Food, Farming and Fishing in Devon during the First World War

Front cover photograph:

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'A British Soldier Helping a Woman Farm-Hand to Gather in the Crops',
Horace Nicholls [1918], Imperial War Museums

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Introduction

Henry French

The Project

These essays are one of the main results of a research initiative run by the History Department at the University of Exeter, as part of its involvement with one of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded First World War Community-Engagement Hubs, 'Everyday Lives During the First World War', co-ordinated by Dr Sarah Lloyd at the University of Hertfordshire. Through this collaboration, we were able to obtain funding for a part-time project officer, Dr James Wallis, who has been responsible for most of the organisation of the project workshops and this publication, and also funding specifically for research undertaken by groups of volunteers on life in Devon during the First World War. This research was brought together under the title 'Food, Farming and Fishing in Devon During the First World War', under the auspices of the Devon History Society, which acts as a federation of over 65 local and community history groups. We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Dr Julia Neville, who acts as the secretary of the DHS' 'affiliated societies', who used her extensive contacts to help bring together the contributors to this volume. We were also assisted considerably by Southwest Heritage Trust/Devon Heritage Centre's on-going 'Devon Remembers Heritage Project', funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and in particular, the efforts of its project officer Katherine Findlay, particularly in bringing in contributors on fishing.

The volume itself is the outcome of a series of project workshops for volunteers which we held every two months between September 2015 and June 2016. These were designed to identify areas of research that volunteers were interested in pursuing, to act as round-table discussions about research methods, to share findings, and to hear overview papers by a series of experts. These experts have included Professor Emeritus David Pinder (Plymouth University) on research methods devised by the Wembury Local History Group for the study of farming during the war; Dr Paul Brassley (Exeter University) on the national picture of agriculture during the war; Dr Nicola Verdon (Sheffield Hallam University) on the organisation of the women's sections of the War Agricultural Committees; Dr Paul Cleave (Exeter University) on food supply, cooking and recipes in Devon during the war and Dr Jacqueline Sarsby's fascinating illustration of the efforts of the small-farmer on the fringes of Dartmoor.

These events were very useful in sharing research methods, knowledge, and allowing participants to put their own research into a county and a national context. By the third workshop, in late February 2016, it became clear that a number of research themes were emerging. Slightly to my surprise, there was considerable enthusiasm within the group to research the annual agricultural output statistics, gathered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries each June. It is fair to say that there are more exciting historical sources for the period! However, the contributors to this volume wanted to understand how farmers had reacted to the on-set of the war, and responded to food shortages after 1916. They also wanted to establish how the situation in Devon reflected or deviated from the national picture. This led on, fairly naturally, to wanting to find out more about particular local initiatives, notably the use of allotments, and the focus on maximising productivity through crops like potatoes. Even more logically, this led onto food itself, and Paul Cleave's researches into First World War-era recipes, and even some 'historical re-enactment', in the form of a surprisingly

palatable potato cake that Paul baked for the final workshop in June!

Throughout the organisation of the first few meetings, James, Julia and I were very conscious of the need to include perspectives on fishing, and we were extremely grateful to Katie Findlay for putting us in contact with Dr Nigel Hyman, Samantha Little, Heather Roche and Lou Bagnald, and for their contributions. As was explained by them in more detail at the workshops, the story of inshore and deep-sea fishing in Devon was rather sobering, and stood in stark contrast to the steady, and less dramatic, changes that occurred in agriculture.

Inevitably, the geographical focus of these chapters reflects the interests of the researchers. These are clustered more on the eastern side of Dartmoor, and on the county's southern coast, than they are on its northern and western flanks. There are two reasons for this concentration. The first is simply that the Devon History Society and 'Devon Remembers Heritage Project' have been able to develop a greater density of contacts in these areas, although not for want of trying elsewhere. The second is that in the run-up to the 2014 commemorations of the declaration of war, The Dartmoor Trust undertook extensive research on farming, agriculture and forestry across Dartmoor and a significant number of parishes in south and west Devon, which resulted in an excellent and extensive exhibition in 2015 at Princetown Museum. The results of their labours are available on-line at: http://dartmoortrust.org/war

The Research

These chapters illustrate that the effects of war on food, fishing and farming in Devon were very varied. The most striking aspect is how the fates of farming and fishing diverged within days of the outbreak of war. While farming was undoubtedly affected by a loss of manpower caused by the 'rush to the colours' in the late summer of 1914, change remained gradual and incremental in the agricultural

sector. By contrast, as Nigel Hyman and Samantha Little demonstrate, the immediate impositions of restrictions on inshore and deep-sea fishing created administrative hurdles for fishermen on the south coast that they struggled with throughout the war, and which were never really mitigated. In the first few days of the war, fishing activity was reduced in range, extent and volume, and it remained confined within these bounds until 1918. This reduction in activity created considerable hardship, both for those fishermen deprived of a livelihood, and for some of the families of those called up into naval service. In addition, fishing vessels were easy prey for German U-boats and mines, and suffered significant loses.

By contrast, the chapters by Paul Brassley, and particularly the detailed investigations by Ted Hitchings, Roger Wilkins and Penny Lawrence of the Exe valley communities and East Devon, demonstrate that the main changes in farming occurred after the Corn Production Act of 1917. Obviously, farming works on an annual cycle, so the processes of change are slower. War soon deprived Devon's farmers of some of their farmworkers and their draught horses, but the declaration of war came just as the 1914 harvest was being completed, and plans for 1915 had been made. It was only in 1916 that changes in production were very noticeable, with an increase in arable acreages, greater emphasis on potatoes, a gradual reduction in fodder crops, sheep and pig numbers. Since Devon was a county of dairy, livestock and mixed arable production, it is not surprising that there was no wholesale 'plough-up' campaign. However, the more significant changes came in 1917 and 1918, in response to governmental price supports and the intervention of War Agricultural Committees to secure acreage targets. The 1916 harvest had been very poor, prices had risen steeply, and repeated periods of unrestricted U-boat warfare had disrupted the food imports on which Britain remained dependent. As Penny Lawrence shows, there is evidence by this point that in Devon price rises and food scarcity were leading to noticeable privation and hunger among rural children, even though Britain never experienced

the starvation that occurred during the German 'turnip winter' of 1917-18. The efforts of allotment holders and market-gardeners, as in Topsham, illustrate the depth of this response, but may also indicate the strength of concern.

Yet, if the overall changes in production appear relatively undramatic, it is worth thinking about the broader historical context. It is a cliché to think of pre-war society in terms of the RMS Titanic, as a gilded society ordered into first-, second- and steerage classes, where everyone knew their place, and which was heading towards an iceberg. Edwardian and Georgian Britain was a society in considerable flux. Whatever its turmoil about extending the right to vote to women, a generation of male householders had exercised the franchise. Elected local government had become immensely important since 1885, at the levels of the county, and urban or rural districts. They had taken on responsibility for schools and technical education, roads, public health, and trading regulation. As Clare Greener demonstrates, Devon County Council even employed an Instructor of Horticulture. Meanwhile, contemporary politics was very turbulent. The Liberal Government had upset landowners (who were influential in a rural county such as Devon) by its policies of land reform, underpinned by punitive taxation on unearned increases in property values (particularly as farm-land was sold for building on the outskirts of towns, as had occurred in Exeter, Plymouth, Teignmouth, and Ilfracombe). The 1910 Election had resulted in the Parliament Act that deprived nobles (such as Lord Poltimore) of a veto over the policies of an elected government. In Devon, this political change shook the self-confidence of major landowners, which had also been weakened by thirty years of depressed agricultural prices, and rising death duties. Even before the great post-war disposal of estates between 1919 and 1923, the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Devon had sold large portions of their estates in Devon, often to the sitting tenants. Others, like Lord Poltimore and Sir Thomas Acland Bt., contemplated selling, but left it to their post-war successors.

There was considerable industrial unrest between 1911 and 1914, including an all-out railway strike in August 1911 which caused more disruption than the General Strike of 1926. This was the background against which the Suffragettes took 'direct action' between 1910 and 1914. It was also the background against which debates about Irish Home Rule occurred. One of the reasons the European crisis of July 1914 came as a shock to many Britons was that their attention was focused at home on the parliamentary debates on the future of Ireland, not that of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Indeed, until the final two weeks of that month, I suspect more people were interested in the doings of Pearl White in the *Perils of Pauline* at the local Kinematograph than they were in the actions of Gavrilo Princip.

In the summer of 1914, the experience of 'total war' was as distant to Britons as World War One is to us today. Not since the end of the Napoleonic wars a century before, had the country had to organise itself to face an existential political, economic and societal threat. The intervening century had been one in which political liberalism had come to dominate both the Liberal and Conservative parties. Along with Free Trade, it had enshrined ideas of voluntarism, private charity and low taxation. While these ideals had been challenged since 1900 by campaigns over tariff reform, naval expansion, and the Liberal Party's policies of social insurance, taxation and land reform, the extent and depth of government intervention in the regions came as a shock, particularly in 1917–8. As a consequence, there was a degree of local obstruction and foot-dragging. Family-run Devon farms could often ill-afford to spare sons for war (not least because their replacements might demand a wage), so the relatively low-levels of volunteering for war, and resistance to conscription are understandable. Similarly, it is possible to sympathise with Mr Cload's predicament in Hemyock in 1918, in the face of local worthies who wanted to get their hands on, and potatoes in, his rented field. He was forced to submit to the dictates of local authority in a way that he had probably never

experienced before. By contrast, Lord Poltimore was able to preserve his deer and deer-park through his steward's cautious manoeuvrings with the War Ag Committee, trading potatoes in the paddocks against deer in the park – at a house and on an estate where he no longer lived.

As Roger Wilkins and Penny Lawrence also point out, the effects of the war persisted in agriculture through the incentives of the Corn Production Act until 1921. As many of the chapters demonstrate, the trends towards the cultivation of greater acreages of wheat, barley and oats, and the continued reduction in livestock numbers, were most apparent not between 1914 and 1918, but between 1917 and 1921. This gives an indication both of how long it took for the effects of war to really take hold in agriculture, but also of how significant the role of government became in influencing production. By contrast, the fishing industry received no wartime or post-war boost. It continued on the path of decline that it had been on since the 1890s, and moves towards mechanisation increased costs, which tended to work against family-owned boats, and small-scale inshore operators. Unfortunately, few of the recommendations of Stephen Reynolds' 1913 Parliamentary Report were implemented, and fishing did not benefit from the attention paid (however briefly) to agriculture.

The chapters in this volume also have another function. This is to illustrate how to go about such research. Apart from Faith Lowe's Diary, many of the sources used are readily accessible, either in the National Archives, the Devon Heritage Centre or on-line (particularly trade directories, parliamentary papers and newspapers). Some, such as the County Agricultural Returns, and the taxation records generated by Lloyd George's Incremental Value Duty, are a gold-mine of information for local historians, but they are not much used compared to the Censuses or local newspapers. Sadly, few records remain of the work of Devon's War Agricultural Committee, unlike in some other counties. We hope that these chapters will provide both a starting point for further research on

these topics, by the participants and others, and a template for other local historians who wish to explore some of the hidden aspects of daily life in their communities during this period of tremendous upheaval and surprising normality.

A map showing the County of Devon

Food Supply in Devon During the First World War

Food on the Home Front in Devon

Paul Cleave

In the early twentieth century there was much interest in food, nutrition, health, and dietary needs. Food was to play a vital role in the war, increasing supplies, feeding the troops, and on the home front. In Devon, it was one of the common threads which enjoined a community in the greater war effort. Drummond, (1959) suggests that when hostilities broke out in 1914 the position was an interesting one, because scientists in England had more advanced views on nutrition than those in Germany. The application of nutritional science to the problem of feeding the British population had been accelerated by national danger.

Devon in 1914

At the outbreak of war in 1914, Devon was a county famed for its agricultural production, and was also a popular tourist destination. Torquay, on the south coast, with its sheltered harbour, palm trees and mild climate was often compared to the south of France, whilst the steep cliffs and valleys of north Devon drew romantic comparisons with the Rhine and Switzerland. The attraction of landscape, dialect, healthy fresh air, and local produce was emphasised by J. Henry Harris in *My Devonshire book, in the land of junket and cream* (1907). In contrast to the busy seaside resorts, many holiday makers enjoyed the traditions of farmhouse hospitality.

Figure 1.1 – Postcard of real Devonshire cream circa 1915
Source: Author's Collection

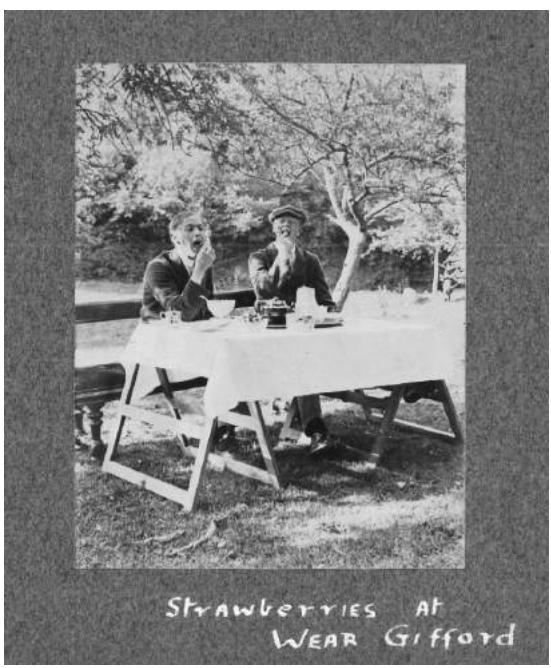

Figure 1.2 – Photograph of 'A pre-war holiday treat', a strawberry tea at Weare Gifford, 1912
Source: Author's Collection

What were people eating in Devon at the outbreak of war in 1914?

In the farmhouse and cottage, it typically comprised a combination of seasonal food, and economical meals utilising a limited range of ingredients, often supplemented by home grown vegetables. The rural Devonshire diet of the period is described in *British rural life and labour,* (Heath, 1911: 66) as a regime necessary to sustain heavy manual work. For breakfast there may be home cured bacon and fried potatoes, and tea. Dinner is described as, 'meat (fresh or salt), vegetables, suet pudding – if the men are near home'; otherwise cold potatoes a meat pasty, and cider. For supper, a pasty, fried fish and potatoes, and tea, followed by cake and bread and treacle, or butter. Sundays were special, for dinner there might be a small joint (fresh meat) baked with potatoes, and other vegetables, followed by apple tart when in season. For tea, or tea and supper, there was cake, bread and butter, 'and now and then (clotted) cream', and tea.

Housewives managing their home and family on a limited income relied on frugality, and instructions in household economy as described by E. Cruwys Sharland in *Ways and means in a Devonshire Village* (1886). Simple recipes ranging from Crocky pie (made from a little meat and vegetables cooked in a *crock,* 'the big kettle you see hanging over the fire in farm-houses') to Devonshire potato cake, were to prove invaluable in times of food shortages, rising prices, and rationing, that were to follow during the war, and after.

The wider picture, food and community

As war was declared, in order to avoid panic buying and the hoarding of food, the government assured the public that there were adequate supplies, and encouraged voluntary rationing. The Crediton Chronicle of August 8th 1914, reported that measures to regulate food prices were being considered. Parish magazines, local newspapers and cookery books reveal what was happening on the

home front, and how everyday life, and the roles of women were affected by the war.

The Cadbury Rurideaconal magazines provides an intimate, contiguous record of the war, with accounts of fund raising events to support the war effort, whilst also looking after those in need in the parish. Food features frequently, with descriptions of fruit bottling, cheese making, and poultry keeping to help the war effort. The magazine for September 1914 encouraged everyone to help in the war effort. It was noted that despite the declaration of war, the Sunday School outing to Exmouth had taken place on Wednesday 5th August, and 290 children had sat down to tea on a 'glorious day with no mishap to anyone'. Fruit and vegetables which had decorated the Church at Down St Mary's harvest thanksgiving were sent next day to soldiers in camp on Salisbury Plain.

In July 1915, the village of Sandford, reported how, '**t**hrough the energy of Mrs Horrocks, something like eleven dozen eggs in one consignment were sent to Exeter recently for the use of the wounded soldiers there. By the contributions of feathers from Mesdames Lane, Gorwyn, Lee, Vinnicombe, W. Daw, Loveridge and Mrs Lake, Mrs Llewellin has made between twenty and thirty pillows for the sick and wounded which were sent partly to the Hospitals in Exeter, and partly to those in Belgium, where they were most welcome'. It was noted that the central school children had sent a large quantity of gooseberries to Harwich for the fleet.

Mrs Peel's account of the war *How we lived then*, (1929: 81) recalled that women of all classes, and especially domestic subjects teachers, supported the food economy campaign with cookery demonstrations, and food economy exhibitions. Crediton held a *War Food Exhibition* on Wednesday May 2nd 1917 in the Church Workers' Institute. 'Initiated by Miss Smith-Dorrien and carried out by a committee of the following ladies, Mrs Francis, Mrs Tremlett, Mrs Halford, Mrs Blease, Mrs Martin and Mrs Parry-Jones was a great success. Besides parishioners, visitors came from Shobrooke, Sandford and other parts of the surrounding neighbourhood. Some

£12 was realized from the exhibition and handed over towards the Flag Day Fund on May 5th in aid of Lord Roberts Memorial Workshop Fund.'

The magazines are a record of social change, and at the end of the war in November 1918, it was recorded that Mrs Montague had addressed the Mothers' Union on the 'Women's vote', and to vote for the betterment of the world. (The Montagues lost their sons, Felix, and Paul – friend of the poet Rupert Brooke, during the war).

Advertisements in the magazines and newspapers also provide topical food detail. Readers of the *Western Times* in December 1916 may have observed how 'a cup of cocoa turns a biscuit into a meal', that The World Stores had supplies of fruit for Christmas puddings, and for *Food Economy,* 'Squatter brand', tinned boiled rabbit was available at the Devon and Somerset Stores. The *Express and Echo* announced the special opening, for soldiers, of Deller's Café in Bedford Street on December 4th 1916. With its unique art nouveau

Figure 1.3 – Postcard of Deller's Café, Exeter
Source: Author's Collection

interior, the creation of architect Henry Hyams (who was facing imprisonment as a conscientious objector), the cafe was to become a major social centre in the city.

Cookery books of the period encouraged readers to make the most of the limited amounts of food available. *The Best Way Book* (ca 1916) provided 1,200 household hints and recipes, including a section on Housekeeping in war-time. It urged 'housewife-soldiers to help their country by saving every penny and making war-time meals as appetising as in times of peace, at half the cost'. Eggless cakes and puddings, and substitute dishes of mock duck, mock sweetbreads and golden mock butter helped to overcome shortages.

Cameron's *The wild foods of Great Britain* (1916) advised readers that, 'The incidence of war has bought home to its inhabitants that an island like Britain is not self-supporting, and that scarcity, if not actual want of daily food is daily becoming more possible, if not probable. This little book makes no pretence to be anything but a severely practical guide for the use of the ordinary man, woman or child'.

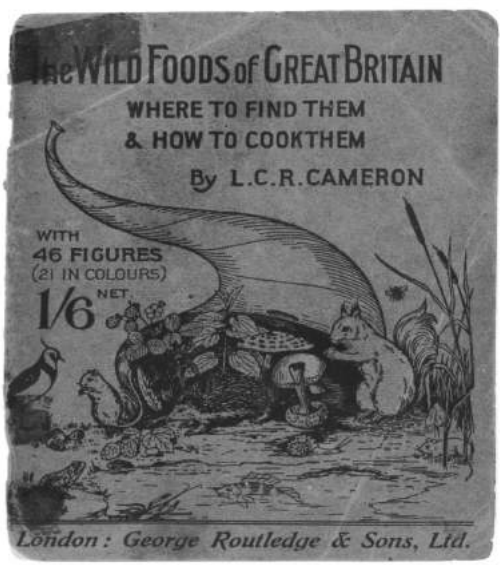

Figure 1.4 – Booklet, 'Foraging, The wild foods of Great Britain'
Source: Author's Collection

Among the 'two hundred and sixty kinds of Wild Food to be gathered freely in Great Britain', Cameron describes the merits of snails, edible frogs, and hedgehogs. Readers are reminded that seaweeds under the names of *Dulse* and *Laver* were highly nutritious. Laver bread (the cooked seaweed) was noted as having been offered for sale to summer visitors, and even in the farmhouses of North Devon it is commonly eaten as a vegetable or salad. Garlic, *allium ursinum, 'ramsons',* was recorded as common in woods and thickets, and could be used instead of cultivated, imported garlic. A substitute for tea was included, made from the dried flowers of the Lime tree, producing 'a pale delicately scented liquor, best drunk in tea cups with sugar, and a small piece of lemon, as tea is usually served in Russia'.

