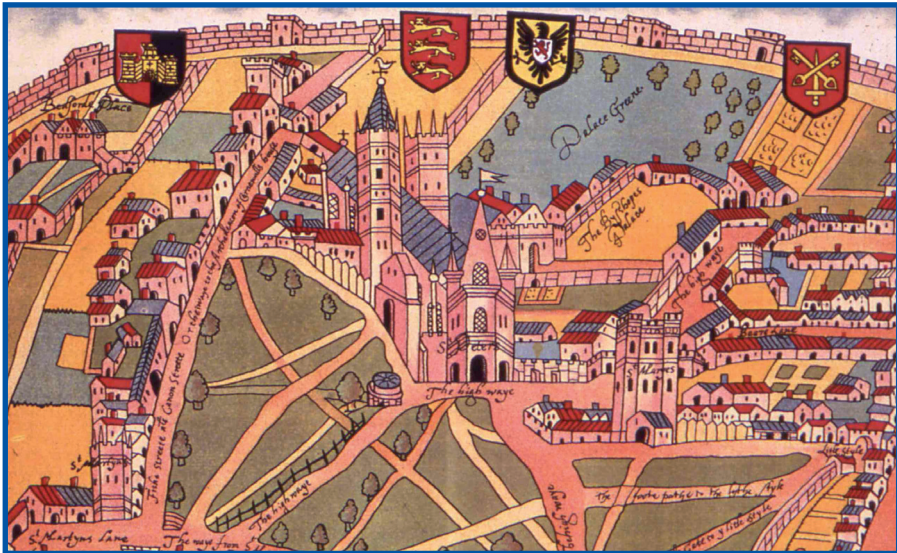


Devon History News



A portion of the Sidmouth tithe map (Courtesy of Devon Record Office and East Devon AONB Parishscapes Project) (see article on page 9)

• NEWSLETTER OF THE DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY •



John Hooker's late 16th-century view of the Cathedral Close (from Exeter Cathedral D&C MS. 3530) (see article on page 5)

From the Editor

Devon History News was launched three years ago and has been edited by Chris Jago since its inception, but Chris has now decided to concentrate on other projects for the Society and relinquish this role. I am extremely grateful to Chris for his support as I have taken over as editor and I hope to be able to maintain the high standards that he has set.

In this issue we have updates from some of the officers of the Society as well as introductions from new officers who write about their roles. Also included are some reflections from Dr Mitzi Auchterlonie about her role as Books Reviews Editor and an update on the project to digitise the Devon tithe maps, as well as news about the plans for the future of the Exeter Cathedral library. There is also information about some upcoming events in Plymouth and Sidmouth.

I hope you enjoy this edition and that there is something of interest to everyone.

From the Editor of The Devon Historian

The very late Volume 79 has eventually appeared. The volume was delayed through a series of unforeseen circumstances: a reliance on late submissions to fill this edition, protracted negotiations with private and institutional copyright holders in Newfoundland, the hold up of proofs in the heavy snowfalls in Lincolnshire and then Devon, and then flood damage at the printers, Bartletts. The Editor would like to think that this will have been an anomalous year. In terms of volume 80, the number of submissions is looking more healthy at this point in the year compared to the last. The Editor would like to thank contributors and Society members for their patience.

Dr Andrew Jackson

Chairman's Report January 2011

Since the last newsletter was published, the Annual General Meeting has taken place and there are several new Council members to welcome, so this is very much an 'Ave et Vale' edition. You may have already seen that the Newsletter has a new Editor, so a great welcome to Ann Bond who has taken over as editor from Chris Jago, who has done a fine job from the start and without whose

commitment we would not have this useful means of communication. Many thanks Chris!

Council had decided that the website, a very valuable tool for information and now receiving more and more 'hits', needed an overhaul so Chris has now turned his attention to re-organising the web with Ray Girvan, who has been running it with Sadru Bhanji for several years. Sadru has been working with our treasurer, Graham Bliss, making sure legislation and directives from the Charity Commissioners are being complied with.

