DEVON HISTORY NEWS NUMBER 32 AUGUST 2023





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Cover photographs: Rare Books Library, National Marine Biological Library (see pages 11 to 16); Mary Willcocks (see page 7)

From the Chair

Welcome to the August 2023 Devon History Society newsletter. As a lifelong feminist, I'm delighted that this edition shines a light on some remarkable female Devonians.

I was pleased to be approached earlier this year by *That's Girltastic!*, an American company that produces collectible cards featuring inspiring women from history. On page 6, Julia Neville takes up the story of how we helped them feature a Devon heroine, Edith Splatt, in their latest collection.

Edith Splatt's contemporary and fellow campaigner Mary Willcocks has been honoured with a blue plaque in Exeter. Find out more about her extraordinary life and the significance of the new plaque on page 7.

On page 9 there is news of the West of England and South Wales Women's History Network's upcoming conference on 'Women and the Natural World'. It promises fascinating insights into the history of women's roles in natural sciences and arts and environmental activism.

I should mention that all three of the initiatives above have been driven by DHS member Dr Julia Neville. Her commitment to researching and promoting women's history in Devon is second to none. Over the years, Julia and the volunteers that she coordinates through projects such as *Devon in the 1920s* have brought to light many local, female stories that would otherwise have remained overlooked.

Sources for women can be difficult to find as their experiences were often excluded from the 'public', largely male, sphere of recorded events. Researchers rely on the work of archivists, who in recent decades have done much to rethink whose words and actions are worthy of posterity. From pages 11 to 16 we take a look at the amazing and little-known archive collections held at the National Marine Biological Library in Plymouth. They include papers relating to pioneering female marine scientists such as Maude Delap. They are all deserving of further investigation.

The American feminist historian Professor Linda Gordon wrote that women's history, 'does not simply add women to the picture we already have of the past, like painting additional figures into the spaces of an already completed canvas. It requires repainting the earlier pictures, because some of what was previously on the canvas was inaccurate and more of it was misleading.'

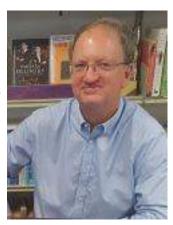
I hope that these articles inspire you to think about how we can repaint the picture of Devon more accurately.

Katherine Findlay

Editorial

In my day job working for the county archive service, I've recently attended several events which have illustrated the value of people coming together to consider the history of our county.

In May I spent two days at the Devon County Show at Westpoint near Exeter with a display of material relating to the history of the show which we mounted in partnership with the Devon County Agricultural Association (DCAA), which



organises the show. While the show remains true to its origins as an annual forum at which farmers can gather, discuss issues of common interest and win awards for their livestock, it is also a massive commercial operation and one of the county's biggest visitor attractions. History doesn't normally occupy a prominent place at the show, but we were fortunate to be situated in a tent near the DCAA Members' Pavilion, which ensured a steady stream of people who were happy to reminisce about past shows or chat about their memories of Exeter. These were stimulated by a huge display board, commissioned by the DCAA, which showed an aerial photograph of central Exeter superimposed over an Ordnance Survey map from the early twentieth century.

In mid-July I took part in the annual Local History Day at Crediton Library. I first attended this in 2018, and after being held online in 2020 and 2021 it has resumed as an 'in person' event over the last couple of summers and is a valuable illustration of the way in which the products of research and shared recollections can coalesce into an event which has community history and the collective memory at its heart. Mark Norman, who works at the library and is curator of the Folklore Library and Archive, deserves credit for introducing the event, persisting with it during the pandemic and re-establishing it in its original format now that life is a little nearer to 'normal'.

Finally, as a resident of the AONB it was a pleasure to attend the exhibition staged at Kennaway House in Sidmouth in July to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The exhibition consisted of displays created by many local history societies, including Axminster, Beer, Colyton, Lympstone, Ottery St Mary, Topsham and Woodbury, and showed both the breadth of the area's history and the depth of people's commitment to it. Nigel Hyman's report on pages 32 and 33 gives more information about the event.

In an age of profound political, economic and ecological uncertainty and distress, the desire to study the past and learn from it, while remaining aware that it can never be replicated, is understandable and important. The articles in this edition, as much as the events I have referred to, reflect that desire and show that interest in the history of Devon is alive and well.

Brian Carpenter

Regular readers may notice that this edition of Devon History News has a slightly different appearance. It looks more like a journal than a magazine, but I must emphasise that I'm not looking to take over from my friend Mike Sampson as editor of The Devon Historian. I wanted to include a separate cover and the appearance seemed to follow from that. Anyway, I hope you enjoy it, and, as Katherine Findlay has done, I particularly commend the feature about Girltastic!. It's a wonderful example of how initiatives taken here in England's south-west can, in the internet age, provide inspiration far beyond our borders.

Devon in the 1920s Project Update

As I write we are just reaching a project milestone moment. The first essays – over forty of them – about Devon's 1920s history have arrived, and are being sorted and catalogued ready to share. (Not to mention a large quantity of research notes on aspects of our themes which haven't yet made it into finished articles.) Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

We plan now to spend time reading and analysing what we've discovered – and of course some people, particularly those who have joined the project more recently, are still finishing their contributions. We know from discussions so far that the 1920s was a time of great change, but also that some of those changes were adopted more smoothly than others. We'd like to understand more about why. We'd also like to focus on areas in which Devon was different from other places. It's a more reflective

phase in the project. far but think this of interest to you,



If you've not been involved so phase of the project would be then please let me know.

Principal's Summer Picnic (Courtesy Seale-Hayne Archive)

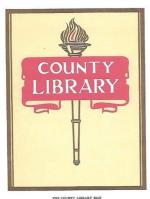
We're also now developing an application for National Lottery Heritage Funding for presenting our work in a Festival of Devon in the 1920s, and actively seeking partners to help in presenting our findings and engaging others in sharing discoveries. If you belong to an organisation that might be interested, or have any ideas about bodies we could apply to co-fund the Festival, again, please let me know.

Our congratulations go to one of our researchers, Anne Corry. Anne was a runner-up in the national '20s' Streets' competition run jointly by the National Archives and the British Association for Local History. Anne won with her entry called 'Plymstock – the end of a Village', a subject she has been researching for the Devon in the 1920s project.

Finally – do you recognize this sign? It was the early logo of the Devon County Library service, and we are trying to find out if any examples of it survive. If you've seen a copy of it, as a physical sign, or as a plate in a book, please contact me!

Julia Neville, Project Manager, Devon in the 1920s

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Girltastic! A Devon Suffrage Activist Promoting Feminism in the USA

The reach of our research collection of Devon Suffrage activists, see Devon Suffrage Activists, 1866-1918 |
Devon History Society sometimes surprises me. I'm used to the odd comment coming in supplementing our information about addresses or connections or burial places. They're really useful. We do always follow them up and, where necessary, amend our entries.

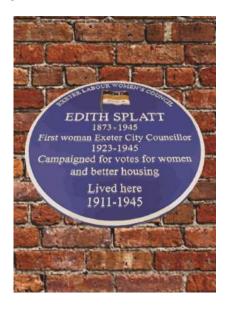
What I hadn't expected, however, was the email our chair, Katie Findlay, received last February. It came from Telva Chase who runs a company in the States called *Girltastic! Girltastic!* exists to raise funds for charitable foundations that support increasing educational opportunities for girls, such as the Malala Fund. One of the ways they are doing this at the moment is by producing collectable cards (think of the old cigarette cards...) featuring inspirational women from history. Telva had come across our biography of Edith Splatt, an outspoken Exeter woman member of the WSPU and NUWSS and the first woman to fight and win a seat on Exeter City Council. She wanted to feature Edith in her collection.