Peace Day celebrations were held in Crediton on July 19th 1919, and in spite of heavy rain, the men who had returned were given a hearty welcome home. It was time to look to the future. Food on the

Figure 1.5 – Postcard of 'Peace Day' in Crediton, July 1919
Source: Author's Collection

home front in Devon made an important contribution to the war effort, and food was shown to be embedded in its history, culture, and economy, and would be vital in future food production, as advocated by the Ministry of Reconstruction, (1919).

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Thank you, to Crediton Parish Church for access to the Cadbury Ruride-canal records.

Farming in Devon during the First World War

Devon Farming in the First World War
The Evidence of the Agricultural Statistics

Paul Brassley

In the summer of 1912 the agricultural expert Daniel (later Sir Daniel) Hall, together with two friends, passed through Devon in the course of making a tour of British farms. Devon agriculture in August 1914 would have been little different from what he observed then. He remarked upon the importance of dairy farming, the small fields of lush grass and the enormous hedges that surrounded them, the importance of oats and dredge corn (a mixture of oats and barley in roughly equal proportions, sown together), and the greater extent of corn growing further east in the county: 'More beautiful land to farm than those soft slopes of the lower Exe valley we do not hope to see' (Hall, 1913: 355-368). As far as we can tell from the agricultural statistics of the time, the war to come would produce some changes in this pattern of farming, but they would be a matter of degree rather than revolutionary departures from the past.

Britain in 1914 was a food-importing country. More than 80 per cent of its wheat, more than 70 per cent of its cheese and bacon, two-thirds of its butter and a third of its beef came from abroad. Only fresh pork, potatoes and milk, among the major food sources, were largely produced at home (Dewey, 1989: 16). As long as these imports could be maintained, this could be advantageous, for it meant that national resources could be devoted to the war. The war

could be expected to have some impact on the inputs needed for British farms, for some of the more important ones had alternative military uses. Sodium nitrate fertiliser, for example, not only required shipping space to bring it from Chile, but it was one of the raw materials for the production of explosives. Potash fertilisers came from Germany, and supplies ceased on the outbreak of war. Horses and men were needed for the army.

Figure 2.1 – Land Use ('000 acres) and livestock ('000 head) in Devon

	On 4 June 1914	On 5 June 1916	On 4 June 1918
Rough grazing	170	175	180
Crops and grass	1204	1211	1201
Of which: arable	480	479	553
Of which: permanent grass	724	732	648
ARABLE			
Wheat	45	49	83
Barley	38	34	46
Oats	120	119	184
Potatoes	10	10	20
Fodder crops	93	83	64
Clover and temporary grass	163	174	137
Fallow	6	6	3
LIVESTOCK			
Total horses	57	56	56
Farm horses	32	31	34
Total cattle	303	324	316
Of which cows in milk	84	83	80
Total sheep	778	869	806
Total pigs	105	94	73

Source: *Agricultural Statistics*, 1915 (Cd.7926); 1917 (Cd.8436); 1918 (Cmd.13)

As Figure 2.1 above suggests, there were no radical changes before 1916, in Devon, as in the rest of the country. The biggest change was the increased area of temporary grass (i.e. land that was part of the arable rotation, but grew a grass crop for one or more years) and the corresponding decrease in the acreage fodder crops, meaning mostly turnips and swedes, mangolds, cabbage and rape. Most of these had a high labour requirement, so the decreased area was presumably one of the first signs of farm labourers leaving for the war. Otherwise the pattern of farming had changed little, and food imports had been maintained, and even increased a little (Dewey, 1989: 221). But by the end of 1916 the strain was beginning to show. Retail food prices were 60 per cent higher than they had been at the beginning of the war, a cold spring and a wet autumn had produced a poor potato harvest, and submarine warfare was beginning to affect imports. The Asquith government fell on 7th December 1916, to be replaced by Lloyd George, and early in 1917 a new Ministry of Food was established, together with a Food Production Department in the Board of Agriculture, charged with increasing home food production. The immediate result was the 1917 Corn Production Act, which guaranteed cereal prices for four years, and the establishment of county War Agricultural Executive Committees, whose first job was to increase the arable area and in particular the output of cereals and potatoes (Whetham, 1978: 89-101, 139).

The result, in Devon, is apparent from the figures for 1918. The area of permanent grass was down as a result of the ploughing-up campaign, as was the temporary grass acreage, the land devoted to fodder crops, and the land in fallow. The cereal acreage was over 50 per cent higher than it had been in 1914, and the potato acreage had doubled. Of the cereals, the biggest change was in the area of oats, a crop better suited to the wetter west country than wheat. Curiously, perhaps, animal numbers changed very little. The number of farm horses was a little higher in 1918, reflecting the increased arable area, and the biggest decrease was in pig numbers as the

cost of feedingstuffs rose. The production data in the agricultural statistics show that crop yields were maintained at about, or in some cases above, the pre-war levels. The effect of using land less suited to arable was presumably offset by its fertility from several years under grass. The overall impression, on the basis of both crop areas and livestock numbers, is of very little change from 1914 to 1916, and limited change thereafter. On the other hand, to maintain most of the animal output, and more than maintain the output of cereals and potatoes, was no mean achievement at a time when labour was in short supply for what was still then a labour-intensive industry.

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Farming Responses to World War One in Poltimore and Huxham

E. C. Hitchings

The two parishes of Poltimore and Huxham lie between the rivers Culm and Clyst only about three miles northeast of the centre of Exeter and separated from the city by a ridge rising to about 120 metres. In 1914 there were 11 farms of which seven were over 150 acres, with a total area under crops (including permanent grass) of about 2,270 acres. The main annual crops were barley, oats, turnips, swedes and mangolds and temporary grass for mowing, in all totalling 870 acres, compared with 1,400 acres of permanent grass. The land is undulating, with areas of steep slopes and some areas with poor natural drainage. Consequently, there are significant areas of woodland on the poorer soils and steeply sloping land, much of it unsuited to arable cropping.

The area is suitable for mixed farming with sheep and dairying important in the early twentieth century. Neither wheat nor potatoes were significant crops. Towards the end of the nineteenth century most of the larger farms had been provided with good sets of buildings that had been enlarged around the turn of the century. Most of the land was part of the Poltimore estate, with the exception of parts of the Killerton Estate to the north and some glebe land.

In many ways, these parishes are not untypical of Devon as a whole. As a background to this discussion, it may be helpful to compare their agricultural statistics with the whole county. In Figure 3.1,

the actual figures are given for 1914 with figures for 1916 and 1918 as a percentage of the 1914 figures.

Figure 3.1 – Acreage & Livestock Numbers showing change in Poltimore and Huxham, compared to Devon, 1914–18

acreage or livestock numbers	Devon	P+H	Devon % of 1914	P+H % of 1914	Devon % of 1914	P+H % of 1914
	1914	1914	1916	1916	1918	1918
Wheat	45182	19	108.5	273.7	183.1	252.6
Barley	37901	260	90.5	90.4	95.4	95.8
Oats	119977	190	99.2	86.3	153.2	101.1
Potatoes	10274	10	97.6	100.0	193.6	280.0
T, S & M*	76188	204	90.3	85.8	75.0	74.5
Temporary Grass	163264	168	106.7	110.7	83.7	111.9
Permanent grass	723601	1395	101.1	104.4	89.6	100.1
Heavy Horses	32283	82	96.8	98.8	104.4	92.7
Light horses	10554	22	85.4	90.9	74.1	77.3
Dairy herd	116347	253	98.3	84.2	99.4	82.6
Other cattle	186867	179	112.6	107.3	107.3	117.9
Sheep	777972	729	111.7	105.1	103.7	97.4
Pigs	105220	124	89.7	58.1	69.0	32.3
Orchards	25443	72	99.5	94.4	99.7	93.1
Heath as grazing	170340	80	102.6	87.5	105.4	62.5
*turnips, swedes and mangolds						

With certain exceptions, discussed below, the percentage changes in the two parishes (allowing for the exaggerating effect of small starting numbers) show a pattern broadly similar to Devon.

The main influences on farming in the early part of the war were the loss of manpower due to the call up of territorial regiments and recruitment of volunteers, the loss of horses to the military, and the reduced availability of fertilizer, particularly potash. In the case of heavy horses, Devon numbers declined by about nine per cent between 1914 and 1915, rather less in Poltimore/Huxham, but numbers were back up within two years. The loss of manpower resulted in a significant reduction of turnips, swedes and mangolds grown, as these were labour intensive crops. Apple orchards for cider production had been a significant farm based industry, but this was already in decline before the outbreak of war. However, during the war years there was little change in orchard acreage, possibly because manpower could not be spared for grubbing up trees. There was a modest switch from barley and oats to wheat, but grain production in 1916 was affected by bad spring weather.

The major change came with government intervention in early 1917. Prices of wheat and oats were guaranteed for six years, and there was a policy of encouraging the break-up of grassland for the production of food. The stress placed on the increased production of corn and potatoes is readily apparent in the 1918 production figures. However, for reasons that are not clear, unlike Devon, there was no significant increase in oats grown in the parishes. Another contrast is the reduction in Devon grassland, due no doubt to the national policy, is not reflected in the figures for the parishes, perhaps because much of the grassland was steeply sloping and unsuitable for ploughing.

There are further divergences with the overall trends in Devon as a whole. Whereas the Devon dairy herd held steady in the war years, that of the two parishes declined. In part, this may be due to Lord Poltimore reducing his involvement in this part of his estate, and selling off his dairy herd in 1916. Pig numbers, never important

in the two parishes, decline even more sharply than in the county as a whole. The reduction was probably caused by measures taken to control and ration the meat supply. The figures for "heathland used as grazing" relate wholly to Huxham parish, where it was reduced from 80 acres in 2014 down to 27 acres by 1920. This is most likely to be due to most heathland being gradually improved to the status of permanent grassland.

One special feature of Poltimore Parish was the 210 acres devoted to the extensive gardens and deer park around Poltimore House (compare this with the 2270 acres of both parishes under crops). It is unclear how the agricultural statistics dealt with the deer park, if at all. There are no statistics for the deer even though the annual cull would have contributed to meat production, and some venison was donated to Exeter hospitals. Despite the fact that the park had been enlarged in the 1840s by demolishing three farmsteads, as far as is known, no consideration was given to converting any of this land back to agricultural production to assist the war effort.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to James Wallis for copying the Parish Agricultural Returns from the National Archive at Kew and supplying the Ministry Of Agriculture and Fisheries, Acreage and Livestock Returns for 1912 to 1920

Farming in the Blackdown Hills

Penny Lawrence

The Parishes

The Blackdowns comprise an extensive plateau of Upper Greensand, covered by a thin layer of chalk with flints and cherts. There is a prominent ridge at the northern end and, to the south, long finger-like ridges separated by deep coombes. Around the edges of all the ridges, there is a series of spring lines (Cobham Resource Consultants).

Clayhidon is the easternmost parish, of 4,707 acres; from the north of the parish to the south the Blackdowns plateau at 850ft is cut by two east-west river valleys going down to 425ft. The population in 1911 was 457, dominated by occupations associated with farming.

Hemyock is a parish of 5,820 acres lying to the west of Clayhidon where the valley of the river Culm falls to 350ft and broadens out; with three side valleys. In 1911 it had a population of 882; a community of farming and local trades and nine men employed on the Culm Valley Railway. For girls, domestic servants were employed in similar numbers to those involved in dairy work on farms and at the Culm Valley Dairy Company, which made butter from locally produced milk.

Culmstock is at the western edge of the Blackdowns, with some plateau and plateau edge but most of the 3,494 acres is gently undulating. For the 810 inhabitants agriculture was important;

however, there were 30 men involved in quarrying and road building and 10 in traction engine operations. Fox Bros' wool factory at Millmoor employed 24, of which 16 were women and girls. They made khaki cloth, including puttees, for the army at their premises in Wellington, Uffculme and Culmstock.

Farming Response

The MAF68 records, (June returns) for 1912–1920 (1915 missing), were extracted for the three parishes. The majority of farms were small, worked by family and a few employees, predominantly grass

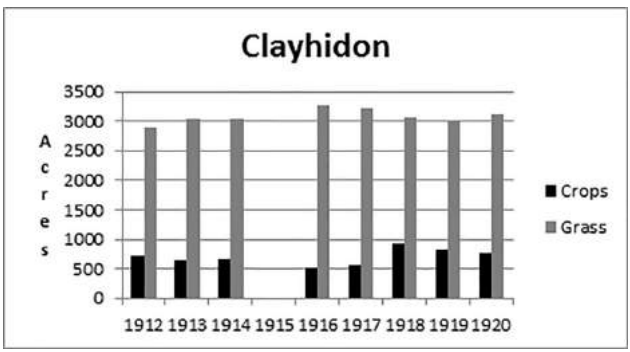

Figure 4.1 – Change Over Time in Acreage Devoted to Crops and Grass in Clayhidon, 1912–1920

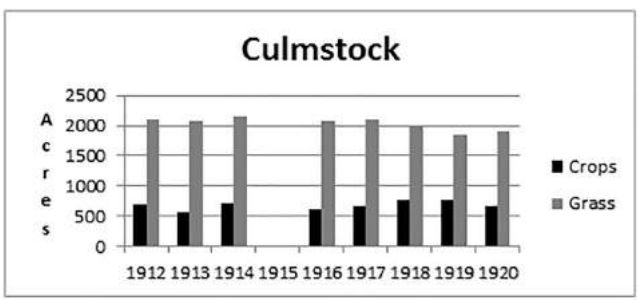

Figure 4.2 – Change Over Time in Acreage Devoted to Crops and Grass in Culmstock, 1912–1920

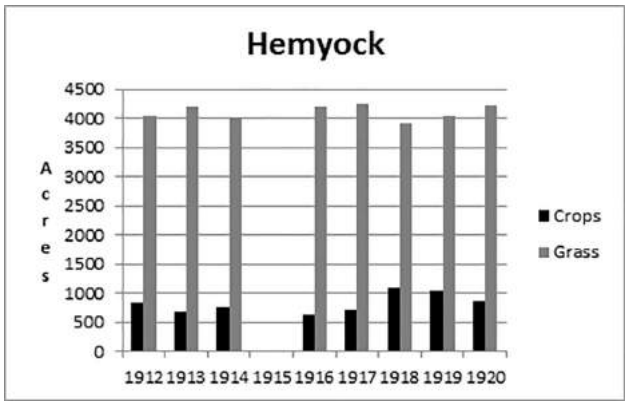

Figure 4.3 – Change Over Time in Acreage Devoted to Crops and Grass in Hemyock, 1912–1920

and dairying, with crops grown for cattle and horses. Most had a small cider orchard, which was included in the permanent grass figure.

The corn crops were winter and spring oats (two-thirds) winter wheat (one-third) and a small amount of barley; wheat and oat acreages increased. Potatoes increased, 1918 acreages were double

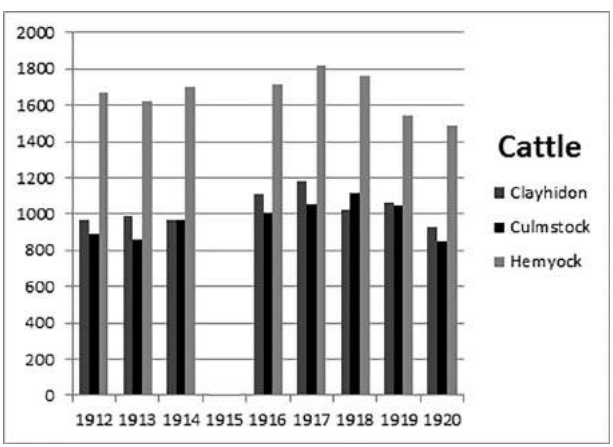

Figure 4.4 – Change Over Time in Numbers of Cattle Recorded in Clayhidon, Culmstock and Hemyock, 1912–1920

those of 1912, at the expense of root crops (turnips, mangolds and swedes). Cattle numbers increased slightly, peaking in 1917 (Clayhidon and Hemyock) 1918 (Culmstock) whilst sheep and pig numbers decreased.

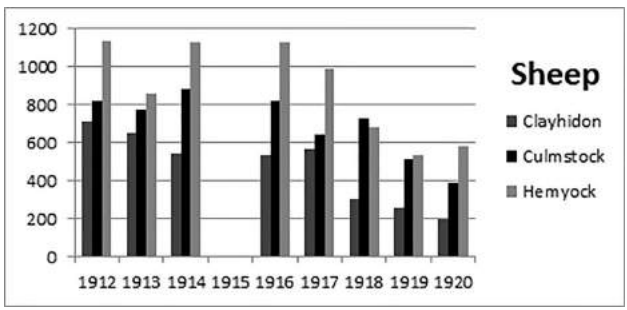

Figure 4.5 – Change Over Time in Numbers of Sheep Recorded in Clayhidon, Culmstock and Hemyock, 1912–1920

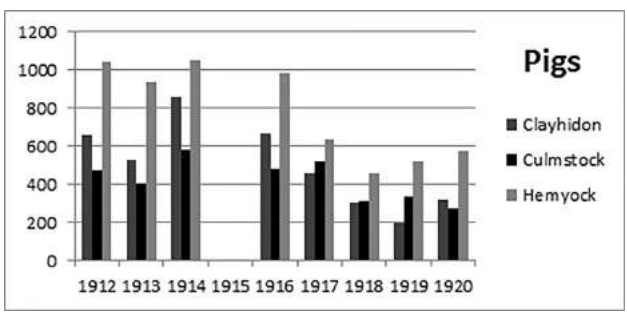

Figure 4.6 – Change Over Time in Numbers of Pigs Recorded in Clayhidon, Culmstock and Hemyock, 1912–1920

Horse numbers were lowest in 1916; in Culmstock and Hemyock, heavy horses & mares were at 75-80 per cent of the 1912 number, in Clayhidon at per cent, but more heavy horses were bred; by 1917/18 heavy horse numbers in Culmstock and Hemyock were just below 1912 and higher in Clayhidon, all had more young heavy horses.

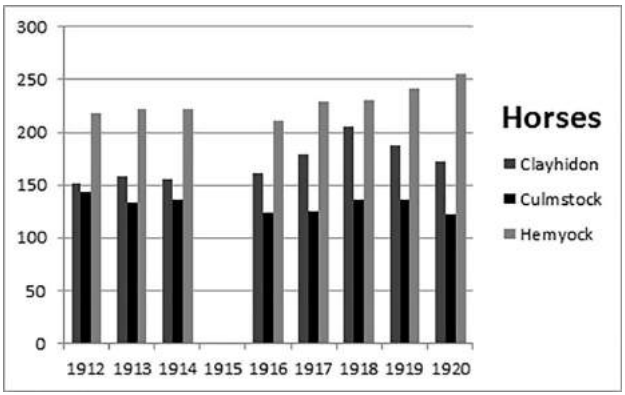

Figure 4.7 – Change Over Time in Numbers of Horses Recorded in Clayhidon, Culmstock and Hemyock, 1912–1920

The returns have supplementary figures for heathland used for grazing, indicating that rough grazing was improved in Clayhidon but let go in 1920. However, two large Culmstock commons of 113 and 255 acres are not included, not being part of farms.

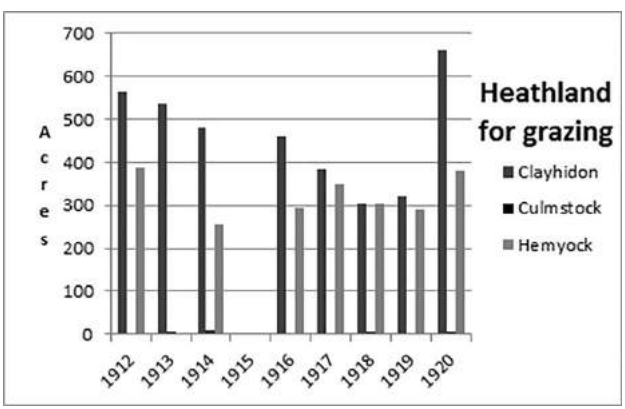

Figure 4.8 – Change Over Time in Acreage of Heathland for Grazing Recorded in Clayhidon, Culmstock and Hemyock, 1912–1920

Further information

The IR58 (Valuation Office) records made in 1910 include so much information on individual farms that it is impossible to draw any conclusions at this time. There is also an Assistant Overseer's ledger (3987M/B/1) in Devon Heritage Centre containing entries on income tax and tithe collections for Clayhidon and Hemyock for 1910–1926. This could indicate the effect of higher input costs against increased output prices. Extracting details from both sets of records for a small number of farms would be a first step. The Hemyock school logs suggest that, for labourers, higher food costs were outstripping any wage increases.

