure 1. Map of the Bridestowe Peat Railway (courtesy of Geoff Roughton).

The first sod of the tramway was cut on 23 September 1878, with a silver shovel and mahogany barrow, by the High Sheriff, S. C. Hamlyn, who also owned the land between the moor and Bridestowe station. The great and good of Exeter travelled by train in special carriages to Bridestowe and all enjoyed a 'handsome luncheon' and many speeches before returning to the city.[15] To keep shareholders happy quarterly dividends, often of 8%, were commenced and this no doubt helped the take up of shares. As there was yet no income the dividends must have been paid from capital.

A tender for the construction of the narrow-gauge tramway was accepted in November 1878 from a contractor named Brotheridge, later described as 'a man without capital', for £6,944. The contract was later changed to standard gauge at an increased cost of £10,802. Work on the railway soon started and the following May three miles were complete and ready for

[15] *WDM*, 24 September 1878; *EFP*, 25 September 1878.

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Figure 2. The peat works at an unknown date looking towards the end of the track. The buildings seem to have suffered the ravages that Dartmoor weather can bring (courtesy of Graham Amhof).

the rails. The line was to be open by August and not only were they going to carry passengers and goods, but talked of extending to Walkham and Princetown.[16] Howard reported in January 1880 that the excavation was almost complete with much ballast and fencing and two or three miles of track in place.[17] At some point Brotheridge failed to complete his contract and gave up, various other people taking over. The railway, incomplete in the spring, appears to have been finished by June 1880 when it was stated to have cost £13,296.[18]

The L&SWR route from Okehampton to Lydford, through Bridestowe, had opened in 1874 and the main line company had agreed in October 1879 to a connection with the peat railway. Ironically, having suggested a standard gauge line and surveyed the route, the L&SWR now refused to permit their wagons on the steep gradients![19]

The directors were satisfied with the state of the railway when finally completed and it does appear to have been well engineered. Leaving Bridestowe

[16] *WDM*, 14 May 1879.
[17] *EFP*, 4 February 1880.
[18] *EFP*, 2 June 1880.
[19] *EFP*, 16 March 1881.

station (SX 523872) the route snakes its way up on to the moor to a reversing point (SX 544890), whence it continues climbing to its summit on the col between Great Links Tor and Woodcock Hill (SX 555871). A gradient profile taken from Ordnance Survey contours shows it climbs at a very steady 1 in 24 for four and a half miles to the summit. This is 1,800 feet above sea line and may well be the highest point reached in the British Isles by a standard gauge railway. From here the line drops down to the works (SX 559871) on the Rattle Brook, whence tramways ran out into the peat beds.

The third AGM in February 1880 had been optimistic, despite the delays in completing the railway. It was decided the best market was in peat charcoal, for which there was much demand as manure, rather than compressed peat. Also the directors optimistically expected traffic from china clay, granite and the Dartmoor Ice Company[20] over the line. An indication of how optimistic they were is the L&SWR's decline in June to run passenger trains over the line![21] Four months later an additional £4,000 of 10% preference shares were authorised and issued to raise more capital to meet the overspend on the railway. The up-beat directors' report in February 1881 said twelve ovens had been built at Rattlebrook, and machinery installed, and the 50 tons of charcoal they would produce weekly would enable a fair dividend. Horse power was being used on the railway.[22]

Disillusionment must have set in soon after as at the fourth AGM in 1881 the meeting was adjourned whilst a committee examined the state of the business. Its report, in March 1881, was not good. Although allegations had been made, the committee had found no evidence of fraud, but some statements in the prospectus were thought to have been made without care and good judgement. Howard's machine was tested and found to be useless. In fact the samples of compressed peat he had said came from Rattlebrook had been made by a workman at Walkham Head. Furthermore it was claimed that Howard and Thomas had obtained rights to the Walkham Head peat beds for £89 a year and sold them to the Company for £10,000 in shares. The chairman, R. W. Head, an Exeter solicitor, had recently died and it was denied that the state of the company had hastened his demise. Despite all this, it was still felt they had a valuable property and could run a profitable business.[23] Nevertheless, all the directors resigned and a new board elected.

[20] The Ice Company had a works on the side of the moor just over half a mile north of the railway reversing point.
[21] TNA RAIL 411/249.
[22] *WDM*, 2 February 1881.
[23] *EFP*, 16 March 1881.

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Figure 3. Workers loading peat into a narrow gauge skip wagon. The depth of the workings is readily apparent (photograph © G C Brooks).

Duchy returns in 1881 showed that over 6,000 tons of peat had been cut, but only 340 tons sold.[24]

By February 1882 the bookkeeping was found to be suspect and voluntary liquidation was proposed. Many angry words were circulating amongst the shareholders and the only saving grace was that the company had no debt. A liquidator was appointed in June. The only full list of shareholders surviving was prepared in February 1883 by the liquidator and it shows that some £50,000 of capital had been raised, a high proportion of the authorised capital.[25] The 344 shareholders lived all over Britain. John Howard and Frederick Thomas owned just 17 shares, jointly,[26] so it can be assumed they had sold their allocations and pocketed the cash.

By March 1881 Howard had left Devon and was living in Camberwell. In the 1890s he became involved in railway contracting in Scotland and became a director of the North British Railway, making substantial sums on dubious

[24] Newman, *Domestic and Industrial Peat Cutting*, 23.
[25] TNA BT 31/2405/12046.
[26] *WDM*, 7 February 1882.

railway takeovers.[27] By 1901 he was living in Brighton where he became known as a philanthropist, completing the Palace Pier at his own expense. In 1912 he gave £40,000 to the town for a convalescent home and in 1916 he was knighted. He died in 1917 and today two of the local bus fleet are named after him.

The liquidation of WECPC Ltd took a long time and it was finally dissolved in 1893.[28] Meanwhile, Samuel Cox and his company, Cox's Patent Prepared Peat Litter Company Ltd, took on the Rattlebrook sett, and that at Walkham Head, hoping to use the peat for various patent purposes. He was unsuccessful and moved on to other means to exploit the sett proposing, in turn, a dynamite works, paper manufacture, granite extraction and electricity generation. None came to fruition and the railway saw little or no use. Other companies followed with equally grand ideas but none succeeded. During and after the Great War an Austrian, Julius Moeller, was experimenting, probably in the production of gas, and much of his correspondence survives. The Duchy acquired the machinery, in lieu of unpaid rent, and from 1918 Moeller managed the works for them.[29] In 1919 they considered connecting Rattlebrook to near Princetown by an aerial ropeway.[30]

It seems that the Duchy now owned the railway but it was seeing little use. However it is from this period that some interesting motive power was developed. T. Day and Sons, motor engineers of Okehampton, fitted flanged wheels to a Humber 10/12 motor car which was used, presumably by Moeller, on the line.[31] In 1920 Tom Day acquired a petrol engine from an Army tank and fitted it to a truck made by the firm. It had a four-speed plus reverse gearbox and the wheels and gears were said to be cast at Devonport Dockyard. The Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) visited the works on 19 May 1921 whilst on a tour of Duchy lands in the south west. At that time some 20 men worked there and tar, oils and ammonia were extracted from the peat. It was in the motorised truck that the Prince travelled back down to Bridestowe, taking 20 minutes for the run.[32] Days maintained the truck until at least 1930 and one of the last people to work on it was Ernie Southcott who fortunately was interviewed and recorded in 1987. He tells of riding over the line, dropping sand through holes in the floor onto the rails to aid adhesion.[33]

[27] David Ross, *The North British Railway: A history* (Catrine: Stenlake Publishing, 2014).
[28] TNA BT 31/2405/12046.
[29] Newman, *Domestic and Industrial Peat Cutting*, 26.
[30] Duchy of Cornwall Library, London.
[31] Brian Moseley, 'Railway to Rattlebrook', *Devon Life* (April 1977).
[32] *WMN*, 20 May 1921.
[33] Transcript of interview with Ernie Southcott 1987, at the Museum of Dartmoor Life, Okehampton.

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Figure 4. Posed under the only over-bridge on the line (now demolished), this is presumed to be the motorised wagon that the Prince of Wales travelled down the line on (courtesy of Neil Parkhouse).

Late in 1929 the Duchy decided to cease the operation and tenders were sought for the sale of the works and machinery. Notice was given to the Calmady Hamlyn Estate, over whose lands the lower end of the line ran, that the railway would no longer be required from 29 September 1930 but this was deferred to 24 June 1931 as the demolition contractors, Thomas Ward Ltd, were behind schedule. The Estate claimed they would continue to use their section as a railway but eventually were paid compensation for reinstatement of their land.

In the ensuing years several people endeavoured to exploit the peat beds, either for chemical or horticultural purposes, using the trackbed as a road for access, but without success. One such person was Thomas Firbank in about 1947, in partnership with another. He acquired two lorries and a granulating machine and employed some 15 men. After a couple of years he gave up the struggle against the moor and sold out.[34] The works were finally abandoned in 1955 and the remaining buildings demolished by the Army in 1961. The route of the railway remains and provides an easy walking route into the moor.

[34] Thomas Firbank, *Log Hut* (London: George G. Harrap, 1954).

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Michael Messenger is well known in railway history and industrial archaeology circles. He is a founding partner of Twelveheads Press, and has written several histories of Cornish and Devon railways. In addition to his writing, his photographs have also formed the basis of books on industrial railways in the Southwest and in north Wales.

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The 1929 Plymouth Drake Election Petition

JONATHAN WOOD

Introduction

In 1929, a parliamentary election petition – the only way that the result of an election can be questioned – was lodged, which claimed the election of Jimmy Moses as MP for the constituency of Plymouth Drake, Plymouth's first Labour MP, to be null and void because of corrupt and illegal activities during the election campaign. The trial of the petition in October 1929 attracted national as well as local attention and became the main topic of political discussion in the city.

Politics in 1920s Plymouth

Parliamentary boundary changes in 1918 created three parliamentary constituencies in Plymouth – Sutton, Drake and Devonport. Sutton's first MP was the American-born Waldorf Astor who, on his elevation to the House of Lords in 1919, was succeeded by his wife, Nancy Astor, a Conservative, and the first woman to take her seat in the Commons. Drake was represented by another Conservative, Sir Arthur Shirley Benn, and initially yet another Tory, Clement Kinloch-Cooke, had taken the Devonport seat, but was ousted in 1923 by a Liberal, Leslie Hore-Belisha.[1]

[1] Crispin Gill, *Plymouth, A New History*, 2 vols. (Newton Abbot: David and Charles,1979) ii, 249; Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, 'Plymouth's Politics', in Brian Chalkley, David Dunkerley and Peter Gripaios (eds.), *Plymouth: Maritime City in Transition* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1991), 157-167, p.158.