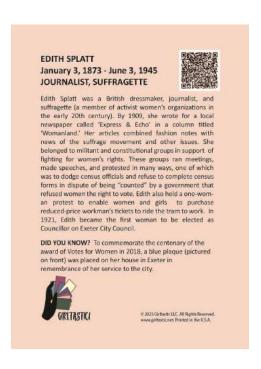
Of course this was very exciting, but there was just one snag. No good photograph of Edith Splatt exists (I asked her great nephew and even the family don't have one). All we could find was a small, fuzzy, head and shoulders newspaper photo. This presented a bit of a problem. Telva said she had found a photograph of Edith in her Wikipedia entry. So I looked, and whoever created the entry had mistakenly identified a photo of a couple of other campaigners in Newton Abbot as showing Edith. I had to get myself involved in the editing process for Wikipedia to correct the attribution.

Anyway, Telva was still keen to go ahead, so I told her about the plaque to Edith Splatt which now marks out her house in Exeter, and the fact that the funding for it had been raised by a modern group of women, the Exeter Labour Women's Council. She agreed to create a card with the plaque on it, and that's what now appears (see illustrations).

Have a look at the *Girltastic!* collection and you'll see Edith Splatt up there with Helen Keller, Florence Nightingale and Ethel Smyth - <u>Brooklyn Series - That's Girltastic (thatsgirltastic.com)</u>. She is in fact the only one for whom no portrait or photographic representation could be used. She stands for all the women activists whose faces history has forgotten.

Julia Neville





Mary Willcocks

On Friday 9th June – a very hot day! – Exeter Civic Society unveiled a blue plaque at 88 Pennsylvania Road, the home for over thirty years of Mary Willcocks, author, lecturer and feminist (see photo). Devon History Society invited participants to hear two talks beforehand – Sheila Hancox from the Ivybridge Heritage and Archives Group spoke about Mary's early life and Julia Neville spoke about Mary's life in Exeter.

Mary Willcocks (1869-1952) was a novelist and suffrage activist who spent most of her life in Exeter. She was born on a farm close to Dartmoor, which provided the background for many of her novels, featuring strong women characters, often set in rural Devon. She moved to Exeter in 1907 when her early novels proved successful enough for her to risk abandoning teaching for life as a freelance writer and speaker. The publication of her seventh novel in 1913 prompted a feature in the *Devonian Year Book* with a portrait photograph (see below) showing her in her forties.

During her first ten years in Exeter she campaigned for Votes for Women, organising campaigns across Devon and Cornwall for the National Union of Suffrage Societies, including the 1913 Votes for Women march from Land's End to Hyde Park. She retained an interest in political activism even after the vote was won, campaigning on issues such as employment opportunities for women. In 1943 she was awarded a Civil List pension for services to literature.

West of England & South Wales Women's History Network were pleased to make a grant of £150 to Exeter Civic Society towards the cost of the plaque. Local city councillors also made a grant, as one of the criteria for grant making has been to increase the awareness of women's place in Exeter's past.

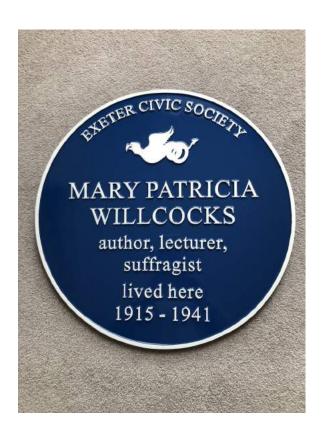
Julia Neville



Mary Willcocks (from The Devonian Year Book, 1913)



Guests at the unveiling of the plaque commemorating Mary Willcocks, 88 Pennsylvania Road, Exeter, 9^{th} June 2023 (Exeter Civic Society)



West of England & South Wales Women's History Network

Annual Conference, 30th September 2023, Exeter Central Library, 10.00 to 17.00

Women and the Natural World:

Historical Perspectives on Nature Climate and Environmental Change

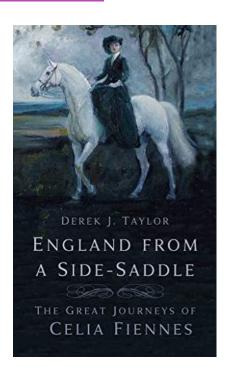
Keynote Speaker: Professor Nicola Whyte, University of Exeter: 'Landscape, Memory and the Life-course in the Travel Writing of Celia Fiennes'

Panel 1: Women and the Rural Environment, with papers on Anne Lister and the gardens of Shibden Hall, Lady Henrietta Gilmor's photographs of her Scottish country estate and 'Of course the good naturalist must be a lady'.

Panel 2: Ecofeminism and Women's Activism, with papers on East German feminism and Chernobyl, Indian Adivasi Women and the intersection of environmental history and women's history.

Panel 3: Natural Science, Education and Community Action including women's 'mimic oceans' and Victorian popular science, 'petit cultur' in fin de siecle England, and women and community – from archives to action.

For further details contact Julia Neville, <u>i.f.neville@btinternet.com</u> and for full programme and bookings go to http://weswwomenshistorynetwork.co.uk



Devon Archives and Local Studies Service

A major focus of the service's work in the early Spring of 2023 was the completion of our preparations for the renewal of our status as an accredited archive service, which was originally awarded in 2017. This involved the submission of our responses to a detailed questionnaire about all aspects of our work and assessment visits by staff from the National Archives. These visits — which included tours and interviews with staff — took place at the Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter and the North Devon Record Office in Barnstaple in late May, and in early July we received confirmation that the service's accreditation had been renewed. The Somerset Archives and Local Studies Service, also administered by the South West Heritage Trust, was reaccredited at the same time.

We are contributing to a regional bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund which, if successful, will enable the digitisation of sound archives for Devon and Somerset and a range of engagement activities over a four-year period. This is designed to build on the success of the British Library's *Unlocking our Sound Heritage* project, to which we have contributed substantially in recent years.

Torrential rain in Exeter on Tuesday 9th May resulted in damage to the roof of Great Moor House (which houses the Devon Heritage Centre) when gutters were overwhelmed, and there was a temporary loss of power, security systems and IT. The archive conservation studio suffered some minor water ingress, but no archive strongrooms were affected and no collections were damaged.

During Local History Month in May four outreach events linked to the West Country Studies Library took place in the libraries at Exmouth, Okehampton, Paignton and Sidmouth, and we were also present at the Devon County Show for the first time in many years. At the end of June we hosted a celebration event to mark the completion of our project to enhance the storage of the library, and in July two members of staff spoke about the library at the annual Crediton Local History Day.

An exhibition to mark the coronation of King Charles III was created in partnership with the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon and ran at the museum from 22nd April until 8th July. It was visited by almost 13,000 people.

An online exhibition called *How does your garden grow?* has been created in partnership with our colleagues in the Met Office archives. It relates to horticulture, the weather and climate change, and draws on archives from both Devon and Somerset.

https://swheritage.org.uk/digital-exhibitions/how-does-your-garden-grow/

Brian Carpenter

The National Marine Biological Library

This has to be one of the best views from a library window anywhere in the world.



Where is it, you may ask. Nestling next to the Citadel on Plymouth Hoe is the Marine Biological Association, and within it is the National Marine Biological Library.