The June Returns show acreages grown, but not outputs; weather records are available locally and regionally, including references in the school logs. The MAF82 monthly reports describe the states of corn, potatoes, roots, fruit pastures & livestock and labour for Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, but lack local details.

Local newspaper reports from the regional War Agriculture Committees include responses from farmers to the pressure to increase production, including difficulties, although the Honiton area is better reported than Tiverton, which includes the three parishes. In the later war years there are indications that outputs were suffering from the lack of manuring (WT 1.1.1918) 'The land has been so largely depleted of labour that opportunities for adequate attention have not always presented themselves' and farmers were resistant to ploughing up good permanent pasture land which would yield more from dairying than corn. The Honiton WAC was told in September 1918 that 'only one farmer in Sheldon (2 miles south of Hemyock) had carried his corn and a deal of corn was rotting due to lack of labour and weather conditions' (WT 30.9.1918); this is in contrast to the MAF 82 report for the same month 'Nearly all the wheat has now been harvested and secured in good condition'.

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Western Times: 1.1.1918, page 4, Farming notes.
30.9.1918, page 3, Honiton Farmers.

Changes in Farming in Newton St Cyres in response to World War One

R. J. Wilkins

The Parish and Farms of Newton St Cyres

Newton St Cyres parish extends over some 4,500 acres and is located about four miles NW of Exeter and four miles SE of Crediton, with altitude varying from about 60 to 650 ft. There are three distinct soil types. Much of the north of the parish is on alluvial soils of the Creedy flood plain, whilst most of the land in the middle of the parish is fairly flat on free-draining red sandstone soils. The south is hilly with poorly-drained clay and shale soils, with substantial areas of woodland.

Farming was and still is the major industry, with large areas of grassland supporting dairy, beef and sheep production. Many of the farms have over the years been mixed, with cereals and fodder roots (mangolds, turnip and swedes) being the main arable crops. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, apple orchards were widespread and used mainly for cider making. Pig production has always been only a minor activity.

Much of the land in the parish has been owned for several centuries by the Quicke family and early in the twentieth century this was farmed by tenants. There was also a substantial area owned by the Church and, again, farmed by tenants. The pattern of land

ownership is much the same to the present, although the Quicke Estate is now farmed in-house, rather than by tenants.

The Parish Agricultural Returns indicate that in 1914 there were thirty eight farms of above five acres, with twenty being between five and fifty acres, seven between 50 and 150 acres and eleven above 150 acres. The total number of farms was the same in 1918 as in 1914.

Changes in livestock and cropping from 1912 to 1922

The crop areas and livestock numbers over this period are given in Figure 5.1. Figures for the parish are not available for 1916.

The changes in Newton St Cyres in cropping and livestock numbers were relatively small until 1918. There were, though, in 1916 and 1917 small increases in the areas of cereals and potatoes and small reductions in fodder roots and permanent grass. The number of sheep varied considerably from year to year, whilst there was a marked decline in the number of pigs by 1916.

Much larger changes took place in 1918, following the 1917 Corn Production Act, the establishment of guaranteed prices for cereals and fixing of targets for cereal production by county War Agricultural Executive Committees (see chapter by Brassley).

The changes in Newton St Cyres during and following the war are summarised in Table 2 and compared with the County statistics for Devon and the National statistics for England and Wales. The baseline for the pre-war period was taken as the mean figure for the years 1912-4, as this was considered to be more robust than using the figures for a single year.

The response to these national priorities was greater in Newton St Cyres than in either Devon as a whole or England and Wales. In 1918 the wheat area in Newton St Cyres was 126 per cent above the pre-war figure compared with an increase of 43 per cent for England and Wales. Likewise, for potatoes the increase for Newton St Cyres

Figure 5.1 – Areas of major crops and livestock numbers in Newton St Cyres, 1912–1922 (from Parish Agricultural Returns)

	12	13	14	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Crop areas (acres)										
Wheat	109	108	178	243	180	298	354	244	314	232
Barley	226	226	198	171	164	266	171	293	246	278
Oats	198	182	217	197	284	286	339	370	252	292
Total cereals	534	517	594	612	628	884	870	907	812	816
Potatoes	23	22	20	32	36	51	37	30	30	26
Fodder roots#	270	259	233	228	198	186	216	232	232	240
Orchards	207	216	205	204	208	216	192	213	111	118
Temporary grass	284	259	204	222	269	216	170	247	256	173
Permanent grass	2268	2314	2362	1919	2154	1968	2131	1983	2044	2263
Total grass	2552	2573	2566	2141	2423	2184	2301	2230	2300	2436
Livestock numbers										
Horses (agricultural)	95	103	87	89	85	94	93	97	96	89
Cows	251	216	222	212	180	197	232	210	212	261
Total cattle	838	888	945	910	847	868	873	931	850	904
Ewes	731	734	541	706	630	680	733	429	541	526
Total sheep	1928	1855	1277	1756	1684	2041	2160	1333	1465	1197
Pigs	341	461	376	327	325	285	269	275	364	419

Mangolds, swedes and turnips

Figure 5.2 – Changes in Crop Areas and Livestock Numbers during the war period in Newton St Cyres compared with Devon and England and Wales (mean for 1912–14 taken as 100)

	1918 as % of 1912-14			1920 as % of 1912-14		
	Newton St Cyres	Devon	England and Wales	**Newton St Cyres**	Devon	England and Wales
CROPS						
Wheat	**226**	187	143	**185**	116	105
Barley	**123**	94	100	**135**	105	109
Oats	**144**	149	140	**186**	113	114
Total cereals	***161***	153	129	***165***	120	109
Potatoes	**235**	185	139	**138**	127	120
Fodder roots	**73**	73	87	**91**	91	92
Orchards	**103**	98	89	**102**	80	–
Grass#	**85**	89	90	**87**	90	92
LIVESTOCK						
Horses (agricultural)	**99**	98	98	**102**	94	94
Cattle	**105**	104	107	**105**	93	95
Sheep	**121**	101	94	**79**	83	77
Pigs	**73**	71	72	**70**	78	84

Sum of temporary and permanent grass
National figures from 'A Century of Agricultural Statistics: Great Britain 1866–1966'. HMSO. London, 1968.

was 135 per cent compared with 39 per cent for England and Wales. These increases occurred through reductions in the areas of fodder roots and grass that were both greater than for the nation as a whole. The numbers of horses and cattle showed only small changes, but there was an increase in the number of sheep in Newton St Cyres in contrast to the national picture. The number of pigs declined by 27 per cent compared with pre-war, almost identical to the reduction of 28 per cent nationally.

Following the end of the war, there was, not surprisingly, a trend back towards the pre-war pattern. The area of wheat in Newton St Cyres, however, in 1920 was still 85 per cent above the pre-war figure and this was maintained in the following two years. By 1922, the area of potatoes in Newton St Cyres had fallen to pre-war levels. Although there were some increases in the areas of fodder roots and grass, even by 1922 the areas were lower than those pre-war. Numbers of sheep showed a pronounced downward trend both in Newton St Cyres and nationally whilst the number of pigs in Newton St Cyres recovered by 1921 to pre-war levels.

The increase in arable cropping occurred despite a limited labour supply, no increase in the number of farm horses and no contribution from tractor power. The reduction in the areas of fodder roots, that have a high labour requirement, would have helped offset the requirements for labour for the increased cereal production.

The large area of grassland in Newton St Cyres and the presence of substantial areas of freely-draining land with reasonable terrain in the parish meant that there was good potential to increase cropping to a greater extent than occurred nationally.

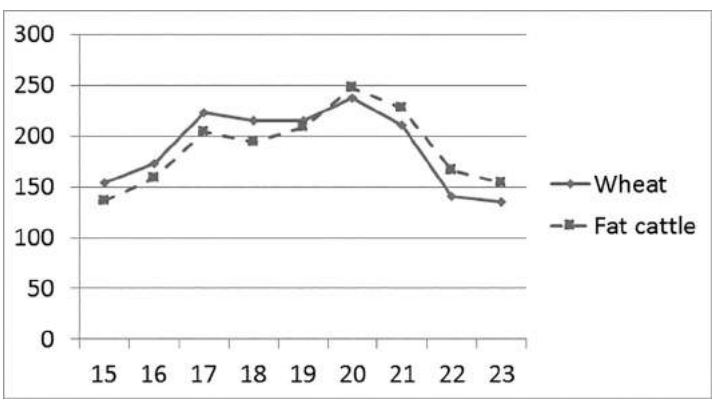

Figure 5.3 – Price Changes for wheat and fat cattle as % of mean price for 1912–14
From 'A Century of Agricultural Statistics: Great Britain 1866-1966'. HMSO. London, 1968.

The changes during the war were driven both by national policy and control and by economic factors. Figure 1 shows the change nationally in prices received for wheat and fat cattle. The increase in prices produced a strong incentive to farmers to increase production, and prices remained high until 1921.

A further factor in Newton St Cyres was very effective leadership from the farming community, as reflected in press articles at the time. An extract from the *Western Times* on 30 Nov 1917, reproduced below, indicates some of the procedures followed in achieving increased cereal production, the responses in Newton St Cyres and the conflict between keeping good quality grassland and increasing the cropped area:

> 'At a meeting at Newton St Cyres, a strong Parish Committee in connection with the Agricultural Corn Production Scheme was formed. It was reported that on nearly every farm in St Cyres the quota asked for has been complied with or exceeded, with the result that the parish stands 84 acres above its apportionment. There is also a large area of highly productive land marked for inspection, the farmers agreeing that if the inspectors thought it would be better tilled to corn in the national interest than for grazing purposes, they would willingly comply, though it would be greatly against their interest. Assuming that the land to be inspected will be tilled to corn, the parish will stand about 171 acres above its quota – 155 acres of corn and 16 acres potatoes.'

Final Comment

The farmers of Newton St Cyres clearly played their part in changing farming in response to the national requirement, particularly for the 1918 cropping season. However, cropping and livestock numbers reverted towards pre-war figures in the three years after the end of the war.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Michael Winter and James Wallis for copying Parish Agricultural Returns at the National Archives at Kew and Ted Hitchings for extracting the Devon County statistics.

A Dartmoor Farmer in 1917 and 1918

Jacqueline Sarsby

William Dunning was born in 1869 and farmed 47 acres at 'Langstone' in Throwleigh parish near Chagford on the Northern edge of Dartmoor. He kept a diary from 1910 until his death in 1950, and these little books describe briefly his day-to-day activities, the animals and crops that he bought and sold and how he was using his fields before, during and after the First World War. Unlike the majority of farmers in the parish, who were tenants, he owned his farm, but with a mortgage.[1] Langstone was a mixed farm keeping and selling cattle, sheep and pigs and with a good additional income every year from 3 or 4 acres of potatoes: the area around Moretonhampstead was known as a particularly good area for them. The family also lived well off the farm with their milk, pork, poultry, rabbits, vegetables, orchards and soft fruit.

In September 1915, the Board of Agriculture had asked County Councils to form War Agricultural Committees with local, district committees. Two of their main functions were, firstly, to see that the supply of agricultural labour was adequate and to try to supply any deficiency and, secondly, to consider how the production of food could be maintained, and, if possible, increased.[2] At first the Minister

[1] Parish Summaries (Crockernwell Division) for Devonshire,Agricultural Census of Production1913, Throwleigh: 7 farms were owned, 21 rented.

[2] Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scheme for the Appointment of War Agricultural Committees, September 1915. DCC 149/1/1/2.

Figure 6.1 – Photograph of Langstone Farm in the late twentieth century
Source: J. Sarsby

of Agriculture must have feared that farmworkers would flock to enlist because he assured them that '. . . Working Farm Bailiffs, Shepherds, Stockmen (inc. Milkers), Horsemen, Thatchers, Engine Drivers, and Mechanics and attendants on agricultural machinery, steam ploughs and threshing machines, will not be accepted for enlistment, even if they should offer themselves . . .'[3] Later in the war, when this assurance proved false, several Throwleigh farmers spoke up for men (one, a son) at rural tribunals, asking that they might be exempt and continue working on the farms. They also petitioned together for a thatcher, Oliver Aggett, to be exempt so that he could continue thatching their ricks.[4]

[3] Lord Selborne's Appeal to the Farmers and Occupiers of Land in England and Wales, 28 September 1915.
[4] *Western Times*, 3 November 1916 referring to the rural tribunal on 30th October.

Further suggestions from the Board included 'inducing women to undertake farm work' and arranging for children to be released from school either to work on farms or to help their mothers so that both parents could go out to work. On small Devon farms, however, women did whatever work was needed outdoors as well as indoors if there were no men to do it, and more than half Devon farms were less than 100 acres, employing only family labour.[5] William Dunning's farm was one where daughters worked in the fields, because he had three daughters and no sons. In August 1914, his eldest daughter, May was 20 years old, and Nina, 19. They did a great variety of work, driving cattle, milking, thinning mangolds, weeding corn, hoeing potatoes, driving the horses for the barn-thrasher, loading dung or mangolds, and helping in the hay and corn harvests. At the beginning of 1917, however, he had particular problems: his youngest daughter, Mary, was still at boarding-school in Okehampton, and his eldest daughter had got married the previous summer and was now living in North Devon. One can understand why her parents were opposed to the wedding: there were now food shortages, especially of bread, and farmers were being instructed to do something about it. The Board of Agriculture told its War Committees that farmers produced only 1/5 of the wheat which was needed and 3/5 of the barley; the rest came from abroad and was very vulnerable to attack. Farmers were not producing nearly as much wheat as had been produced before the great agricultural depression, and they, including Devon farmers, must grow more. The Board did not mention that industrialised flour milling now favoured the hard Canadian wheat as opposed to the soft English wheat which had been used when corn was stone ground, or that it

[5] Using oral history methods, I interviewed farmers' daughters from various parishes who recalled their mothers working in the fields at the turn of the century, for example Eveline Ball (Hittisleigh), Marian Endacott (Throwleigh), Molly Tucker (East Prawle). See also Mr A. Austin, Royal Commission inquiring into the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture, March 25th 1843, pp. 3-4; see also W. G. Hoskins, *Devon and its People,* (1959), p. 158.

Figure 6.2 – Photograph of William Dunning with his grandchildren, Mary and Dunning Morris, and his daughter, Nina Dunning. Harvesting bracken at Langstone, 1933

Source: Reproduced by kind permission of the family of William Dunning and Throwleigh Archive

was imports of wheat that had ruined wheat farmers in England, the plain reason for a more grass-based agriculture.[6] William was now very short-handed.

William's shortage of labour was exacerbated by the fact that William Webber, who lived in the farm cottage, and who helped on the farm, had passed his medical at the end of 1916. He was likely to be in khaki before the month was out because conscription had been extended to married men aged 18–41. On 20th January, William Dunning went to Okehampton to appeal for him, and appears to have been successful: William Webber's work is now mentioned

[6] See Elizabeth David, *English Bread and Yeast Cookery*, 1977.

much more frequently: 'Wm cutting wood', 'Wm drawing dung' (carting manure), 'Wm started plow', 'Wm working Staining Close for tetties' (cultivating a field for potatoes), 'Wm Dartmoor cutting fags' (cutting peat on Dartmoor), 'Wm paring hedges', 'Wm. Started hoeing turnips', 'Wm. 1 rick' (builds a rick of corn). Finally, in March 1918, William Webber moves out, presumably with his family, and takes their belongings to Providence, where he appears, both living and working, in the 1919 electoral register. William Dunning, meanwhile, was working with his daughters and took on more casual labour including a 'worker' from 'the camp' at South Zeal, who was paid 4d per hour. Local people were paid 5s.6d per acre for pulling mangolds. As the price of farm products rose, the price of casual labour does not seem to have risen comparably.[7]

William Dunning went to Meetings, acquired food for his animals and complied with the suggestions and commands of the Committee, growing his quota of wheat and potatoes and sharing equipment and labour. In 1916 he secured half a ton of Arran Chief potatoes from Scotland, and in 1917 and 1918, he sold small quantities of seed potatoes by the bag to individual people as well as larger amounts to his usual wholesalers. Like other Throwleigh farmers, he was allowed to grow one acre of potatoes instead of two and a half acres of corn. He and his neighbours worked together at crucial times such as digging potatoes, and he and his brothers helped one another shearing their sheep.

In 1917 he tilled winter wheat as well as dredge corn (barley and oats), oats, turnips, potatoes and mangolds, and in 1918 he grew potatoes, turnips, cabbages, mangolds and oats, as well as three fields of wheat; he made hay in some fields which had never been cut before, and used land on other farms. With all this extra effort, by the end of the war he had done well financially: prices for everything from lambs to steers to potatoes had rocketed, but the cost of

[7] There were 12 pence in a shilling and 20 shillings to a pound (money); a guinea was 21 shillings, 21/-, or £1.05p. One pound in weight was 0.453 of a kilo.

Crops mentioned at Langstone 1900–1918

Acres	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Higher Venvuls (2.168)	turnips potatoes	corn	mangolds	corn	hay	?	potatoes	dredge corn	mangolds winter wheat
Middle Venvuls (4.559)	corn	hay	hay	potatoes and corn	corn turnips swedes	potatoes	corn	hay	pasture
Lower Venculs (2.484)	corn	hay	corn	potatoes	pasture	?	turnips swedes	oats	potatoes turnips cabbage
Great Close (3.872)	mangolds	corn	hay	?	potatoes	corn mangolds	mangolds potatoes	corn	corn clover
Stoneland (2.014)	potatoes	corn	hay	?	black oats	mangolds	corn	turnips	oats
Hill Close (2.017)	hay	?	potatoes	dredge corn	mangolds	corn	hay	turnips	potatoes
Staining Close (2.725)	hay	potatoes	cabbage corn	mangolds	white oats	hay	?	potatoes	oats winter wheat
2 Little Fields (1.937 and 2.017)	corn	mangolds turnips	corn corn	hay potatoes	corn hay	turnips hay	corn	mangolds winter wheat	wheat oats

Wray Close (2.699) and Lower Meadow (1.652) were hay every year, Post Field (4.189) also mentioned as hay from 1913; Barns Close and Long Close, hay, but sometimes described as 'Wonson' (unclear) ; Moor used for hay, also Higher Meadow, in 1918.

renting grass and buying a heifer and a sow had also increased. Nevertheless, he could buy new machinery, and he had transformed a rearing farm into one that could also help to satisfy the country's need for bread. Further research will look at the changes which he made in his cropping and in the number of his sheep and cattle in the 1920s.

Allotments and Home Produce in Devon During the First World War

Increasing the Use of Allotments and the Cultivation of Home Produce in Devon's Communities

Julia Neville

Pressure first on landlords and then on local government to supply allotments on which working families could grow vegetables to supplement their earned income had grown during the nineteenth century. Rural landowners such as the Fortescues and the Aclands were praised for creating allotments in 'their' villages so that those whose cottages did not include gardens could supplement their range of food and perhaps even grow a cash crop of fruit. Local gentry led the way in developing Cottage Garden Societies, such as the Bradninch Cottage Garden, Allotment and Labourers' Encouragement Society. These societies held annual competitions for prize vegetables of every kind, often judged by head gardeners from neighbouring villages, and thus promoted knowledge of best practice. In 1908 the Small Holdings and Allotments Act was passed, requiring parish and town councils to provide allotments for local people, and council action increased the numbers of allotments available.

When war was declared in 1914, the first concern about allotments was who would cultivate those that belonged to absent soldiers. More women took on the task, boys helped; local market gardeners lent a hand on a voluntary basis; and soldiers on leave were noted to be putting time in on allotments of absent neighbours

as well as their own. At the end of 1916, however, with the risk of serious food shortages in view, the government determined to extend their powers under the Defence of the Realm Act by a Cultivation of Lands Order. Passed in January 1917 this enabled War Agricultural Committees to acquire where necessary land for the cultivation of food. A Food Production Department was simultaneously established. Up and down Devon parishes and town councils began to hold meetings to discuss how to increase food production and, specifically, to compile lists of those who wanted allotments but were unable to find them.

It had been the desperate shortage of potatoes, a food staple, during the winter of 1916–7 that lent particular emphasis to the need to grow more, as Anne Kaile describes in her article about potato-growing (see Kaile, this volume). The County Council gave particular attention to supporting allotment holders with supplies of seed, bulk purchase of sprayers and advice; and, as Clare Greener's article shows, the Royal Horticultural Society tapped into its network of members to provide advisers for allotment holders, schools and food production committees (see Greener, this volume).

Much of what has been written about allotments during the First World War has referred to the way in which they were developed in major cities, such as London or Birmingham. The challenges of supplying allotments in rural areas is less widely known, with perhaps the unspoken assumption that in the countryside there would have been little difficulty in making plots available. This was not, however, the case. As Penny Lawrence's article about the process in the village of Hemyock demonstrates, it could in fact be hard to identify and gain control of land in a rural community, with objections raised to every site identified (see Lawrence, this volume). The parish council were finally required to use the powers of compulsory acquisition.