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Plymouth's most notable Labour politician in the 1920s was Jimmy Moses, a councillor who worked as a shipwright in Devonport Dockyard. Originally elected as a Liberal, he joined the Labour Party in 1918.[2] Two of his closest friends and political allies were fellow-Dockyard workers and Labour councillors; Bill Miller, a man of mixed race heritage who was Plymouth's first black councillor,[3] and Harry Mason.[4] In the 1923 General Election, Moses stood as Labour's parliamentary candidate in the Plymouth Drake constituency with Miller as his election agent, and reduced Benn's majority to less than 500 votes. In the following year's election, Moses again unsuccessfully contested Drake, but in 1926 he was chosen as Plymouth's first Labour mayor.

A.C. Ballard

It was during his mayoralty that Moses first met Albert Casanova Ballard,[5] a wealthy philanthropist who had dedicated himself to charitable work for Plymouth boys and established several very popular boys' clubs in the city. Moses was favourably impressed by these clubs and gave enthusiastic support to Ballard's work with the youngsters. He visited the establishments to give talks to the boys and attended religious services organised under Ballard's auspices.[6] In 1928, Ballard opened the Ballard Institute, a large purpose-built building, and closed his other clubs apart from the Athenaeum. In January 1929, Moses was one of those defending Ballard when he was criticised by Free Church Ministers.[7]

The 1929 General Election

When it was announced that a General Election would be held on 30 May 1929, Drake Divisional Labour Party adopted Jimmy Moses as their

[2] Len Stephens, *The Life and Times of Jimmy Moses* (Plymouth: The Old Plymouth Society, 2010), 8-10, 15, 20; *WEH*, 29 May 1946.

[3] *WEH*, 22 December 1970.

[4] PWDRO 439/18/8. Biographical particulars of Alderman Henry George Mason.

[5] *WMN,* 11 August 1942. Obituary of Ballard; Sheila Ralls, 'A. C. Ballard and Mount Everest', *Dawlish Local History Group Newsletter,* July-August 2014.

[6] PWDRO 88/23/1. Plymouth Election Petition Drake Division, Transcript of Proceedings, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 5, 346-7; PWDRO 88/23/2. Plymouth Election Petition Drake Division, Transcript of Proceedings, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 45-48.

[7] The Free Church Ministers criticised Ballard because he had offered boys money if they came to the religious services in his clubs as a method of increasing attendance. PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 1, 6-8, 347; PWDRO 88/23/2, pp.47-48, 387-88, 403; *The Times*, 22 October 1929.

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parliamentary candidate. He chose Bill Miller to be his agent, and Harry Mason became a member of his Election Committee.[8]

Ballard told Moses he wanted to donate £50 to the Party's Fighting Fund. Although Ballard was a Conservative supporter, he regarded his work for boys as far more important than party political loyalties, and wanted to elect parliamentary representatives who would support his clubs. In a letter to Moses, he wrote

> I am asking all Electors, irrespective of party, to vote for you because you … know well the hunger and distress of poor boys … who belong to my club … I am supporting you absolutely irrespective of party and I have voted Conservative all my life.[9]

Ballard supported Lady Astor and Hore-Belisha as well as Moses.

On 13 May, Ballard sent Moses a laudatory letter and proposed to send it to every voter in the Drake constituency. Bill Miller, Moses' agent, emphasised that Ballard should not distribute electoral propaganda because this would be a breach of election law, and Moses persuaded Ballard that he and Miller should be responsible for distributing the letter to the boys at the Institute. Indeed, they arranged the distribution of 5,000 copies to them there, and on 28 May they had a further 10,000 copies printed as a circular with the phrase 'Follow Mr Ballard's advice' on the back.[10] Ballard firmly believed he had great political influence due to his work with the youth and said in a press interview: 'I consider that through my boys, nearly seven thousand strong, I will have great pull in deciding the result of the election in the three Plymouth divisions'.[11] Councillor Miller became alarmed when he learned Ballard planned to place an electoral advertisement supporting Moses in the morning papers. If Ballard paid for an advertisement without written authority from the candidate or his election agent, it would contravene election law.

Miller warned Moses and Mason, and the three men attempted to contact Ballard to persuade him to withdraw the advert. They went to Ballard's home, but were prevented from seeing him by his housekeeper who told them he was asleep and could not be woken under any circumstances. Moses subsequently visited Ballard and told him he should not have published the advertisement

[8] PWDRO 88/23/1, p. 3; PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 44-45, 222.
[9] PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 15-18, 348-53.
[10] PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 50-57, 337-49.
[11] PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 1, 357; PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 39-41, 61-63, 110-14, 167-69, 210-14, 237-38, 389-91, 395; *WMN*, 18 May 1929. 'Ten Thousand Votes. Mr A.C. Ballard and the Election'.

without written authority from the election agent. Ballard responded that he was solely responsible for the advert, believing that because it was his name at the bottom of the paper there would not be any legal difficulties.[12]

Ballard decided to withdraw his support from Lady Astor and back her Labour opponent, William Westwood, instead. He asked Moses to bring Westwood to the Institute, so the boys could see him.[13]

The General Election was held on 30 May 1929. In Devonport and Sutton respectively Hore-Belisha and Lady Astor were re-elected, though her majority over her Labour opponent was reduced to only 211 votes. In Drake, the results were

Jimmy Moses (Lab)	16,684 votes
Sir Arthur Shirley Benn (Cons)	14.673 votes

Thus making Moses Plymouth's first Labour MP and the first of the party in South-West England.[14]

The Election Petition and the Trial

Some Plymouth Conservatives were disturbed, especially by Ballard's intervention, and the possibility of legal action was discussed privately. Several boys who had attended the Ballard Institute during the election campaign were invited to the office of a local solicitor to give statements.

In June 1929, two electors in the Drake constituency, Nicholas John Pethick Revington and Andrew Treeby Easterbrook, submitted a parliamentary election petition which opposed the return of Moses as MP and called for his election to be declared null and void.[15] An election petition was a procedure for challenging the result of a parliamentary election and could be presented by one of the defeated candidates or, as in this case, by members of the constituency's electorate. Easterbrook was a retired civil servant and Revington a retired RAF lieutenant and the nephew of John Pethick, a former

[12] PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 389-91.

[13] Ballard had become disappointed with Lady Astor whom he felt had not done enough to support his boys' clubs. PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 382-85; *WEH*, 28 May 1929. Letter from Albert Ballard.

[14] *WMN*, 31 May 1929. 'West's First Labour M.P. Mr Moses wins Drake'; PWDRO 88/23/1, p. 3.

[15] PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 125, 131, 135, 147, 159-60, 195, 215, 220-23, 229-31; *WEH,* 27 June 1929. 'Sensational sequel to Drake election. Petition lodged against the return of Mr J. J. H. Moses'.

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Conservative mayor of Plymouth. Revington was active in the public life of the city, serving as a member of the City's Board of Guardians and was also a prominent Freemason.[16]

The petition's most serious charges were that Moses was guilty of corrupt practices and that an agent had incurred expenses, organised public meetings, produced advertisements and distributed circulars without written authorisation from his official election agent, thereby infringing the provisions of the 1918 Representation of the People Act. The petition alleged that the general bribery before and during the election rendered the election null and void, and that Moses, by himself and through his agent, was guilty of other corrupt practices. The agent against whom the most serious allegations were made was Albert Ballard.

The *Western Evening Herald* reported that the petition dominated discussion in political circles in Plymouth.[17] As he was the first Labour MP to be challenged by an election petition the national party urged local Labour parties and affiliated societies to contribute to the Drake Election Petition Fund which had been set up to pay his legal costs.[18]

Since 1868 special courts sitting in the borough or county of a disputed election had been responsible for the trial of petitions. The judges who presided sat without a jury and their decisions were certified by the speaker of the House of Commons. The trial of the Drake petition was held in Plymouth's Guildhall between 17 and 25 October, under Sir Rigby Swift and Sir George John Talbot. Roland Oliver, K. C., led the petitioners' legal team while Moses' defence was led by Sir Stafford Cripps, K. C., a distinguished lawyer who had joined the Labour Party shortly after the 1929 General Election.[19] Ballard attended the trial as a witness under *subpoena* and was represented by his own solicitor.[20]

The most serious charges brought concerned corrupt practice and bribery arising from the activities of Albert Ballard, but there were no personal charges against Moses himself. The petitioners' legal team alleged that Ballard

[16] *WMN*, 31 August 1942. 'Plymouth loss. Death of Lieutenant N.J.P. Revington; *WMN*, 2 September 1942. 'Tribute paid to citizen. Funeral of Lt. N. Revington'.

[17] *WEH*, 28 June 1929. 'The Political Sensation in Drake Division. Sole Topic in the City.'

[18] *WMN*, 20 September 1929. 'Labour's appeal. National Contribution to Mr Moses' Defence'; *WMN*, 23 September 1929. 'Bodmin Socialists. Response to appeal for Petition Case Funds'.

[19] *Western Independent*, 8 September 1929. 'Drake Election Petition. Judges Selected and Date Fixed'; *WMN*, 28 September 1929. 'Drake Division Petition. Judges selected to hear evidence'; Chris Bryant, *Stafford Cripps: The first Modern Chancellor* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), 79-80. Cripps eventually became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1947.

[20] PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 4, 22-8, 148.

had acted as Moses' agent during the election campaign. They claimed that Ballard, by paying for an advertisement aimed to win votes for Moses, had committed a corrupt practice and had made promises to boys attending his Institute to persuade them to convince their parents and neighbours to vote for Moses. The promises consisted of increased pocket money and a firework display with free refreshments if Moses was elected, but Ballard had threatened to close his Club if he was not elected.

Ballard had placed his advertisement backing Moses in the newspaper without being authorised to do so by Moses' election agent and the expenditure on the advert had not been included in the return of election expenses which was a corrupt practice. If Ballard was proven to be Moses' agent, it would make the offence a corrupt practice which Moses had committed through a corrupt agent. The seriousness of this offence meant that, if proved, the Court could not give any dispensation and Moses' election would be declared null and void.[21]

Two of the charges in the petition related to the use of private hire cars and taxis to transport Labour voters to the polls. Henry Linsdell supported Moses and hired a car which was used to take voters to the polling station. Ernest Freeman drove a licensed taxi cab and took voters to the poll in it. The use of taxis and hired cars to take voters to polling stations was an offence under election law. The gravity of the offence depended on whether Moses and Miller, the candidate and his election agent, had known that these cars were a hired car and a hackney carriage. If the unlawful act had been committed by a member of the public, it was merely an offence of illegal hiring but if it was done with the knowledge of the candidate or his agent it would constitute an illegal practice.[22] The other charges affected Bill Miller, Moses' election agent. It was alleged that the return of Labour's expenses that he had completed had not included the cost of hiring the cars, had not supplied the requisite details of the campaign's financial contributors and campaign workers, and did not include political meetings which were part of the campaign. Because of this, Miller was accused of knowingly making a false declaration about the election expenses.[23]

Interest in the trial proceedings was intense and a long queue of people, hoping to be admitted to the public gallery, formed while thousands of people gathered outside the Guildhall. When Jimmy Moses arrived, he was greeted

[21] *Ibid*., pp. 29, 245-61; PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 405-17.