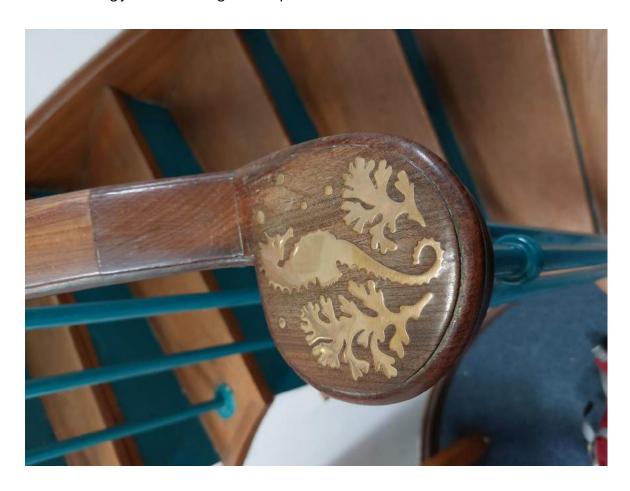


Can you just imagine whiling away the hours in this wonderful space?





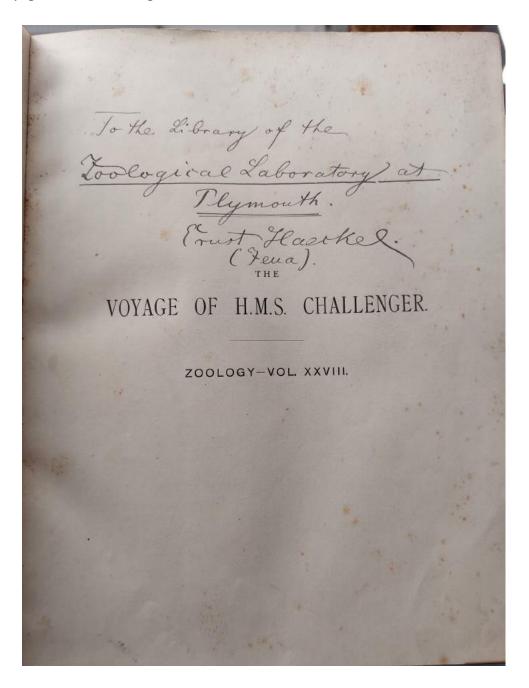
It's worth visiting just to see the glorious spiral staircase with a brass seahorse on the newel.



The library opened in 1888 when the organisation moved into its new premises which were purpose built. An appeal was made locally for books to start a library and that's the basis of the collection. The library building you see today is an extension from the 1930s, with another addition in the 1970s. Not only is it a nationally significant marine library and one of the largest in the world, there is also a rare book collection (the earliest work in the collection dates from 1554) including a first edition of *On the Origin of Species* thought to have been originally signed by the author, small paper and photographic archive, portraits and paintings of Plymouth landscapes, approximately 130 objects (mainly scientific equipment – some made specifically for research at the MBA), a Science Archive consisting of



scientific slides and data records, and a large herbarium which was set up by Dr Mary Parke in the 1940s. The Assistant Librarian's favourite rare book is a report on *Siphonophorae* by Ernst Haekel collected on the voyage of HMS Challenger, between 1873 and 1876.



Minutes and reports of the organisation survive intact from its formation in 1884. The MBA also had its own vessels historically and photographs and log books of these vessels also survive. By their nature, they record daily weather patterns.

Focussing on the archive, although the main concentration is marine based, there are interesting letters to and from many of the scientists associated with the MBA which often give details of life in and around Plymouth. Construction photographs of the building in the 1880s are simply stunning. Many scientists have hand-drawn or painted the marine flora and fauna, and these in themselves are beautiful works of art. Among the E. T. Browne collection, are photographs of Plymouth and its hinterlands from 1895 to 1906. There is a box of material relating to the book 'Dartmoor' by R. Hansford Worth which was collated and edited by G. M. Spooner and F. S. Russell to enable the publication of the book following his death. Letters from European marine scientists expressing their experiences during World War Two I found

completely fascinating, and there are several collections of papers connected to female marine scientists.



Among those are Marie Lebour, Molly Spooner, Miriam Rothschild and Maude Delap.

Maude Delap was a self-taught, Irish female amateur marine scientist who created a laboratory at her family home on Valentia Island, County Kerry.



She collaborated with MBA scientists at Plymouth, particularly E. T. Browne (who visited her), and University College London. She was offered a fellowship by the Plymouth Marine Biological Station (the MBA) in 1906, but she had to refuse as allegedly her father stated "No daughter of mine will leave home except as a married woman". She was the first person in the world to successfully rear jellyfish in an aquarium. She continued her work on Valentia Island until her death in 1953. This website gives some information about a current project relating to Maude and her work.

https://www.ecomuseumlive.eu/finding-maude-delap.

The archive collection is yet to be fully explored and made available. There are collection-level descriptions for much of the collection available online on the National Archives 'Discovery' catalogue, but by no means everything is listed. There is an online catalogue for the book collections that anyone can view available through the MBA website https://www.mba.ac.uk/our-facilities/library/.

There are currently two members of staff who work part-time at the library and there is a small team of regular volunteers. The two main volunteer projects currently, are conserving the rare books collection and cataloguing the Science Archive (scientific slides and data records).

The NMBL is a bit of an undiscovered gem in Devon. Do take a look at the website of the MBA to see the important work that they do and discover more about its important library collections. Groups can arrange tours, although please note there is currently no lift. The library is open Monday to Thursday, 9-5 (but this can vary due to staffing). Use of the library and archive is by membership, but they welcome enquiries and can advise further if you contact them.

Go on, you know you want to.

Deborah Lister

The Devon Lands of the Lord of the Honour of Skipton

The main source of this information is *Early Yorkshire Charters (EYC) Vol 7, The Honour of Skipton*, Ed William Farrer and Charles Travis Clay, Cambridge University Press, 2013. The thirteen volume series, which first appeared between 1914 and 1965, is an extensive collection of pre-thirteenth-century charters and related records of Yorkshire, which had previously remained largely unpublished; I commend the series to those whose research takes them in this direction.

The Rumilly Family

For the purposes of these notes the start point will be the vill of Remilly, about ten miles north-west of St. Lo in Normandy. It was from here that Robert de Rumilly (various spellings) took his locative name. He was the son of Rainfray de Remilly and Muriel who were the benefactors of the church of Marigny. They had no surviving sons, but did have two daughters one of whom, Cecily, would later inherit the lands granted to her father in England by William le Batard, Duke of Normandy - the 'Conqueror' of England. Those substantial grants were centred on Skipton in Yorkshire; there were also other lands in Dorset and Devon. There is no evidence that Robert came to England with the invasion and these estates appear to have been granted by William I shortly after the Domesday survey. In a later charter issued by Robert de Rumilly in 1094-96 he gave to the abbey of St. Martin de Troarn, Normandy, the following grants in Devon:

'The church of Molland, with the priest and land for one plough three tenants with their land and the tithe of all things belonging to the manor' (In Henry I's subsequent confirmation charter the tithes of the mansionis [hall] at Molland are also mentioned.)

'In Spitchwick [Widdecombe in the Moor] one tenant'.

'The church of Warkleigh'.

'The tithe of all killing of his hogs and a tithe of the skins of stags and beasts'.

'The common of pasture for beasts and sheep in all his land when necessary'.

Witnesses to this charter included King William; Bishop Johannis of Somerset; the Bishop of Dunelmi [Durham] and Robert de Rumelli. These grants can be found in the *Bruton Cartulary* (Somerset Record Society vol viii, No. 310 & 329). They are recorded there because in 1260 Troarn Abbey and Bruton Priory agreed to exchange their possessions in Normandy and England, presumably to relieve themselves of the burden of each having to manage an overseas business.