Vice Chairman, Phil Planel, Elizabeth Maycock, our valued Honorary member, Chris Jago and Jane Bliss, are heavily involved in producing the 40th Anniversary book of Devon, with support from our President, Professor Christopher Holdsworth and Dr. Todd Gray. Jane has had a tough time first with an accident in France, then an unexpected major operation. While recovering from this double disaster, she had another accident, not I hasten to add, in the snow and ice. You will all be glad to hear she has recovered and the programme for 2011 is launched.

Gerald Quinn continues to manage the growing membership with great skill and thanks to Anne Howard, well known to all who frequent the West Country Studies Library, will soon be adding several area societies to our list of affiliated societies. The need for gentle but persuasive publicity is in the capable hands of Gill Selley. Tony Collings makes sure we have clear and accurate minutes so that nothing is overlooked. Andrew Jackson has produced our much enlarged and interesting Devon Historian again, despite the difficulties of communication with the printers from snow bound Lincolnshire which contributed to the delay in mailing it this time. Every year finds us saying 'vale' to a valued Council member. This year, Clare Greener, very involved in the Devon Gardens' Trust and Friends of Devon Archives, and John Draisey have stood down, but as Director of the Devon Records Office we certainly have not lost John!

As well as the two annual visits to villages in Devon at the invitation of their individual societies, we will carry on with the excellent "North, South, East, and West" lectures, which grew in numbers and popularity as the year progressed. Phil, thanks to an anonymous gift is working to organise a day's workshop for primary school teachers wanting to involve their pupils in local history and of course the Devon Book of the year and the University dissertation prize will continue. See the next newsletter for details of more activities through the year!

The Council wishes everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful new year.

Shirley Purves (Chairman DHS)
Woodbury January 2011

An introduction from the new Secretary for Affiliated Societies

I am writing to introduce myself as I have recently taken on the position of secretary for the affiliated societies on behalf of the Devon History Society. I have lived in South Devon since 1987 having moved from North London with my family. We initially lived in Bishopsteignton followed by Teignmouth and in 2003 moved to Exeter primarily to reduce travelling time as both my husband and I work in the city.

My interest in local history came about through my work as a librarian. From 1994 to 2003 I was responsible for the local studies collection in Torquay Library and was fortunate to work under the guidance of Ian Maxted both before and after local government reorganization in 1998. From 1998 to 2003 I was responsible for local studies in Torbay. In 2007 I was appointed as Local Studies Librarian based in the Westcountry Studies Library but with the wider remit of advising on the collections in the libraries throughout Devon. As you can imagine I discover and learn something new every day and one of the greatest pleasures of my post is meeting both amateur historians and those undertaking research in a professional capacity.

I hope that I will be able to provide a clear line of contact between Devon History Society and the affiliated societies. This will enable the Society to discuss and implement some of the suggestions received through the recent survey. The use of e-mail would reduce postage costs and speed up communications and to this end it would be most helpful if all affiliated societies could e-mail contact details to me at annegh58@yahoo.co.uk

Please contact me with your comments, ideas, and suggestions. I look forward to meeting you at future meetings.

Anne Howard
Affiliated Societies Secretary

The Exeter Cathedral Librarian writes about the plans for the transformation of the library. See also the front cover for an illustration from one of the treasures of the library.

A new chapter for the oldest library in Exeter

Exeter Cathedral Library was founded in the 11th century by the first Bishop of Exeter, Leofric (d. 1072), who gave 66 of his own manuscripts to his cathedral. Regrettably, only one of those manuscripts remains in the library, but this survivor is the anthology of Old English poetry usually known as the Exeter Book (c. 965), one of the most important books in the country and the foundation volume not only of the library but arguably of English literature itself. There are, however, many more treasures here, such as the Exon Domesday Book (1086), the final draft of the Domesday survey for the South-Western counties and the only regional survey to survive alongside its edited counterpart in Great Domesday.

The library has come through various traumas in its long history, and at different times library stock has been housed in the cloisters, the Lady Chapel, the Chapter House and elsewhere. Library resources – of time, staff and finance – have often been in short supply. In the mid-1950s the first floor of the west wing of the Bishop's Palace was fitted out as the main Cathedral Library room (though it was never large enough to house all the books) and the University of Exeter assumed responsibility for administering the library. This arrangement lasted till 2001, when the Dean and Chapter took back direct control. Since that time, momentous decisions about the future of the library (and the Cathedral Archives) have been taken, and we can look forward to a dramatic improvement in our prospects for the future. Some six years ago the Exeter Cathedral Third Millennium Campaign was launched, one of the aims of which is to raise £1,000,000 for the library and archives. Thanks to years of extremely hard work and a determination to overcome various obstacles to progress, the transformation of our library and archive service is now beginning in earnest.

Just before Christmas 2010 the library and archives were closed to the public for about a year, so that work on the new premises could begin. (Library enquiries will still be dealt with to the best of our ability.) The project involves the creation of a new repository on the ground floor of the west wing, with mobile shelving and atmospheric controls conforming to the appropriate British Standard. This floor will also house the new reading room and offices, with a lift connecting to additional library rooms on the second floor. Library stock in the building will be 'cocooned' while building work goes on, and during 2011 will be moved to its new home. One of the main advantages of the new arrangements is that there will also be room for all the parts of the library which have had to be kept

off-site, and for the archives. A few years ago it would have been beyond expectation that all these resources could be housed under one roof and in appropriate conditions, and this will contribute to a greatly enhanced service for readers and visitors.

There would of course be little point to all this if the holdings of the library and archives were not of great significance or interest, but the team's conviction is that the resources are profoundly deserving of the forthcoming transformation in their fortunes. The Exeter Book, Exon Domesday and the other medieval manuscripts, the great collections of early medical and scientific books, the foundation charter, other Anglo-Saxon charters, the unrivalled set of medieval fabric rolls and all the many other treasures of the library and archives have been undervalued and undeservedly neglected in the past, but their future should now be very different.

Peter Thomas,
Exeter Cathedral Librarian

DHS Anniversary Book Update

As reported in last August's newsletter, around thirty articles are being considered for publication and work is now progressing well in the final editing phases. The Committee's aim is to complete the project before the AGM in October. In the meantime, we are in touch with authors in finalising scripts.

Jane Bliss, Elizabeth Maycock, Phil Planel, Chris Jago

A request from the Membership Secretary

At the last Executive Committee meeting, a decision was taken to ask members for their email addresses. This would greatly facilitate communication with members, particularly in connection with matters of urgency, but also possibly saving on postal costs. No email addresses will be communicated to other parties, apart from members of the Executive Committee. When our existing supplies of membership leaflets are exhausted, the new replacement stock will naturally have provision for email address inclusion. So, if you do have an email address, I would be grateful if it could be communicated to me direct via my email address g.quinn256@btinternet.com. My thanks in advance.

Gerald F Quinn, Membership Secretary

The 2011 Programme

Following the successful introduction of a broader ranging programme in 2010, the society will continue to offer seminars in venues across the county. The emphasis remains on talks which highlight the very wide range of sources available for local historians, and provide an opportunity for questions and lively discussion. Our previous seminar speakers communicated their enthusiasm for their own local history research by focusing on the material they had used and the information it could reveal. The spring meeting at Ilfracombe is the first event of this year's programme, where the recently formed Ilfracombe History and Architecture Appreciation Group have kindly agreed to host the day. We can also look forward to an enjoyable summer meeting with the active local history group at Lustleigh. The fortieth anniversary AGM in 2010 saw the St Luke's lecture theatre filled to capacity, and it would be good to see an equally enthusiastic response for the 2011 AGM. The theme is Devon at war. Booking forms and further information about events later in the year will be sent out with the next newsletter.

Jane Bliss, Hon. Programme Secretary

Publicity for the Devon History Society

My intention is to give wider publicity to the Society throughout Devon in order to inform those people who are not members (individuals affiliated societies), and make them aware of what the Devon History Society does.

A general poster will be distributed to all libraries (through the kind offices of the West Country Studies Library), and also displayed in areas which might catch people's attention.

Notice of meetings will be advised to local newspapers and television. The Devon Book of the Year winner and runners-up will receive publicity in the newspapers, and a display of the books and authors will be shown in the foyer of the West Country Studies Library. Photographs of the presentations, at the AGM, to the winner of the Devon History Dissertation and winner and runners-up of the Book of the Year competition will be sent to newspapers and shown on the DHS website.

Jane Bliss, Anne Howard and I will co-ordinate publicity on the website.

Gill Selley

Book reviews for The Devon Historian

When Andrew Jackson asked me to be the Reviews Editor of The Devon Historian I was a comparatively new member of the Devon History Society and wasn't sure what I would be taking on! The new format of the journal has meant a higher profile and, hopefully, a wider readership, but disseminating information on, and assessments of, new publications continues to be a vital part of its contents. The Devon Historian offers opportunities for knowledgeable members of the DHS (and their friends and colleagues), to contribute, if not an article, then a review of one of the numerous publications on all aspects of Devon history that are published every year. One of the hardest jobs of a Reviews Editor is finding suitable people willing to do a review and then hoping it will be submitted before the next publishing deadline – occasionally they are never sent in! Of course, if no-one can be found for a particular book a review will not appear and this may affect the potential sales and distribution of a publication.

A great range of titles are sent to me for review – these vary from specialist texts dealing with maps, archaeology and localised micro-history to explorations of the built environment and transport, as well as studies of the great Devon families and their estates. There has even been a detective story centred on Branscombe! Social history is a particular interest of mine and it would be good to see more of this genre submitted for review.

I am currently trying to assemble a list of reviewers and their particular interests, so I would be very grateful if anyone who would like to be on the list would contact me either by e-mail or post. My new address is: 10, Langdon House, Furze Court, Exeter, Devon, EX4 1FH. My e-mail is: M.M.Auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk

Finally, there are some books that still have not found reviewers. If anyone feels that they would like to write a review of one of them (it does help if you have some knowledge of the subject or related topics), please do get in touch with me by post or e-mail, as above.

Pugh, B., Spiring, P. and Bhanji, S., *Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and Devon: A Complete Tour Guide and Companion*, London: MX Publishing, 2010.

Ravenhill, M. and Rowe, M (eds.), *Devon Maps and Map-Makers: Manuscript Maps before 1840 (Supplement)*, Devon & Cornwall Record Society, 2010

Scott-Fox, C., *Moorstone Barton: A Medieval Manor, Peninsular*, no date.

R. Wawman (ed.) *Never Completely Submerged: the Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*, Guildford: Grosvenor, 2009.

Webb, N (ed.), *The Journals of Mr Sugar Face and Mr Gastric Juice* (a travel narrative of the 1850s by George Webb Medley), Oakham: Legini Press, no date.

Whitten, E. H. T., *Bonehill: Evolution of a Dartmoor Hamlet*, Wellington: Ryeland, 2009.

Mitzi Auchterlonie

Reviews Editor

Philippe Planel provides an update on the East Devon Parishscapes Project and writes about plans to extend the transcription of tithe maps to the whole of Devon. See the front cover for a picture of the tithe map covering a portion of Sidmouth.

Tithe Map and Apportionment Digitization

The tithe was an annual payment of an agreed proportion (originally one-tenth) of the yearly produce of the land, which was payable by parishioners to the parish church, to support it and its clergyman. Originally tithes were paid ‘in kind’ (wool, milk, honey, fish, barley etc). By 1836 tithes were still payable in most of the parishes in England and Wales, but the Government had decided on the commutation of tithes - in other words, the substitution of money payments for payment ‘in kind’ all over the country and the Tithe Commutation Act was passed in 1836.

A survey of the whole of England and Wales was undertaken in the decade or so after 1836, to establish boundaries of land, acreage of fields, and states of cultivation, and parish or district tithe maps showing all plots subject to tithe were produced. When an overall value for the tithe in a parish or district had been determined, the tithe rent-charge had to be apportioned fairly among the lands of differing quality and various uses in the parish, and for this purpose a tithe apportionment linked to the map was drawn up.

The process of creating high-resolution digital copies of Devon’s tithe maps began with the East Devon Parishscapes project in 2008, and by the end of 2009

all 510 maps held at the Devon Record Office (plus a few duplicates and extras) had been scanned. The DRO also purchased from the National Archives grayscale digital copies of the 472 tithe apportionments. It is planned to publish the digitized maps and apportionments on the Internet in 2011, so that they can be viewed without visiting a record office. A second stage in the process will involve 'stretching' the maps over a modern map, so that they can form a layer in a Geographical Information System and be used to demonstrate changes in the landscape over time. The third and final stage will link the apportionment details to each field on the map, thus making information about ownership, occupancy, acreage, and state of cultivation instantly accessible.

For this final stage the apportionment information needs to be transferred to a spreadsheet in a standard format, and this can only be done by reading the original document, or an image of it, and keying in the separate pieces of data to a computer. This was accomplished very successfully by volunteers for a large part of East Devon during the Parishscapes project, and groups elsewhere in the county have produced transcriptions or are in the process of doing so. The challenge now is to extend transcription to cover the whole of Devon, and for this more volunteers are needed. The DRO can supply copies of apportionments on CDs (and they will soon be available online), along with detailed instructions for transcription. The documents themselves are generally written in a clear hand and are not difficult to read. Local knowledge of place and personal names is useful, though not essential. For further information contact the DRO: devrec@devon.gov.uk and mark the email subject as Devon Tithe Map and Apportionment Project.

Newsflash

At the time of going to print, Devon County Council is considering its budget and spending plans for the coming years. There is currently every indication that this will result in significant funding cuts to the two Decon Record Offices, in Exeter and Barnstaple, and to the library services within the county. The record offices and the West Country Studies Library are amongst the most significant resources available locally to anyone studying the history of Decon and naturally the Devon History Society is concerned to see the long term future of these assets preserved. You should by now have received a letter from our chairman, Shirley Purves, about the proposed cuts, which has also been posted on the website. It is intended that regular updates will be posted on the website as further information becomes available so please try to visit the site at www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk regularly over the coming weeks for the latest information as it becomes available.

Upcoming events

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PLYMOUTH BLITZ

This year is the 70th anniversary of the Blitz on Plymouth in 1941 and to mark the occasion a one-day conference sponsored by Friends of Devon's Archives, Devon Family History Society, Plymouth and West Devon Record Office and the University of Plymouth will take place on Saturday, 5 March 2011, at The Sherwell Centre, University of Plymouth, North Hill, Plymouth, PL4 8AA. Tickets are £14 including lunch, or £8 without. To book a place at the conference please send a cheque made payable to "Friends of Devon's Archives" to Peter Towey, 20 Skylark Rise, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 7SN or contact Peter on 01752 310852 or e-mail ptowey@sky.com for further information. Bookings for lunch must be received by 26th February 2011.

The Devon FHS, Plymouth & West Devon Record Office, Ford Park Cemetery Trust and local Societies will all have stalls at the conference where you can browse.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SIDMOUTH ANTIQUARY

A day conference will take place on Saturday, 16 April 2011 at the Norman Lockyer Observatory, Sidmouth sponsored by the new East Devon AONB cultural project focusing on Peter Orlando Hutchinson - a Victorian antiquary whose legacy provides a fascinating account of the Victorian landscape particularly in and around the Sid Valley. Tickets are £10 per person and include lunch. Further details and booking forms can be obtained by contacting Peter Orlando Hutchinson Project, East Devon AONB Partnership, East Devon Business Centre, Heathpark, Honiton, EX14 1SF or by email from pplanel@eastdevon.gov.uk or telephone 01404 46663

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