[22] PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 10-4.

[23] *Ibid*., pp. 82-5, 99-103, 127-28, 143-49, 152-53, 157-59, 162, 169-70, 176-77, 187-88, 192-93, 195, 198-200, 202, 209-12, 219, 224, 232, 236-240; PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 357, 360.

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with cheers and expressions of support.[24] Roland Oliver, for the petitioners, presented the evidence that widespread bribery and corruption had occurred during the Drake election campaign. The two crucial questions were whether Ballard was acting as Moses' agent and whether his actions constituted bribery. Oliver observed that the legal position of an agent in election law was different from that of an agent in commercial law. In election law the relationship between a candidate and their agent bore more of a resemblance to the relationship between master and servant than that between a principal and their agent in commercial law. If someone acting as the agent for a parliamentary candidate obtained votes by corrupt means, the candidate was still responsible for their actions if they hadn't authorised them, or even if they had prohibited them, and their election could be declared null and void. An MP was not allowed to benefit from corrupt or dishonest actions committed by their agent.[25]

Roland Oliver and his team relied heavily on evidence from young boys who attended the Institute. These boys testified that Ballard had urged them to tell their parents and neighbours to vote for Moses and had given them promises and the threat mentioned above. The weaknesses in the evidence given by the boys became apparent during the trial. The assembled boys were frequently so noisy it made hearing the words spoken by Ballard and Moses difficult. Several of the boys had made written statements at the solicitor's office in June but in court they were unable to remember what they had said and had to consult their statements to refresh their memories.[26] Stafford Cripps demonstrated that the boys' evidence was contradictory and inconsistent: some claimed that Ballard had made certain statements but, under cross-examination, admitted they had not heard Ballard say these things themselves, but heard them from other boys. The boys provided differing versions of what happened and disagreed over the facts such as the dates when Moses and Westwood had visited the Institute. Some boys claimed the promised firework display was conditional on Moses winning the election, but others said it was being organised to celebrate the second anniversary of the club's opening. Several boys alleged Ballard had promised increased pocket money if Moses was elected but other boys had not heard this offer.[27]

Moses, Miller and Councillor Mason gave evidence. Moses said he had never discussed politics with Ballard, and had never heard him offer bribes or

[24] PWDRO 88/23/1, 392-98; *WEH*,17 October 1929, 'Scenes in Guildhall Square'; *WEH*,18 October 1929, 'Guildhall Square Scenes'.
[25] PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 100, 194-202, 208-10, 223 -33.
[26] *Ibid*., pp. 129-32, 136-39, 146-52.
[27] *Ibid*., pp. 238-77, 304-05.

rewards to the boys. Both Moses and Miller strenuously denied that their aim in using Ballard's flattering tribute in their electoral leaflets was to win votes and claimed that it was to protect Moses' reputation. Miller's denials did not convince the judges, and Justice Swift told him bluntly 'it is perfectly absurd to talk like that. All this was an electioneering campaign'.[28]

Giving evidence, Albert Ballard, who had been accused of the most serious breaches of election law, agreed he had advocated support for Moses, but denied promising money if Moses was elected and rejected the allegations made by some of the boys. When he was questioned about his alleged threat to close the Club if Moses wasn't elected, Ballard replied that he had said he would consider closing the Club because he would be unable to continue without more support.[29] Three of Ballard's employees, Norman Bullock and George Covington, who were instructors, and Thomas Smith, a caretaker, who had been at the Ballard Institute during the election campaign testified that Ballard had not promised increased money to the boys, and had stated that the firework display would only be especially lavish if Moses succeeded. Their accounts corroborated Ballard's evidence and were clear and consistent. Bullock and Covington both supported the Conservatives and Cripps noted that their evidence could not have been affected by political loyalties, though Justice Swift commented that as they were Ballard's employees they were not impartial.

The allegations of bribery and corruption were the most serious charges in the petition. As for the hiring of taxis and hired cars, for this to be an illegal practice it had to be proved it was done with the knowledge of the candidate or his election agent. Both Moses and Miller stated they did not know the cars were a hire car and a hackney carriage.[30]

The remaining charges concerned Bill Miller's return of election expenses, which commenced on 10 April. Roland Oliver argued Moses' candidature had begun in March and three meetings held by Labour that month should have been included because they were electioneering meetings, and the cost of Ballard's advertisement and the payment for the hired car should also have been recorded. He argued that because Ballard was Moses' agent his payment for the newspaper advertisement was a corrupt practice. Election law required that all the money spent after a candidature had begun had to be recorded in the election return, and the omissions in Miller's return were a breach of

[28] PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 415-18; PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 13-5, 66-67, 175-78.
[29] PWDRO 88/23/1, pp. 58-62, 74-75, 262-64, 268, 278, 281, 283-94, 302; PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 3-4, 48-49, 67-68, 120-24, 126-27, 173-74, 216-17, 219-21, 317.
[30] PWDRO 88/23/2, pp. 16-24, 317-18.

the law. Moses and Cripps responded that the candidature had not begun until April, and that the meetings in March were not election meetings but normal Labour propaganda meetings, and that Ballard was not Moses' agent, so his expenses did not have to be included.[31] It was further alleged that the return breached the law because it omitted details of financial contributors and campaign workers. Moses and Miller admitted these shortcomings, and Cripps made a formal application for relief on Moses' behalf.

Public interest in the petition trial was high; although canvassing for Plymouth's municipal elections took place during the trial, it was completely overshadowed by the petition controversy. Few public election meetings were held and there was little sign of interest among Plymouth's electorate whose attention was focussed on the trial.[32]

The Judges' Decision

The judges gave their decision on the petition on Friday 25 October 1929. Justice Swift's opening words were unequivocal 'In my opinion this Petition has failed and must be dismissed'. He began with the most serious charges: that bribery was so widespread before and during the election in Drake that it rendered the election null and void, and that Moses, through the actions of Albert Ballard, was guilty of corrupt practices. Justice Swift said Ballard had used his influence in an improper and illegitimate way, but there was no evidence that Ballard's promises of rewards to the boys amounted to bribery or that they had corrupted voters, and consequently the allegation that bribery was so extensive as to void Moses' election could not be sustained. Moses would have been liable for Ballard's unlawful actions if the latter had been his agent but the evidence indicated he was not. Moses did not ratify, or endorse, Ballard's actions on his behalf, and did his best to prevent the publication of Ballard's advertisement and to dissociate himself from it. Justice Swift next discussed the illegal use of a hire car and a hackney carriage in the campaign. Henry Linsdell and Ernest Freeman, the men who had supplied these vehicles, had contravened the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act 1883, but the judge accepted that Moses and Miller did not know these cars were vehicles for hire.

The other charges concerned Bill Miller as election agent. The petition

[31] *Ibid*., pp. 420-38.

[32] *WEH,* 23 October 1929, 'Mr Moses, election agent in the witness box'; *WMN,* 24 October 1929, 'Notes in the West'; *WEH,* 25 October 1929, 'Round the city wards of Plymouth. More interest in the election petition'.

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alleged his election return was incomplete and did not conform to legal requirements. However, the Judge concluded that the items omitted by the election return were not election expenses, and Miller was right not to include them. Speaking on Miller's behalf, Cripps conceded that his election return did not contain the required details, and applied for relief for Miller. Finally, Miller was accused of making a false declaration because he knew his election return was incomplete. However, Justice Swift was satisfied Miller did not realise he had breached election law. He concluded that the petition had to be dismissed and the Court would declare that Moses had been properly elected. Justice Talbot concurred with his colleague and added that much of the petitioners' case was based on testimony from boys which was often factually inaccurate and contradictory. The judges decided the petition would be dismissed with costs. The crowds which had gathered outside in the Guildhall Square cheered loudly when they heard the verdict, and there were more cheers for Moses when he emerged from the court-room.[33]

After the Trial

Jimmy Moses received an ovation from his fellow Labour MPs when he took his seat in the House of Commons,[34] but his parliamentary career was cut short by defeat in the 1931 General Election. Albert Ballard was deprived of his vote for three years and barred from holding municipal office. However, chastened by the hostile reaction to his intervention in the General Election, he had already decided to withdraw from political activity. Few defended the decision to bring the petition after its rejection by the court. The petition was criticised by local newspapers and by Conservatives and Liberals as well as Labour politicians. In the Plymouth Council elections, which were held soon after the conclusion of the trial, Labour gained five seats, mainly at the expense of the Conservatives who lost their majority on the Council, and it was widely believed that public resentment of the petition contributed to this result.[35]

The Astors and the Election Petition

The *Western Evening Herald* commented that the petitioners, Revington and Easterbrook, had kept a very low profile and had not given evidence in the

[33] *WEH*, 26 October 1929, 'The Talk of the City'.
[34] *WMN*, 30 October 1929, 'Vital session open. Ovation for Mr Moses.'
[35] Bull, 'The Drake Election Petition Trial', *The Watchman*, November 1929; Letter from J. Northcott in the letters column, *WEH*, November 1929.

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trial and this produced suspicions that they were acting on behalf of influential politicians who wished to conceal their involvement. James Palmer, editor of the *Western Morning News*, in a private letter claimed the petition had been inspired by the Conservatives, most notably Lord and Lady Astor, and was aimed at Ballard rather than Moses -

> the moving spirit is the Conservative Party … the Town Clerk also advises, strictly confidentially, that the Petition is not actually aimed at unseating Moses but to stop corruption by Mr Ballard, who was very active against Lady Astor, and no doubt Lord Astor is behind the scenes of the Petition as well.[36]

Many suspected the Astors were responsible for the petition. Lady Astor vehemently denied these allegations, saying 'There is not a word of truth that I or Lord Astor were behind the Drake election petition'.[37] However, Lord Astor revealed his role in the petition to James Joseph Judge and Robert Walling, two prominent Plymouth journalists, who were personal friends. He had discussed action over the Drake election campaign with other local Tories and participated in a conference attended by local Conservatives, representatives of the Conservative Central Association, and lawyers which led to the election petition.[38]

Conclusion

Despite the publicity, important questions about the petition remained unanswered – were the Astors implicated and was the real target Ballard rather than Moses? Arguably, the petition proved counterproductive for those who initiated it. The election petition had few defenders, even among local Conservatives, after its rejection. Moses kept his seat and considered his reputation had been vindicated, Ballard had already decided to withdraw from political activity before the petition and the affair brought opprobrium to the Conservatives, who were assumed to be responsible. Those who supported this legal action incurred considerable expense, but the result was that the Court upheld the decision of the voters.