The Meschin Family

Ranulf de Briquessart, viscount of Bessin and sheriff of Bayeux married Margaret d'Avranches, and one of their known issue was a son, Ranulf, (1070-c.1129) styled as le Meschin. He later gained the title Vicomte de Bayeux, and also succeeded as the Vicomete d'Avranches from his maternal line. Ranulph senior's son, Ranulf de Meschin, vicomte de Bessin, had at least two sons by Maud, the sister of Hugh, the vicomte of the Avranchin. The oldest was also named Ranulf, and was destined to later become the earl of Chester. The younger of the two was William, with whom we are largely concerned here.

Cecily Rumilly became a significant matriarch after she married William le Meschin, a tenant-in-chief who also held large estates of the king in his own right. Their marriage united their respective holdings which included not only Skipton and the honour of Copeland in Cumberland, but also lands in other counties which William also held as tenant in chief in his own right, plus other estates which he held as a tenant in chief of his brother Ranulf, Earl of Chester. Despite the power and influence of her husband Cecily retained her father's name and was thus always known as Cecily de Rumilly, a tradition which at least two of her subsequent daughters and grand-daughters were to continue.

William Meschin pre-deceased Cecily and so, because there was no surviving son, she held all these combined estates in her own right and thus became known as lady of Skipton (d. c. 1151-1155). She married for a second time, not earlier than 1135, to the Devon baron Henry de Tracy who had been King Stephen's vassal in France when Stephen was only the Count of Moretain. Henry de Tracy had gained a reputation as a fighting man when he fought on the side of king Stephen in 1139 which was, most probably, during the notorious attack on Worcester. This latter event was followed-up by a reconnaissance in the west by king Stephen which included his raid on Dunster. Henry again fought for Stephen in 1143, before eventually being defeated in 1147. Charter 10 (p.59) in EYC 7 suggests that Henry de Tracy was indeed the Devon baron of that name; this is supported by the last name among the witnesses to this particular charter being Radulfus de Oteri [Ottery,]. This charter [1135-54] was confirmation by Henry de Tracy and Cecily his wife to Embsay priory of 'Chyldwyke with its appurtenances' [Kildwick - a vill in the district of Craven in North Yorkshire]. Charter 11, of the same date range, is in a similar vein but this time they include Kildwick 'with its tithes, oblations and profits, and also its mill and its soke'.

In 1146 Henry de Tracy issued a charter confirming to Barnstaple Priory the gifts made by Johel de Totnes. Before Michaelmas 1165 he had been succeeded by Oliver de Tracy, a son by a former wife. It seems likely that this wife was a daughter of Johel de Totnes with whom he obtained a moiety of the manor of Barnstaple in 1196. Oliver was recorded as owing 500 marks for his share of the honour of Barnstaple and 'paying the [same] sum for scutage as William de Briouze' [did]. The other moiety of Barnstaple appears to have passed to William de Briouze in a joint agreement with Johel; William identified Johel de Totnes as his grandfather.

The manors of Spitchwick and Warkleigh become part of the inheritance of Avice (or Amice) de Rumilly who was the daughter and coheir of Cecily de Rumilly and William Meschin, and the wife of William de Curcy II. (For the record, her other coheirs were her sisters: - a second Alice de Rumilly, and also Maud Meschin.) Her inheritance embraced many manors in Wharfedale, Yorkshire and seven knights fees in Lincolnshire, in addition to those at Spitchwick and Wakeleigh. In 1242-43 one fee in Spitchwick was held

by Michael de Spichewik of John de Neville, grandson and coheir of Avice de Rumilly, the Curcy heiress, as of the honour of Stoke Curcy, Somerset, with another fee in Warklieigh also held of him. Molland was held by another of Cicily's daughters, the previously mentioned Maud.

Footnotes

- 1.EYC Vol 7, p2
- 2. Morris M. The Norman Conquest, London 2013, p56
- 3.Meschin meant 'younger' so it was used here to differentiate between Ranulf the father and Ranulf his son. The name then appears to have stuck, even in subsequent generations.
- 4.EYC Vol 7, p. v
- 5.EYC Vol 7 p.6. citing Gesta Stephani, Rolls Ser., pp.52, 97,135
- 6.EYC Vol 7 p.59 citing MS Dodsworth cxliv, f35 [1135-54] Bodleian Library, Oxford.
- 7.Soke [Old English socn: right of jurisdiction] A lord's right of jurisdiction over the lands attached to a manor with the right to receive fines and other dues including the right to mill corn as a source of additional income from his tenants.
- 8.EYC vol 7 p.6 fn 8
- 9.For those who may not have previously encountered this I offer the description of 'scutage' established around c. 1179 by Richard fitz Nigel, Treasurer to Henry II. The *Dialogus de Scaccario* [Dialogue of the Exchequer] is, interestingly, the first document showing the functions of medieval administration. It records 'The king decrees that a certain sum be paid from each knight's fief namely a mark or a pound whence come the pay and gratuities for the soldiers For the prince prefers to thrust into the vortex of war mercenary troops rather than domestic forces And so this sum is paid in the name of shields and is therefore called scutage' [latin scutum: shield]. This tax was levied every four years or so and permission was granted to tenants-in-chief to issue summonses for military service and to collect the scutage.

10.EYC Vol 7 p.2 fn9 citing: EYC Vol 3 p.370 and Book of Fees pp.786, 794

Keith Wren

Landholding Patterns in East Devon

The Friends of Devon's Archives' recent 'Norden project' has now published its results in a handsome hardback edition, containing the surveys conducted in 1615 of Duchy of Cornwall lands in Devon - i.e. Ashburton, Bradninch, Bovey Tracey, Exeter Castle, Heathfield, Buckfastleigh, Dunkeswell and Ottery St Mary. The new resource is a valuable aid for anyone interested in local landscape studies, and of course, the Ottery St Mary data I found particularly interesting. Comparing the tithe schedules with Norden for clues to the historic landscape is not straightforward – the two surveys are over 200 years apart, which is time enough for plenty of changes, but there are also some features that have stayed much the same. Among these is a pattern of landholding often characterised by widely scattered resources. This can be illustrated by the holdings of four landowners in Alfington – a village just north of Ottery (see illustration) – JMH Bate 214 acres (purple), Mary Carpenter 217 acres (brown), Mary Gould 69 acres (blue) and Ann

Gillet 27 acres (yellow). These owners – large and small – hold their property in multiple small pieces interleaved each with the others, together accounting for a great proportion of the land in Alfington tithing. How this state of affairs came into existence is an open question, but it does not take much effort to discover that the same situation applied in Norden's time and that his survey mimics the tithe in describing widely distributed fields that go together to form a single holding.

For this reason Martin Ebdon's recent *Devon Historian* article on tithe boundaries as they are set out in the Commutation Act maps struck an immediate chord for me in the way that it described the intermixed tithe boundary between Buckerell and Awliscombe (*The Devon Historian*, Volume 92, page 36). This interweaving of bits of one parish in the adjacent parish reflects exactly the ownership patterns (internal to the parish) on view in Alfington. Tithes are an important administrative determinant and tithable property has a long provenance. Martin has suggested they were established at the time that churches and parishes were newly made, which dates back to the 10th and 11th centuries and possibly earlier. That has to be a factor for sure, but the length of time involved since then must surely have challenged the stability of the tithe boundaries in some way. But for the time being I think it is reasonable to suggest that the patterns on view in Alfington are the result of multiple generations of interchanges of lands between the major landowners, whose fortunes rise and fall over the centuries. The origins of these exchanges must be in the medieval period and probably after the Norman accession. Land ownership patterns (in Ottery at least) are more cohesive and show less scattering in the marginal lands, and also in the areas where secure ancient tenures held sway. More on that will be best left for a future *Devon History News*.