Difficulties in identifying new allotments could occur in any scale of community. With the help of members of local history groups in we have been able to reconstruct some of the issues that

arose in increasing the number of allotments made available to local people in the communities of Chagford, Sidmouth, Dawlish and Alphington.

The history of the allotments in Chagford illustrates the link that was often taken between the land that local authorities had secured for the future provision of housing and allotments. By the beginning of the war borough council and rural and urban district councils had been charged with responsibilities for town planning and the provision of additional housing. Councils had already acquired land for the first of their schemes. Now, with a war to fight, the schemes were delayed and the land was consequently available. First discussions in Chagford had identified a couple of owners willing to let fields, and the possibility of using local commonable land. But Padley Common proved unsuitably boggy and in 1918 the Parish Council sought and obtained permission from the Rural District Council to use the land acquired for housing on a temporary basis for allotments.[8]

In Sidmouth initial responses from owners approached by the council were mixed. The Council were keen to have their allotments as central as possible for ease of access by the community. They made strong endeavours to get the local butcher to release a field he held in the centre of the town (Horse Park) but he declined to make it available unless he could be provided with another equally good for the grazing of the cattle he was fattening. The council were thrown back on land they owned in Barton Close, but the use of this for allotments was only agreed after a vote, with some councillors concerned that ploughing it up would diminish the amenities of 'some of the best lodging-houses in the town'.[9]

Dawlish Town Council too struggled with finding enough land to

[8] *Western Times (WT)* 2 Mar 1917, 8 Apr 1918; further information from Sue Price.

[9] *Devon and Exeter Gazette* (DEG), 7 & 14 Mar 1917; further information from Brian Golding.

meet the demand, but they also became involved in a wider initiative to ensure every possible plot was used to grow vegetables. The sisters of C. J. Ross, Exeter gent's outfitter and the most patriotic of fundraisers for war causes, lived in Dawlish. They had initially ploughed up their lawn and planted potatoes but in 1918 they secured an allotment, and their lawn reverted to grass. The Council wrote reprovingly requesting them to cultivate their lawn again and Miss Ross had to write to explain that the potatoes in their lawn had rotted and affected her sister's health.[10] In March 1918 the council also discussed the fact that smallholders in the town were continuing to grow violets as a cash crop rather than a food crop. They wrote to the Earl of Devon, as landlord, and, when he declined to intervene, they raised the matter at the South Devon War Agricultural Committee, with the result that an order was served requiring the tenants to grow potatoes or other vegetables instead.[11]

In Alphington, the account of a perambulation of the allotments made during a Rogationtide service for the blessing of the crops enabled us to identify the two locations where allotments were in place by 1918: the Higher Allotment adjoining the Plymouth Road, identified as on Shillingford Hill and later built on for housing; and the Central Allotment at the end of Mill Lane, subsequently taken over by the Primary School as sports fields.[12] The Alphington accounts also contained reference to the Alphington Allotment Holders Association formed late in 1917 and with over 100 members. Co-operative associations on allotments grew in popularity during the war as means of mutual help, securing good deals on seeds and manure and making joint sales of produce.[13]

[10] *WT* 5 Apr, 3 May 1918, further information from Tricia Whiteaway.
[11] *WT* 2 Apr 3 May 1918,
[12] *WT* 13 May 1918; further information from Rowena Kirkpatrick.
[13] *WT* 14 Dec 1918.

Acknowledgments

My thanks are due to Brian Golding of Sidmouth History Society, Rowena Kirkpatrick of Alphington on-line history society, Sue Price of Chagford Local History Society, Tricia Whiteaway of Dawlish Local History Group, for their researches and the information they supplied about their communities.

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Allotments in a Rural Setting

Penny Lawrence

Hemyock is a parish of 5,437 acres lying in the Blackdown Hills of East Devon. In 1911 there were 882 residents, of whom 200 lived in 53 properties in the village and 37 in 8 properties in the Millhayes area to the north of the river Culm, 0.6 mile away; the remainder were in hamlets and scattered farms throughout the parish.

Food Supply

Despite living in the country, the scarcity of food and associated high prices were causing problems; in February 1917 the Chairman of the school managers "raised the question of the food problem and suggested if anything could be done in connection with children attending school by giving them some meal as a substitute for bread during the dinner hour." By July the Headmaster, Mr Baxter, noted that the "scheme for supplying school dinners is working well, 7d for 5 dinners, between 30 and 40 children taking advantage."

In July 1919 Dr Lightbody, the Medical Officer, visited and examined 60-70 children of the 120 on the school's books. The Headmaster recorded: "13 children require treatment; of these, 5 are suffering from anaemia. It is a noticeable fact that, since food has been so dear, especially milk, many of the children have lost their former ruddy appearance and have more the look of town children."

Figure 8.1 – Photograph of Mr Baxter, the Headmaster

Provision of Allotments

On 17th December 1917, eleven parishioners asked the Parish Council to provide them with allotments, 'some discussion ensued as to the most suitable sites, and eventually a committee consisting of Messrs R. Graves, S. Lawrence and J. Salter were appointed to make inquiry as to land that would be available for this purpose voluntarily.'

Figure 8.2 – Photograph of Mr S. H. Lawrence, one of the Committee

The Parish Council next met on January 3rd 1918 and several applicants attended. The committee reported that they had identified five sites and 'interviewed Mr S Pring, Mr S. Stradling, Mr J. M. Cload, Mr J. Ackland and Mrs Granger were but that in every case objections were raised.'

Mr S. Pring lived at Brickyard, about a mile from the centre of

Hemyock, Mr S. Stradling was a baker and lived in Hemyock in High Street. Mr J. M. Cload was the publican at the Railway Hotel, opposite the Church and rented Glebe land. Mr J. Ackland was at Millhayes Farm and Mrs Granger at Churchills Farm, at the south end of High Street.

Continuing the January 3rd 1918 record:

> 'It was generally considered by the applicants that Middle Clavwells, part of the Glebe in the occupation of Mr J. M. Cload, was the most suitable. And after some discussion the Chairman (Rev J. de B. Forbes) as owner consented to wait on Mr Cload with the Committee, if the meeting would remain waiting, to which it consented.
>
> The result of the interview was that Mr Cload promised to consider the matter and give some definite answer in a week's time. It was therefore resolved to adjourn the meeting for a week.'

Figure 8.3 – Photograph of Rev John de B. Forbes, Rector of Hemyock

The Reluctant Tenant

Mr John Cload lived at the Railway Hotel in 1911, but was described as a Farmer, rather than a Publican. He was aged 54 in 1911 and lived there with his wife aged 50; they had been married for 29 years and had three children:

> *John M. Cload jnr, age 25, Farmer's son working on farm.*
> *Florence Ann, age 23, Farmers daughter dairy on farm.*
> *Ernest J., age 11, at school.*

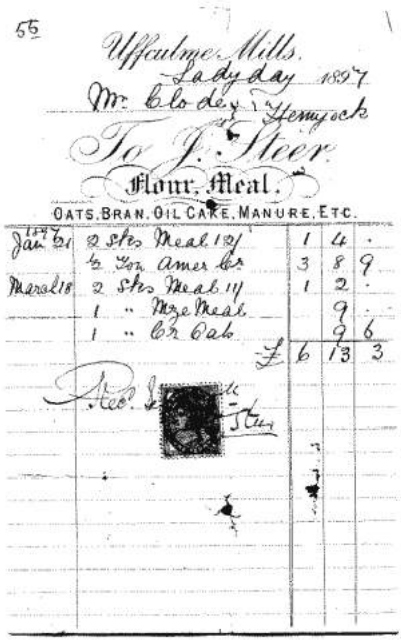
In 1918 the Cloads would have been 61, 57, 32, 30 and 18 respectively. Also at the Railway Hotel in 1911 were Fred Wright, age 22, Waggoner on farm, and two servants: May Clapp age 16 and Fred Lowman age 18. Fred Lowman joined the 8th Devonshires in 1914

Figure 8.4 – Photograph of Cload's Railway Hotel

or 15 and fought in France; John and Ernest Cload and Fred Wright are not mentioned on the Hemyock Roll of Honour and do not appear to have enlisted.

The Railway Hotel was one of three hostelries in Hemyock; it was actually in the centre of the village, adjoining the Star Inn and opposite the Church, about half a mile from the railway. It benefitted from being next to the Hemyock Market and was probably more of a pub than a hotel for overnight stays. A photo of the time shows it with a sign of "Cload's Railway Hotel" (Clist & Dracott p. 72).

Middle Clavwells was a 2.5 acre gently sloping field beside the road to Dunkeswell with a stream on the eastern boundary, approximately 0.4 mile south of the centre of Hemyock. Mr Cload's description of himself as a Farmer rather than a Publican suggests that he was renting a quantity of land. This is backed up by a receipt from Uffculme Mills for foodstuffs, dated 1897 (Clist & Dracott p. 75).


55

Uffculme Mills.

Lady day 1897

Mr. Cloday Hemyock

To J. Steer.

Flour. Meal.

OATS. BRAN. OIL CAKE. MANURE. ETC.

Jan 6	2 Sks Meal 12/	1	4	.
	½ Sk Amer 6s	3	8	9
March 18	2 Sks Meal 11/	1	2	.
	1 " Maze Meal		9	.
	1 " Gr Oats		9	6
	£	6	13	3

Rec'd

Figure 8.5 – Receipt from Uffculme Mills, dated 1897

On 10th January:

> 'It was reported that Mr J. M. Cload objected to voluntarily give up Middle Clavwells for the purpose of allotments and after some discussion it was resolved on the proposal of Mr J. Clist, seconded by Mr T. Cogan, to make a representation to the County Council, as to the application by twelve persons for allotments, and that the Council could not succeed to voluntarily hire suitable land for this purpose, and to ask the County Council to make an order authorising the Parish Council to hire compulsorily for allotments.'

Taking over the Site

On 15th February 1918:

> 'A letter from the Devon Executive (Food Production) Committee was received approving the taking over of Middle Clavwells for the purpose of providing allotments for the ratepayers of the parish. Considerable discussion ensued and it was resolved
>
> (1) To get the land ploughed by the Council
> (2) That the rent should not exceed 5/- for 20 yards
> (3) That written application for allotments be invited, to be sent in before 25th March
> (4) That the Clerk get all necessary information as to procedure and possession as early as possible
> (5) That the question be further adjourned to Monday 25th inst.
>
> The question of potatoes and potato spraying was also adjourned.'

The February 25th Parish Council meeting was informed of a circular from the Local Government Board urging Local Authorities 'to make every effort with respect to food production in the matter of Allotments and cultivation of any unoccupied Gardens.'

'The question of the purchase of a potato spraying machine

was discussed and on the proposal of Mr S. Lawrence, seconded by Mr R. Graves, it was resolved to purchase one. The selection and ordering being left to Mr John Salter.' The Clerk said he had received no information from Exeter in the matter of procedure re. the Allotments but that he had written and received a reply from Mr W. S. Price, Clerk to the District Council, which he produced.

Applications for the allotments were received and the following made to George S. Clist 20 yards; Edwin Studley 40 yards; William Ackland 40 yards; Robert Hill 20 yards; Walter S Cox 20 yards; Ephraim Luxon 40 yards; John Browning 40 yards; Percy Pengelly 20 yards; John Hart 20 yards; John Ridgeway 20 yards; and C. J. Moulder 40. Total 2 acres.

The question of Ploughing and marking off the plots was left to the original committee, Messrs R. Graves, S. Lawrence and J. Salter. It was resolved to consider the questions of rules and regulations at another meeting of the Council, the Clerk being asked to get some.

Rules and Conditions

On Lady Day (March 25th):

> 'The question of Rules governing the occupation and cultivation of the Allotments were considered and the following adopted.
>
> I Each tenancy shall be a yearly one commencing on 25th March and shall be determinable at that date in any year by either party by one calendar month's previous notice in writing given to the other.
>
> II The rents shall be payable yearly on or before 24th June.
>
> III No occupier shall underlet or part with possession of his allotment except with the consent of the Parish Council.
>
> IV Any allotment holder who leaves the parish shall give up possession of his allotments on the 25th March following unless he continues to be a ratepayer of the parish.

V Occupiers of allotments shall be bound to cultivate them in such a manner as to preserve the land in a due state of fertility and free from weeds to the satisfaction of the Council, and shall not without previously applying a sufficient quantity of suitable manure between the first and second years' crop grow two successive straw crops nor mow the same ground two years in succession.

VI Any occupier of an allotment who shall be found guilty of mis-demeanour and sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine shall be deprived of his or her allotment.

VII No occupier shall trespass upon any other allotment.

VIII Upon breach by any occupier of any of the foregoing Rules the Parish Council may by one calendar month's written notice given at any time thereafter terminate the tenancy and the tenancy shall determine accordingly, and the occupier shall immediately after such determination pay a due proportion of the current year's rent calculated up to the date of the determination of the tenancy.

IX Any notice if given by the Council shall be sufficient if signed by the Clerk to the Council and delivered to the occupier of left at his usual or last known place of abode in the Parish of Hemyock and if given by the occupier shall be sufficient if delivered to the Clerk to the Council.

X The yearly rents of the allotments shall be as follows 5/- (fives shillings) per plot Free of Rates or Taxes.

The applicants attended and signed the foregoing Rules and Conditions, and drew for their plots with the following result viz:-

George Stone Clist, No. 2; Edwin Studley, No. 16; William Ackland, Nos 10 & 11; Robert Hill, No. 4; Walter S. Cox, No. 5; Ephraim Luxon, No. 3; John Browning, Nos 8 & 9; Percy Pengelly, No. 6; John Hart, Nos 12 & 13; John Ridgeway, No. 7; Cornelius James Moulder, Nos 14 & 15.

> Of the four plots remaining, not taken up, the Clerk was instructed to advertise. Applications to be in by Monday April 15th.
>
> The committee for allotments were asked to consider the question of rules governing the hedges adjoining the allotments and report at the next meeting.'

The Applicants

Of those who can be identified from the 1911 census, five were living in Hemyock (Browning, Clist, Cox, Hill Pengelly), two at Millhayes (Hart and Ridgeway) and one in a hamlet half a mile to the south of the allotments (Ackland). Seven ratepayers had one 20 yard plot each and four had two plots each.

William Ackland, Nos 10 & 11; Castle Hill, Manager of Creamery, age 48 in 1918
John Browning, Nos 8 & 9; Egypt, Labourer, age 60
George Stone Clist, No. 2; Cornhill, Insurance Agent, age 44
Walter S Cox, No. 5; High Street, Insurance Agent, age 60
John Hart, Nos 12 & 13; Millhayes, Builder, age 59
Robert Hill, No. 4; Cornhill, Mason builder, age 66 or Station Road, Mason's Labourer, age 42
Ephraim Luxon, No. 3; a Hemyock man and farm labourer; living in Clayhidon parish with his family in 1911, age 63
Cornelius James Moulder, Nos 14 & 15.
Percy Pengelly, No. 6; Station Road, Carpenter, age 53
John Ridgeway, No. 7; Millhayes, Labourer, age 36
Edwin Studley, No. 16.

On 15th April:

> 'The Committee for Allotments reported that Mr Cload was prepared to take over all the hedges adjoining land in his occupation. As however some objection was raised to the adoption of this course, the question was further adjourned.'

On May 10th:

> '. . . the question of the unlet allotments was discussed. Mr J. M. Cload having intimated his willingness to take them over for the purpose of cultivating mangold.
>
> Plot one however was applied for, and let to Edwin Studley at this meeting, and the three remaining ones were left to the allotment committee to dispose of, as it was understood there were other applicants who would be pleased to have one for mangolds besides Mr Cload.'

The Potato Sprayer

Also at the May meeting:

> 'Mr J Salter reported that he had received the Potato Sprayer and conditions as to its loan were discussed. (1) It was resolved that 6d per night, or day of usage be charged. (2) That the machine be returned promptly and in clean condition after use. (3) and that any damage caused be made good by the person hiring the same.'

It was also resolved that the Clerk ask the Sexton to take charge of the sprayer and if he would consent to use the same in cases where such assistance was required, his own services to be paid for by the hirer independent of the cost of machine.

Allotment Matters

At their 8th August meeting 'the allotments committee reported having let plots 17, 18 and 19 to Mr F. Hall.' He was the butcher and lived in the Cornhill area of the village, on the Dunkeswell road to the south of the Church, and was aged thirty two.

> 'Mr J. C. Knowlman (auctioneer and valuer of Culmstock) made an application through the Clerk for the Council to support a claim he was making to the Losses Commission on behalf of Mr J. M. Cload for the giving up of the field for allotments. After some discussion the Council were of the opinion that it was really no business of theirs, and resolved to take no action in the matter.'

On 11th November 1918 the Council received 'a complaint relative to the former tenant's poultry getting in to the allotments, and after some discussion it was resolved that a letter be written to him asking him to take preventative measures against this':

> 'The question of vermin also getting into the allotments was discussed seeing the fences were under the control of Mr Cload, a difficulty arose as to setting spring traps therein, and as by law these were not allowed to be set in the open except by the written consent of the owner, the allotment holders were consequently in a dilemma. The Chairman (Rev J. de B. Forbes) as the owner said he would most certainly consent to the setting of spring traps in the open and promised to hand this to the Clerk in writing for the information of the persons concerned.'

A lease was presented for approval as between the owner of the allotment field, the Rev J. de B. Forbes, and the Council as the Tenants thereof, as from Lady Day last, at the annual rent of Three Pounds per annum, the owner paying all Rates, Taxes and other outgoings whatsoever which may be charged upon the said field during the continuance of the Tenancy. Mr J. Clist moved that the best thanks of the Council be given Mr Forbes for his liberality in granting such a lease as read, and moved that the same be accepted, and executed forthwith, this was seconded by Mr S. Lawrence and carried.

In February 1919 it was 'resolved that the Rules and Regulations

governing the letting of the allotments be printed and the Clerk was instructed to order 100 copies.'

In March 'The question of the disposal of the allotments in hand was considered and resolved that should Mr Frank Hall wish to retain those he had last year, that he should do so, and as Mr Stradling and Mr William Salter would each take one it was decided that this should be arranged or failing Mr Hall taking his, three should go to Mr Stradling and the remaining two to Mr Salter.'

Decline

The allotments were well used until the mid-1920s; in March 1926 it was reported that three were vacant and in August a complaint was received that some were 'in a dirty condition'. In January 1928 it was reported that 'only four occupiers were now left and Mr Salter who had recently purchased the land had given the Council notice to yield possession of the land at Lady Day 1929'. The Council agreed to this, and Middle Clavwells was vacated in March 1929.

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Photos from the Blackdown Archive and author's own collection

Potato Growing in Devon in the First World War

Anne Kaile

The nation entered into the war in August 1914 in the belief that it would be short and sharp. Nothing had been done in preparation for food production even though home produce then only met a third of the national requirement. Harvests in 1914 and 1915 were reasonable and relatively stable, whilst food imports had lulled the Government into a false sense of security. However, the food situation became desperate in early 1917, due to poor harvests in 1916 (for example the poor potato harvest reduced seasonal availability by 25 per cent) and the effect of the U boat blockade of Britain.[14]

Before World War One, potatoes were the main crop in the world and this vegetable was to play a key role in the food production during the War, and potatoes, at the time, offered the cheapest source of protein.[15] In Devon the production of potatoes increased from 10,000 acres in 1914 to 20,000 acres in 1918.[16] Devon in 1911 was the ninth largest grower out of eleven, with the principal growing counties in East Anglia, but its 100 per cent increase in

[14] A. Wilson, *The Story of the Potato*.
[15] W. Wright, *Practical Gardening*, 1930s; *Food Economy in Wartime* by T. B. Wood, Drapers Professor of Agriculture and F. G. Hopkins, Professor of Biochemistry 1915.
[16] *Presentation* by Paul Brassley at Project Workshop, November 2015.

output during the War showed the importance of the potato to the food requirement programme.[17]

There was some doubt as to whether Devon could be considered a potato county, or whether it would be wiser to grown oats instead. At a meeting of the Crediton District War Agricultural Committee in January 1917 a speaker stated that Devon 'could not generally speaking be regarded as a potato growing county though the Chagford district and the area on that side of the county some of the finest potatoes in England were grown'.[18] Articles in the *Gardeners Chronicle* and in local Devon newspapers were encouraging gardeners and allotment holders to grow more potatoes; 'Sir, it is to be hoped that everyone able to dig or pay for digging will make every effort to grow potatoes . . . potatoes may save the situation'.[19]

Training and education was offered by the Royal Horticultural Society in the Food Production Campaign during the War and Mr. P. C. M. Veitch (of the Devon nurserymen Messrs Veitch and Sons of Devon) gave a lecture at the Exeter Guildhall in February, 1917 covering vegetable growing, including potatoes (Figure 9.1). Another organisation was The Devon Produce Society which was set up under the presidency of Sir Henry Lopes and for the first season it expected its work to be largely educative on guiding allotment holders and other small growers on 'their choice of crops to grow and how to produce the maximum of food from the ground at their disposal'.[20]

The Government decreed that growers should concentrate on the growing of main crop-potatoes to feed the nation, which meant that the Branscombe Plats, which since sometime in the eighteenth

[17] *Commercial Growing a Practical and Scientific Treatise for Market Gardeners* Volume 1, 193. Editor J. Weatley
[18] Article, *Western Times*, 23 January 1917
[19] Letter, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, April 14 1917
[20] *The Gardeners Chronicle*, 4 May 1918.