[36] PWDRO 1418/A/127. *Western Morning News* Papers re General Election 1927–1931. Letter from James. L. Palmer, editor of the *Western Morning News,* to S. 28 June 1929.
[37] *WMN*, 31 October 1929. 'Rumour denied by Lady Astor. Nothing to do with Drake petition'.
[38] PWDRO 94/97. Personal diary of James Joseph Judge 1927–1934, entries for 30 June 1929, 1 July 1929, 1 August 1929, and 24 October 1929.

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Dr Jonathan Wood has written extensively on the history of the Labour Party and its activists in Plymouth.

Book Reviews

Richard Batten (ed.), ***A Lord Lieutenant in Wartime: The experiences of the fourth Earl Fortescue during the First World War*** (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series, vol. 61, 2018). 267 pages. Softback. ISBN 978 0 90185 361 5. £30.

To commemorate the centenary of the armistice that concluded the hostilities of the First World War the Devon and Cornwall Record Society has published a volume about one of the key players on the Home Front in Devon, Earl Fortescue. In 1914 Fortescue held the posts of Lord Lieutenant, president of the Territorial Forces Association and Chairman of Devon County Council. Aged 60 when the war began, he found the additional burden made by the demands of war-time administration too much for his health and in March 1916 he stepped aside from the chairmanship of the County Council on his doctor's advice. He nonetheless remained a senior alderman, and a major contributor to County Council policy.

Richard Batten has selected for publication in this volume some of the many contemporary documents held in the voluminous folders of Fortescue papers deposited by the family in the Devon Heritage Centre and catalogued under reference 1262M. The *Devon Remembers* Heritage project identified 2,467 items from the Fortescue papers related to 1914–1919, and Batten has selected as the principal documents for this publication two 'overviews' written by Fortescue himself. The first of these is the memoir Fortescue wrote in 1924, looking back on his war-time experience as a whole, a task prompted by reflecting on the papers in the archives relating to his forebears. The second is the diary Fortescue kept on a daily basis, usually noting briefly his appointments and activities, whose 1914–1918 components are held in the archive as three separate files, but helpfully presented here in a composite document.[1] The publication of these two together allows Batten to discuss

[1] This is rather confusingly entitled 'The personal diary of the 3rd Lord Ebrington', a title superseded in 1905 by Fortescue's succession to the earldom.

their interface, and the role of the other papers in the archive in supporting Fortescue in his conclusions about what he described as remembering as a 'confused mass of perpetual meetings, committee meetings and anxiety'.[2]

To follow the memoir and the diary, Batten has selected a number of shorter items to illustrate the spread of Fortescue's work, covering the themes of mobilising the county for war; recruitment; charities and voluntary aid;[3] and food production and agriculture. These comprise a more diverse array of documents. Batten has selected two summaries: the pamphlet on the history of the Devon and Cornwall Refugees Committee (pp. 222-24) and a lengthy extract from the book, 'Red Cross and Voluntary Aid in Devonshire', (pp. 225-32). The basis for selection of these papers from the multitude available is not entirely clear, as Batten merely suggests (p. 26) that they are a 'representative sample' of the papers. This general approach means that the documents do not enable the reader to assess, for example, how in the voluntary sector Fortescue performed the role Batten describes as 'intermediary and moderator between conflicted parties' (p. 31). Documents on the other topics are briefer and illustrate particular issues with which Fortescue dealt, or points that specifically interested him.

The records are prefaced by a useful introduction in which Batten not only provides a descriptive account of Fortescue's life, but sets out the contribution that this study makes to our understanding of the actions of county elites on the Home Front during the First World War, deriving both from the structures of the past, such as the Lord Lieutenancy, and of the present, such as the Territorial Forces Association and the county council.

What the diary also shows, although Batten does not make much of this, is that Fortescue's life was grounded in his role as an active country landowner. Even in the dark days of 1917 he spent about one-third of his time out on his estates with his bailiff, or riding, walking, hunting and shooting over his own lands and those of his neighbours. This perhaps explains why, even after giving up the chairmanship of the County Council, he continued to play a leading role on the topics of agriculture and food production. It was a world in which he felt more confident than, for example, the manoeuvrings of volunteers on the Relief Committees or the Red Cross.

Sometimes the contemporary Devon detail in the papers, important for a

[2] *Typescript*, p. 33.

[3] It is not quite clear why 'voluntary aid' is separated out from 'charities'; the contemporary use of the phrase appears only in the context of the Red Cross, whose 'voluntary aid detachments' were units of organisation, operating primarily in the sphere of care for the sick and wounded.

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micro-historical study, is not given the illumination it deserves. For example, the recruitment appeal that is republished on pp. 200-204 has a footnote explaining to readers who Sir Francis Drake was, but no footnotes or index references to explain who a number of the actual signatories were, George Lambert of Spreyton, for example. Lord Clinton's address is given as Heanton, instead of the correct village title of Heanton Sackville.

Nonetheless this volume is full of interest for the light it sheds on many different aspects of the Home Front in Devon in the First World War, and the challenges faced by the Lords Lieutenant nationally in exercising leadership at a time of major social change. The Devon and Cornwall Record Society's volume is a welcome addition to the literature on Devon in the First World War.

Julia Neville

Jeremy Black, *Exeter's University: a History* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2019). xvii + 350 pages. Hardback. ISBN 978-1-905816-06-4. £70. Paperback. ISBN 978-0-85989-443-2. £20.

In 2015, celebrating its Diamond Jubilee, the University of Exeter published its definitive history, *The City on the Hill*, by Professor Jeremy Black (ISBN 978-0-9933713-0-1). A superbly designed book, sumptuously illustrated, it was a pleasure to own but, for purely physical reasons, not to read. It was effectively a high-status coffee-table book, and our copy indeed sat on a coffee-table for several months, greatly admired but only dipped into. Curiously it had no index, which made even dipping a rather random exercise.

Sensibly, Jeremy Black and the University have now produced *Exeter's University: a History*. This is effectively an updated second edition of *The City on the Hill*; the size of a paperback novel, with some minor revisions, an index and no illustrations. One can now read it in an armchair; and it is well worth reading. Professor Black has achieved a major success in presenting a perceptive, enjoyable account of the University's evolution, drawn from the immense resource of minutes and reports of Council, Senate and various committees and working parties over sixty years, leavened with reminiscences and comments from a range of colleagues, past students and retired staff. Writing recent history has its problems. Frankness needs to be tempered by tact, as many of the people discussed are still alive. Black manages this well, and I imagine few people will have been particularly offended by his comments. Some earlier personalities are treated less gently: his accounts of

two problem professors in the 1970s are even more trenchant than they were in the *City on the Hill*.

For me, the early chapters are a nostalgia trip. Jeremy Black captures the atmosphere of those days exactly. When I was appointed in 1961 the Charter and my department's relocation from Gandy Street to the Hatherly Laboratories were recent memories for my colleagues. I vividly remember the sub-Oxbridge flavour of the University, the distant, rather colourless Vice-Chancellor, the tutting, brocade-waistcoated, recorder-playing Registrar, the scholarly eccentrics, the autocratic, sometimes bullying professors (not all: my own was a quiet, pipe-smoking cynic), the long coffee-breaks and the lack of pressure to do research. Coming from liberal London University I was amazed and amused by the restrictions placed on students: the insistence on gowns in lectures (science students were exempt, but the Botany professor would eject females in trousers, and men without ties); the absurdly limited visiting hours in the female halls. As a liberally-inclined Hall warden from 1965 to 1985 I experienced at close quarters the social changes Black documents, as the University adapted slowly and often painfully to the lowering of the age of majority, to the sexual revolution, to the arrival in the hippy era of cannabis, LSD, and the drugs squad, to the period of international student protest when the extreme Left took over the Guild of Students and 'sherry-drinking' – informal staff-student contact – was regarded as a betrayal of the student cause. Came the 1980s, Thatcher, a swing to the Right, and the era of the 'wellies', when the Sloane Ranger Handbook recommended Exeter and specifically the Duryard Halls as the Place to Go – for a week or two until one found a country cottage with one's friends, paid the statutory fine ('cash or cheque?') and moved out. This period established a national image of the University which it took decades to shed.

Professor Black's skill as a historian is particularly illustrated by the three chapters in which he disentangles the troubled, tortuous, politically active, financially stressed late 1970s and 1980s, when long battles were fought over the representation of non-professorial staff and of students in University decision-making, the allocation of resources and appointments between departments and disciplines, staff salaries, the election rather than appointment of departmental heads and the survival of uneconomic departments, all against a background of inflation and static or reduced government funding.

In the rest of the book the author writes from personal experience, first at Durham, and from 1996 at Exeter itself. The 1990s brought major changes. Geology had been closed in the late 80s and staff cuts achieved through an early retirement scheme. Right of tenure was lost in 1992. The

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greatest pressures now came from new formal external and internal scrutiny of teaching quality, research performance and management. TQA (teaching quality assessment) and RAE (research assessment exercise) joined the array of acronyms that litter these chapters (there is an indispensable glossary). Training of new staff became the norm, and high overall departmental performance became progressively crucial. As Director of Studies in my department I had to drive through a raft of new measures: staff appraisal, peer observation, student assessment of teaching – all very unpopular, as was I. Poor results in the RAEs in 1986 and particularly 1996 were a serious shock to several complacent departments and to the University as a whole. There was growing realisation that financial support and indeed survival were not guaranteed, and serious concern that a two-tier system was on the cards, with only highly-rated universities gaining research support from Government.

Change was inevitable, and for myself, retiring in 2002 just as Steve Smith became Vice-Chancellor, the last three chapters of the book are the most interesting of all. My knowledge of the University's development since the turn of the millennium comes mainly from University bulletins and from the comments, often bitter, of colleagues and friends in the know. It is fascinating to read Black's perspective on the remarkable changes of the Smith era: the immediate switch in priorities to achieving excellence in research and teaching at all costs, and the spectacular transformation of the University from relative mediocrity to its present high rankings in national and international league tables and its position as one of the most popular in terms of student applications. One learns about the economics, politics and tactics behind the closure of the Chemistry Department, the massive expansion of the biosciences and the Business School, the evolution of a Medical School and the growth and success of the Penryn campus, Sir Geoffrey Holland's principal legacy. Black is also frank about the downside: the pressures on staff, the growing overall impersonality, the fall in the staff/student ratio, the diminution of small group teaching and individual contact. One sentence in Chapter 12 sums it up:

> Exeter plc had parallels with a modern high-profile company, with a strong CEO, a well-defined mission statement, a concern with brand and positioning, a strong, centralised administration, an exertion of managerial control, an emphasis on quantification, an intolerance of underperformance, and a determination to invest for success, not least with high-profile appointments.