Meanwhile, if you have any thoughts on this, please write to me at cwwakefield@btinternet.com.

Chris Wakefield



Property of four landholders in Ottery St Mary Parish in the Tithe Map of 1843. See text for key to colours. The pale blue wash denotes land use, not ownership.

BOOK REVIEWS, COMMENTS AND PREVIEWS

Andrew Powell-Thomas, *Devon's Military Heritage* (Stroud: Amberley, 2020), 95 pp., numerous colour photographs, map. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-4456949-1-7. £15.99.

'As the third largest county in Great Britain, Devon has rolling hills, national parks, vast swathes of farmland and some stunning coastline to its north and south. It also has a somewhat unexpected rich military heritage ... it could be easy ..., particularly if on holiday, not to see or appreciate the sheer range of history that lies all around, sometimes in plain sight' (p. 6). So begins this rather slight compendium of and guide to the remains of some of the most important military installations in Devon – most refer to the army or the air-force, with references to Devon's extensive naval heritage concentrated in the chapter on Plymouth.

The book is arranged geographically by parliamentary constituency starting in the north-west of the county in Torridge and finishing in the south-west in Plymouth. Most of the buildings and installations described and photographed by the author are either early castles or facilities created during the Second World War. For example, the chapter on Torridge begins with Bideford and describes James Chudleigh's fort, the sixteenth century Spanish cannon in Victoria Park, and Bideford Ordnance Experimental Station Depot O-167; it then moves on to the existence of prisoner-of-war camps at Holsworthy and Handy Cross, the remains of a Chain Home radar station of Northam Burrows, a potted biography of Sir Richard Grenville, the testing of the Great Panjandrum at Westward Ho!, and RAF Winkleigh. The other chapters follow a similar pattern and encompass the castles at Berry Pomeroy, Bickleigh, Dartmouth, Exeter, Okehampton, Tiverton and Totnes, and several others, and discuss some unusual survivals of World War II, including the 'huge stop butt at Rippon Tor Rifle Range' (p. 32) and the remains of the 'Air Ministry Laboratory Bombing Teacher' (p. 48).

This book lays no claim to be either comprehensive or original. Its value to the historian is limited, but as a guide for the tourist or someone new to the heritage of World War Two, it is an attractively produced and well-illustrated guide to some of the most visible military facilities in Devon.

Paul Auchterlonie

Nigel Hyman writes:

The book reviews in Volume 92 of *The Devon Historian* (page 94) included a review of the Sid Vale Association publication *Sidmouth: The War Years* 1939-1945.

Although the review was generally favourable, the final sentence was puzzling. It refers to the 'paucity of references in this book which will hamper this process [further research]'. On page 211 of the publication is a full list of sources which includes a University of Exeter PhD thesis which is available online. In addition, the local newspapers (Sidmouth Herald and Observer) were a very major source of information and indicated throughout the text.

Only a single author was named, although five shared the research and writing: Christine Hardy, Nigel Hyman, John McCarthy, Andrew Rugg-Gunn and Alastair Watson.

"Gran... He's talking French again!" by Anthony John

This book is based around the mainly humorous anecdotes told by my grandfather to me when I was a child which I have woven together into a narrative, along with a great deal of research and background material providing context and colour.

Albert Holman was born in Exmouth in 1898. He was the ninth child of the Senior Pilot working in the busy docks and grew up at the tail end of the Empire and of sailing ships, just before the advent of modern transport. Tales from his early years include the arrival of one of the first motor cars in Exmouth, the wreck of a Russian timber ship on the foreshore, and rumours that an aircraft was coming to the town.

As soon as he was able and after a couple of years spent as an electrical apprentice, he, along with tens of thousands of others joined the army in 1915. His experience with wiring making him a natural candidate as a signaller for the Royal Garrison Artillery. These men were frequently placed in the most exposed positions, where they could observe and report back on the shell fall and direct the gunfire onto the enemy trenches. In this capacity he took part in many of the battles all across France and Belgium. These actions included Vimy Ridge, The Somme, Ypres, Flanders and Hill 70 (Loos).

After the Armistice he joined the Metropolitan Police, and as a young copper in London's East End he joined and became a founder player in the Metropolitan Police Athletic Association Rugby Club. And, after selection and trials, he took part in all their inaugural games, including several of the annual *Coup Poirson* matches against the Paris Police. Here the stories of their after-match celebrations included one notable night out in the *Folies Bergere* of the 1920s.

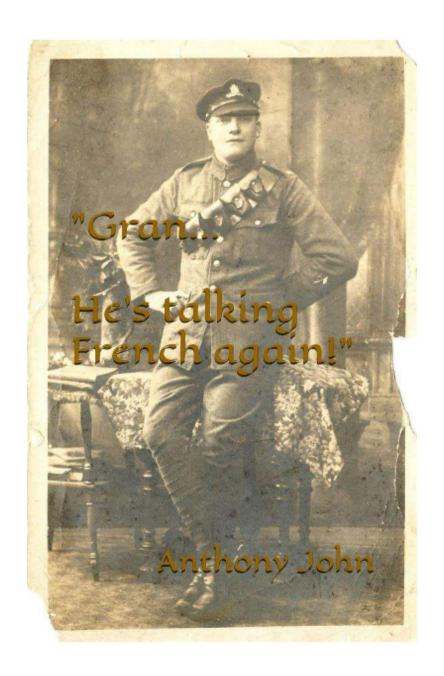
As a young police officer he arrested the man who smashed the window of Winston Churchill's car during a near riot in Walthamstow, and he carried a revolver throughout the Sinn Fein uprising of the 1920s. Later on in the 30s, his skill as a signaller was recognised by the police and he became an early radio operator in the newly created 'Q'-cars, these were used extensively against the organised crime gangs and looting which took place under the cover of the blackouts of the Second World War.

In his later life he returned to Exmouth, where after a spell as a postman he became a water bailiff around the River Exe, looking after the salmon fisheries and dealing with incidents of poaching, or of pollution which might occur from the factories and paper mills lining the river.

The book starts at the end of the 17th century. Through census and church records I traced his line back to the man who would have been my seven-times great-grandfather and followed that line continuously to Albert, as they migrated along the south coast to settle in Exmouth, spending much of the Napoleonic period at the shipyards in Bucklers Hard. As background it also outlines how Exmouth evolved from the isolated hamlets listed in the Domesday Book, to its current dominant position in East Devon, and includes approaching sixty photographs and illustrations.

It is available from The Exmouth Museum or from Amazon, price £9.50. ISBN: 9798379288358

John A Holman



Membership Payments

Over 50 members of the DHS have either not paid or topped up their membership payments this year to the new standard rate of £20.00. If you happen to be one of those members please make a payment online and update your standing order for 2024 to the new £20.00 rate.

If you have an queries about you payment please contact Martin Smith:

webmaster@devonhistorysociety.org.uk.

NEWS FROM AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

Blackawton and Strete History

After a period of time lying dormant, the Blackawton and Strete History group (BASH) has been relaunched and now has an online presence in the form of a Facebook group. We have worked with Bob and Anne Harvey and Andrea and Jan Scott from Blackawton and Kate Gill and Val and Ian Phillips from Strete to look at ways of taking the group forward and the Facebook group now has 165 members with more joining every day.