Figure 9.1 – Photograph of Peter Veitch (1850–1929)
Source: Seeds of Fortune, A Gardening Dynasty (Sue Shephard, 2003).

century had grown early potato were under threat (Figure 9.2). Early potato growing had meant that they could get the best prices but during the War the government had fixed the price of potato, and selling at main crop-prices was not a viable option for these part-time farmers.[21] On these plats, that ran from Sidmouth to Branscombe, in some places a mere ledge six feet wide. In others gently sloping terraces covering an acre or more, were grown some of the earliest and best English potatoes.[22] Conditions for growth were favourable as south facing, they received the sun all day long and were naturally irrigated by the springs which trickled from the cliffs above. The staple fertiliser was seaweed obtainable in large quantities from the beach below. By 1945 cultivation had ceased on most of the plats.

[21] Branscombe Project.
[22] Melville Mackay, 'Early Potatoes on the Devon Cliffs', *The Garden*, 29 July 1917.

Figure 9.2 – Photograph of Branscombe Plats[23]

Many varieties of potatoes were available during World War One. Earlies included Sharpe's Victor or Epicure, as grown on the Branscombe Plats; mid-season varieties such as British Queen and Snowdrop, and main crops potatoes such as Arran Chiefs (which gave good early yields and therefore was an important consideration when there was a shortage of food). For example, at Aylesbeare, it was reported in a letter to the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, in March 1917:

> '. . . that a small convenient field has been chosen and one acre plots are to be divided into sixteen strips . . . at the right time plough in the seed potatoes, barrow the surface, spread 1 cwt of sulphate

[23] Sourced from 'www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/EAW050068 English Heritage' (Accessed 18/07/16).

ammonia per acre and light roll . . . the seed is Arran Chiefs supplied by the County Council Agricultural War Committee.'[24]

Up to Date was another main crop variety which was one of the heaviest cropping potatoes, and was mentioned at a meeting of Devon County Council as being quoted 'at 13 shillings per hundredweight as opposed to 16 shillings per hundredweight for Arran Chiefs' (Figure 9.3).[25] During the War the Government set a minimum retail price for potatoes which stimulated further acreage to be set aside for potato growing.[26]

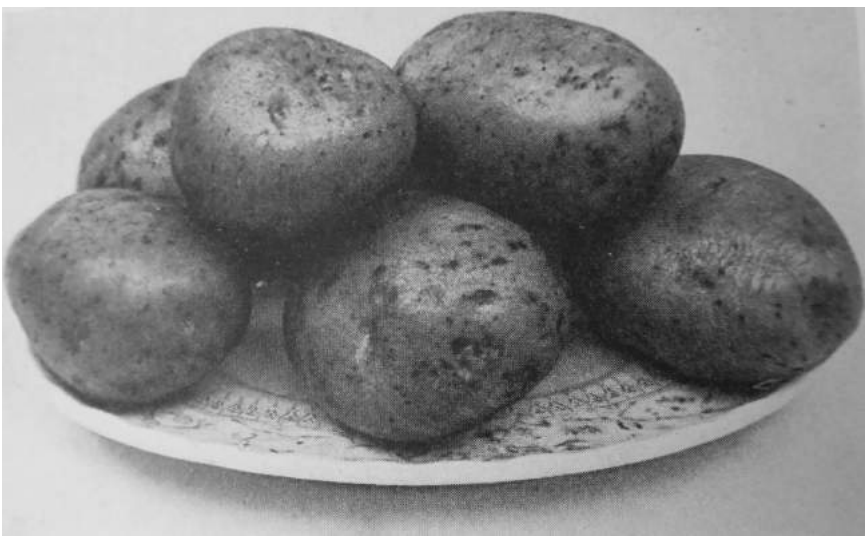

Figure 9.3 – Photograph of 'Up to Date Potato Variety'
Source: The Gardener's Assistant, 1935

[24] *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 2 March 1917.
[25] *Western Times*, 16 March 1917.
[26] A. Wilson, *The Story of the Potato*.

Figure 9.4 – Photograph of spraying equipment being prepared for use
Source: The Gardening Magazine, July 28 1917

The supply of seed potato (which normally came from Scotland or East Anglia) was difficult, either because of shortages or pricing, and was the subject of discussion at many local council meetings including a meeting at Hennock – 'Disappointment had been caused to the allotment holders and others by the non-arrival of the seed potatoes ordered. The time has fully come for planting'.[27]

Perhaps to address this issue it was reported in the *Gardeners Chronicle* in June 1918 that 'on some of the high land in Devonshire where the rainfall is rather high, potatoes are grown which give great promise of being first rate for seed purposes: this trial as being conducted by RHS'.[28]

[27] *Western Times*, 13 April 1917.
[28] *Gardeners Chronicle*, 29 June 1918.

Potato diseases were never too far from the minds of the growers. In June 1918, an 'onlooker' wrote a letter in one of the local papers;

> 'I once more make an earnest appeal to all farmers and allotment holders to spray their potatoes as the Food Production Department point out that potatoes are essentially food crops and their security is mainly a matter of preventive spraying . . . already reports of the outbreak of the disease are reaching the department.'[29]

An article in *Gardeners Chronicle* reported of numerous outbreaks of potato blight in Wales and other areas badly affected included Devon.[30]

Devon was not a natural growing area for the potato, but when asked to increase its production, it did so. From 1916 onwards, as reported in an article *The Dawn of Peace*, 'the army of volunteer cultivators have made such notable contributions to the food supply'.[31] The potato that in 1914 saw 2.8 tonnes being produced is still an important vegetable today with 5.7 million tonnes being produced in 2014.[32]

[29] *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 11 June 1918.
[30] *Gardeners Chronicle* 10 August 1918.
[31] *Gardeners Chronicle* 16 November 1918.
[32] National Farmers Union, *Paper Farming and WW1* (2014).

Royal Horticultural Society Advisors and their role in the Food Production Campaign of World War One

Clare Greener

In the *Western Times* dated 8th March 1918 there was a list of forty-two 'Western Garden Experts' who had voluntarily undertaken to help the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) with their Food Production Campaign in Devon. They were part of a country-wide team of 2,000 'Expert Garden Advisers, Lecturers, and Demonstrators'.[33] The volunteers were tasked with:

1. serving on local food production committees
2. giving expert advice to allotment holders and cottagers
3. lecturing on vegetable cultivation
4. demonstrating horticultural techniques
5. instructing children in cultivating their school gardens.[34]

The Devon experts were a mix of people from private citizens to working gardeners. Of the forty-two people listed it has been possible to find some information about most of them, although there are still two who have not been traced and information found on others is minimal so far. The experts were made up of a

[33] *The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, (JRHS),* vol. XLII, Part 1, (October, 1919) p. iii.
[34] *Western Times*, 08.03.1918.

clergyman, three teachers, six private citizens, twenty-nine gardeners including three nurserymen and one market gardener, and a dental surgeon. Sources used for research on these individuals include the census, local directories, newspapers and archives.

Not all volunteers helped in all categories. Some, such as Mrs Quinton of Blindwell, Kingsteignton, George Nicol Thomson of Hulham House, Exmouth and Harold Dunstan, School Master at Bishops Nympton, only served on Food Production Committees. Others limited their input according to their knowledge and abilities. Head gardeners, who made up over half of the 'experts', undertook to serve on committees, gave practical demonstrations to allotment and cottage gardeners, organised and gave lectures on varying aspects of food production, wrote articles in local parish magazines and worked with local schools.

Serving head gardeners and nurserymen were the obvious people to ask to assist; many would already be known to the RHS through their articles in horticultural journals and their work with plants. A professional head gardener would, in most cases, have had years of training and work experience frequently working in nurseries as well as on private estates. He would have been accustomed to communicating with a wide range of people including owners, contemporaries and garden staff. It was rare for a man to reach the peak of his profession until he was at least 30, that meant that they were older than many of their garden staff, so were less likely to be called up to go and fight. Only five gardeners were young enough to be conscripted in 1916; the majority were in their fifties and three were in their sixties.

Charles Berry had been a jobbing gardener who trained to become a horticultural lecturer to the East Suffolk County Council Technical Instruction Committee. In 1895 he was appointed as the Instructor of Horticulture by the Devonshire County Council.[35] He worked throughout the county giving lectures and running courses

[35] *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* 09.1895

mostly on cultivating fruit. He also joined the Exeter Gardener's Association which ensured he had good links with many of the top head gardeners in the county. When the war began, Berry, then in his 60s, changed the focus of his lectures to allotment gardening and the importance of school gardens in food production.

Another important garden official was Alfred Andrews. He too began his career as a gardener, following in his father's footsteps, working mostly in the Plymouth area. In 1914 he was appointed as Superintendent of Parks to Plymouth Borough Council, where he oversaw planting and maintenance of the parks, acted as a judge at horticultural shows and ensured that plants were cultivated for decorating the Guildhall and other buildings for civic functions.

Peter Veitch, head of the Veitch nursery in Exeter, was invited to sit on the Exeter City Allotments Committee. He sent his foremen to show allotment holders how to make the best of their plots and lent tools and equipment to help them get started. He also arranged for them to have seed potatoes and vegetable seed packs.[36] William Godfrey, another well-known nurseryman from Exmouth, was an active man in his community, sitting on 'school, council and sports committees'. He was well-known too in the gardening community, winning prizes for his chrysanthemums, writing articles for the *Gardener's Chronicle* and producing regular editions of plant and seed catalogues.[37] Both nurserymen, while contributing to the war effort, also looked ahead to a commercial future following the conflict by continuing to exhibit and win prizes with the RHS.[38]

Many of the head gardeners came from humble backgrounds, but through horticultural education, work experience, and the professional necessities of good communication, they established themselves in some of Devon's top gardens. They were accustomed to producing food out of season and of making the most of the local

[36] Devon Heritage Centre ECA 11/1.
[37] April Marjoram's research.
[38] *JRHS,* vol. XLII, Part 1, (October, 1919) pp. lxxii, lxxvii.

soil. Many had already taken part in vegetable trials before war began, reporting their results in horticultural journals and this work continued throughout the war.

The use of a wide variety of individuals as RHS advisors demonstrated a breaking down of social barriers as all worked together as a team with a common aim of increasing food supplies. Women undertook similar tasks as men. Garden owners worked alongside their gardeners. The RHS advisors in Devon, along with those in other parts of the country, played a powerful role in increasing food production, but also in involving people who had little or no previous experience in practical gardening. Additionally they provided meaningful and therapeutic activities to soldiers who had been invalided out from the war. To date no evidence has been found of any of these volunteers serving in a military capacity although many other head gardeners did despite their age. It is not known how these people were chosen or became volunteers or whether any influence was brought to keep these men where their skills could be best utilised.

Fishing in Devon During the First World War

Inshore Fisheries in Wartime Devon

Nigel Hyman

Despite the media interest in the Great War there has been little mention of inshore fisheries either nationally or in Devon; similarly the contribution of both Stephen Reynolds in Sidmouth and Henry Maurice in London appears to have been entirely forgotten.

In the early twentieth century the inshore fishing industry was largely based in Devon and Cornwall. There were periods of 'boom

Figure 11.1 – Photograph of Sidmouth Beach in the early twentieth century
Source: Sidmouth Museum Archives

and bust' but overall there was a steady decline; a pattern which has continued to the present day. The fisheries from a specific beach or harbour would typically extend up to 20 miles along the coast line and as far as 20 miles from the shore. The catches were seasonal and the two most important fish were herring, November to March, and mackerel, May to September. Additionally sprats, flat-fish, lobsters and prawns were caught. Drift, and occasionally seine, nets were used for herring and mackerel. In 1890 there were 30 drifters on the Sidmouth shingle but at the outbreak of the Great War the number had fallen to 10 or less (Figure 11.1).

Stephen Reynolds was an author and fisherman living with the Woolley fishing family in Sidmouth (Figure 11.2).

He became the local fishermen's spokesman and wrote articles in national papers. His name came to the attention of Henry

Figure 11.2 – Photograph of Woolley Family and Reynolds (Second right), 1908
Source: Sidmouth Museum Archives

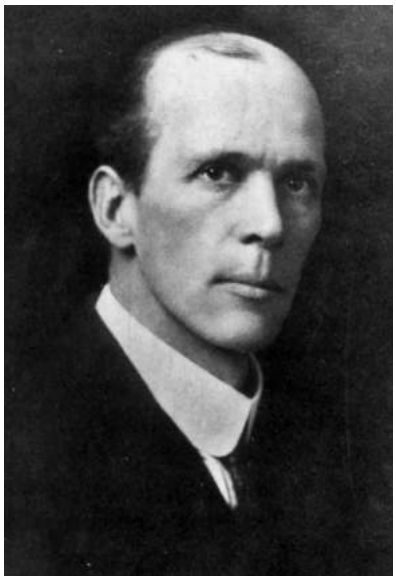

Figure 11.3 – Photograph of Henry Maurice
Source: Grizelda Maurice, Scoble (2000)

Maurice (Figure 11.3), the head of Fisheries Division in the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Subsequently Reynolds became the prominent member of a committee set up by Maurice in 1912/13 to report on inshore fisheries in Devon and Cornwall; an investigation, it was thought correctly, that would have national implications. Their main findings concluded that fisheries should be on an equal status to agriculture, rather than a poor relative. Improvements should be centrally funded with local inspectors on the coast. Some fishing boats would have inboard engines installed. Some landing sites and harbours would be improved. Credit banking would be offered and insurance of boats and equipment, previously impossible, would be available.

'Fishery work smashed' was Reynolds's reaction at the outbreak of war in August 1914. In fact the next 4 years would see the Committee's radical recommendations carried out to varying degrees. Many of the Devon fishermen, who had in peacetime trained with the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), were now called up. Precise figures have not been found but 10 members of the fishing Woolley family left immediately. There were, however, many fishermen who believed that their patriotic duty lay in their work and the survival of the fishing industry, a view shared by Reynolds.

Reynolds was appointed the District Inspector for the South West Naval Command, (Figure 11.4) based in Sidmouth, and his role was

Figure 11.4 – Photograph of Stephen Reynolds
Source: Frances Woodward

to liaise with the Royal Navy at Mount Wise in Plymouth.

There were several areas of potential conflict between the fishermen and the Royal Navy. The latter neither knew nor cared about the fishing industry and regarded fishermen with amused condescension. There was increasing pressure on those, previously trained in the RNR, to be recruited.

Many inshore fishing grounds were now out of bounds, either because the Navy required them for training purposes or because of fear of enemy mines or U-boat attacks. There were strict fishing permit requirements and fines were enforced on fishermen who 'trespassed' in incorrect waters, even if the breach was unintentional. The majority of the national permits were in the south-west reflecting the importance of the local industry.

In 1909, Reynolds had designed and owned the boat, Puffin, clinker built of elm and with a single cylinder engine; its main role was to tow drifters to fishing grounds. It had been the first such boat in Devon and indeed the country to be used as an aid for the inshore fisheries. In an act of supreme irony it was now commandeered by the Royal Navy, as were other fishing vessels that were also deemed useful.

By far the major source of tension between the fishermen and the Navy followed conscription in January 1916 which applied

to all single medically fit men aged between 18 and 41. Fishing was a 'certified' occupation but exemption required attending a Military Service Tribunal. The decision-making process was often inconsistent and the outcome uncertain. Fishermen were taken by the Navy or the Army if the Tribunal found against them, although they could appeal. Many fishermen were not necessarily excellent recruits to the Navy, despite their maritime knowledge, in view of their self-reliance and dislike of taking orders; they were even less suitable for the army. A possible compromise was a subgroup of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, the RNVR(Y) designed specifically for professional seamen, including fishermen. If accepted such a fisherman would continue his work but be on 'standby' and could be called up in the future. Advertisements explaining this complex arrangement were in the local papers including the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*. If the fisherman was turned down, for whatever reason, he would receive a RNVR (Y9) certificate. A crisis arose when the Army intervened and insisted that such a 'failed' recruit could be transferred into their service. Reynolds immediately objected and, with the support of Maurice in Fisheries, the Army backed down. Nevertheless there is no doubt that some West Country fishermen felt aggrieved by what they regarded as inappropriate conscription. Some of those sent to Devonport Barracks for training were nicknamed 'Reynolds's Men', a term deeply upsetting to Reynolds.

As meat shortages increased the public was encouraged in newspaper articles to eat more fresh herring, so-called 'free food'. (Herring was salted and exported, pre-war.) Leaflets, such as 'Tasty Ways of Cooking Fish' and 'Herring – The King of Fish', were distributed. Nationally, during the war years, there was a 75% reduction in catches but the Devon fishing industry benefitted by a 700% increase in herring prices. In 1918 various food items, including meat, were rationed but fish, despite low levels, escaped. This remarkable success was due to the organisational skills of Reynolds in Devon and Maurice in London combined with the determination and industry of the county's fishermen.

Ongoing research

- A more accurate estimate of the numbers of inshore fishermen at the onset of the Great War
- The number who had trained in the RNR
- The number who were conscripted in 1916
- Are there records of any inshore fisherwomen in the conflict?
- An estimate of the Devon fish catches and prices

Sources

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The Brixham Fishing Fleet in the Great War

Samantha Little

Figure 12.1 – Photograph of Brixham fishermen in the Great War, contributing to the food supply of the nation
Source: Brixham Heritage Museum

The impact of the declaration of war, described by H.M. King George V as 'this grave moment in our national history' on the fishing port of Brixham was instantaneous and dramatic; comprising 210 vessels with £148,000 invested in capital, boats and gear, the fishery was abruptly depleted of men as Royal Naval and Special Fleet Reservists with Naval Pensioners immediately departed for

Figure 12.2 – Photograph of BM225 'Cariad', destroyed by enemy submarine action during the War
Source: Brixham Heritage Museum

barracks at Devonport.[39] It was remembered as 'the saddest day in history' by fourteen-year-old George Bridge, who had been sailing on trawlers for two years.[40]

Simultaneously, the Government set out requirements for fleets to record information about movement of smacks (destination and return to port). This coincided with the reinforcement of a controversial bye-law, enacted by Devon Sea Fisheries Committee and applicable to Start Bay, which prohibited the fleet from trawling

[39] His Majesty King George V to Admiral Sir John Jellicoe K.C.B., K.C.V.O., 'King's Message to the Fleet and Colonies', *Brixham Western Guardian,* 6 August 191; *Brixham Western Guardian*, 16 April 1914*; Brixham Western Guardian*, 6 August 1914.
[40] George Loram Bridge (1900–77), memoir held in the archive of Brixham Heritage Museum and Little, Samantha – Battling Onwards: The Brixham Fishing Fleet 1914–1918, Brixham Heritage Museum (2016). ISBN: 978-0-9545459-8-7.

a lucrative and well-stocked fishing ground near the home port in efforts to preserve immature fish and protect the livelihood of Dartmouth shell fishermen.[41] This damaging legislation was to prove contentious throughout the conflict, as crews were forced to fish further afield, later exposing themselves to great danger from German submarine warfare and mines.

Stephen Reynolds, Inspector of Fisheries for the South West (and a celebrated author of books set around the fishery in his home town of Sidmouth), arrived at Brixham to examine the effects of war on the industry the following month (see Hyman, this volume). Convening a formal inquiry, he ascertained there were 'about 1,200 sea-going fishermen in Brixham' and 'approaching 300 had already been called up', leaving most trawlers either short-handed or redundant. Questioning the need for night fishing, he was told that remnants of the fleet had 'barely earned 5/- in the previous fortnight' and compulsion to fish in daylight hours meant families 'would practically starve'.[42]

Early in 1915 Brixham fishermen were instrumental in the rescue of sailors from H.M.S. *Formidable*, which brought national attention to the port.[43] Stephen Reynolds returned with confirmation of £2,000 in Government money for experimentation with motor power in trawlers, meeting 'mule' owners who had expressed an interest in utilisation of their smacks for trials.[44] Later the fishery was subject to Defence of the Realm regulations, requiring vessels to hold a permit to work. Fishing in Lyme Bay from Hope's Nose to Portland was prohibited at night and smacks could not fish within 10 miles of a defended port.[45]

[41] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 16 April 1914.
[42] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 27 August 1914.
[43] Little, Samantha – Through Cloud and Sunshine: Brixham in the Great War, Brixham Heritage Museum (2008). ISBN: 978-0-9545459-5-6.
[44] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 18 March 1915.
[45] 'Notice to Mariners, Fishermen and Boat Owners, Article 38, Defence of the Realm Regulations, Consolidated', Brixham Western Guardian, 1 July, 1915.