The contrast with the tiny, cosy, paternalistic, traditionally-minded University I joined in 1961 could hardly be greater. I am delighted with Exeter's present success – but glad I retired when I did.

Exeter's University: a History and its splendid predecessor together form a remarkable achievement. This authoritative account of the entire evolution of a successful university for its first 64 years should be of great interest to any student of the history of higher education in Britain. Present staff and students will find the new book far more accessible than the *City on the Hill,* and should certainly benefit from a clearer understanding of the University's history. Exeter citizens, whatever their views on the University, would do well to read about it. I recommend the book without hesitation.

Robin Wootton

Rivers Carew, ***Footprints in the Sand: the story of the Carews of Devon 1086-1945*** (Cambridge: DuBois Publishing, 2018). ISBN 978-1-9998074-4-3. 374 pages. 65 black and white and colour illustrations. Hardback. £25.00, paperback £11.99, e-book £7.99.

Extensive and in-depth research supports this new history of the Carew family. The result is impressive, both broadly speaking, and more specifically in terms of the ways in which particular lines of enquiry open up and convey complex and diverse strands. The lives of prominent individuals and significant episodes intermingle. It straddles genealogy, and family and biographical history, such that lineages can be traced and experiences contextualised. The work is also local and regional history, setting out the fate and fortunes of houses and estates, and associated communities and places. The study is additionally national and international in its framing, with narratives bringing in the activities and roles of other individuals and families, royal, aristocratic and otherwise; the decisiveness of events, favourable and less so; and geographical connections, domestic and global.

The book is chronological in its structure and direction, commencing with medieval origins, and progressing through 'Tudor times' and then subsequent centuries up to the present. Seats, places and other surnames feature: the Courtenays, Haccombe, Bickleigh Castle, Mohuns Ottery, Haldon House, the Palks, Marley, Tiverton Castle, Rattery, among others. The tragic and the far flung provide colour and momentousness to the story: Ireland, the sinking of the Mary Rose, the English Civil War, India, Waterloo, the Crimea, and

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the two World Wars. The research is much enriched by a fair and stimulating array of sources: primary and secondary, manuscript and printed, historical and literary, factual and fictional, and held within county repositories or elsewhere. The historian, David Cannadine, receives due mention, and indeed the Carew life course aligns with the 'origins, rise, decline and fall' trajectory of the broader social class to which the Carews belonged.

Much effort has been dedicated to the production of the publication, and the provision and quality of illustrative material. The result, along with the engaging and compelling manner of the text, will appeal to local and regional, and other, readers and enthusiasts.

Andrew J.H. Jackson

Stuart Drabble, ***Haytor Granite: A Celebration*** (Stover School: Stover Historic Landscape Trust, 2018). 191 pages, c.180 figures and illustrations. Hardback. Landscape format. ISBN 9781999328108. £16.95.

The carved granite rails of what is generally known today as a 'tramway' curving down and away from the quarries behind Haytor Rocks are a familiar feature of the East Dartmoor landscape. It was a unique and pragmatic feat of civil engineering, making good use of extremely hard-wearing local stone in preference to iron, which would have had to be carried in from a much greater distance, and incur much higher maintenance cost given the local climate and the burden of the heavy blocks of hewn granite which were its cargo. Without some form of rail transport it would have been commercially infeasible for the renowned Haytor granite to be carried even the ten miles to the Stover Canal and thence to the Teign estuary. The 200th anniversary of its construction falls in 2020, the anticipation of which prompted Stuart Drabble, founder and secretary of the Stover Historic Landscape Trust, to write and publish this book.

Despite the link to this anniversary, the book's avowed focus is the history of the use of the products of the Haytor quarries and the businesses behind their operation, rather than the railroad. This has clearly been researched very extensively, and the author has amassed a large amount of detail on many of the bridges, buildings and monuments either wholly constructed from or incorporating durable Haytor granite between the 1820s and the early twentieth century. London Bridge, the British Museum, Buckingham Palace, Covent Garden Market, and the river terrace wall of the Houses of Parliament are prominent amongst the many such structures in the capital

of a booming Victorian empire. Most of these are illustrated in colour here, making up a roughly chronological gazetteer of key monuments containing Haytor granite, separated into sections by chapters of historical narrative. The imposing and majestic buildings convey an aura of serene permanence that is, however, utterly at odds with the hand-to-mouth existence of the sequence of businesses which quarried, dressed and transported the stone.

It was the wealthy Templer family of Stover which invested in the transport infrastructure which enabled the quarry to be opened up, but they could not sustain the business beyond a few years. Other companies tried their hand, often exploiting the funding possibilities of joint-stock companies, and the accompanying rudimentary accounting standards that bought them time from gullible or lazy investors. In similar vein the author describes the studied marketing vagueness of the Johnsons of Plymouth, attempting to pass off their West Dartmoor granite as being from Haytor, while taking a lease of the latter quarry in order to close it down and thereby reduce competition.

Those interested in the use of building stone during the expansive Victorian era will find a great deal of detailed raw material between the covers of this book. It is clearly the result of an enormous amount of work on the ground, and amongst a variety of archives, newspapers and company prospectuses. The subject matter is interesting enough in its own right to have made this a worthwhile endeavour. However, it is all too easy to be swamped by that detail, most of it set out *verbatim* from the original sources with little interpretation. It *is* possible to read between the lines to infer, for example, that George Templer had no idea how to make investment decisions, but this is not made clear, or where he went wrong and – even roughly – by how much. Granite quarrying was highly competitive and hugely dependent upon transport costs and handling, and the construction of even a simplistic summary business model of the industry would have provided a striking illumination of how fine the line was between success and failure.

Greg Finch

Michael Gee, *The Devon Orchards Book* (Wellington: Halsgrove, 2018). 144 pages. Hardback. ISBN 9780857043108. £14.99.

Michael Gee is an orchards enthusiast and an authority on their natural history. His book is lively and well presented, with a wide range of illustrations, including some wonderful Ravilious photographs. Gee is particularly strong

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on the economics of orchards, the present and future of orchards and orchards as social space – community orchards. This is the first general interest work on Devon orchards to be published, as opposed to the packs and reports that have preceded it. The book is also a history of Devon orchards, but history is not the strongest aspect of the book.

Absence of detailed referencing is often beyond the author's control, though in the case of the publisher (Halsgrove), absence of editing seems to be the editorial policy. There is no index and the bibliography neither contains complete entries nor differentiates between grey literature (reports) and published books. Dr (now Prof.) Turner's 2005 report for the DCC on historic landscape character has no date or provenance (it is in fact available only as a PDF), whereas Turner's much fuller, published study: *Ancient Country* (Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society, 2007) is entirely absent. Citations and quotations do not contain page numbers. If historians have an irritating habit of first looking at the referencing it is because, without referencing, the work will not stimulate further research; which is not to say there is nothing of interest in it. In fact Gee's book gets better and better as the reader advances.

After some definitions, the book moves on to an analysis of Devon's geology, topography and soil – without mentioning that landscape professionals have 'characterized' the entire county. Later in the book, the author rejects Natural England's six National Character areas in Devon as being too 'broad brush' (p. 88), but makes no mention of the much more detailed Landscape Description Units (LDUs) – see the East Devon and Blackdown Hills 2008 Landscape Character Assessment, for example, where just one Landscape Character type contains 23 LDUs (each LDU includes geology; soils; land cover and culture). Management guidelines for: *lower rolling farmed and settled slopes* includes 'promote the management and restoration of orchards'. Why ignore this work?

The exotic origins and complex migration of apples, plums and mazzards which comes next, is of considerable interest. Michael Gee clearly knows a lot about the natural history of all orchard fruit. In chapter 4 history starts in earnest, though the abundant 'would haves', and 'might haves' that attend the planting proclivities of Roman farmers and medieval monks alike, only partly redeemed by the occasional medieval reference, do not inspire confidence. An entire class of historical evidence is ignored: place names. There is nothing speculative about the Pomeroy family (Berry Pomeroy – Totnes) and their shared Anglo-Norman tradition and landscapes. Their origins in Normandy could be St Sauveur la Pommeraye (Manche) or La Pommeraye (Calvados), but both are apt and 'appley' (*pommeraye* means apple orchard). Even in later

centuries, place names are useful; the corruption of the Applehayes (Honiton) farm name in an eighteenth century survey to Applins in the Tithe survey in the next century is a valuable indicator of change and survival in the historic record.

With chapter five, 'Moving into the modern era' we enter more certain ground as the archival record expands and references to '*pomariis*, *gardinis*' at the Dissolution (from an unidentified part of Joyce Youings' research), and a new 'Apple Garden' (Dartington) in 1582 begin to paint a much more complete picture. Tudor and Elizabethan orchard references from outside Devon are useful in reconstructing what orchards actually looked like. Things only get better as we move into the eighteenth century, with a useful discussion of Dean Milles' survey. This carries through to the nineteenth century and analysis of the Tithe Apportionment evidence, though we cannot pass over the fact that Gee discusses the DHS' very own Tithe Apportionment Project without telling the reader where the data is. It's on the DHS website, in case you wondered. (devonhistorysociety.org.uk).

At this point Gee sidesteps another important resource for historians. He comments that, at the time of writing, the Devon Heritage Centre had not electronically 'redrawn' the tithe maps (p. 58). The problem was not actually one of reproducing the tithe maps but geo-rectifying them so that they could be used in conjunction with other digital layers of mapped information. Strangely, because we have seen that he is aware of Professor Turner's work, Gee makes no mention of the publicly funded and available Devon Historic Landscape Characterization which, in the absence of geo-rectified tithe maps, used the First Edition Ordnance Survey series to elucidate the important question of orchard decline – a subject the book addresses at length. There is even a map layer called 'Lost orchards'. Better still, local historians can zoom to their village, even their house and garden, to see if it was an orchard in 1888. Again, why ignore this work?

We move on to an analysis of the recent economic history of orchards, commercial growing for cider production, current trends and the culture of orchards and their future. This is one of the strongest parts of the book. And indeed, overall the book is a good read, with occasional frustrations. We will end on a final note of incomprehension. This is what Gee says about orchards in the landscape:

> Raymond Williams claims that a working country is hardly ever a landscape. He says that 'landscape' is observed self-consciously, with the observer making a divide between the practical and the aesthetic. (p. 88).

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Fortunately we have moved on from this slightly out of context observation. Of course the landscape is observed self-consciously. The European Landscape Convention even enshrines this notion: 'landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. So there is no need to divide the practical from the aesthetic. Historically the practical BECOMES the aesthetic: the practical medieval tithe barn becomes the attractive heritage asset. Gee goes on: 'What is interesting is that Devon's non-natural orchards, often quite tiny, should become such a loved landscape feature'. Is there any part of the landscape, apart perhaps from cliffs and the tidal zone, which is entirely natural?