BASH holds an enormous wealth of information, photos, documents and books, several of which are on sale in the local shop, which we are keen to see enjoyed by the local community it all belongs to. We welcome contributions from members and hope to generate discussion and bring back memories by sharing photos of the local area and the folks of bygone days.

As time goes on, and we get up to speed, we hope to hold meetings locally to share and discuss and hold talks on items and areas of interest and meet our members face to face.

We can also be contacted through our email address info@historybash.co.uk.

Justine and Gary Hadden

Colyton Parish History Society

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 27th September: Sotheby's & Fine Art Photography by Lucilla Phelps

Lucilla is principal photographer of Sotheby's auctioneers and her talk will cover some items that came to Sotheby's and changed history. Also the amazing castle auctions of Germany and France, together with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor's possessions in their Paris home, and some images from Princess Diana's childhood home, Althorp. Catalogues will be available to view.

Wednesday 25th October: Fairgrounds at War 1939-45 by Kay Townsend

Kay is a member of an old showground family and her illustrated talk depicts the life of show families and the difficulties faced during the war years. Fascinating stories of old rides and showground characters. How the Government closed them down and then begged them to open again during the war years.

Wednesday 22nd November: A History of Seaside Towns by Stewart Raine

Stewart will present an illustrated talk on the fascinating development of sunny seaside towns to brighten November days!

All talks are at Colyton Town Hall, beginning at 7.30 pm

£2 members, £4 visitors including refreshments

All are welcome to come along and enjoy an entertaining evening.

Crediton Area History and Museum Society

Crediton Museum's Summer exhibition is based on the Great Fire of Crediton in 1743. We are extremely lucky to have a map of the West Town that was made in the Spring, before it was mostly destroyed in the August. The map was commissioned by the Lord of the Manor to show the frontages of the properties, as many encroached on the then market place. Some occupants had built extensions in order to sell goods on market days, thus taking trade from the market and not paying him a fee. The map gives us an amazing insight of how Crediton looked in 1743.

Extensive research was carried out, led by Tony Gale, into life in Crediton before the fire, fire-fighting in the 18th century, fire insurance and how the town recovered. Many fascinating stories were also uncovered about people who lived in the town. A book and other merchandise based on the exhibition has been produced, and are selling very well.

Both local primary schools, as well as a group from Queen Elizabeth's School have been actively involved, and a gallery of their work is on display at the museum. This includes diary entries, based on Samuel Pepys' diaries about the Great Fire of London, newspaper reports and amazing artwork around fire.

Guided walks are planned for 28th July and again on 14th August, (the anniversary of the fire), taking visitors along the High Street, revealing stories about the fire along the route and ending at the Museum to view the exhibition.

The exhibition is open Wednesday to Friday, 10.00–16.00, Saturday 11.00–14.00 and will run until Saturday 28th October 2023.

Exeter Local History Society

The main activity of the Exeter Local History Society is its monthly programme of talks. These take place at the Leonardo Hotel on Western Way, Exeter, every second Thursday of the month at 7 pm. As can be seen from the programme, the subjects covered are wide ranging but with an emphasis on Exeter and Devon. Speakers are drawn from a range of backgrounds but bring passion and knowledge to their chosen topic.

Annual membership is £12 (£16 for a couple). Non-members are welcome to attend these talks subject to a £3 charge.

On the next page is a list of recent talks held and our programme through to December 2023.

2022

Thursday 8th September 2022: "St Martin's Island", by Dr Todd Gray

Thursday 13th October 2022: "Exeter Cathedral Memorials with links to Empire", by Peter Wingfield-Digby

Thursday 10th November 2022: "More Tales of Exeter's West Quarter in the 1920s", by Dr Julia Neville

Wednesday 7th December 2022: "Rougemont Castle Exeter: Buildings, Archaeology and Topography", by Dr Stuart Blaylock

2023

Thursday 12th January 2023: "Life in Exeter since 1757 seen through the lives of some extraordinary Free-masons", by Brian Thornton

Thursday 9th February 2023: "Squilometre Project" on fascinating hidden histories of some of Exeter's streets, by JoJo Spinks

Thursday 9th March 2023: "Devon's Railway Heritage", by Robert Hesketh

Thursday 14th April 2023: "Men of the Royal Navy", by Charlotte Coles

Thursday 11th May 2023: "History of Bus Transport in Devon", by Paul Jenkins

Thursday 8th June 2023: "Grievous Bodley Harm? The strange affair of Exeter's medieval manuscripts", by Ian Maxted

Thursday 13th July 2023 (a.m.): "Workshop: Lost Buildings of Exeter, the 1800s", with Dr Todd Gray at St Katherine's Priory. This workshop will be led by Dr Gray and will discuss his ongoing project – and his upcoming book – on Exeter's buildings lost in the 1800s.

Thursday 13th July 2023: "How to look at Exeter's Colourful Heraldry", by David Oates

Thursday 17th August 2023: Visit to the RAMM to view the Pinhoe Hoard and the exhibition on Medieval Manuscripts returning to Exeter for the first time in 400 years

Thursday 14th September 2023: "Recent excavations and building studies in Exeter Cathedral Cloisters", by John Allan

Thursday 12th October 2023: "The Devon & Exeter Hospital: bedless and lifeless", by Richard Holladay

Thursday 9th November 2023: "General Buller", by Dr Robert Guyver

Wednesday 13th December 2023: "Queen Elizabeth II", by Dr Todd Gray

If you want to find out more please visit our website: www.exeterlocalhistorysociety.co.uk

There you will find the details of our recent talks and upcoming events, as well as how to join the Society.

HARBERTON'S HIDDEN TREASURES

LEARN ABOUT THE HIDDEN STORIES IN OUR MIGHTY MEDIEVAL CHURCH - SOME OF THEM REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME







In our second annual exhibition, this year find out about...

The stories in our dazzling Victorian windows Our fascinating churchyard, a protected environment for 756 years Our 1717 'Vinegar Bible', Royal 'spin' from 1701 and the 1745 hatchment

Open every day from 15th July in St Andrew's Church,

the exhibition will run until the end of September. The church is usually open until about 5.00pm

ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION IS FREE, BUT WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR DONATIONS TOWARDS THE COSTS.

Harberton Church Community Fund Registered Charity number: 1172549

Hemyock History Group

Hemyock History Group, like many local groups, has a Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/3109027852731490 so that members can add comments and contributions so that it is not just the job of the administrator. We also have our web site at www.blackdownarchives.org.uk. We are working with the owner of Hemyock Castle on a project for Heritage Sunday on Sunday 10th September when both Hemyock Castle and St Mary's Hemyock will be open to the public.

The owner of Hemyock Castle and Hartland Abbey and Quay during the wars of the Roses was Sir John de Dynham who is celebrated as the Captain of the Earl of Warwick's forces supporting the Yorkist cause in 1459 by providing the men and ships to take Warwick, Salisbury and the future Edward IV across the seas to the safe haven of Calais while Henry VI attempted to regain his throne at the battle of Ludford Bridge. At this stage Edward was too young to gain the country's total support. John, Lord Dynham, was instrumental in bringing Richard Woodville and Jaquetta over to Calais so that they would join the Yorkist cause at a later date and result in Edward becoming King. The document below will be the basis of the project for this year's Heritage Open Days.