Figure 12.3 – Photograph of fishermen carrying out essential tasks, after hauling in the catch
Source: Brixham Heritage Museum

At the end of the year, as the Government considered conscription and the toll on fishing crews became acute, Rev. Stewart Sim, Chairman of Brixham Urban District Council, who advocated that their employment was 'of national importance' and crucial to the whole country, became gravely concerned that endless recruitment would result in complete cessation of the industry and drastically affect the nation's food supply. He raised the matter of exemption for fishermen with the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Fortescue, who corresponded with Lord Derby, responsible for the 'group' enlisting scheme, receiving the reply that no such exemption was possible, despite a statement contained in the Annual Report for Sea Fisheries (1914): '. . . when the history of the war is written, the country will realise as it has never realised before, the supreme value to an island maritime power of an organised fishing industry and daring fishing population'.[46] A letter from the War Office to the Admiralty, which was made public, stated that fishermen: '. . . constitute the only class

[46] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 25 November, 1915.

. . . with practical experience of the sea who are left to be recruited in any considerable numbers . . . in the R.N.R. It therefore becomes imperative that the whole of this class should be available for service in the Royal Navy as required'.[47]

Devon Sea Fisheries Committee held a meeting to discover the problems facing the residual fleets, which they intended to communicate to the Government as a matter of urgency. The debate exposed some grim realities: decommissioning of significant numbers of vessels due to shortage of hands with owners incurring severe losses; bureaucratic difficulties preventing Belgian nationals from bringing Brixham crews to full capacity; deprecation of boats (a critical concern); and the tragic case of a fisherman's widow and family applying to the parish overseers for relief from their poverty.[48] The industry was further impeded by the introduction of the Military Service Act (1916), which contained provisions to exempt fishermen from Army service to retain their availability for the Navy, while the Brixham Military Tribunal, convened to hear appeals for exemption from conscription, considered many cases of men in trades allied to the fishery.[49]

Despite these hardships, the fishing community managed to maintain food supply, also donating fish to local hospitals for the nourishment of wounded and convalescing soldiers in the locality. They also raised the considerable sum of £650 through fundraising efforts and the establishment of the popular Brixham Fishermen's Choir, which was used to provide a Red Cross ambulance that was eventually sent to the Somme battlefields, one soldier writing home to Brixham: 'I salute every time I see it'.[50]

[47] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 25 November, 1915.
[48] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 6 January 1916.
[49] The Military Service Act (1916) and *Brixham Western Guardian*, 17 February 1916.
[50] *Brixham Western Guardian* 13 January, 20 January, 10 February, 24 February and 16 March 1916; Lance-Corporal G. James (Devonshire Regiment), *Brixham Western Guardian*, 15 June 1916.

Figure 12.4 – Photograph showing the Gift of the Brixham Fishermen
Source: Brixham Heritage Museum

During November the fishing fleet became the target of a violent submarine attack, a deadly threat during their exposure at sea. Seven vessels were destroyed by incessant shelling, which was then directed at the small boats in which the crews fled, many cutting their gear to escape, which led to disastrous financial loss as insurance premiums were prohibitive due to war risk.[51]

The following year a deputation of Brixham and Plymouth fishermen asked the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to provide better protection at sea; otherwise they were confined to near grounds with poor yields.[52] They were also hampered in their work as

[51] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 7 December 1916.
[52] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 22 March 1917; National Archives BT 145/51 – Board of Trade and successors/Returns of fishing boats/England and Wales/Ports/Brixham.

men conscripted for naval service were kept in barracks at Chatham or Devonport for inordinate lengths of time when they could have remained with the fleet; 40 fishermen had been conscripted to the R.N.V.R. 'Y' Section during the week the issue was raised.[53]

As food supply became critical, regulations were introduced in 1918 that constrained the industry further. Brixham apportioned land for allotments and implemented Government regulations to ration commodities such as tea, butter and margarine. Meat was also rationed, and a Fish Control and Distribution Advisory Committee was formed; meanwhile poor weather and the influenza pandemic (which claimed the life of Stephen Reynolds) kept boats in port.[54] When the Brixham fishing fleet finally celebrated the Armistice with flags, flares and rockets, the celebration was short-lived as the community had fresh problems to surmount: fish distribution in the face of strikes, Government-funded trawlers and surging unemployment.[55]

[53] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 5 July 1917.
[54] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 8 August 1918; *Brixham Western Guardian*, 24 October and 7 November 1918, and 20 February 1919.
[55] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 20 March, 3 April, 29 May, 5 June, 26 June, 28 August and 21October 1919.

Researching the Brixham Fishery during the Great War

Samantha Little

Brixham, known as the 'Mother of Trawling' after its fishing methods spread to other ports, has a unique place in national history with local fishermen playing a vital part: escorting the only Spanish Armada ship captured (1588), assisting the Dutch William, Prince of Orange on his arrival to ascend the British Throne (1688), and the transfer of Napoleon Bonaparte off Berry Head before his departure for St. Helena (1815). The Great War and its aftermath, however, provided the industry's greatest challenge: resilience and development during the post-war period in the wake of decimation wrought through conflict.

The main research themes have been the disruption to the fishery in terms of enlistment and compulsory recruitment to the Royal Navy; restriction due to Government regulations and local bye-laws; danger from German submarines and mines, and their effect on the industry's ability to contribute to the national food supply. Local newspapers have provided a rich source with reports of Brixham fishery activity and local opinion, coupled with quotes from national newspapers, verbatim publication of Admiralty notices and Parliamentary debate extracted from *Hansard*.

After the Armistice, a Parliamentary election was announced and the *Western Guardian*, which was neutral, did an excellent job informing electors of the views of the Coalition, Liberal and Labour

candidates. Colonel Charles Burn (Coalition) praised the 'splendid service . . . rendered by the men of Brixham as mine sweepers and manning patrol boats'. He also advocated a separate Ministry of Fisheries to support the industry.[56] The other candidates made no mention of the fishery.[57] Newspaper reports and Election Addresses make for interesting comparison, confirming no political slant adopted by the Press.[58]

The newly-elected Government, early in 1919, released national figures for the industry, pertaining to the war years: 3,000 steam fishing vessels requisitioned, principally for mine sweeping duties, while those remaining contributed 400,000 tons of fish to the food supply of the nation *for each year of the conflict*. Destruction through enemy action affected 672 smacks and 416 fishermen lost their lives at sea. The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, stated: 'There have been no readier volunteers than fishermen and no industry has contributed a larger percentage of men to the fighting forces'.[59] Although Royal Naval Reservists were being demobilised and motor boats had been released to prepare for the home fishery, heavy restrictions still applied, as indicated through the Admiralty's 'Notice of Restrictions in Fishing Area (Portland Bill to Bardsey Island) around the South West Peninsula'.[60]

The *Western Guardian* published an account of the local Food Control Committee, which intended to pursue removal of State prices for sole, brill and turbot, after fishermen had gathered opinions from crews at Plymouth, Milford Haven and Swansea.[61] Colonel Burn had the opportunity to introduce a Private Member's Bill: 'That the House would welcome the early introduction . . . of legislation to improve the method of transport and distribution

[56] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 5 December 1918.
[57] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 5 December 1918.
[58] Brixham Heritage Museum Archive.
[59] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 2 January 1919.
[60] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 2 January 1919; 20 March 1919; 6 March 1919.
[61] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 26 March 1919.

of fish, to simplify and consolidate the fishery laws, and to terminate the confusion consequent upon the present administration of these laws by eleven departments of State. Also, in view of the great importance of securing favourable international agreements relating to deep-sea fisheries, this House is of the opinion that an effort should be made to negotiate such agreements during the Paris Conference and that this matter should at once be entrusted to a . . . Minister of the Crown, assisted by an advisory body representative of the deep-sea fishing industry'.[62]

A useful account of an industry meeting (with statistics) was published in March 1919, which offered comparison with the industry in September 1914; 125 vessels were fishing out of Brixham, a significant decline from numbers at the commencement of hostilities (210). While 1,200 men were employed by the fishery in 1914, an eye-witness account was given of 27 unemployed men waiting at the fish market for work in 1919.[63] The meeting was also reported in the *Western Daily Mercury*, which allowed comparison for accuracy and potential political influence.[64] Comments made at the event were recorded in somewhat 'flowery' terms, but mainly the language used reflected the emotive subject and the public view, capturing the widely felt anger, frustration and resentment at the decline in the fishery and the subsequent impact on the local economy.

During April, the Admiralty published a chart of wreck sites (approximately 50-60), requesting that fishermen 'flag' any that could be suitably buoyed, a good example of Government notices alongside local reports creating the wider picture.[65] Hansard for May 1919 revealed that the 458 trawlers and 227 drifters were built for the Admiralty during wartime, many of which were being sold

[62] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 20 March 1919.
[63] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 20 March 1919.
[64] *Western Daily Mercury*, 20 March 1919.
[65] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 3 April 1919.

on the open market, while 'proposals' for 'dealing with the rest of them' were 'under consideration'.[66] The *Western Guardian* also published an item from *The Times* regarding British (Falmouth) trawlers that were loaned to the American Navy.[67] A report in June gave details about the Treasury having vetoed an Admiralty scheme for demobilised fishermen to purchase surplus trawlers under 'co-operative' principles, following complaints about competition between 'state-aided' boats and private enterprise.[68]

These sources present a clear picture of the decline in the fishery and measures taken to consolidate it. Despite deputations, representations and rhetoric, Brixham fishermen were obliged to take employment with companies trawling off Wales and the East Coast of England, after decreasing fish sales and with some men only receiving insurance payments in September 1919 for loss of gear due to submarine activity three years earlier.[69] A dilemma here for the researcher: despite great detail about financial loss and different types of fish, there are no earlier prices of catches from this source, although Brixham people of the time would immediately have realised the severity and implications of the problem.

Through researching the aftermath of the Great War in terms of the fishing industry, the items described or quoted seek to illustrate the utility or drawbacks of the sources consulted.

[66] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 29 May 1919.
[67] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 29 May 1919.
[68] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 5 June 1919.
[69] *Brixham Western Guardian*, 26 June 1919; 28 August 1919; 4 September 1919.

Sprats ARE Important
The Inshore Fisherman had an Important Role In Teignmouth and Shaldon 1900–1925

Heather Roche and Lou Bagnald

Situated in south Devon, the town of Teignmouth at the mouth of the river Teign; Shaldon village is on the west bank. Both are associated with fishing and boat building.

1901 shows a population of 8,499 with 202 fishermen and boys and 1911 shows 9,115 with 99 fishermen and boys. By 1921, it is 10,970 with 80 fishermen.

Background

Local men were fishing and trading with Newfoundland since early 1500. In 1893 Kelly's quote 'There is a good Newfoundland trade, and home fishery for whiting, herrings, mackerel and pilchards, which are caught in the Channel and salmon in the river'. By 1902 the Newfoundland trade is no longer mentioned and fishing is definitely declining.

1901–1913

Seven new fishing boats were purchased, making an average of thirty two, and by 1912 the highest number was thirty eight. These boats were under fifteen tons, averaging 21 ft. long, crewed by one

Figure 14.1 – Photograph of Fishing Boats on Teignmouth back beach, circa 1910
Source: Teign Heritage Centre

or two men and used as sailing boats, fishing by hooking, drifting or seining with nets. Some were used for potting, i.e. catching crabs and lobsters. 1913 saw two new boats entered; both motor boats, and the first in Teignmouth. Several smaller boats were closed or cancelled.

Discussions were ongoing about the problems with trawlers inside the three mile limits; from 1903 Teignmouth Bay and Torbay were nurseries for small flat fish. Higher discharge of sewage was affecting shellfish beds in the estuary; a 1904 report highlighted the importance of the shellfish industry. The number of local fishermen had halved in the past twelve years.

Local fishing was totally dependent on weather, tides and locality of the fish. When large shoals of fish were sighted the small boats would be towed along the coast by local tugs. Diary entries note '1911, Nicoli's boat caught 40,000 herrings up under East Land', 'In December 1912 the tug "Teign" towed 4 seiner boats down to Torbay for sprats'. In 1913 the owner of a lugger/net trawler, caught 70,000 herrings, selling for 12s per 1,000, a good price.

Figure 14.2 – Photograph of Salmon and Seine Fishing on the Teign Estuary
Source: Teign Heritage Centre

Teignmouth had the advantage of river salmon; 'the river seiners have been catching several salmon this week. Dodd's boat caught 6 salmon at one haul, total weight 70 lbs'. Another asset was the mussel trade and for the locals who lived off the mussels and shellfish in the estuary.

1914–1919

13 boats were entered from 1914–1917, eight fitted with motors. The boats were averaging 24-25 ft. in length, with three or four crew.

In 1910, the RNR (Trawler Section) was formed to recruit and train fishermen for wartime service in minesweepers and small warships. Many local fishermen were registered with the RNR and in early August 1914, they hurried away by train. Due to the haste of this call up many had not completed separation allowance forms,

leaving families with no income. The local council made arrangements to help until the problem could be addressed.

Military records show many fishing families where the majority of sons served; with elderly parents carrying on fishing. From 1916, following the National Conscription Act, appeals were made for sons to stay and work in the fishing industry. At least six fishermen were killed during the war.

In February 1915, local pilots were used to take charge of patrolling craft for submarine coastal watch. This year the sprat season was very poor, but saw reasonable supplies of crab. However, large quantities of herrings and sprats were caught in January 1916; the majority were packed and sent to up-country markets. The smallest fish were kept for the local market; and a barrel of fish for the benefit of the hospital.

Meanwhile submarines off the south Devon coast meant that

Figure 14.3 – Photograph of 'Landing the Catch', Teignmouth back beach
Source: Teign Heritage Centre

fishing became more dangerous for all fishermen. To cut down on these risks the Motor Loans Committee helped install motor engines in more fishing boats; '*A motor fishing boat is able to follow and catch the fish and hustle back into harbour and catch the train, and the fishermen now are often saying they would sooner be without their boats than without their engines*' (*Hansard*). Shoals of fish were caught up the coast at Budleigh Salterton, and Teignmouth men who invested in motor boats saw good returns as they were able to travel there and back far more quickly.

Following the Conscription Act 1916 it was announced that 'special compensation paid for widows of fishermen killed by war risks and for wives of those interned'. Fishermen were now to be regarded as the reserve for navy and were 'not liable for service in

Figure 14.4 – Photograph of a record catch of salmon at Teignmouth, 1921
Source: Teign Heritage Centre

the army at present'. Additionally local fishermen were thanked for continuous gifts of old fishing nets which had been forwarded to France, and used for camouflage at the front.

To help maintain food supplies in 1917, local men were allowed to fish with seine nets for mullet in the river during the close season, having first obtained permission. In 1917/1918 large catches of sprats are being caught, but due to a shortage of men and carts, the fish was unable to be sent to market, but sold cheaply locally.[15] No new boats were registered during 1918/1919 and six existing boats are sold outside Teignmouth.

1920–1925

A total of eleven boats registered during 1920/1923; a mixture of sail and motor and fourteen boats were sold or changed their use. This reflects the collapse of the herring industry in Teignmouth although sprats and whiting were still being caught. The Teign Board of Conservation, 'welcomed the return of salmon fishing for the Teign during the past year, with large returns; however, rod salmon fishing had been mainly very poor'.

'What is the cause of the dearth of fish in the bays around the West country coast?' headline on 29 January 1923. Meetings were called to discuss the problems and a resolution presented to the inquiry held in London, 'that the Torbay and Teignmouth bay be closed to mechanically propelled fishing trawlers for 12 months'. Two of the older fishermen were chosen to attend the inquiry and give their opinions.

The main change which was apparent was the motorisation of the fishing boats, but this also helped to exacerbate the decline in the numbers of men fishing.

Sources

Kelly's Directories, Teign Heritage Centre (Teignmouth).
Teignmouth Urban District Council Minutes, Teignmouth Library.
Teignmouth Fishing Boat Registers, Devon Heritage Centre (DHC).
Devon and Dorset Fisheries District (Sea Fisheries Regulation Act 1888 & 1891), DHC.
Devon Sea Fisheries Minutes 1904, DHC.
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Albert Best Diaries, Teign Heritage Centre.
Hansard – 26 May 1916; para 1841, https://hansard.parliament.uk/
The Western Times, DHC.

Social Change in Rural Devon during the First World War

Using Kelly's Directories to identify change in the village

Social change in Poltimore during and immediately after the First World War: A Study based on entries in the Kelly's Devonshire Directories of 1914, 1919 and 1923

Julia Neville

Background

Kelly and Co. was one of the many firms who published trade directories, listings of the postal addresses and contact details of local businesses, together with local landowners, charitable and civic organisations, organised by town and parish for a particular county.

Although there are some variations from one parish entry to the next, probably due to the efficiency or otherwise of the compilers, it was agreed to investigate whether, in different places, the analysis of directory entries for the three years of directory publication 1914, 1919 and 1923, would provide information about the kind of changes that were going on in rural Devon during and immediately after the First World War. A pilot study for Bridford, for example, indicated the loss of a blacksmith, a carpenter and a shopkeeper during the decade between 1914 and 1923.

The information about Poltimore from the directories was discussed by a group from the Poltimore Estate Research Society in 2015.

Poltimore Village

The three directories all use a standard description of the village: locating it in relation to road and rail connections, listing its civil and religious affiliations and public services and describing the church and Poltimore Park, Lord Poltimore's 'seat and occasional residence'[70]. The area was 1,740 acres (of which Poltimore Park comprised 300 acres) and the population in 1911 was 291 (civil parish).

A Time of Major Change

The principal landowner in Poltimore listed in 1914 was Lord Poltimore, who owned all but a small portion of the parish. In 1923 Lord Poltimore was still listed as the principal landowner, although the title had passed on Lord Poltimore III's death in 1918 to his eldest son. The 1914 directory accurately represents the fact that Lord Poltimore only resided occasionally at Poltimore Park; however it is not possible to tell from the information provided that by 1923 several of the farmers and other business owners were no longer tenants but had bought their farms when Lord Poltimore attempted to sell the southern portion of his estate in 1921. He was unable to sell the mansion and the park, however, and retained, however, unwillingly, a stake in the village. The Poltimores' London house, in Belgrave Square, is mentioned in 1914 but not subsequently, suggesting one of the first economies had been to give up the lease.

While the main fact of the estate sale is not deducible from the entries in Kelly's, some of its repercussions can be identified. In 1914 the directory lists four principal heads of function on the estate: the clerk of works, the head gardener, the farm bailiff and the head gamekeeper. In 1919 there is no separate farm bailiff, and by 1923

[70] Directory of Devonshire and Cornwall, 1914, London, Kelly and Co., p. 668. Entries also in the directories for 1919 (p. 624) and 1923 (p. 641).

no separate head gardener, but the clerk of works is listed as also holding the posts of farm bailiff and head gardener. This illustrates the contraction of the estate function: the farm bailiff left in 1916 when Lord Poltimore sold his pedigree Jersey herd of cattle and stud of shire horses and decided to let the Home Farm where they had been kept. Further work is continuing with the estate records to provide a fuller history of the change.

Underlying Continuities

Much of what the Kelly's directories listed remained unchanged throughout the ten year period, or passed from one generation to the next after a death. The Rector, Dr Hopkinson, who had come to the village in 1913, remained in post, as he was to do until the 1930s. The wheelwright/smith in 1923 was still a member of the same family, the Holmeses, as in 1914. The post office & shop was still run by Miss Grant; George Lindsay remained head keeper and custodian of the deer in the park, though the pheasant shooting was let out. Bampfylde Lodge, the village's second substantial mansion, was still occupied by old Mr Snow, who had first leased it from Lord Poltimore in the 1860s, and his family. Posts such as those of sexton, clerk to the Parish Council, and collector of taxes changed hands but were taken on by members of the community who were already present in 1911.