Philippe Planel

Tony Grumley-Grennan and Michael Hardy, *Gidleigh: a Dartmoor Village past and present,* 2nd edition (Chagford: Glebe Publishing, 2019). Hardback, 216 pages, b & w and colour illustrations. ISBN 9780953892204 £20.

'There is neither pub nor shop, and never has been; no great man was born here, no major battle took place'. Gidleigh is a scattered settlement, covering 3500 acres, containing now, as in the past, some forty houses. The current population of a hundred is likely to be lower than in earlier centuries but this has always been a small community. You might be forgiven for thinking that this does not give a great deal of scope for those compiling a local history book. Yet the authors have crafted a beautifully presented, informative and readable book, chronicling several centuries of village life in intricate detail.

This is the second edition of the book and there have been updates, enhancements, revisions and correction since the first edition appeared in 2000. This is not a traditional, chronologically arranged, local history but its more unusual arrangement is highly effective.

The first chapter 'General History' begins in pre-historic times and covers the Saxon origins of the settlement's name, its Domesday entry and comments on the Norman history of the Prouz (or Prouse) family. The denouncement of the story of Alice Prouz, which appeared in the first edition, is an example of one of the corrections that has been made in the light of new evidence. The chapter then races through five hundred years in eight pages but the remainder

of the book returns to concentrate on particular aspects of this period, so a more detailed overview is not essential.

The bulk of the book, 149 pages, is devoted to Chapter 2. This is a treasure trove for local and family historians with an interest in Gidleigh. It begins with the church and then provides a residential history of each building in turn, with details of the occupants' lives. Incidents and events, as they relate to the houses and farms or their inhabitants, are described within the history of each property. The chapter includes the story of the castle, the 'big house', the mill, the rectory and the farms. Humbler dwellings are subject to just as detailed scrutiny. No building seems to have been ignored, so here too are the histories of the twentieth century buildings and the village hall. The descriptions of most of the properties have been accompanied by drawings that have been produced especially for the book. Often in local histories, much of the narrative relates to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as that is where the wealth of the source material lies. In this book however earlier centuries are well documented too and the authors have made good use of printed, archival and oral sources.

The third and final chapter is devoted to farming and land use, setting the detailed analysis of developments in Gidleigh in a wider context. So dominant was agriculture in this parish, that there was little need to cover other industries or occupations.

There are two appendices. The first lists the rectors of Gidleigh. The second is an insightful analysis of the debate surrounding the authenticity, or otherwise, of the allegedly twelfth century charter that preceded the Letters Patent of Henry VIII. The text of the Letters Patent is reproduced.

The book is illustrated with photographs, a few of which are in colour, line drawings, maps and facsimile documents. There is a bibliography listing printed sources. A serious researcher might have appreciated the inclusion of a list of the documentary sources to consolidate the information found in the footnotes. Although there is an index, for which the authors must be given credit, a list of the buildings covered in Chapter 2 would have been a useful addition to the contents. As an inveterate footnote reader, I was pleased to see that this volume opted for footnotes, as opposed to endnotes. On a few occasions, the footnotes did threaten to overwhelm the page but that was a minor issue and to me, preferable to flicking back and forth to read the references.

This is a scholarly, yet accessible, story of a rural settlement, of which the authors should be proud. Those with no particular interest in Gidleigh, or its inhabitants, should not ignore this book. Gidleigh's story is a fascinating account of the development of an isolated rural settlement, with relevance to

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the broader history of the region. The way in which Gidleigh's history has been presented here should serve as an excellent example to those seeking to write the story of communities elsewhere.

Janet Few

Peter Maunder, *Tiverton Cloth: The Story of the Town's Woollen Trade 1475–1815* (Tiverton: the author, 2018). ISBN 978-1-5272-3174-0. Hardback. Available from the author, Bryngwyn Manor, Raglan, Usk, NP15 2JH, price £25 (incl. UK postage and packing).

On the back cover the author states that this volume is the culmination of 20 years' work, and from the very first page this is evident: he has left no stone unturned in his investigations of Tiverton's merchants. Some readers will imagine that most of this material has already been published and is readily available, and all that is needed is selection of the most relevant facts and to put them into order, however, anyone who has undertaken serious research knows full well that such information as contained in this volume often has to be extracted from obscure dusty documents held in various repositories throughout Britain and overseas.

Previous authors have attempted to show how Tiverton's trade in cloth raised it to a position of being one of the most important towns not only in Devon and the South West, but in the whole country, but Maunder has definitively proved this to be the case beyond doubt through his diligent research. His training as an accountant has placed him in good stead to understand the national economic circumstances and financial dealings behind the Tiverton merchants' successes and failures and, in the case of Peter Blundell, whose phenomenal wealth has only ever been partially explained, the author now gives us a credible explanation of his meteoric rise.

The detailed investigation and analysis of the Exeter Customs Accounts and the Port Books of many locations in England have shown the importance of sea-borne commerce to the Tiverton merchants. The extent of the early trade in such commodities as Breton crescloth, wine from the Bordeaux region and elsewhere, and Spanish iron, illustrates the various connections Tiverton had with the Continent at a very early date. I remember many years ago joking with a former curator of the Tiverton Museum about the (im) possibility of writing a maritime history of an inland town like Tiverton, yet, here it is in glorious detail! As the author is the first to point out, despite gaps in the coverage of the maritime trade, it is nothing compared with the

complete absence of sources for the overland carriage of Tiverton cloth to London which would, certainly in times of naval conflict in the English Channel, been much more voluminous than the risky journeys by sea. Oh for the discovery of a carrier's ledger!

This 450-page volume covers almost three and a half centuries, each period of which receives equal in-depth coverage. Beginning with the early trading of such well-known Tiverton luminaries as John Greneway, the book chronicles the volatility of the international cloth trade in the mid-sixteenth century and the effects of national conflicts of that time, as well as the decline in exports in the 1630s, and the upheaval of the English Civil War. The important change from the production of kerseys to serge is fully explained, as is the importance of Samuel Foote who virtually founded the Dutch serge trade in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Prominence is given to the surviving correspondence between the Tiverton merchants and David Leeuw in Amsterdam – another previously untapped source – and to the troubles that followed the introduction of Irish yarn and worsted in the 1700s. Maunder describes how circumstances led the town's cloth merchants to attempt to diversify as the century progressed, illustrating this with the example of the Upcotts' ventures into America. Material is included from the Fox archive to illustrate the latter part of the eighteenth century and, following the arrival of Heathcoat in 1816, the remnants of the cloth industry, although often ignored, are well-described.

The chronological treatment of Tiverton's trading activities is supplemented by biographies of the main merchants, thereby giving a further personal dimension to the history. Much additional information has resulted from an arduous trawl through the proceedings of the Court of Chancery in the National Archive at Kew, which uncovered a wealth of detail concerning Tiverton merchants – a source not previously consulted in relation to Tiverton.

The appendix, Jane Evans' catalogue of Tiverton cloth seals, similarly displays a very scholarly approach to the subject, and would be worthy of a separate publication, but, I am sure everyone will agree, is the perfect complement to the main body of text. The catalogue brings together information from far afield – necessary, as of the 165 cloth seals so far examined, just seven have been found in England, and of those just one in Tiverton. It must be added that the wonderfully executed illustrations of the seals enables the reader to view in one place all of the examples so far known without having to travel extensively.

This substantial A4-size volume has been produced by Short Run Press to their usual high standards, and the choice of illustrations has been well planned and all are relevant. The author's style of writing flows well, and,

although he is first to admit that his research techniques and palaeographic skills are largely self-taught, he has produced a work worthy of any university don. Indeed, I truly believe that the range of sources investigated in this study of Tiverton could (and possibly should) be used as a blueprint to study the important trade in woollen cloth in Exeter, and other areas of Devon, both north and south. To all of those lucky to have a copy of this volume – look after it, as it will not be surpassed for many a year!

Mike Sampson

Nicholas Orme, ***Medieval Pilgrimage: with a survey of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Bristol*** (Exeter: Impress Books, 2018). xiii, 191 pages. Illustrations. Maps. Paperback. ISBN 9781911293354. Pbk. £14.99.

Leafing through any book new to me, I turn first to the index looking for my home town, Ottery St Mary. I know this is parochial in every sense of the word, and that I should look for more comprehensive value in an author's efforts. But alas, no matter what volume I happen upon, a decision pro or contra adding it to my stock will hang on index inclusions and chapter heads above reviews and plaudits on the cover.

No surprise then, that Nicholas Orme's *Medieval Pilgrimage* started under full sail with a following wind in my esteem, when I noticed Ottery St Mary among pilgrims' choice destinations in Devon. Which is why I began reading on pages 109-10, where Ottery's pilgrim offer is set out. I knew by the end of that short piece that I would enjoy the rest and thus reassured, I turned back to the introductory chapter.

The structure of the book is immediately accessible – a thirty-eight page introduction on medieval pilgrimages with a West Country focus (Part I) followed by a gazetteer (Part II) covering Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Bristol, which makes up the rest of the 190 or so pages including a comprehensive index and bibliography, forty-six colour illustrations and four maps. Part I sets out the business of pilgrimages, and indeed the pilgrimage business, which includes income streams from relics, indulgences, hat badges, and a range of other souvenirs alongside a full complement of introductory and promotional offers, efficacy claims – often for particular medical conditions, advertising schemes and all the panoply of active competitive marketing instantly recognisable today. I found that particularly striking, but those appearances are set amid a view of life much removed from our own, and an important point that the author wishes to make is that most medieval

pilgrimages were short term and local affairs, and only rarely were they the lengthy adventures depicted as a contemporary phenomenon by Chaucer, or later as a literary motif by Bunyan. The introduction concludes slightly provocatively with the briefest mention of Christian romanticism, which Dr Orme distinguishes from that of Rousseau or Wordsworth, but omits to explain further, well aware perhaps that it could distract the traveller from the pleasures of shrine hunting.

There is much else in the introduction, but I won't ruin it by covering the ground here in more detail. The notes to Part I often refer the reader onwards into the Gazetteer for apposite examples and additional information, and beyond the introduction, sustained by Dr Orme's spare, authoritative prose, lies an equal pleasure simply in continuing to read through the Gazetteer without thoughts of visiting any of the sites described. Although I dipped in at several points, I thought I might save some of the entries for the reward of reading individual vignettes on site, when the opportunity arose. In the end though, much as if left unsupervised with a packet of chocolate Hob-Nobs, I finished the lot in short order.

En route through the many fascinating details of various saintly places I learned a delicious new word – cephalophore – describing the habit, by no means rare it seems, of saintly persons to hold their heads in their hands, not as you may imagine in a manner to express frustration, but by virtue of decapitation, usually violent, whereby they achieved martyrdom. On the plus side, the detached head is often able to continue in discourse, and thus mitigate the more usual effects of peremptory removal. There are several cephalophores in Devon and I do believe I spotted one on the North porch of Exeter Cathedral, although as I write I can't be certain about that.

As a field guide, I would wish the book slightly smaller and to have been bound more durably to fit that purpose, especially as it will doubtless need to be serviceable over many years, My only other complaint, if it amounts to that, is that I wish the map maker had shown less Puritan zeal in removing all the customary cartographic ornamentation, including even a scale and north point. The richness of the medieval illustrations set alongside these maps points perhaps to something that was lost in the Reformation. Even so, I shall make sure this book is in my rucksack (or glove-box) for use when abroad in the West Country. If you are at all susceptible to the pleasures of discovering history in the landscape, then I recommend you keep a copy of this book to hand.

Chris Wakefield

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Nigel and Caroline Webb, ***Mr Sugar Face and his Moll*** (Oakham: Legini Press, 2019). xiv + 216 pages. Many illustrations. Softback. ISBN 978-0-9553311-2-1. £10.00, post free.

Despite the title, which even the authors had reservations over, this is not a work that concerns an American gangster and his lover. *Mr Sugar Face* is a pseudonym adopted by the entrepreneur George Webb Medley (1826–98) when writing an account of a tour with his sister Amelia in 1851. This was published by Nigel Webb, Amelia's direct descendant, and reviewed in volume 80 of this journal. *Moll* is Maria ('Molly') Louisa Selous who married George in 1871 and when widowed did much to perpetuate his legacy to their Devon neighbours.

The twelve chapters of this book are thematic, albeit tied strongly to chronology, and begin with George Medley's upbringing in Jamaica and his family's return to England during the financial and racial tensions following the abolition of slavery. George's father resumed his somewhat tarnished career in London's financial market; and in 1841 his son became a stockbrokers' clerk. By 1860 George was well on the way to becoming a man of considerable wealth. On the other hand, it was by no means a matter of 'all work and no play'. He was an accomplished amateur chess player and was involved in the regulation and organisation of the British game. He also enjoyed travel and took pleasure in chronicling the people and places encountered.

In 1850 George Medley became a full member of the London Stock Exchange, where he probably owed much to the counsel of Frederick Lopes Selous, a fellow chess enthusiast and the Chairman of the Stock Exchange at a particularly difficult time for the investor. As Molly's uncle, he no doubt played a part in more personal matters. After a chapter on Molly's artistically distinguished maternal and paternal forebears, the narrative turns to George's widening interests beyond the purely financial. His unsuccessful attempt to enter Parliament as a Liberal representing Devonport and his extensive pamphleteering on behalf of the Cobden Club, a bastion of Free Trade, are well described. Nevertheless, it is the last four chapters that are probably of greater interest to the Devon reader.

By the time of his marriage, George was investing in property and purchasing land in Devon. One such acquisition included Winsford House, Halwill, a building that he and Molly were to enlarge substantially, rename as Winsford Tower and from the mid-1880s use as their summer residence. While in Devon, both did much to involve themselves with the local community: contributing towards, attending and hosting many charitable events. In 1887

Molly opened the new recreation ground at Holsworthy and six years later laid a memorial stone at Chilla Methodist Chapel. In 1884 George became patron of the Holsworthy Agricultural Association, and in 1892 was invited to be President of the comparable body in Northlew. The Medleys' greatest contribution to the local community did not, however, occur until after George's death.

George Webb Medley died, childless, on 29 Nov 1898, aged 72 years. The bulk of his estate (worth a modern-day equivalent of some £25,000,000) went to Molly, who continued her concern for her Devon estate and the welfare of the local people. In keeping with the latter, she had Winsford Cottage Hospital built in memory of her husband. This was closed down in 1998, but thanks to local endeavour and generous grants is lovingly restored and serves as a community facility and holiday accommodation. As to Winsford Tower, this passed through various hands following Molly's death in 1919 and is now demolished. However, her beloved walled garden survives, well-tended by the present owner.

The book closes with two appendices concerning George and Molly's families, an extensive bibliography and a comprehensive index. It is well-written and the illustrations, most hitherto unpublished, are clear and apt. The Webbs, husband and wife, have produced an engaging account of a couple exemplifying the wealthy public-spirited incomers who did much to transform nineteenth-century Devon. It can be recommended, but time will tell if the authors were right to bow to marketing advice over its title.

Sadru Bhanji

The Lustleigh Society (Chris Wilson and Karen Stevenson), *Lustleigh: A Dartmoor Village in Focus* (Exeter: Lustleigh Society, 2018). Softback. Numerous half-tone and colour illustrations. ISBN 9 780995 712225. £13.50

Lustleigh is situated in Central Devon within Dartmoor National Park, about one mile west of the A382, the Bovey Tracey to Moretonhampstead Road. It is a popular destination for tourists wishing to see a typically picturesque Devon village, with thatched cottages centred around the parish church. Walkers and cyclists for generations have enjoyed the route following riverside and woodland pathways to 'the most charmingly situated village in Devon' as described in a Victorian guidebook of 1886.

The Lustleigh Community Archive already has a reputation for its well organised collection of photographs and documents relating to the history of the village and these resources have been used to great effect in this beautifully produced book. *Lustleigh: A Dartmoor Village in Focus* is lavishly illustrated throughout with some delightful snapshots of village life. Happy faces beam out in group photographs of various clubs and societies, school children and events and celebrations. The architecture is equally well represented with rural cottages and Victorian additions, in most cases a testament to how little the outward appearance of the village has changed.

The images draw the reader in to the text, which is well researched and organised into topics. The first chapter sets the context, describing the geology and early history of the settlement, bringing the reader forward to the Tithe Map. The archive is home to one of the three copies of the 1837 Tithe Map, which has recently been restored with support from the Moor Than Meets The Eye Project. Subsequent chapters cover the coming (and going) of the railway branch line, tourism and working life. Village institutions are covered with chapters on education, religion and the church, farms and the manor, and clubs and societies. Lustleigh's contribution to two world wars is included in a chapter entitled 'Defence of the Realm' and the chapter on celebrations and commemorations demonstrates the importance of such events to the village through to the present day tradition of celebrating May Day each year on the first Saturday in May, when there is a procession of children with flowers following the May Queen round the village. A surprising number of 'People of Note' have had connections with Lustleigh, including Cecil Torr, who wrote S*mall Talk at Wreyland,* three volumes of anecdotes and observations drawn from the diaries of his father and grandfather. The final chapter takes the reader on a tour round the landmarks in the immediate vicinity, which includes an accessible clam bridge 'believed to be the last such structure still accessible on Dartmoor.' (p. 90).

The text is referenced throughout and there is a useful index. Anyone who knows Lustleigh village will find this book of interest, but those with a more general interest will find this to be a fascinating insight into the history of a Dartmoor village. As the title suggests, it does feel as if you are zooming in on the details of life in Lustleigh through time.

Viv Styles

Poltimore Estate Research Society, *Poltimore: A Village in Transition, 1911-1921* (published by the Poltimore Estate Research Society, 2018), ISBN 978-1- 5272-3005-7. Copies are obtainable from the Society, via their website (£5 plus postage and packing), or from the Devon Heritage Centre at £6.

This is a well-illustrated, attractively-produced paperback of just over fifty sides. The front cover has a coloured picture of Home Farm as it appears today and the back cover a useful, large scale, map of the village 'as it was in 1921'. No date is given on the map. A list of sources (p. 47) refers to the Ordnance Survey map of 1903, but as the new Model Cottages are shown, the cover map must date from 1914 or later.

The book contains acknowledgements of all those who have contributed in any way, followed by a substantial foreword. This provides a clear background to the period of study, the Poltimore family and the Estate, to the point of its attempted sale in 1921 and eventual renting out to a girls' school in 1923. It is followed by nine brief sections. Of these, the first supplements information given in the foreword, with reference to the Poltimores and especially their interests in the farm and its stock as well as the gardens. Each of the others takes one of the village farms, cottage groups or 'trades' such as the wheelwright and his premises.

The format of each section is similar, so that, although each may be by a different member of the research group, the book reads as a whole. There is information about the buildings, including ground plans and, where appropriate, farm details. This is followed by what is known about their inhabitants, in each case making use of the census of 1911 and known changes during the following years of the period. The last section, on Higher Lathys Cottages, uses the three sons of those of the second cottage to provide an example of the impact of the First World War in Poltimore … and then suddenly one has reached the end, save for the list of main sources.

We know what happened to the Langdon family, but the picture of the memorial in the church suggests that twelve village men were lost. In the foreword, there is reference to loss of population by emigration; but we are not told what the population total had been or what happened to the overall figures. Although the details of the 1921 census are not available, the basic figures tell us that between 1911 and 1921 the population of the civil parish fell from 291 to 240, with the loss of 22 males and 29 females. The parish registers may account for some of the further losses, but further emigration appears to have occurred.

Having had the interest whetted, this reviewer wished for more information. The village map clearly shows church, school and post office, all

key elements of a community. There are snippets of information such as that concerning the rectors, a reference to an assistant teacher and to the village cobbler who was also the postman, but where were the principal teacher and the person running the post office? Are these unreasonable expectations? Perhaps they arise because there is no initial definition of what constitutes 'Poltimore' in this context as no boundaries are shown. The Poltimore Estate only, the civil parish, or the ecclesiastical parish, which would include further farms? Research efforts are limited by the documentary, printed and other evidence and people's available time. Perhaps the book was length-limited by the costs of production and the size of the likely readership.

For anyone with an interest in Poltimore House and its Estate and for all members of the village community this should prove an interesting read. It will be relevant to those with a family history link to Poltimore, with an interest in farm and village architecture or who may be interested in undertaking a similar study. Having read it, perhaps more people may be inspired to volunteer information, perhaps leading to an enlarged version when the 1921 census details have become available.

Marion Hardy

Sarah Child, *Rackenford: a Short History,* 2nd edition (Rackenford: the author, 2019). 24 pages. Illustrated. Softback. No ISBN. £3.00. Available from Rackenford Community Shop, email rackenford.shop@btconnect.com)

A much enlarged version of the edition published in 2009, this short, but engaging and well researched history of Rackenford covers a very large amount of ground. Rackenford, a large parish with a small population, eight miles west of Tiverton, is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but this booklet focusses on the village from the sixteenth century onwards, when much of the land in the parish belonged to the Cruwys and Acland families. The author takes a subject approach and there are short chapters on population and land, farms and farming (including farming patterns and other occupations found in the village), the poor, outdoor relief and the workhouse, education and social life, church and chapel, and Trinity Well. The author addresses the issue of who were the main families who lived in the parish, mentioning that many of them are no longer present in the village now (p. 18), but does not investigate the issue further. The booklet continues with a summary roll of honour for World War One; since the 1911 census records the total population

of Rackenford as 349 persons (p. 3), the statement that half of the adult male population of the parishes of Rackenford and the nearby hamlet of Creacombe served in the war (a total of 46 men – p. 20) probably mirrors the experience of other Devon villages such as Sampford Peverell and Abbotskerswell where around 20% of the total population of each village served in the war (see the relevant book reviews in *TDH* 89 (2019) and *TDH* 84 (2014)). At this point, it should be noted that conscription began in January 1916 not January 1915 as stated on p. 20. The work concludes with a brief glance at Rackenford in World War Two, and the evacuation of a junior school from Erith (Kent) to the village, and the changing building styles and patterns in the village.

This is not an anecdotal history replete with postcards and family photographs, but serious historical research backed up by references to The National Archives (mainly legal disputes), material in the Devon Heritage Centre, an unpublished manuscript by Robert Way dating probably from the 1880s, and the author's previously published articles in the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* (other publications on the village include the series published by the Devon Family History Society between 2000 and 2003 on Rackenford marriages, baptisms and burials mainly for the early nineteenth century). The pamphlet as a whole is a useful study, which raises many interesting questions which merit further research.

Paul Auchterlonie

Peter Bowers, Clive Cotton, Heather Culpin and Allan Weller, *Sampford Peverell during the First World War* (Sampford Peverell: Sampford Peverell Society, 2018). vi + 263 pages. Illustrated. Softback. ISBN 9780993317118. £6.00.

Kenton Past and Present Society, *Kenton Remembers: World War I Roll of Service* (Kenton: the Society, 2018). 70 pages. Illustrated. Softback. No ISBN. No price indicated.

These two books are the latest in a longish line of publications by Devon local history societies which contain biographical details of all those from particular villages who died in the First World War (and often those who served as well). Many of the villages which have been covered are of similar size (between 400 and 650 inhabitants), offered employment mainly in farming, labouring and domestic service and perhaps one industrial concern,

and contained people who had been born, if not in the village itself, then usually within a radius of 20 miles. Some of the books, notably the volume on Lustleigh (*Lustleigh and the First World War*, reviewed in *TDH* 85 (2016), 106-8) give considerable background information of life in the village during the War and the first book under review, namely that on Sampford Peverell, fits into this pattern.

In 1914, Sampford Peverell was a village of some 140 properties (613 inhabitants according to the 1911 census), of whom three-quarters were born in Devon (the remaining quarter comprised a few incomers and most of the 60 boys who lived in the St Boniface Children's Home). The book begins with an imagined walk through the village describing the inhabitants of each house, and their occupations:

> 'for boys and men, agriculture is the most common employment, but there are shop-workers, craft workers [e.g. a baker, a butcher and a boot and shoe maker], or those working on the railway [which included on the canal which passed through the centre of the village], in the quarry or at the creamery … Of girls and women, about 70% have occupations, for instance as domestic servants, dairymaids, shop-workers, or seamstresses (pp. 3-4).

There were also a small number of members of the middle-class, professionals like the rector, the doctor and the vet, a couple of well-to-do farmers on the edge of the village, and at least two people of private means, Mrs. Rossiter, widow of the former rector, and Mr. Frederic Coupland-Smith.

Having completed one's tour of the village (which contained three public houses, a post office, a state school, a private school and several shops), the book then looks at the village during the War. The first chapter (pp. 23-34) discusses the various recruiting drives during the first two years of the War (only 27 villagers had joined up by December 11, 1914), and once conscription was introduced in 1916, the results of the Tiverton Rural District Tribunal and how it affected claims for exemption by various men from the village. In all, '122 men and three women helped directly with the war effort, 24 of these lost their lives … [and] 51 … definitely returned to the village [after the War]' (p. 197). Following on from recruitment and tribunals is a chapter on the Volunteer Training Corps (pp. 35-40), a unit of which was set up in neighbouring Uffculme, which contained a small contingent of Sampford Peverell men.

The First World War was the first conflict in which British women were mobilised on a national scale, and chapter three (pp. 41-51) looks at the role of Sampford Peverell women in the war. The Pedlers of Sampford Barton

had two daughters, Alice and Mary, both of whom went into nursing as a career and served in the war, Mary becoming acting matron of the Magdalen Camp Military Hospital in Winchester (p. 41), while Lucy Wallington, whose mother ran a girls' school in the village, also served as a Red Cross volunteer in Bristol 'doing full time nursing work' (p. 43). The village was served during the war by a registered nurse and midwife, Elizabeth Moon, who had clearly improved her station in life considerably, as 'at the time of her marriage [in 1877] she was unable to sign her own name … in the parish register' (p. 44). During the war, many women continued to work at their usual jobs, and 'there is limited evidence that farmers did actually change their employment practices [by employing women]' (p. 48), although at least seven women were taken on in 1916 to work in the creamery (p. 44). Chapter 4 is devoted to Lottie Walrond, the wife of the Conservative M.P. for Tiverton and daughter of Baron Glentanar, who lived at Bradfield near Uffculme. This chapter ranges much more widely than just the War, chronicling her social life, her political work (she had to campaign alone during the January 1910 election as her husband was ill and she spoke on 'tariff reform, unemployment, Home Rule, the Navy [and] unity with Ireland' – p. 54), her war work (she converted and 'personally superintended' Bradfield into a convalescent home for wounded soldiers – p. 57), and her charitable work in Sampford Peverell. This chapter goes beyond 1918 and describes the visit of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin to Bradfield in 1925, and the conversion of Bradfield into an auxiliary hospital during the Second World War.

After looking at state regulations during the war (pp. 61-69), which covers rationing, restrictions of alcohol, and the Defence of the Realm Act, there is an important chapter on farming and food production (pp. 69-77) which adds very useful information to volume 86 (2017) of *The Devon Historian* which was devoted to 'Feeding Devon in World War 1', but did not use any examples from the Tiverton area. The first half of the book concludes with chapters on Belgian refugees, fundraising, collecting from the wild (conkers, herbs, blackberries and nut shells), and public services, which examines how the Parish Council coped with the war and anecdotes about the medical, police and fire services. The final chapter of the first half of the book deals with the St Boniface Home for Waifs and Strays (pp. 101-09), a home for orphaned or abandoned boys, which transferred from Bognor Regis in 1907 and whose pupils raised money during the War; several of the boys from St Boniface served with the armed forces and three died on active service. The home closed in 1952.

The second half of the book is a very detailed, well researched series of biographies of the 24 men who died in the war, and shorter, but still

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impressive biographies of the 121 who returned, giving details of their war service, residence, marriage, family and occupation after the war, and in the majority of cases, also the date of death. The proportions of those who served and those who died for King and Country are 22% of the population served and 3.9% died in service, which is almost identical to the figures found for Abbotskerswell (20.5% of the population served and 3.9% died) whose roll of honour was published in 2014 and reviewed in *TDH* 84 (2014), 134-35. This biographical section includes details of plans to memorialise and celebrate those who died and those who served (pp. 200-3), plans which reached their culmination in 1949 with the opening of a park dedicated to the memory to those who had died in both world conflicts.

Supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the authors have used a wide variety of newspapers, magazines, school log-books, archival resources and genealogical and military databases in compiling this work, which is well illustrated with contemporary photographs and illustrations plus two maps. The book is enhanced by extracts from *A Village Childhood, a Memoir of Life in Sampford Peverell* (Sampford Peverell Society, 2007) by Denis Cluett who was born in 1907 and still had clear memories of the village during the War when he wrote his memoirs 50 years later.

This is an important and significant addition to the growing literature on First World War rolls of honour, and gives the reader a valuable insight into how one Devon village adapted to life in wartime a hundred years ago.

Kenton Remembers is a less ambitious but equally well researched project which, after a short introduction covering sources and the research process, recruitment, tribunals (held in Exeter for Kentonians) and the Defence of the Realm Act (pp. 4-8), launches into the main text which gives biographical and service information for the 106 men and one woman who served in some capacity in the First World War. Using archival, genealogical and census data as well as newspapers and the photographs of 48 men and one woman in military uniform held in the Kenton Archive, the research team has uncovered a great deal of information about the birth, residence, marriage, family, service record and death of those who feature in the roll of service, and the entries are often as full as those for Sampford Peverell. The volume concludes with brief details of nineteen men who were potentially eligible for the Kenton Roll of Service, but whose link with Kenton or service details could not be confirmed (pp. 69-70).

There are also fascinating inserts in the text covering 'Farming and Farm Policies' (p. 22), 'Women's War Work' (p. 23), which included staffing a remount depot at Powderham Estate, where horses were trained for military

service, serving in Red Cross Working Parties, and even becoming GP for the village, a duty which Bertha Mules undertook when the regular doctor volunteered for the Royal Army Medical Corps, and finally 'Kenton Supports the War Effort' (p. 44). These inserts presumably formed part of the 2017 exhibition mentioned in the introduction which 'focused on wartime policies and regulations and their impact on life in Kenton in the mid-war period when domestic economic pressures were becoming increasingly severe and the war's outcome increasingly uncertain' (p. 4), a subject to which one hopes the Kenton Past and Present Society will devote further research. This book is another useful contribution to the growing literature on Devon during the Great War, showing the extent of the sacrifices the men and women of Kenton made in all the theatres of war, from Gallipoli to the Somme.

Paul Auchterlonie

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Obituary

Bob Patten 1948–2018

DHS members will be sorry to hear of the death of long-term DHS member and *The Devon Historian* reviewer (often with his wife Jackie) Bob Patten. I did not know Bob personally, but by all accounts he had a remarkable life full of many interests and achievements, and he was admired and respected by all who knew him.

Although he was born in rural Somerset, much of Bob's life was spent in Devon, in Morchard Bishop. From a young age Bob began to collect, listen to and tape people's memories, customs and songs. In 1974 he published *Exmoor Custom and Song*. It was the mutual love of the folk music of the South West of England that brought Bob and Jackie together, and they married in August 1982. With the help of funding from the British Library Sound Archive they created the Bob and Jacqueline Patten English Folk Music Collection, which will soon be available at the South West Heritage Trust.

Bob gained a degree in chemistry at Aberystwyth University, but his interest turned to mills and milling, and he worked in mills all over Britain, It was when he became a mill manager in Crediton that he and Jackie moved to Morchard Bishop in Devon.

In 1992 he and Jackie planted the first trees in what was to be a heritage orchard containing eighty different varieties of apple near their home in Morchard Bishop. For many years Bob acted as Clerk to the Parish Council and had a long association with the Dartmoor Folk Festival.

He will be much missed.

Mitzi Auchterlonie

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