Michael Cooper

The de Dinham family who owned Hemyock Castle and Hartland Abbey from sometime in the 12th Century. Hartland Abbey also owned Hartland Quay from which they were able to sail between England, France and Wales in the worst of weathers during the Wars of the Roses.

Margaret de Hydon, (1272–336) daughter of Sir Richard de Hydon, of Clayhidon and Hemyock, co. Devon. Two sons: John & Oliver. His widow, Margaret de Hydon later married: Sir Kilbert Knoville (died 1313 or 1314), Sir Piers de'Uvedale (1296 – 1336).

Margaret de Hydon and Sir Piers de'Uvedale both died around 1336 and endowed a new chapel in the south aisle of St Mary's Church, Hemyock. This endowment will be celebrated at the forthcoming Heritage Open Days for 2023.

During the 1100s the Norman Hidon family built a fortified manor house in Hemyock. Later, the Dynhams (originally from Brittany) married into the family.

Most likely, the site first had a wooden stockade and probably a wooden defensive tower. It may also have had a ditch or moat. Later, the wooden tower was replaced by a stone tower. Subsequently, a hall was added on the north side of the tower, probably with other outbuildings. In 1380, the site was "crenellated" – converted into a castle.

On 5th November 1380, King Richard II granted Sir William and Lady Asthorpe (née Dynham) licence to crenellate their fortified manor house.

However the de Dynham family or de Dinham, owned both Hemyock Castle and Hartland Abbey among other properties acquired through marriage through until the line ended with the death of John, Lord Dinham (1443 – 1501/2). This last John Lord Dinham was the Captain of the Yorkist forces who would serve the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury and the Duke of York's young son, Edward Earl of March to their safe haven of Calais in 1459 after the thwarted Battle of Ludford Bridge, near Ludlow. As Sir John Dynham, who it is reported could handle a ship in winter seas, came out of the darkness with a raiding force of 800 men, landed at Sandwich and marched into the town taking Richard Woodville and his wife

Jacquetta, part of Henry VI's entourage, back over the seas to Calais to be rebuked by the young Earl of March and the future Edward IV, little aware that in a few years the daughter of Richard and Jacquetta, Elizabeth, would marry the then Edward IV and their daughter, Elizabeth, would marry the future Henry VII, the first of the Tudor Dynasty and thus the end of the family wars.

Holsworthy History Society

The Society meets on the second Thursday of the month. Most meetings are at 7.00 pm in the Manor Suite which is behind the Memorial Hall in Holsworthy. The remaining meetings for 2023 are:

Thursday 14th September: A visit to the Tarka Valley railway with a talk on its history and future plans (This is an afternoon trip)

Thursday 12th October, 7.00 pm: Hairy Hands, Devils and Black Dogs by Paul Rendell

Thursday 9th November at 7.00 pm: **Arguably the British army's greatest defeat and victory on a single day** by Julia Warren and Alan Strike

Thursday 14th December, 7.00 pm: Annual General Meeting

For more information please contact Julia Warren on 07938 833425 or julialwarren19@gmail.com

Ottery St Mary Heritage Society

Lease at Last!

At last! It has taken since 2017 for the Society and the Ottery St Mary Town Council to sign the lease for the museum but they have finally got it done!

On 22nd June there was a brief signing ceremony held at the museum with the new Mayor Richard Grainger and Councillor Dean Stewart from OSMTC, Roy Clark, long time Trustee and Peter Shrubsall, Chairman putting their names to it. As well as many of the Trustees there were several volunteers and partners, and one guest to whom the completion of the agreement was particularly poignant; Margaret Neal. Robert Neal, her husband, who sadly passed away last November, was deeply involved in Ottery St Mary

Heritage Society since its foundation in 1999. His very last act for the Society was accompanying Peter in the final negotiations with the Ottery St Mary Town Council over the lease of The Old Town Hall. It still took another six months, but it is now signed and it moves the Society on significantly. Peter Shrubsall was pleased too to acknowledge the contribution to the negotiations that had been made in the past by Dr Michael Patrick, Chris Saunders and Quentin Beddall.

This lease will now enable the Society to apply for grants for maintenance, building enhancements, a lift for wheelchair and disabled visitors and even training. It will also enable the Society to start with the formal accreditation of the museum.

The twenty-five year lease marks a turning point in the history of Ottery St Mary Heritage Society and the Trustees very much look forward to the opportunities this will open up.

Right hand picture below (I to r): Peter Shrubsall, Chairman, Ottery St Mary Heritage Society, Councillor Richard Grainger, Mayor of Ottery St Mary and Councillor Dean Stewart, Ottery St Mary Town Council



Lynda Murlewski

Teign Valley History Group

Learn about our rich and fascinating local history, from prehistoric times to the recent past



Trusham Railway Station 1905
Courtesy of the Teign Valley History Centre https://tvhistorycentre.org

The Teign Valley History Group explores the influence on our lives today of people and places in the past. We host talks on the history of the Teign Valley, Devon, and sometimes beyond.

The Group usually meets at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of selected months at the Teign Valley Community Hall, in Christow. We also organise visits to local sites of historical interest.

Forthcoming meetings in Christow include:

- 12 Sep 2023 Levi Roach, "Ethelred and the South-West"
- 10 Oct 2023 Geoff Hodgson, "Celtic Devon: Why Devon and Cornwall have more in common than we thought"
- 14 Nov 2023 Bill Horner, "Recent archaeological discoveries in Devon"
- 12 Dec 2023 Christmas Quiz and Raffle
- 9 Jan 2024 Josephine Collingwood, "The geology of Dartmoor"
- 13 Feb 2024 Richard Holladay, "Commercial trading in Exeter"
- 12 Mar 2024 Nick Walters, "Mining in the Teign Valley"
- 9 Apr 2024 Paula Clarke (tbc), "Castle Drogo"
- 14 May 2024 Phil Collins, "Mills in the Teign Valley"

For updates and other information visit https://teignvalleyhistorygroup.org/

Chair: Geoff Hodgson (geoff@vivarais.co.uk)

Secretary: Saul Ackroyd (saulackroyd@googlemail.com)

Treasurer and membership: Julia Kirkland (juliamkirkland@hotmail.com)

Way of the Wharves, Bideford

In the spring of this year we ran a short series of three maritime themed public talks at The Burton Art Gallery and Museum. The three talk topics ranged from stories, drawn mainly from 18/19th century, about maritime heritage along the Torridge; the future of shipbuilding with the General Manager of Harland and Wolff, Appledore and from research in the Spanish archives revealing the experiences of five sailors from North Devon 'interviewed' by the Spanish Inquisition.

A group from Devon History Society visited Bideford in June as one of their 'Society Showcase' events. Way of the Wharves ran a programme at the Royal Hotel describing progress since the group was established in 2016.

There was a guided walk around the East the Water wharves. This is a unique moment as before any new building has commenced on the new development there are uninterrupted views of Bideford and East the Water. The walk ended up behind the Grade One listed Royal Hotel which started out as a tobacco merchant's house. During its long history it became a prison and a workhouse before the Heard family, who made their fortune taking emigrants to Prince Edward Island and returning with timber, built the present hotel, complete with its own railway platform.

In the afternoon Katy Lee told some history based stories before a lively discussion about how to use storytelling to engage people in local history. Finally the session concluded with a presentation on 'Maritime Heritage Stories from the Torridge' and some ideas for future plans. It was a beautiful sunny day and thanks to the Royal Hotel for letting us use their newly refurbished 'secret garden' next to the river for our lunch.