The Farms

There were only five farms in the village, one of which was an Acland farm rather than a Poltimore farm. The Poltimores had always taken the opportunity of changes of tenancy to undertake minor or major reorganisation of farm boundaries as the Land Tax records demonstrate. This practice continued and is reflected in the case of Poltimore Barton farm. In 1914 this is let with Hayes Farm to Samuel Tozer; in 1919 though Tozer remained at Hayes, there is

no entry for Poltimore Barton; in 1923 a new tenant for Poltimore Barton is named, with Tozer still at Hayes. In the sale proceedings of September 1921 Hayes, Lathys and Vinnecombes were all bought by their tenants[71], but Hornhill (the Home Farm), maintained in hand for a possible sale with the mansion, and Poltimore Barton remained unsold.

The 'Mystery'

One of the changes identified through the directories is that the head teacher at the village school, William Gill, listed in 1914 and 1919, had been replaced in 1923 by a Miss Luxton. Gill had been a significant figure in village life, not only in his work at the school but in a range of social and sporting activities. The directories of 1914 and 1919, for example, list him as hon. sec of the Chess and Recreation Club. A first hypothesis, that he had retired, was disproved by newspaper reference to the Rector's speech at Gill's farewell wishing him 'happiness . . . in [his] new sphere of work'[72]. This led to further investigation in the school logbooks. The entries following the armistice in November 1918 refer constantly to the other teachers being off sick and resigning, leaving Gill to manage the whole school on his own, or with the help of 'a boy'. Gill records in the log book that he left at Easter 1922 to transfer to a small school in West Devon, and it seems likely that the lack of support contributed to this decision.[73]

Conclusion

In Poltimore, as in Bridford, change can be identified, this time particularly in the decline of one of Devon's great landed estates, rather

[71] *Devon and Exeter Gazette (DEG),* Sep 24 & 30, 1921.
[72] *DEG*, Apr 20 1922.
[73] *Poltimore School Logbooks, 1918–1922,* Devon Heritage Centre 2187C EFL.

than in the tradespeople of the village. While the directory information alone did not enable the group to identify what prompted Lord Poltimore's decision to sell, which tenant farmers bought their farms, or indeed why the head teacher left, the changes recorded in the directories were an effective prompt to further investigation.

Change in Newton St Cyres during and immediately after the First World War

Study based on Kelly Directories for 1914, 1919, 1923

R. J. Wilkins

Background

The Kelly Directories provided the basis for a study of changes in Newton St Cyres. The concept was that the Directories, together with local knowledge, would give a good picture of the changes that occurred and some of the reasons for specific changes. A collation of information from the Directories was used at a meeting of a group of people from the village with interests in local history or long family village connections. The recollections and information provided was augmented from other sources including the 1911 Census, the book *Newton St Cyres: A Village History* published in 1999 and local newspapers.

The Parish of Newton St Cyres

Newton St Cyres is described in the 1914 Kelly Directory as a on the road from Exeter to Barnstaple some 4½ miles NW from Exeter with a station on the London and South Western railway.

The area was given as 4,416 acres and the population in 1911 as 677. The chief crops were wheat, barley and roots. The church of Saints Cyr and Julitta is described and reference made to the chapel of the United Methodists. Edward Quicke was Lord of the Manor. The background information was nearly identical in all three Directories.

The Directories list Private and Commercial residents, but with only 11 entries for Private Residents and 45 for Commercial in 1914, this is only a partial listing for a parish with a population of 677. The importance of farming is emphasised by 29 of the 45 commercial entries being for farmers, dairymen or market gardeners. Changes for farmers, other commercial entries and private residents are discussed below, with particular attention to changes that appear to relate to the war.

Farmers

The Directory details most farms in the Parish with 29 listed in 1914 compared with thirty eight farms with above five acres in the 1914 Agricultural Returns. The 1919 and 1923 Directories indicated farms with above 150 acres. There were eleven of these larger farms, identical to the number of farms of this size in the Agricultural Returns. Practically all farms were tenanted.

Of the 24 farms listed in all three Directories, fourteen had the same person in all Directories and for an additional four farms the surname remained the same, indicating generational change. For the 6 farms at which the surname for the farmer changed, 3 of the farmers were above the age of 60 in the 1911 Census, so they probably retired. One farmer emigrated, but we do not know the reason for the other two changes.

Thus, 14 out of 24 farms stayed in the same 'management' over a 9-year period, representing a high level of stability. *Our research did not find any evidence of change due to World War One (WW1).* Rather, it seems that the higher prices received by farmers during

and directly following the war, the importance attached to food production and farming family members often getting exemption from conscription all contributed to this stability.

Other Occupations

There were 15 people listed in the 1914 Directory with fourteen in 1919 and seventeen in 1923. These figures are much lower than the 82 people listed in the 1911 Census for occupations other than those directly related to agriculture. The Directories though appeared to give a reasonable picture for tradesmen. Many entries are for trades that supported farming. In 1914 there were two blacksmiths, cider merchants and wheelwrights and one farrier. Other occupations were two publicans and one each of butcher, shoemaker, shopkeeper, tailor and thatcher. There were also a clerk to the Parish Council and an Insurance Agent.

As with farmers, there was relatively little change between Directories, with nine of the fifteen entrants appearing in all three Directories and a further two having the same surnames. A generation shift occurred with a cider merchant and a tailor. The ages of those listed in 1914 and 1919 would have been 79 and 83 by 1923. Both of the public houses changed hands with one having three different surnames in the three Directories. There were three shops listed in 1923 compared with only one in the earlier Directories, but this could have reflected additional subscribers rather than a real change. *I was not able to ascribe any of the changes to WW1 events or circumstances.*

Private Residents

There were only 11 entries in the 1914 Directory, with 12 and 13 in 1919 and 1923 respectively. There was more change between Directories than with the commercial entrants. Only two appeared in all three Directories and 25 appeared in at least one Directory.

The occupation of Newton House changed between 1919 and 1923. This was normally the residence of the Quicke family, referred to in the 1914 Directory as the Lords of the Manor. They had, though, vacated Newton House after a major fire in 1906 and moved away from the village, with Newton House rented to Lady Audrey Buller. Captain Noel Quicke returned by 1923. Although Noel Quicke's elder brother Edward, was killed in action in 1914, these moves did not appear to have been driven by war events. Mrs Trollope was listed in the 1914 and 1919 Directories. Although appearing as a private resident, she achieved prominence during the war as a lady farmer. She had taken over the farm because her husband, Col. Trollope was away on military service.

Concluding Comments

There were large changes in activity in Newton St Cyres during WW1. There are 21 names on the War Memorial and at the end of the war medallions were presented to 120 men who had served. Tremendous efforts were made by villagers during the war both through the provision of funds for the war effort and supporting appeals for goods to help hospitals and refugees. Farming changed in response to needs to increase production, particularly of wheat. But entries in Kelly Directories change relatively little between 1914 and 1923. The predominance of the farming community and the importance of agricultural production for the war effort contributed to this relative stability.

The Directories provide a useful resource, but suffer through not being comprehensive. Consideration of the Directories can though provide a valuable focus for discussion and stimulation for further enquiry.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Julia Neville for suggesting this approach and Margaret Hazell, Christopher Lee, Tim Sedgwick, Chris Southcott, James Walters and Jean Wilkins, all from the Newton St Cyres History Group, who joined a discussion meeting to provide local knowledge to help identify reasons for the changes between the different Directories.

Food and Families in Topsham 1914–1918

Sheila Stephens

Kelly's Directory for 1914 describes Topsham as a market town, parish, seaport and fishing station on the navigable River Exe, with a population in 1911 of 2,874.[74] The area comprised 2,369 acres of land, with 466 acres of water and foreshore.

The Directory lists 137 commercial establishments, including six farmers and six market gardeners. The Directory for 1919 lists a reduced number of establishments at 117, but again records twelve entries referring to farmers, market gardeners or fruit growers.[75]

A comparison of the Agricultural Returns for 1914 and 1918 shows that the number of holdings in the Topsham area decreased from 52 to 46, an 11.5 per cent drop, but that, as the number of smaller holdings lessened, the mid-to-large ones grew, with the 100-150 acre farms increasing most.[76] In 1914, 597.5 acres were producing cereals, roots and legumes and 136.25 acres were growing soft fruits and other crops. This was a total acreage under production of 734.25 acres. In 1918, 692 acres were being used for staple crops and 122 acres grew soft fruits. At this stage 814 acres in total were under production.

[74] *Kelly's Directory*, 1914, Part 1 from 'Historical Directories of England and Wales – Special Collections', University of Leicester.
[75] *Kelly's Directory*, 1919, Part 1 from 'Historical Directories of England and Wales – Special Collections', University of Leicester.
[76] Agricultural Returns Wonford Division A1 (1914) and (1918).

During the years 1914 and 1918 productive acreage had increased by 79.75 acres or 10.86 per cent, with crops grown on fewer but larger holdings. There were noticeable differences in wheat production from 30.75 acres in 1914 to 134.25 acres in 1918 and in potato growing, which went from 58.75 acres in 1914 to 118.5 acres in 1918. The doubling of the acreage of potatoes represented a really

Figure 15.1 – Table Showing Change in Holding Size and Output in Topsham, 1914–1918

SIZE OF HOLDING	1914	1918	CEREALS, ROOTS, LEGUMES	1914	1918
1-5 acres	15	11	Total acreage	597.5	692
5-20 acres	16	14	Wheat	30.75	134.25
20-50 acres	4	6	Barley	149.5	125.5
50-100 acres	14	10	Oats	124.25	122.25
100-150 acres	0	4	Potatoes	58.75	118.5
150-300 acres	3	1	Turnips and swedes	68	58.25
300+ acres	0	0	Mangolds	97.5	69.25
Total holdings	52	46			
SOFT FRUITS					
Total acreage	136.75	122			
Strawberries	14.25	9.5			
Raspberries	13.5	15.75			
Currants and gooseberries	25	42.75			
Other kinds	2.5	12.5			
Other crops	78.5	40.5			
Fallow	3	1			
TOTAL ACREAGE ALL CROPS	734.25	814			

significant increase in production within the town. At the same time production of root vegetables suitable for animal feed went down.

In 2014 Topsham Museum began to research the family stories of men from the town who served in World War One, shedding light on many aspects of their lives, including the growing and supply of food.[77] Market gardening was an important industry but it became increasingly difficult to find men to work the land as the war progressed. St Thomas Tribunal heard many appeals against conscription from local market gardeners.[78]

In February 1917, George Henry May appealed to the Tribunal:

> 'Mr George Henry May, market gardener, Topsham, appealed for his son, Herbert James May, 25. The military authorities appealed for the withdrawal of exemptions of Wilfred J(?). May, another son, and E. T. Bellamy, an employee. Mr May said he had five sons who were serving in the Army and Navy. He had eight employees before the war. The Chairman said the employees and Mr May's seven sons must have been tumbling over each other on fifteen acres of gardens. Mr May said his sons were not all working for him. They were learning other businesses and joined up. He was in the unique position that his sons were all of military age, and his employees were also of military age. There was plenty of work for all he employed in the gardens. The Chairman said he should have thought that there was room in Topsham for the employment of 75 German prisoners. Mr May: They could not do my work. It is technical, and was learnt from youth. Asked if he ploughed any of the land, Mr May said that was always necessary with 15 acres. The tribunal granted H. J. May till April 1st (final) and W. J. May conditional exemption. In the case of E. T. Bellamy they recommended substitution.'[79]

[77] 'War Comes to Topsham', published 2016 by Topsham Museum Society, researched by Rosemary Hatch and Marion Grimshaw.
[78] *Western Times* cuttings at Topsham Museum.
[79] *Western Times* cuttings at Topsham Museum.

However, a year later the need for additional workers had grown so much that, at an East Devon Agricultural Committee meeting; 'Mr Dutton, of the County Council staff, pointed out that the Topsham market gardeners were very desirous of getting prisoner labour . . . It was eventually decided to ask for . . . 40 (prisoners) at Topsham . . .'[80]

George Henry May also kept a diary, revealing much about market gardening practice.[81] His daily entries for 1915 record the cultivation and harvesting of soft fruit and apples, garden vegetables and salad crops, as well as flowers for cutting. Demand for his wreaths and crosses was high. Male workers were significant enough to be named individually, but females were referred to as 'the women', as they worked endlessly on fruit-picking, flower cutting and hand weeding.

At times May mentions boys working in the garden and the school log books testify to their involvement.[82] Boys also worked on allotments attached to the school, remembered from the early 1920s, sometimes outside school hours but sometimes being released from normal lessons.[83] This was often to the detriment of their health and education. In April 1917 Dr Adkins 'called this morning to enquire into cases of boys being over-worked at home and elsewhere . . .' and, in July 1918, boys fruit-picking '. . . often 6 hours per day, are incapable of any concentrated attention in school.'

In April 1917 food shortages led Topsham Parish Council to:

> '. . . increase the number of allotments by taking in the other portions of (existing allotment area). This will provide for about 20 plots of ground at ten yards a plot. Mr H. Michelmore, of

[80] *Western Times* cuttings at Topsham Museum.
[81] Diaries of George Henry May held digitally at Topsham Museum.
[82] Log book for Topsham Boys' School held in collections at Devon Heritage Centre.
[83] Oral history Recording and Transcript 'A Walk Around Topsham'.

> Grove Hill, has secured some seed potatoes for allotment holders, which he is selling at cost price.'[84]

Topsham's position as both an agricultural and horticultural centre must have eased its access to food supplies and the availability of river fishing would have been a bonus. However, it is clear that it was only through hard work and sacrifice that families overcame food shortages.

[84] *Western Times* cuttings at Topsham Museum.

'Will they eat venison?'
Lord Poltimore's 1918 Initiative to Feed the People of Exeter

Steve Hobbs

Poltimore Park, the heart of Lord Poltimore's southern Devon estate, was home to a herd of fallow deer numbering between two and three hundred head. George Lindsay was employed as Head Gamekeeper operating with the assistance of an Underkeeper. He was one of three heads of departments on the Estate who kept their own book of account. It is from these accounts that the war-time management of the deer herd can be seen in operation.

The deer herd was kept to a sustainable number by killing the surplus. The preparations for the culling started each year with Lindsay sending his recommendations to Lord Poltimore. An average would be 30 Bucks, 30 Does, 10 Fawns and sometimes a small number of Pedicels, deer with only one year's antler growth. Two carcasses a week were sent to the main household, gifts made and the remainder of the meat was sold by Lindsay. He also sold the skins to a furrier, the horns for use as decorative or display items and occasionally a full buck head. In July 1914 just before England entered the War Lord Poltimore had instructed that 70 Bucks be killed, but not all the largest.

When the war commenced a number of men employed on the estate volunteered, although they often remain on the 'books' as being unpaid awaiting their return. The keepers were reduced from

the five staff shown on the 1911 census to Lindsay, one underkeeper, and assistance from an elderly woodman. There was also a slight reduction in leisure game hunting of rabbits, pheasant, partridge etc. and eventually, a decision was made to let the rights to shoot at Poltimore Park to a third party. Even early in the war, in September 1914 before the system of paying allowances to the dependants of serving men was sorted out, when it became known that families are facing difficulties, Lord Poltimore responded to a request from the Exeter Relief Aid Committee by instructing Lindsay to offer them some rabbits as a contribution at a rate of 30 couples per week with the occasional brace of pheasant or partridge.

The Poltimores operated a give-away list for their venison to endear themselves to people whom they wanted to influence. There is no complete version of the annual give-away list, so it is only possible to partially see the sphere of influence when amendments were made. The preparations for the deer-killing season in 1915 commenced with a direction to Lindsay to stop the give-away list as demand for meat has grown and prices are rising. Some reductions in the give-away list were gifts to the General Post Masters at Exeter and South Molton, the Station Masters at Exeter St David's, and at South Molton along with solicitors and agents. Gifts to tenants were also stopped and Lindsay reported that 'they are very unpleasant about this', as a result of which, perhaps the gifts were re-instituted in 1917.

In 1917 the decision was taken to kill 60 Bucks, 70 Does and 30 Fawns over six weeks instead of three and to send six Bucks a week to Lord Poltimore's Recuperation Hospital at North Molton, one Doe each a week to Court Hall, Lord Poltimore's North Molton seat, and to "Miss Buller's Hospital for Soldiers" (the Exeter Temporary Military Hospitals, managed by Georgiana Buller).

In July 1916 the Venison Supply Committee had been established under Lord Lovat, with the object of increasing the numbers of deer killed to supplement home supplies of meat. In November 1916 Lindsay was instructed to commence doe killing 'when the carcasses

Figure 16.1 – Photograph of Poltimore House in 1921
Source: Sale Catalogue

will command most money'. Similar instructions were given in 1917. However, in February 1918, under pressure from Ackland, a local farmer on the War Agricultural Committee, Lord Poltimore corresponded with the Mayor of Exeter asking if the butchers of Exeter would sell the venison from Poltimore Park in their shops. Lord Poltimore suggested that he could supply the meat at 6d a pound for the butchers to sell at no more than 8d a pound. The Mayor accepted Lord Poltimore's offer and Lindsay began supplying 10 carcasses a week to the Exeter Butchers Association for their distribution.

Lord Poltimore considered that people might not have a taste for such a rich food and he offered an article for newspapers to publish covering his good works and generosity. As a softener, he sent

gifts of venison to the editors of a number of newspapers for their enjoyment asking: 'Will they [the people of Exeter] eat venison?', and would the editors let the people of Exeter know the goodness of the meat being offered for consumption. Such was the demand that Lindsay killed over a hundred and twenty deer. He wrote to Lord Poltimore that the Park now had a herd of only around 250 deer left.

By the end of February 1918 Lindsay had sent a further 180 deer carcasses to the Exeter Butchers and a further number to the Military Hospitals. He donated the money from the sale of the venison to the Lord Mayor of London's Prisoner of War Fund, so did not profit himself from the sales. After the estate covered the costs of the keepers, feed etc. it was a generous offer to the people of Exeter; albeit that if Lord Poltimore had not subscribed to the Lord Mayor's scheme, he might have faced a requirement for compulsory supply to the authorities which might have damaged the viability of the Poltimore herd. The provision of carcasses to the Exeter butchers ceased in April 1918 with a note that in total 260 were killed that last season.

There was a continuing shortage of food which was controlled by the rationing of many produce, butter, cream, eggs, meat, etc. but the venison was now going to the general meat markets and no doubt at a commercial rate. By July 1918 Lord Poltimore again had a give-away list in operation and ordered the killing of 40 Bucks, 30 Does and 15 Does. Venison as a meat ration was now sold at one coupon per pound of meat although offal was free of ration. Due to the rationing system, Lord Poltimore had to reconsider his give-away list as it impacted on the recipient's allowance.

Lord Poltimore died in November 1918 and the estates passed to his son. After the deer herd management of the War time period, the Poltimore Park herd still remained at much the same number it had been at the beginning of the war. This must be down to the animal management skills of George Lindsay, benefitting both the people of Exeter and the Poltimore Park.

References

All the data for the above article has been extracted from the Estate Letter Books for North Molton & Poltimore kept by Messrs Riccard & Son of South Molton held at the Hartland Abbey Archive. Archive ID: HaB-LTR-32 to 40.pdf. As there is no public access to this archive, individual page references are excluded.

Faith Lowe's Diary for 1918

Judy Moss

Diaries are usually objects which generate excitement in historians, and so the discovery of a diary for 1918 apparently written by a girl living and working on the land in Throwleigh, Devon was of great interest to the Farming, Fishing and Food Supply in Devon during the First World War project. The diary of Faith Lowe, aged 19 at the time, first came to light in the early twenty-first century, when an extract was published.[85] The whole diary has now been transcribed by the author: this brief article highlights the nature of the farming work which Faith and her sister did and the food which was produced, and compares their experience with that of Olive Hockin who worked on another Devon farm the previous year. Figure 17.1 illustrates the location of Throwleigh.

Faith and her sister Patience, aged 21, were the daughters of the Rector of Throwleigh (who was the incumbent from 1895 to 1934), working the church glebe and another block of land purchased by their father; see Figure 17.2. These areas have been deduced from the fields named in the diary.

[85] Paget, M. (Ed.) *Throwleigh: Pictures and Memories from a Dartmoor Parish* (Throwleigh Archive, 2006) pp. 98-100.

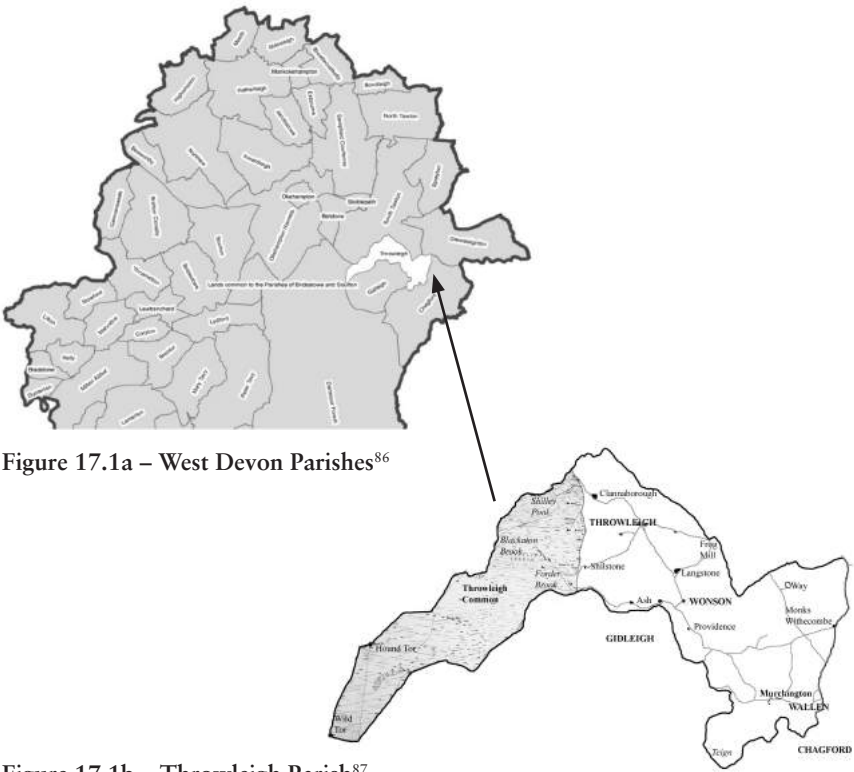


Figure 17.1a – West Devon Parishes[86]

Figure 17.1b – Throwleigh Parish[87]

The nature of the diary as a source of agricultural history

Faith Lowe's Diary for 1918 is a small book, about 10 x 15 cms, week to a page. The cover is lost and the remaining leading and end pages are used for some accounting information: some of this is personal accounting, some of it records dairy produce sales in Throwleigh village. The entries are succinct, none running to more than a couple of sentences: see example in Figure 17.5.

[86] From www.**devon**.gov.uk/**west_devon_parishes**.pdf – *Accessed 20 Jun 16*
[87] Paget, p. 1.

An accurate analysis of the work that the girls did cannot be elicited from the diary. For example it became apparent that Faith was looking after stock that was indoors, but only because she referred to it when somebody else did it on their behalf, such as when she and her sister stayed overnight in Exeter on a social visit, or from a comment that because of bad the weather the cows were kept in. Looking after housed stock in the mornings and evenings, variously referred to as 'tending up', 'outdoor work', 'evening work', 'did the animals', does not feature in the table below, but was probably one that was actually done every day, twice a day.

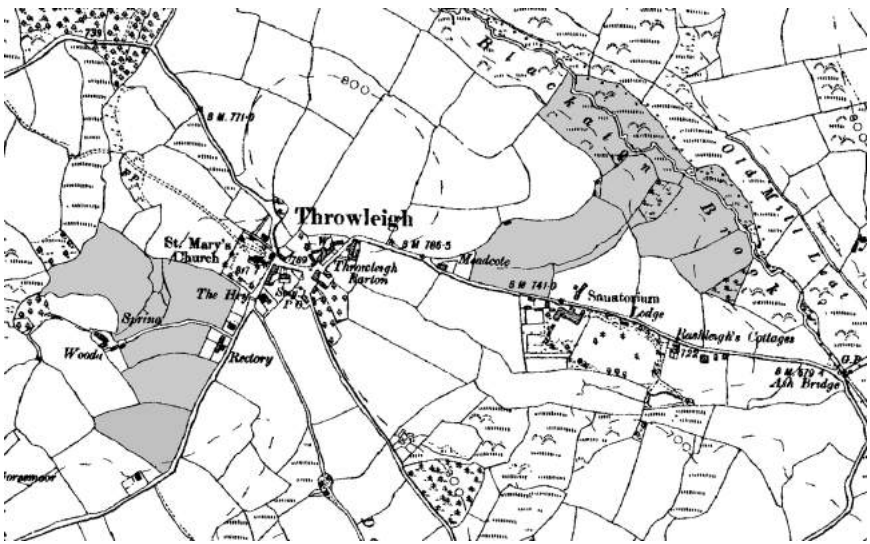


Figure 17.2 – The fields mentioned in the diary. To the east was what remained of the original church glebe, to the west of Wooda Farm purchased by Father Lowe in 1898, about 40 acres[88]

[88] Father Lowe's purchase is recorded in his will dated 30/9/1927 (Private hands, Colchester). The map is based on the OS 6 inch 1st Revision 1902–1905.

There were three cows, and these must have been milked daily, though this is rarely mentioned. More butter making must have taken place than is referred to in the diary, as the account pages record sales of more butter (and cream) than the diary records making. It is very likely that much other farm work is similarly not recorded, and so the diary cannot be utilised as a farmer's Day Book.

Farming task analysis

The task analysis tables in Figures 17.3 and 17.4 have been achieved by counting the number of times a farming task or other activity is referred to in the diary. Figure 3 is the work done by Faith, Patience or a female helper in the village.

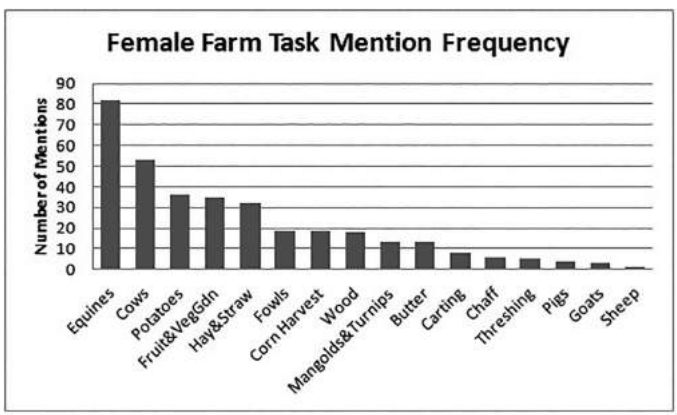


Figure 17.3 – Female Farm Task Analysis

There is other work done by men, referred to by their surnames. Powlesland, Brock and Olver do the ploughing, preparing land for and planting potatoes, and harvesting and ricking hay and straw: this work is analysed in Figure 17.4.

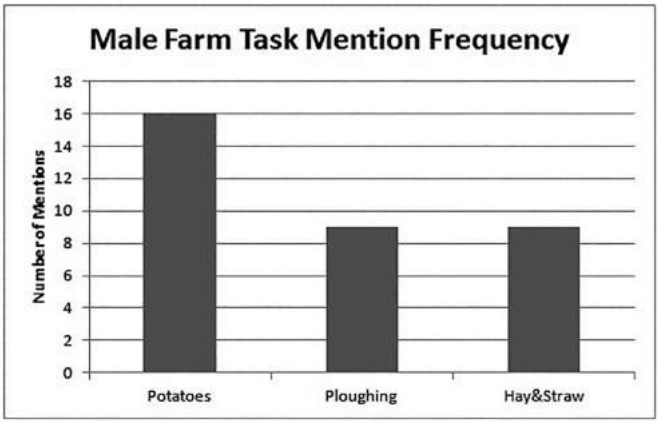


Figure 17.4 – Frequency of Male Farm Tasks Mentioned in the Diary

The most frequently mentioned work relates to equines, including tack and carriage cleaning. Whilst classifying the work, 'yearlings' are assumed to be equines, since they are usually referred to in association with colts and foals: it seems that horse-breeding may have been taking place, though what breed cannot be inferred from the diary. The high frequency of equine references may also have reflected either Faith's fondness for horses, or simply their importance for powering farm work and being the main means of transport.

It is unclear who was running the farm, since the diary gives no impression that someone was directing the girls' or men's work. There is no one referred to as 'maester' as do Hockin and Lees in their accounts of working on Devon farms.[89] The analysis shows that the girls were working a typical mixed Devon upland farm, though with a particular emphasis on breeding horses. The Lowe's farm may also have been responding to the government's

[89] © IWM506 Interviews with Mary Lees, Reel 2; Hockin, O. *Two Girls on the Land: Wartime on a Dartmoor Farm* (Arnold, London, 1918) p. 48, 109-110.

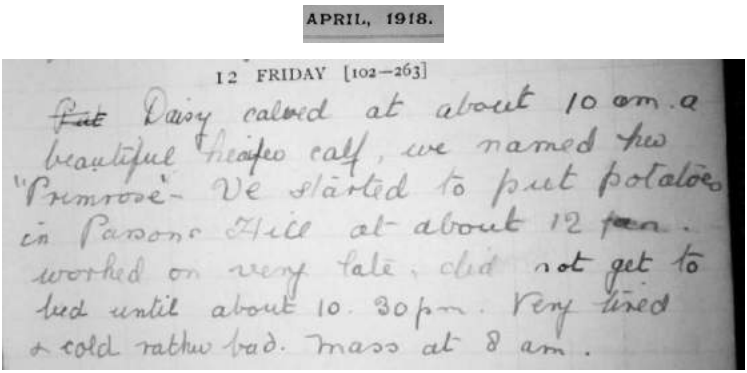
exhortation to produce more potatoes: though potato tasks are not the most frequently mentioned, the diary records that the work to produce about three acres was long and arduous, which chimes with Hockin's account of potato growing.[90] The extract in Figure 17.5 gives an impression.

The Lowe girls' work in Context

Lord Selborne's 1915 encouragement to women to take up agricultural work locally, had generally met with failure in Devon.[91] Alice Mildmay's program Practice Farms for training women was not a success,[92] leaving 'local villagers to carry the weight of extra work' and 'do their bit'.[93] Faith's diary reveals an unusual, if not rare, instance of Women's Land Army work. The girls were not only working in their own village, they were working on their home farm. The likelihood is that the girls were encouraged to become Land Army girls after the conscription of their brother, the only Lowe son. The girls appear competent, and the diary refers to a Second Poultry Lecture in March, so they were trained at some level. They may have done the one month course at Seale Hayne College, which opened early 1917, or learned 'on-the-job', supported by the local men Powlesland, Olver and Brock who were all occupiers of Father Lowe's or his brother Willoughby's property.[94]

In contrast to the 'paralysing monotony', 'mental stagnation' and lack of time for the 'ordinary civilities of life' experienced by Hockin, Faith and Patience were able to both amuse themselves, relax sometimes, and also carry out duties expected of a rector's

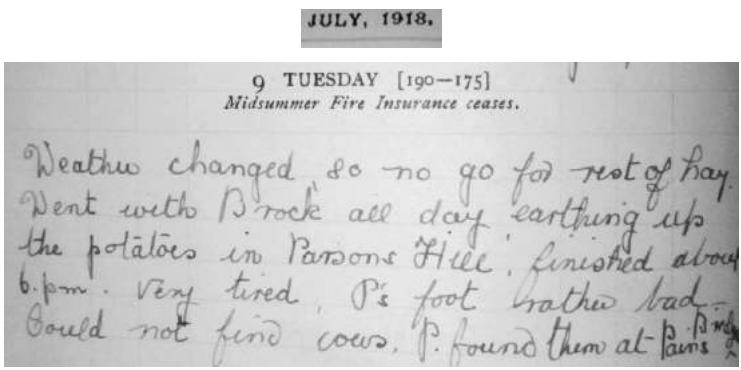
[90] Hockin, p. 19.
[91] White, B.(a), *The Women's Land Army in First World War Britain* (Palgrave, New York 2014) p. 24, 53
[92] White (a) p.36.
[93] White, B.(b), *War and the Home Front: Devon in the First World War, 1914–1918* (McMaster University, 2008) pp. 150-152.
[94] White (a), p. 22; Throwleigh Rate Book, October 1915 (Private Hands).


APRIL, 1918.

12 FRIDAY [102—263]

~~Put~~ Daisy calved at about 10 am. a beautiful heifer calf, we named her "Primrose". We started to put potatoes in Parsons Hill at about 12 pm. worked on very late, did not get to bed until about 10.30 pm. Very tired & cold rather bad. Mass at 8 am.

Figure 17.5 – Photographed Extract of Faith Lowe's Diary


JULY, 1918.

9 TUESDAY [190—175]
Midsummer Fire Insurance ceases.

Weather changed so no go for rest of hay. Went with Brock all day earthing up the potatoes in Parsons Hill, finished about 6 pm. Very tired, P's foot rather bad. Could not find cows, P. found them at Pairs Bridge

Figure 17.6 – Photographed Extract of Faith Lowe's Diary

daughter: Figure 17.6 provides an analysis of their non-farming activities mentioned in the diary.[95]

Further Work

Much more can be drawn from this diary, such as the apparent middle class social continuity in a small Devon village, and to provide additional layers to what is known of Father Lowe's incumbency.

[95] Hockin, p. iii, pp. 62-63.

Other sources are available to flesh out the diary's content, such as newspaper reports, and a recently discovered recorded interview with Faith's son. There are also matters of detail to resolve, such as why the girls' horses were shod in Chagford rather than the local smithy: did that close down due to lack of manpower, a reported common occurrence?

'They Women have done Well'
Sylvia Calmady-Hamlyn and Women working on the Land[96]

Julia Neville

The attitude of some Devon farmers has given a bad name to Devon initiatives to employ women in farming during the First World War. Even at the time the Director of the Women's Branch of the national Food Production Department told colleagues that 'the Women's Committee works . . . in spite of opposition'.[97] The modern historian of the Land Army, Bonnie White, states that 'not a single Devon farmer offered his farm for training'; and when demonstrations were arranged 'few women came forward'.[98] David Parker has listed the difficulties Devon farmers made over employing women farm workers: refusing to pay 'reasonable wages', and stating that 'women would be unable to work with a team of horses.[99] While it

[96] Said by local farmers of the women at Great Bidlake Farm, quoted in Sylvia Calmady-Hamlyn, 'A Woman's Farm in Devon', *Journal of the Board of Agriculture*, Vol XXV (7), Oct. 1918, pp. 834-839;'

[97] TNA MAF 59.1. Referred to in a report of 4 Oct 1916.

[98] Bonnie White, *The Women's Land Army in First World War Britain*, 2014. London, Palgrave-Macmillan, pp. 37, 59. See also her article, 'Sowing the seeds of patriotism? The Women's Land Army in Devon, 1916–1918', *The Local Historian,* Vol 41 (1), Feb. 2011, pp 13-27.

[99] David Parker, *Devonshire Farms and Farmers during the First World War,* p. 9. http://www.dartmoortrust.org/docs/Farming-Selbourne.pdf, accessed 5 Nov 2015.

should be conceded that the number of women employed full-time on farms in Devon made a limited contribution to the efforts to increase food production, considerably more success was achieved in co-ordinating women in farming communities to provide assistance on local farms, and that was in a large part due to the efforts of one woman, Sylvia Calmady-Hamlyn.

Miss Calmady-Hamlyn was a member of the Calmady-Hamlyn family of Bridestowe. She inherited enough money to allow her to set up a pony-breeding business in her twenties. As the *Western Times* reported in 1913: 'Miss Calmady Hamlyn started her stud in 1903, and has since won 250 prizes. Her stud comprises a select lot of polo pony, young stock and pure Dartmoor ponies, also a few miniature polo-type blood riding ponies.'[100] She also reared poultry and kept cows, and in 1912 became the first woman President of the Okehampton Agricultural Society.[101]

Her wartime mission, to encourage women to work on farms in Devon, fell into three phases. Between November 1915 and January 1917 she worked through the Devon Women's War Service Committee to develop registers of women workers available for farm labour. In January 1917 she was appointed (on an unpaid basis) as travelling inspector for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in the south-west. In May 1918 she was appointed County Organiser for the Devon Women's War Agricultural Committee (WWAC), a post she held until April 1919.

When, towards the end of 1915, attention first focused on the importance of farming to the war effort, Calmady-Hamlyn's expertise was recognised in her own district by co-option to the Okehampton and District War Agricultural Committee. She also volunteered to serve on the County Women's War Service Committee.[102] Her task was to establish village registrars in west and

[100] *Western Times (WT)*, Jul 8 1913.
[101] *Devon and Exeter Gazette (DEG)* Dec 10 1909, May 11, 1912.
[102] *WT,* 5 Nov 1915; 15 Nov 1915.

north Devon who would identify women willing to work on farms, and provide their names to farmers seeking help. She spoke at public meetings to encourage women to come forward to register not only in Okehampton but in Barnstaple, Morchard Bishop, Tavistock, Ilfracombe, Frithelstock, and South Molton.[103] In Barnstaple she shared a platform with the National Farmers' Union chair and the 'agriculturists' present passed a motion to support the employment of women.[104] By June 1916 the county reported 2,472 women registered in all categories (full-time, part-time, milking) of whom 608 (25 per cent) had worked during the quarter.[105]

In January 1917 she was appointed as Inspector specifically to develop the new initiative to create a Women's Land Army. She explained the scheme to the Women's War Service Committee, later the Women's War Agricultural Committee (WWAC). '[It] did not really touch on the kind of work the committee had been doing', she said, by which she meant that this was an initiative to train women to undertake full-time agricultural employment, rather than one that sought to match local volunteers, many part-time, with local needs.[106]

Calmady-Hamlyn was appointed a governor of Seale-Hayne College, Devon's planned new agricultural college, where the new Treasury-funded formal training course for women was established. Seale-Hayne was already providing some training, as the WWAC chair reported in March 1917 that there were 27 girls being trained and a waiting list of eighteen.[107] The alternative route for training, via practice farms, was not taken up to any great extent in Devon (eleven only by June 1917) but Calmady-Hamlyn worked to extend

[103] *WT* 3 Jan, 18 Feb, 11 Mar 1916; *North Devon Journal (NDJ)* 10 Feb, 6 Apr, 18 May1916
[104] *NDJ* 10 Feb 1916.
[105] Devon Heritage Centre (DHC) 1262M/L/141, report to Devon Women's War Service Committee, June 1916.
[106] *WT,* 17 Mar 1917.
[107] *WT,* 20 Oct 1917,

the opportunities for women, partly by developing specialisms such as forestry and hay baling, and then by the 'big idea' of the women-only farm. This was to be a way of convincing sceptics that women could manage a farm and undertake all the tasks associated with it. The 130-acre farm was at Great Bidlake, close to Calmady-Hamlyn's home in Bridestowe, and at her suggestion, with its owner's consent, it was taken over by the Devon War Agricultural Committee in October 1917 and, with the advice and support of a local farmer, ploughing began and a small dairy was established. The farm was staffed by a forewoman and three girls. Calmady-Hamlyn wrote about the first year of the experiment in the Journal of the Board of Agriculture.[108]

In May 1918 Calmady-Hamlyn agreed to step into the role of County Organiser for the Devon WWAC.[109] She organised recruiting rallies to keep up the supply of recruits, but acknowledged that the numbers achieved were not large: 178 girls placed and 29 in training in September 1918.[110] By contrast, 4,300 women were in part-time work which meant that Devon had done 'uncommonly well'.[111] Great Bidlake Farm was no longer just a working farm, but had replaced Seale-Hayne as a training centre when the college buildings were requisitioned as a hospital. Although its first year's balance sheet showed a deficit, this was due primarily to the inclusion of the setting-up costs as expenditure. Nonetheless the end of the war was the end of the Great Bidlake Farm experiment too. The County Council closed it along with other farms acquired under Defence of the Realm Act powers.[112]

The end of the war signalled the end of the initiative to attract

[108] DHC 1262 M/O/LD/142 21-50, *Devon County Council Agricultural Executive Committee Minutes,* Sep. 1917–Jan 1918; Calmady-Hamlyn, 'A Woman's Farm in Devon'.
[109] *DEG*, 18 May 1918.
[110] *WT,* 21 Sep 1918.
[111] *WT,* 21 Jan 1919
[112] *WT* 20 Sep 1919.

women into farming. By 1920 the 178 girls working as farm employees had dwindled to forty.[113] The Land Army was demobilised completely by December 1919. Calmady-Hamlyn had always believed that their work was designed only to fill the gap till the men came home. She retired to her pony-breeding business, receiving the MBE for her work. Having demonstrated her effectiveness in public service, however, she found herself almost immediately recruited to two new spheres of work in the county: the development of Women's Institutes, and service as one of the first women magistrates.

Undoubtedly there was hostility expressed by some farmers to the work of Calmady-Hamlyn and the Devon WWAC, particularly when they were criticised for their poor rates of pay. But there was support from others, for example from the Barnstaple branch of the National Farmers' Union; from the individuals who lent their farms for demonstrations of women's work; and from Mr Ash, the farming neighbour at Great Bidlake who offered the women advice and instruction. The full-time members of the Women's Land Army may only have made a small contribution to the labour force in Devon, but the women recruited through the registrar scheme performed a valuable role in replacing the pool of men whom farmers had in peacetime been able to call on from their rural trades at times such as harvest.

[113] *WT,* 28 May 1920.