Mike Teare

www.thewharves.org



Images from maritime themed talks, Spring 2023

East Devon AONB 60th Anniversary Local History Exhibition

Kennaway House, Sidmouth

17th-22nd July 2023

Fourteen History Society/Heritage Centre/Museum groups took part and were asked to reflect how their landscapes and communities have changed in the last sixty years.

The board displays were:

Fairlynch Museum (Budleigh Salterton)

In 1960, 11 hotels, now 1. No longer any banks. In 1967 the railway closed. In the 1970s Otterton Domesday Mill was renovated and is now a tourist attraction. In 2014 the hospital closed. A gradual closure of farms. In 2013 the 'beaver reintroduction'. The Lower Otter Restoration Project was completed in 2023. Salt marsh and mudflats are attracting varied wild life including unusual birds.

Whimple Heritage Centre

The Whimple Wassail is intended to drive away evil spirits. Although celebrated in the past, it was reintroduced in 1993 and there were images of recent events.

Lympstone History Society

In the last sixty years a gradual loss of farms, now only four remain. However, there is a growth of market gardening and glasshouses. Maize is the predominant cereal grown.

Topsham Museum

In 1963, ship building ceased. In 1966 Topsham became part of Exeter with loss of its independence. In 1979 a swimming pool was built. In 1986 the Museum reopened. In 2000 important Roman items were found in an excavation at site of new school.

Beer Village Heritage

Photos showed changes in town landscape in last sixty years including loss of church spire and loss of Social Club. More recently the Fine Foundation Centre was established which shows both local history and fossils.

Woodbury History Society

Images showed a gradual loss of farm buildings including an old cob barn. Blackhill Quarry closed in 2005, the last butcher shop closed in 2010 and cider making has ceased. A 1960s photo showed farming on Woodbury Common, which is permitted in times of need.

Colyton Parish History Society

Two boards showed contrasting fortunes of dairy herds. In Colyford the Pady Dairy Herd and Milk Round peaked in the 1970s then declined and stopped in 1997. The Colyton Abbey Manor Farm (Herrod family) set up a Vending Shed and successfully supplies milk to the district, including Musbury.

Sidmouth Museum

Pennington Point coastal erosion was demonstrated by aerial views and an additional digitised diagram showed the changes more graphically.

The Knowle, the most famous house in the town in the 19th century, has seen many changes since World War Two when it was the Knowle Hotel. In 1967 it became the headquarters of Sidmouth Urban District Council and in 1974 East Devon District Council. Plans to relocate in 2012 produced a protest march. Now sold off to be largely demolished, it has been destroyed by a recent arson attack.

Sid Valley Biodiversity Group

Wild flower species in the Sid Valley were surveyed by Bob Hodgson in 1980-1983 (410) and compared with a 2021 survey (456). However, flowers are less abundant with far fewer hedgerows, insects and birds.

Axminster Heritage Centre

The history of the Centre from 2006 to its move to the present location in 2015 was described. The Town Information Centre was incorporated within it in 2018.

Ottery St Mary Heritage Centre

The history of this Centre was described from its beginnings in 2004 to its re-opening in 2022.

Other displays

Sidmouth Museum: Digitised film footage was shown of the Sid Valley in the 1960s, 1970s and finishing with the demolition of the last town brewery in 1980.

The Branscombe Project: 'Talking Heads' video showed eight locals with varied memories of the last sixty years.

Beer Village Heritage: 'The Wreck of the Napoli' composed and sung by Mike Green (1950-2023)

Woodbury Wide Awake: A film of William Keble Martin and Woodbury honoured his work as a botanist and artist. Landscape changes in the last fifty years were shown.

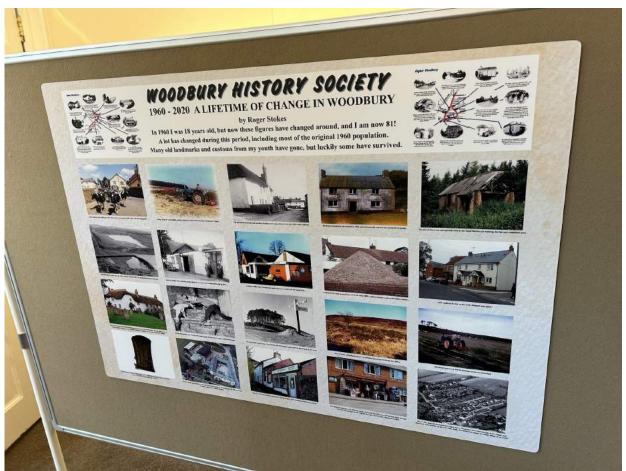
Newton Poppleford History Society: A recently digitised from cassette tape conversation from 1990 of former landlords of the now demolished Turks Head Inn. Changes in the village were described. **Rolling PowerPoint:** 186 images from the groups reflected images from their past.

We are very grateful to Chris Woodruff (East Devon AONB Partnership Manager) for both suggesting and funding this initiative.

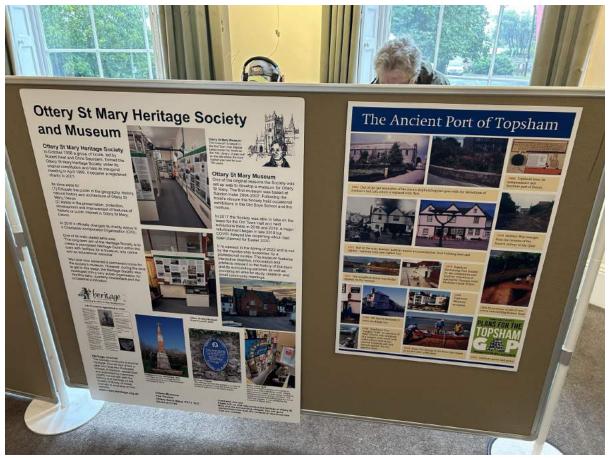
Nigel Hyman

Sid Vale Association











On Thursday 21st September, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum will host a Wikipedia workshop themed around Devon history. Run with Wikimedia UK, the event is for anyone with an interest in local history and culture and no prior knowledge of how to edit Wikipedia is required. Participants will learn Wikipedia basics and make their first edits.

We are delighted to welcome the team behind the amazing book *Devon Women In Public and Professional Life 1900-1950: Votes, Voices and Vocations* (2021) as part of this Wikithon, to share their knowledge and research experience with us.

The wikithon starts at 1 pm and will wrap up at about 4.30 pm. Our focus on the day will be everything related to Devon and Exeter. If you do not have a specific topic you would like to work on, we are happy to provide you with one. We will support you by showing you how to set up a Wikipedia account and make edits, as well as create new articles and upload images.

We encourage you to bring your own laptop if you can. If this is not possible, please let us know on connectedheritage@wikimedia.org.uk and we can make alternative arrangements. We will send supporting information and resources prior to the event.

The sessions are free and no prior Wiki experience is required. We hope to see you there! All participants should register at https://tinyurl.com/rammwmuk (it is case sensitive if you are typing it out yourself).

2023

Upcoming Events

5 SEPT

Devon in the 1920s - Building a new understanding of the past



19:00 - 20:15

19:00 PM - 20:00

10:30 - 12:30

19:30 - 20:45

7 SEPT

Norden Manorial Survey (with DRA/FODA) at the Devon Rural Archive, Modbury



14 oct

Devon History Society AGM & talk 'The Exeter Conspiracy' at Exeter Library



6 DEC

The Alehouse in Tudor & Stuart Devon



2024

17 JAN

Devon Tithe Barns

19:30 - 20:45



MORE INFORMATION: www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk

