

DEVON HISTORY NEWS
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Cover photograph: Bideford Long Bridge, 20th July 2014 (Graham Hobbs). See report from *Way of the Wharves* on page 36.

From the Chair



Welcome to the February 2024 edition of Devon History News, which I hope will bring some interest and cheer to the last days of winter and inspire you to explore our beautiful county in spring.

We run a full programme of online events throughout the colder months, meaning you can enjoy stories from all over Devon from the warmth and comfort of home. On page 42 you can see the programme for the next five months. We have two more online talks this season, both on fascinating Devon women: artist and craftswoman Dame Elizabeth Simcoe and Lady Harriot Acland, who went behind enemy lines during the American War of Independence.

Then, as the weather warms up, we have some great in-person events to look forward to. In June, our annual Society Showcase event is at the wonderful Salcombe Maritime Museum, where members will have the opportunity to find out about a new Lottery-funded project and go on a guided walk around the historic seaside town. Book your tickets now for what promises to be a really enjoyable day out.

Also on a maritime theme is the Spring Symposium of the Devon in the 1920s project, held jointly with the South West Maritime History Society. A host of expert speakers will explore how fishing, leisure sailing, dock working and more changed during the decade. The project continues to do valuable research and has some exciting plans for its next stage. There is a full report on pages 4 to 6.

Other opportunities to get out and about include a guided tour of Crownhill Fort, including a talk on the Jewish Legion which was stationed there during the First World War. Take the chance to see inside this imposing Plymouth landmark and learn about a little-known aspect of Devon's long Jewish history.

The events programme is made possible thanks to the trustees who take on special roles to make it happen: our Events Coordinator Marie, Bookings Secretary Judy, and Social Media Manager Debbie. They have recently been joined by two volunteers, Rhian and Abi, who are helping to promote our programme to new audiences. A very warm welcome to both!

Katherine Findlay



Editorial

Elsewhere in this edition I have written about the Devon archive service's successful and innovative project to catalogue the papers of the Cary family of Torquay and bring them to wider attention. During one of the meetings of the project Steering Group, the Torquay local historian Kevin Dixon, whose ideas, enthusiasm and wide range of contacts did a huge amount to enhance the project, suggested making a film.

I instantly liked the idea. My only previous experience of taking part in anything cinematic came in 2021, when I was involved in making a DVD about aspects of life in Devon in the 1920s as part of the DHS project of the same name, but I found that a stimulating experience and wanted to do more. Kevin Dixon put us in touch with a Paignton based film maker, John Tomkins, who assisted myself and the Cary project archivist Stuart Tyler, in making a short film about the fami-

ly and the Devon Heritage Centre. This set me thinking again about something I often reflect on when looking back at my long career in archives: the way in which history has become a commonplace feature of British television in a way I don't remember it being when I was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. And, from the viewpoint of an archivist, the elements I really welcome are the use of documentary sources to enhance and illustrate the stories being told.

The first programme I can recall using documents in this way was a series called *Breaking the Seal*, presented by Bettany Hughes (although, as this doesn't even appear in the list of credits in Bettany Hughes' *Wikipedia* entry, I may be the only person who *does* remember it), and it was both preceded and followed by many of Michael Wood's programmes. Such individual programmes as *Christina: A Medieval Life* (2008) and the twin series *Michael Wood's Story of England* (2010) and *The Great British Story* (2012), used archives to show viewers that historical scholarship is not simply a matter of supposition or guesswork, but that, at its best, it is based on the interpretation of contemporary records, the very survival of which can be a thing of wonder in itself. And then there was *Time Team*, Channel 4's groundbreaking (pun at least partially intended) archaeology series, the early years of which were enhanced by the contributions of the late Somerset archivist Robin Bush.

Of course, when one considers the growth of television history, one series stands above all others in terms of longevity and popularity. *Who Do You Think Are?* has run for almost twenty years and has shown millions of people how documents can be used to trace the history of families who, although the programmes' subjects are famous to one degree or another, have originated from a wide range of geographical, socio-economic and political circumstances. Although a downside of the success of *Who Do You Think You Are?* is the fact that many people start their genealogical journeys in the mistaken belief that it will be as easy to trace their families as it appears on TV, it has also shown people the ways in which the documents that were created by people of the past can be used to chart the courses of their lives.

It may be fanciful, but I like to think that, even if only for a minority of people, these programmes have raised awareness of the cultural value of historical records, with the result that fewer records are destroyed and more are deposited in local archives. I certainly hope that's the case.

Brian Carpenter

Devon in the 1920s Project Update



Since the update in *Devon History News* in August 2023 just after the first wave of research essays had been received, I've been reflecting and digesting what they tell us about Devon in the 1920s. One of the principal features seems to me to be that Devon in the 1920s was a place and time of great opportunities. We could say that about many decades but what made the 1920s unusual was not just the pace of adoption of new technologies but the determined post-war effort to create a better world through a new focus on child development, education, housing and community life. Whilst the force of these commitments were dulled by recession our work shows key figures in Devon history who were determined not to let opportunity slide completely out of reach. It will now be interesting to compare Devon with other areas of the country.

Essays generated in the second wave of research, principally related to our primary industries, are coming in and I hope our collection will be complete by April ready for use to inform plans for sharing them with wider audiences next year.

Events

We are holding two events on different aspects of the project in the next few months. Devon History Society members are always very welcome even if they have not been involved in the project so far.

Saturday 20 April in Plymouth – A Symposium on Change, Progress and Decline: Devon's 1920s Maritime History

This event is presented in partnership with the South West Maritime History Society.

Our Spring Symposium will take place in the University of Plymouth's Rolle Building. The full day programme opens with Mike Bender, author of *A New History of Yachting*, speaking on leisure sailing. Then Devon in the 1920s researchers will contribute papers looking at the history of the north and south coastal and estuarine traffic, fishing, boat-building and the specialist areas of Plymouth's Dockyard and Maritime Biological Association. The full programme and booking arrangements are available via the Devon History Society website; see [Devon's Maritime History in the 1920s: Change, Progress and Decline | Devon History Society](#). As you'll see from that page, DHS members get a discount on the price of booking (£12.50 instead of £15). South West Maritime History Society are kindly handling the bookings so you will need a coupon code to enter on the booking form to obtain the discount. Please ask Julia Neville - see the end of the article for contact details - for the code before you book or you will be asked to pay the full rate.

Friday 14 June at Devon Heritage Centre – A Study Half Day on Dartington and the Dartington Archive

This event is presented in partnership with the South West Heritage Trust and will run from 11 am to 3 pm.

Several of the Devon in the 1920s research topics have touched on Dartington Hall and the experimental role the Elmhursts played in estate management and community development which began in the 1920s. Anna Neima, whose book *Practical Utopia: the many lives of Dartington Hall*, was published in 2022, has agreed to present her researches as the opening to a study session using the resources of the Dartington Archive which is held at Devon Heritage Centre and we'll take the opportunity, in partnership with South West Heritage Trust, to explore structure and content of the archive. Places are limited, so if you are interested, do pre-book one, contact Julia.

Plans for 2025

We are awaiting the re-opening of applications for National Lottery Heritage Funding in order to apply for a grant to help us share our researches with wider audiences. We have a growing list of societies and heritage organizations who have offered to take part and host an exhibition or event(s) but there is still space for more. If you're interested in taking part as an organization or as an individual volunteer, or if you are in touch with any creative arts organizations who'd be interested in getting involved in presentations in any kind of media, then contact me.

Julia Neville

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Our 1920s Built Heritage – evidence of decay and risk of demolition



Seale-Hayne College

Photo © Richard Knights (cc-by-sa/2.0)

As we make our way through the *Devon in the 1920s* project we hear histories which involve new buildings. Many of these exemplify the interests and concerns of the decade. There are cinemas, for example, and school buildings, and village halls, and war memorials. Above all, as we learned from our 2023 symposium, there are houses. Council houses, social housing, estates built by developers, one-offs built for the well-to-do. The very volume of building (even in those harsh economic times) means that lots of examples survive, and I know I have already asked members who live in 1920s houses to share their photos with the project. Thank you to those who have done so!

Recently, however, I was alerted by Ray Bartlett from the Old Seale-Haynians to a different aspect of the plethora of 1920s survivals, the 1920s buildings decaying in our landscape.

Seale-Hayne College was an important feature of Devon's agricultural history in the 1920s, and its impressive buildings, dating from the 1910s, are rightly listed as a Grade II building. (Its description and photograph are listed by Historic England at [SEALE-HAYNE FACULTY, UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH](#), Newton Abbot - 1380155 | Historic England, although no one has amended the entry, which still shows it as the Seale Hayne Faculty of the University of Plymouth, a function it ceased to fulfil more than twenty years ago.)

The same architects who designed the college, Gutteridge and Gutteridge of Southampton, also designed a set of farm buildings which, because of the intervention of the First World War, were not constructed till 1921. This is a photograph (© Ray Bartlett 2023) of how they look today.



Whilst technically these buildings are part of the listed quadrangle they are now fenced off from the main site and Ray and his colleagues are consider the new owner may claim ignorance of their protected status and pull them down. They have raised their concerns with the Historic Buildings Officer at Teignbridge Council.

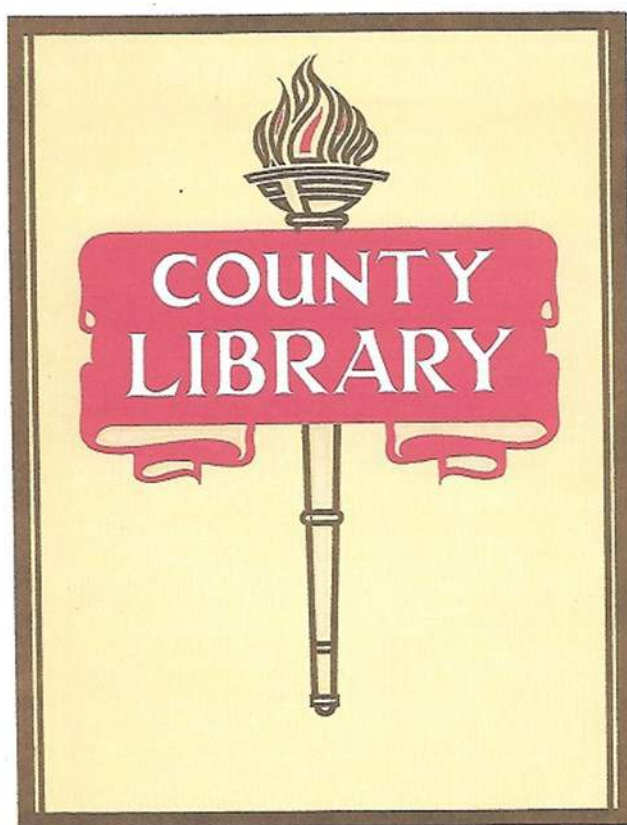
Are members aware of other 1920s buildings which may be under threat? Please get in touch if you are!

Julia Neville

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The County Library Logo

In the last newsletter Julia Neville appealed for help in locating the use of the sign below. It was the winning entry in a national competition, organized by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.



THE COUNTY LIBRARY SIGN

According to the *Western Times* of 28th September 1928, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust had offered to present the sign to all county library centres. A panel of adjudicators were appointed by the National Society of Art Masters. Almost every authority agreed to exhibit the sign. The trustees agreed to meet the cost of the sign, which came to about £4,000. My research to date had failed to find to what extent, if indeed at all, the sign was promoted or even used across the county of Devon.

Following Julia's Appeal, Richard Holloway, a local historian, located a photograph he had taken in 2013, somewhere in Sidbury. Then, John Loudon, an East Devon District Councillor, who lives in Sidbury, established that the image is on the wall of Sidbury C of E Primary School. He took the photograph below, a copy of which was sent to Julia Neville. Further research (*Western Times*, 16th January 1925) has found that Mr H.B.W. Knight, Headmaster, was the Honorary Librarian of a County Library Branch based in the school in 1925.



This is an important discovery and should be preserved. To date it appears to be the only use of the logo found in the county. It will be interesting to see if further locations come to light during the 1920s project.

Jackie Bryon

Contributor, Devon in the 1920s Project

Helen Harris

1927-2023



Helen Harris, who was the longest-serving Editor of *The Devon Historian*, died in December 2023 at the age of 96.

Helen Warren was educated at the Maynard School in Exeter and at Studley Agricultural College in Warwickshire. She married Desmond Harris in 1952 and later worked as Dairy Advisor for the Ministry of Agriculture in Devon.

Helen Harris contributed hundreds of articles for newspapers and periodicals, including *Country Life*, *The Field* and the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* and also wrote books on a wide range of subjects, including *Industrial Archaeology of Dartmoor* (1968), *Industrial Archaeology of the Peak District* (1971), *The Bude Canal* (1972), *The Grand Western Canal* (1973), *Devon's Century of Change*, published in 1998 and the Devon History Society Book of the Year in 1999, and *A Handbook of Devon Parishes*, published in 2004 and runner-up in the DHS book awards in 2005.

She became Editor of *The Devon Historian* in succession to Sheila Stirling in 1985, and edited the journal for twenty years and forty editions, before passing the mantle to Andrew Jackson.

In addition to her work for the DHS, Helen Harris was a member of the Executive Committee of the Devonshire Association between 2004 and 2013, and a founder member of both the Tavistock and District Local History Society and the Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group.

Brian Carpenter

Editor's note: I am grateful to Jane Tirard for the details of her mother's life, and for the photograph reproduced here.

Devon Archives and Local Studies Service

Over the last six months the Devon Heritage Centre and the North Devon Record Office have hosted a range of outreach events, accepted a large amount of additional archive material and concluded a major cataloguing and engagement project, while continuing to plan for the future.

Last September, as part of the annual *Heritage Open Days* festival, the Devon Heritage Centre hosted two tours, with accompanying displays of documents, on behalf of the South West Police Heritage Trust, which is funding a major project to catalogue the records of policing in Devon and Cornwall which are held at the Heritage Centre. In Barnstaple, the North Devon Record Office staged a special event in connection with the history of the RAF station at Chivenor. More recently, the Heritage Centre has hosted group sessions for researchers studying the history of their street in Exeter as part of the Interwoven project and participants in the latest section of the long-running *Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots* project, which is currently studying the history of immigration to Honiton and Ilfracombe.

Also in September we purchased a volume of sketches by the noted eighteenth century clergyman, artist and travel diarist, the Reverend John Swete. This serves as an addition to our existing collection of Swete's illustrated travel journals, which has been in the custody of the archive service since 1959. The illustrations in the book include Swete's own Oxton House, near Kenton, Mamhead House and Dartmouth Castle, in addition to many Devon landscapes and artistic impressions of flowers.

We have also recently acquired two major collections of intrinsic importance to the history of Exeter. Firstly, we purchased the ISCA photographic collection, which was assembled and curated by the late Exeter photographer, collector and publisher Peter Thomas. The collection contains more than 40,000 negatives which came from the studio of the Exeter photographer Henry Wykes, together with a large number of other photographs of Exeter acquired by Peter Thomas during his lifetime and used in his many books about the city. We are hoping to acquire funding to enable us to embark on a major digitisation, cataloguing and engagement project based on the collection. More recently, we have collected the records of the Exeter-based supplier of clerical wear and textiles, J.Wippell and Company, which ceased trading in 2023, having been in business since 1789.

Our project, funded by an *Archives Revealed* grant from the National Archives, to catalogue the papers of the Cary family of Torre Abbey officially came to an end in January 2024. The project, under the stewardship of archivist Stuart Tyler, was a huge success. It brought order and organisation to a collection of records, the majority of which we had held since the 1980s, and also proved innovative in other areas. An article about the family was translated into Polish in order to make the project accessible to Torquay's substantial Polish community, while Stuart Tyler and Brian Carpenter conducted workshops in Paignton and Torquay to bring the collection to the attention of local people. A short film about the family and the project was produced, and this can be seen on the South West Heritage Trust's YouTube channel. An exhibition about the family, which includes original documents from the collection, opened at Torre Abbey in early February and will run until mid-July.

Finally, Dr Janet Tall, currently Head of Strategic Development and Archives at the South West Heritage Trust, will be leaving in March to take up a job with English Heritage in Swindon, having had overall strategic responsibility for the Devon service since the formation of the Trust in the autumn of 2014. We owe a huge amount to her intelligence, vision and energy, and many of our achievements over the past decade, including the *Devon Remembers Heritage Project*, the

transformation of the North Devon Record Office and the West Country Studies Library and indeed the Cary project, would not have been possible without her. We wish her well.

Brian Carpenter

Plymouth Marjon - A Tale of Two Colleges

Early Years

Plymouth Marjon University, or the College of St Mark and St John to give it its full trading name, is located at the northern end of Plymouth, just adjacent to the disused airport. The two colleges began life in the London area in the 1840s – St John's in Battersea (founded 1840) and St Mark's in Chelsea (a year later). James Kay-Shuttleworth founded the former, and Derwent Coleridge (son of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge) the latter. Kay-Shuttleworth was the first Secretary of the Committee on Education and established 'Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools' – now known as OFSTED.

Both colleges were founded to develop educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, particularly workhouse orphans, training them to be teachers as a route out of poverty. This was politically a deeply unpopular idea. With the Chartist and Peterloo riots still fresh in the government's memory, it accused Shuttleworth of 'putting the torch of knowledge into the hands of rick-burners'. Coleridge apparently make a mock apology for the 'inconvenient excellence' of the two colleges – neither backed down on their progressive educational provision. The student population was very inclusive, with neither age, race nor religion being a barrier. The age range of the first ten pupils was apparently about 30 years, and there were two young Muslims who were given space to pray. This continued. In 1894, Henry Rawlinson Carr (seated far right below) became the first minority ethnic person to become a school inspector.



Plymouth Links

So what's the early 'stuff' got to do with Plymouth? Well quite a bit. Derwent Coleridge first visited the town in the 1820s in his words as 'a disillusioned, unfocussed and wayward youth' following an unhappy time studying at Cambridge. He apparently loved Plymouth – its natural beauty, libraries and Athenaeum (where he gave and attended talks) and the gallery where he first met the young Plymouth woman who would later become his wife – Mary Simpson Pridham, daughter of John Drake Pridham esquire, banker). He romantically proposed to her whilst they were walking among the primroses on North Hill. They married in St Andrew's Church in 1827, by which time he was curate at Helston in Cornwall. The couple went on to run a school together in Cornwall, later relocating to Chelsea to open St Mark's College. Several of the staff went with them, including Elizabeth Harvey the housekeeper, a native of Plymouth.



Photograph of St Mark's College grounds, students and staff, c.1860. Mrs Harvey is in the centre.

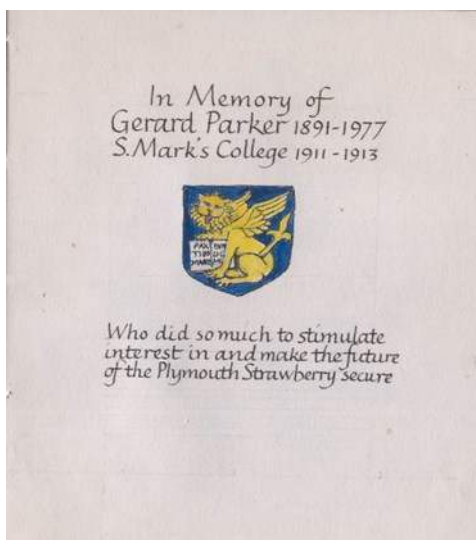
One of the first students to graduate from St John's in Battersea was John Christie who was originally from Plymouth. After graduating, he returned to Devon and taught at the school at Milton Abbot where he remained for 30 years, eventually as headmaster.

Another local student, this time from Plympton, was Charles Sherwill Dawe. He attended St Mark's where he remained after completing his studies in the 1840s. He became one of the lecturers, eventually heading up the innovative 'Practising School'. This allowed trainee teachers to apply their skills in a 'real time' setting, giving local youngsters an opportunity for learning.



Charles Sherwill Dawe (centre) and students of the 'Practising School'.

A more notable local student came along in 1911 to St Mark's – Wilfred Owen 'Josh' Reynolds of Plymstock. He received the nickname 'Josh' after Sir Joshua Reynolds because of his drawing skills. He and fellow student, Gerry Parker, would later be responsible for saving the Plymouth Strawberry and bringing it back to its native town. Reynolds was again living in Plymstock by 1977 and died in the Plymouth area in 1979.



Drawing of the Plymouth Strawberry by W O Reynolds from his 'Josh's' scrapbook. Copyright rests with Plymouth Marjon University. Please contact gfewings@marjon.ac.uk if you wish to re-use.

The Two Colleges Merge

Both St Mark's College and St John's had sustained significant damage to their buildings in WW1, and rebuild costs were high due to shortages of labour and materials. The post-war period also saw a decline in student numbers country-wide, due to the losses sustained in wartime and in the flu pandemic afterwards. The two colleges therefore decided to merge. They had always worked closely together, even though their students were fierce rivals, especially in sports.

The St Mark's Chelsea site was chosen as the campus. Relocation began in 1923, and by 1926 all students were officially on one site, and now known as 'Marjohns'. Some older students still recall the earlier spelling, but most people now use the later spelling from the 1960s – Marjon.

Relocation to Plymouth

Proposed changes to the London road network led to a dramatic turn for Marjohn. A motorway was planned - to be built through the centre of the Chelsea campus. The college took the decision to relocate. In truth, the site was becoming unsuitable – too small to allow for expansion, and with not enough sports facilities or outdoor spaces.

Nine sites across the country were selected for consideration – Plymouth was added at the last minute, as it was discovered to be actively seeking to expand its college educational provision. It was the clear winner, as the college committee minutes show. The move was agreed, with the college moving to its current site in Plymouth in 1973. The photograph below shows the site in 1975.



The Archives

The surviving records of students and the two organisations are held on the campus. There is a qualified archivist, Gillian Fewings, managing the collections. Not only are there admission registers (some back to 1845) and a fairly complete printed alumni, there are also letters, fabulous and unique photographs of Plymouth in the late 1960s taken by the students on a field trip, wonderful photographs of staff and students (and some excellent beards!), various objects including large busts of the two founders, scrapbooks, news cuttings, and so much more.



One of the photographs taken by the students in the 1960s/early 1970s. Shows Sutton Harbour (north end) looking west.

Gil is always happy to help with enquiries and welcomes anyone who would like to visit and/or research in the archives, and can be contacted by emailing gfewings@marjon.ac.uk. There are some fabulous stories being discovered all the time and new material being donated to discover new ones. You can read more about the University's history here: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/about-marjon/history/>. As with the Plymouth Strawberry drawing, please contact Gil before using any of the images in this article.

Marjon is a great local university with an interesting background and some real characters. I can't wait to go back and make new discoveries!



Recalling Seaton's Coastline History

This article looks at the history of Seaton's coastline, illustrated by seven photographs taken in March 2022 during the UK Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022), a time when people were not allowed to meet up. The paper is by two Sidmouth friends who rediscovered their friendship after the death notice of the second author's mother was published online. Both authors know Seaton well, as the first author had worked there and the second author has a flat there. The photographs were taken by the second author who started at White Cliff and followed the coast around to the River Axe in the east. The town was a port in Roman times, a health resort in the late eighteenth century and a family seaside resort in the Victorian era. The coastline is part of the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage site.

INTRODUCTION

The two Sidmouth friends grew-up as neighbours during the 1950s and later both left Devon. Seaton's coastline had welcomed the second author for thirty years and during Covid he sent the coastal photographs to the first author who lived in London. He started his photographs at White Cliff, the boundary with Beer and then walked eastwards along Seaton's coastline stopping at other locations to photograph the scene with a digital phone camera. The coastline stretches eastwards for over one mile up to the edge of the River Axe beside Haven Cliff. Comments from both authors about Seaton were recorded as were geological and historical details. Seaton's shingle beach consists of rounded flint and chert pebbles. The pebbles are protected. Seaton was a port from Roman times and the River Axe was navigable up to Colyton. In 1791 Seaton started as a health resort when 'many decent-looking men' went to the beach to drink the sea-water (Travis, 1993, p.34). Seaton had the advantage of a south facing situation and mild sea air (Travis, 1993, p.35). Seaton catered for holidaymakers who were seeking cheapness and retirement (Travis, 1993, pp.34-35). Yet, with its shingle beach, Seaton lost trade to other resorts such as Exmouth which had a sandy beach. Finally, in the Victorian era it was the middle class families who came to Seaton which helped the resort to grow. In the twentieth century Seaton built a chine by landscaping some of the cliffs along the west beach in order to attract more tourists to the town. The West Walk promenade was washed away in 1915 and rebuilt in 1924 (Gosling, 1991, p.73). The West Walk joined up with the Esplanade along the sea front. In the 1970s a high sea wall was built along the Esplanade to prevent the town from being flooded again, but this was not a popular scheme with motoring day visitors as they couldn't park beside the wall and see over it. In the 1990s and 2000s many new properties were built in Seaton along the

Esplanade to offer accommodation for residents and tourists.

SEATON'S JURASSIC COAST

The Jurassic Coast begins in Exmouth, east Devon, which is west of Seaton and continues eastwards for 95 miles to Old Harry Rocks near Swanage in Dorset, and it was designated a World Heritage Site in 2001. This was because the cliffs and foreshore record 185 million years of the Earth's geological history. It has become known as 'the walk through time' (Edmonds, 2005, p.53). White Cliff, the cliff on the west of the bay, is made up of chalk above Upper Greensand. Adjacent to White Cliff to the east is Seaton Hole Cove where the cliffs are red Triassic Mercia mudstone. Between these two cliffs is a fault line which has a throw of about 60 metres and has mud and desert loess from the interior of a Sahara Desert. Both White Cliff and the cliffs at Seaton Hole suffer cliff falls. Seaton Hole is a cove with its own beach with sand and can be reached by walking from Seaton at low tide along the shingle. The red cliffs decrease in height from Seaton Hole until they reach Seaton's Castle Hill Road close to the Esplanade. At the east end of Seaton beach is the River Axe.

THE SEVEN BEACH VIEWS

Figure 1 is a photograph of White Cliff showing also the red cliff at Seaton Hole cove with its beach, as photographed from the west end of the West Walk. Figure 2 shows a closer view of Seaton Hole. An event seen by the first author around seventeen years ago when she travelled down Seaton Down Hill by taxi to go to work in Seaton may have been connected with the fault line. The first author saw a small group of mist columns in the sky to the south west nearer to Seaton Hole's cliff top. The columns were above the land or perhaps above the sea, for the source could not be seen. The columns were spirals which grew larger as the taxi drove down the hill and got closer to them. The columns rose up into the sky and were replaced by more spinning columns of mist from beneath. The weather on that February morning was extremely cold, yet bright and sunny. Up close the view of the spirals was startling.

Figure 2 also shows properties built on the cliff top, and in 2014 there was a cliff fall here and the Old Beer Road became severely damaged when a large slab of the road and cliff fell as a result of heavy rain. This road is now permanently closed.

Figure 3 is of the Hideaway café, once named the Chine café as there was a chine which is a gorge or steep pathway, constructed up the cliff as a tourist feature in around 1920 (Gosling, 1991, p.13). The café was built on the West Walk, the concrete walkway which was rebuilt in 1924 (Gosling, 1991, p.73). Today tourists still walk along the West Walk at the edge of the beach, close to the cliffs. The caption of an early photograph of West Walk says there was an automatic chocolate bar machine here and "for the price of one old penny (1d) people could obtain a bar of Fry's chocolate" (Gosling, 1991, p.129).

Figure 4 is a photograph of the cliffs near to the east end of West Walk where it meets Castle Hill Road close to Seaton's seafront. Built into the red cliffs here is a reminder of World War Two days in Seaton for the white building shown housed Seaton's Searchlight Emplacement, a coastal defence built in 1940 in anticipation of a German invasion. The searchlight inside the building was powered by a Lister or Crosby generator producing Arclight equivalent to two million candles and on a clear night would have had a range of 5 miles. The Crompton anti-aircraft searchlight was 36 inches in diameter and was manned by soldiers from the Royal Artillery Searchlight Regiment, assisted by the men from the 19th Seaton Battalion of the Devon Home Guard. The searchlight may have been operated by remote control, with operators

situated at a distance of 6.20-9.20 metres away on the West Walk or in the low cliff above, as the emplacement building was an easy target for enemy bombers. Steel shutters protected the searchlight from the wind and rain.

Figure 5 shows the beach beside the esplanade and the vast expanse of shingle. The second author remarked that the shingle on Seaton's beach varied in size, with some pebbles the size of tennis balls while the smallest were the size of a little fingernail. The pebbles changed at the tideline all the time, depending on how rough the sea was. The photograph shows two of the early Victorian buildings built in Seaton namely Castle House on the left and Beach House partially shown at right back and they were first photographed in 1855 by the town's first professional photographer Samuel Good (Gosling, 1991 p.2). Beach House, on the right, was also known as Cliff House and was built as a two storey building. In 1920-30 a third floor was added to create Cliff House Hotel. During World War Two the hotel was used as an army officers' billet. After World War Two it was sold to Ted Washer and renamed as Washington House. Castle House, now known as Cliff Castle and St Elmo, is shown on the left and offered holiday accommodation in the 1950s.

Further east along the beach and shown in Figure 6 are some modern blocks of flats built along the north side of the Esplanade and the shingle beach can be seen in the foreground. The building second on the right is the 2019 built Seaton Beach Developments Ltd which is based on Passivhaus eco-design and was designed by the architects Gale and Snowden of Exeter. The building on the right is Norcombe Court, where the second author has a flat. He was told when he bought the flat fifteen years ago that the block was built on the site of a house owned by Billy Butlin. However, an enquiry to Devon Archives could not back up this statement. The second author also remarked that his first flat in Seaton overlooked the Warner Holiday Camp and that Friday nights at the holiday camp were rowdy, with drunken fights and shenanigans.

The photograph in Figure 7 is of the River Axe which marks the boundary of Seaton. The concrete bridge which links Seaton with Axmouth is seen in the near background and the hills are beyond. There are also sailing boats in the small Axmouth Harbour and small shingle beaches beside the River Axe.

CONCLUSION

This project marked the renewal of the authors' friendship and showed that research was still possible during the Covid pandemic with the help of the World Wide Web. The views of Seaton's coastline provided a topographical panorama of the beach area and acted as prompts for history. The presence of the fault line between White Cliff and Seaton Hole Cove may have been the cause of the mist columns seen around the western cliff top area. The columns may have been due to Carbon Dioxide released from carbonate rocks such as chalk in White cliff. Another explanation which was offered by the Met Office in Exeter, was that the mist columns were Light or Ice Pillars, which formed in very cold conditions when natural mirrors formed in the air in layers and the bright light source from the sun was reflected from each layer. This created a column whose source could not be ascertained. However, without a photograph of the mist columns it is likely that the event will not be believed. The buildings photographed in this study also added to Seaton's history, such as the café at the Chine which was first seen on the 1936 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map. The two substantial Victorian buildings, Castle House and Beach House, in Figure 5, are from the Victorian era when Seaton developed into a resort and the buildings were used for holiday accommodation. The modern blocks of flats built along today's fully developed

Esplanade add their own history. As to whether Billy Butlin lived in a house on the site of Norcombe Court, this is quite likely to be true, for Billy Butlin could have come to Seaton as a visitor with his friend Captain Harry Warner who founded Warner's Holiday Camp in Seaton in 1935. Billy Butlin later opened his own holiday camp in 1936 in Skegness, which was his first camp. Rowdy Friday night behaviour was also recorded at Butlin's holiday camps (Hylton, 2014, p.23).

At the end of Seaton's beach is the River Axe and Axmouth Harbour where the river today is narrow, as shingle has built up at its mouth. The concrete bridge seen in Figure 7 is the oldest concrete bridge remaining in Britain and was built in 1877. The views of Seaton's coastline in the project have provided an easy and pleasant way to recollect the town's history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Mrs Briget Girling for her memories of her holiday in Seaton in the 1950s.

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River Axe was navigable. Note 1

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Geology of Seaton Hole. West, I. (Note 2) 2009

Access to Seaton Hole beach. West, I. (Note 2) 2009

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Blue plaque at Seaton's searchlight emplacement

www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6411471 accessed 8 June 2022

Personal communication from Briget Girling 2021 friend of first author

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Devon Archives, 5 April 2022. No reference of Butlin name in the archives (electoral register). Butlin may have owned more than one property but he would only have been listed at one property. The Land Registry started in 1970.

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<https://wxobservation.com/ice-pillars/> accessed 28 August 2023

Café built by 1936. www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6404473 accessed 15 June 2022

Butlin's first holiday camp. Note 1

Concrete Bridge, Harbour. Note 1

Norma Cox and Richard Franks

IMAGES (see following pages)

Figure 1 White Cliff (R. Franks 2022)

Figure 2 Seaton Hole Cove (R. Franks 2022)

Figure 3 Hideaway Café (R. Franks 2022)

Figure 4 Seaton's Searchlight Encasement (R. Franks 2022)

Figure 5 Seaton Beach with Castle House and Cliff House (R. Franks 2022)

Figure 6 Seaton Beach with Seaton Beach Developments Ltd building and Norcombe Court (R. Franks 2022)

Figure 7 River Axe, Axmouth Harbour and concrete bridge (R. Franks 2022)









The Third Man in the Haldon Duel

Much has been written about the duel on Haldon in 1833. The fullest account is still Sadru Bhanji's *Devon's Last Duel of Honour and its Aftermath* in the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, Volume 129 (1997), pp.109-127, with extensive references to the previous literature. It was heavily based on the five Exeter newspapers in large bound volumes in the Devon & Exeter Institution in the Cathedral Close.

Since then we have had the British Newspaper Archive starting in 2011, making available online 72 million pages from more than 1,000 local newspapers. Most of them were not conveniently available before and all of them can now be consulted by word- or name- search. We can therefore easily update Bhanji's account of the duel on some points.

Why did Dr Peter Hennis move to Exeter?

Hennis moved to Exeter in 1830. He first appears in the local press on 2 October in connection with a dinner to celebrate the extension of the canal and the construction of a new Wet Dock (Exeter & Plymouth Gazette).

On 15 October he published two election manifestos applying for the posts of Physician to the Devon and Exeter Hospital and Physician to the Exeter Dispensary. The former sets out his qualifications: "I have graduated in Arts, in the University of Dublin, independent of anatomical studies; have resided 3 years at the University of Edingbro' of which I am an MD; have had charge of the Lying-in Hospital for near two years, under Dr I Hamilton; been a Dressing Pupil to the London Hospital, and spent two winters in the Hospitals and Schools of Paris." He was elected by a large majority as Physician to the Exeter Dispensary and withdrew his application to the Devon and Exeter Hospital. In December he was appointed Physician to the Exeter Lying-in Charity.

According to modern tradition, while he was in Exeter he met Miss Clack, daughter of the Rector of Moretonhampstead. They fell in love and were to be married in June 1833.

It is surprising that he moved to Exeter first and then applied for local appointments, instead of applying first and then, if successful, moving to Exeter. And it is surprising that a man of his background, Dublin, Edinburgh, Paris, London, should move to Exeter at all.

How are we to explain these events and this order of events?

The answer may be in the Derby Mercury for 5 August 1829 which has a list of (fashionable) Arrivals at Buxton, including Dr Hennis. Buxton was not as good as Bath, but it attracted a number of Lords and Ladies and members of the Clergy and a lot of bachelors. Perhaps Peter Hennis met Miss Clack at Buxton and fell in love with her. She told him that she lived near Exeter, and he moved to Exeter to be near her and then applied for medical appointments there. Without the British Newspaper Archive we would not have known of this possibility.

When did Jeffcott visit Exeter?

While he was in England in 1832 and 1833 Jeffcott met Miss Macdonald, daughter of Col John Macdonald, of Summerlands, Exeter. He was the youngest son of Flora Macdonald, of Bonny Prince Charlie fame. He died in August 1831, but Summerlands remained the home for his widow and the rest of the family. There were rumours about a possible engagement. Certainly Jeffcott wrote to Lord Goderich, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, asking for an appointment in a healthier colony. "The climate of Sierra Leone, which as your Lordship well knows is not very favourable to men, has always been peculiarly fatal to women." (17 November 1832. R M Hague, *Sir John Jeffcott, Portrait of a Colonial Judge* (1963) 25.)

The modern tradition is that Jeffcott met Miss Macdonald in Exeter. In that case he must have visited the city occasionally or, by some accounts, frequently. Indeed that view is supported by an extract from Jeffcott's journal, published in *Exeter Memories* on 14 April 2017 ("The Duel of Doctor Hennis – 1833").

April 14, 1832: Wild, wet and windy. Invited to ride on Dartmoor with the hunting parson, Clack, from Moretonhampstead. He wanted information on the pious Hennis who is paying attention to one of his daughters. A yokel threw himself in front of my horse after I lost my balance and was severely trampled for his pains. At the Rectory I consumed a small snack of venison pie and a quart jug of rum punch and then fell into a gentle slumber.

April 15, 1832: Cold. It has been reported to me that Dr Hennis told the hunting parson's daughter that I was an amoral coxcomb, a vapid man terrified of the gutter and the poorhouse. I barely know Hennis, but I will not forget this slur.

If this is genuine then Jeffcott visited Moretonhampstead in April 1832. But in fact he only sailed from the Gambia on 15 April, arrived at Plymouth on 19 May, reached Salisbury on 20 May and London a few days later. (Fashionable Arrivals, from the Continent, *Morning Post*, 24 May 1832). He cannot have been in Moretonhampstead in April 1832. This cannot be his journal. "I will not forget this slur." The slur is detailed and memorable. If this was Jeffcott's journal, he would have remembered it a year later. He did not. It was not his journal.

I wrote to David Cornforth, the editor of *Exeter Memories*, to ask him where the journal extracts came from. He replied that he did not know. We shall come back to this question later.

A number of modern accounts say that Jeffcott was a High Court Judge or an Admiralty Judge who often visited Exeter as part of his duties. In fact he was Chief Justice and Judge of the Vice Admiralty Court of Sierra Leone and he never visited Exeter as part of his duties.

The only time when Jeffcott visited Exeter before May 1833 was at the end of January 1833. It was a private visit. There was no record of it in the Exeter papers at the time. But on 31 January the *Morning Post* and other London papers recorded: FASHIONABLE ARRIVALS: the Hon Chief Justice Jeffcott and J Murray Macdonald, Esq. at Fenton's Hotel, St James's Street, from Devonshire. Without the British Newspaper Archive we could easily have missed this information.

Jeffcott did not meet Miss Macdonald in Exeter. He met her first and later came down to Exeter to visit her mother. He probably met her when she was staying with her other grandmother, Lady Chambers, the widow of Sir Robert Chambers, formerly Chief Justice of Bengal. The Exeter papers were too interested in the romantic connection with Flora Macdonald to mention Lady Chambers. But she was a lady of experience, influence and wealth. She knew about the

difficulties of life in the colonies. She lobbied the Permanent Under Secretary at the Colonial Office. She lived at Cumberland Terrace, Regent's Park (average price in 2022: £4.8 million) and she also had a house at Brighton. She would have been happy for Jeffcott to marry her grand daughter if he was appointed to Mauritius, but not if he had to return to Sierra Leone. And that is why that connection failed.

The Third Man

In the duel on 10 May Hennis's second was Captain Halsted, RN. After the parties had been acquitted at Exeter Assizes in July he returned to his family and his career. In court he produced twelve character witnesses, including three present and three future admirals.

Jeffcott's second was Charles Milford, a partner in the Exeter City Bank. He was totally out of his depth in the proceedings and apparently did not even know how to load a pistol. Jeffcott only chose him to be his second because he did not know anyone else in Exeter, another indication that he had not visited Exeter before, apart from his visit to Mrs Macdonald. After his acquittal in July, public opinion against him was so strong that he had to leave the bank and the City. He never came back again and died on 3 January 1862 at Clapham Road, London.

There was a third man present throughout all the events of 9 and 10 May: Robert Holland. He was present at the dinner in Charles Milford's house in Southernhay. He went back to the Clarence Hotel with Jeffcott and sat up with him smoking cigars and drinking brandy until the small hours. There had been no mention of a duel before that evening. He was present at all the discussions the following morning between Hennis and Halsted, Jeffcott and Milford, and Mr Irvine. Jeffcott relied on him: "Damn it, Sir! Do they expect me to disbelieve my own ears? Ask Holland, who stood by my side, what the words were." He repeated them again to Captain Halsted and Mr Irvine. In the afternoon Jeffcott and Milford left the Clarence and drove to Holland's residence in Magdalen Street, where he joined them carrying a parcel in a silk handkerchief. They met Mr Irvine, who thought that the whole affair had been satisfactorily settled. He shook hands with Sir John Jeffcott. He did not shake hands with Mr Holland. On the racecourse, a few minutes before the transaction, Holland observed a gig with a gentleman in it; he made a signal for the gentleman to stop, and ran towards the gig, on which he discovered it to be Mr Edye, of this City, surgeon, who is stated to have been passing at the time on his way to Chudleigh on professional business. He immediately got up behind the gig and they drove fast back down to the racecourse.

Who was Robert Holland, and what was he doing there? He was the son of the Reverend Richard Holland, vicar of Spreyton (1802-57), a small parish on the northern edge of Dartmoor, population, 404; value, £135, according to the Clergy List, 1846. His mother had been Miss Clack, the eldest daughter of the Rev Thomas Clack, rector of Moretonhampstead (1774-1805), and his wife, who was a sister of Lord Courtenay, of Powderham, the patron of the living. Holland's uncle, the Rev William C. Clack, was Rector of Moretonhampstead 1807-66 and Incumbent of Wolborough, another Courtenay living, from 1821. According to the Clergy List 1846, Moretonhampstead had a population of 2037 and a value of £401; Wolborough had a population of 2609 and a value of £235. His daughter was the fiancée of Peter Hennis and the cousin of Robert Holland.

Robert Holland's sister married George Milford, a partner in the Exeter City Bank and brother of Charles Milford. They were brothers-in-law and that is probably why he was invited to the dinner at Charles Milford's house on 9 May.

Robert Holland was much poorer than his wealthy relatives. In 1835 he appeared before the Insolvent Debtors Court in Exeter. "The insolvent attributed his present situation and all his misfortunes to the circumstance of a defect in his articles [as a solicitor's articulated clerk], which rendered them invalid, and in consequence of which he could not be admitted as a solicitor." (*North Devon Journal*, 19 March 1835.) There is no mention of this in the Exeter newspapers, and without the British Newspaper Archive we could easily have missed it.

In normal circumstances Holland should have been pleased that his cousin was going to marry such a suitable person as Peter Hennis. Evidently he was not. Perhaps he would have liked to marry her himself. Or he may have had another reason. It is time to take another look at the journal attributed to John Jeffcott:

April 14, 1832: Wild, wet and windy. Invited to ride on Dartmoor with the hunting parson Clack, from Moretonhampstead. He wanted information on the pious Hennis who is paying attention to one of his daughters. A yokel threw himself in front of my horse after I lost my balance and was severely trampled for his pains. At the Rectory I consumed a small snack of venison pie and a quart jug of rum punch and then fell into a gentle slumber.

April 15, 1832: Cold. It has been reported to me that Dr Hennis told the hunting parson's daughter that I was an amoral coxcomb, a vapid man terrified of the gutter and the poorhouse. I barely know Hennis, but I will not forget this slur.

This could have been written by Robert Holland, rather than John Jeffcott. His father lived not far away. He behaved like one of the family. He may have been terrified of the gutter and the poorhouse, compared with his wealthy relatives. And he did not forget this slur. Though he does not mention it, it explains his behaviour on 9 and 10 May.

What happened to the Journal?

This is a matter of speculation and I make a suggestion simply to encourage others to think about it. We have a journal of which only one page survives. There is no trace of the complete journal anywhere. I suggest that, at the end of 1832, Holland tore out that page and kept it somewhere safe, so that he would not forget this slur. After the duel the reasons given for it were obscure and unsatisfactory. "All parties seem to have blundered in this affair. A misunderstanding, arising from the misrepresentation of a fact, by a series of fortuitous accidents, and by an unaccountable mismanagement, was swelled into importance." (*Morning Chronicle*, 24 May 1833). Holland and Milford were publicly criticised for their part in the affair. Posters appeared round the City with a picture of a gallows and the words: "Who killed Dr Hennis? Holland and Milford." I suggest that Holland may have sent the journal extract to one of the Exeter newspapers to show that there had been an insult from Hennis which would certainly have justified a challenge to a duel; the editor left it in a file marked "Jeffcott", and there it stayed until it was found by someone who did not know where it came from but assumed that it was an extract from Jeffcott's journal.

David Pugsley

NEWS FROM AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

Colyton Parish History Society

2024

All meetings are at Colyton Town Hall

February 27th, 2.30 pm

'Dairy Maids & Milkmen' A history of dairying in Colyton Parish since the 1930s by Colin Pady, whose family of many generations, operated a milk round from their farm. The talk also brings us up to date with a presentation on self-service milk vending operations.

'1924 - That Was The Year That Was' - Marian Sydenham, Chairman of Colyton Parish History Society, gives a light hearted review of the past 100 years.

A social afternoon, with tea and cakes served to all.

£2 members, £4 visitors. All welcome.

March 26th, 7.30 pm

'Axminster - A Past defined by Fire & Flood' - an illustrated talk given by David Knapman of Axminster Heritage Museum.

£2 members, £4 visitors, includes refreshments. All welcome.

April 23rd, 7.30 pm

'From Deeds to Digital' - The work of Devon Archives is explained by Brian Carpenter, who has had a long career at the Devon Heritage Centre. Come along and hear how the development of digitisation and on-line access has changed the face of archival research.

£2 members, £4 visitors, includes refreshments. All welcome.

September 24th, 7.30pm

'Lost Buildings of Exeter' - Destruction from 1800 to 1899, presented by renowned historian Todd Gray. Copies of Todd's books will also be available for purchase.

£2 members, £4 visitors, includes refreshments. All welcome.

October 29th, 7.30 pm

'Hunting the Hunter' - WW2 Dunkeswell - A fascinating illustrated talk covering the role that Dunkeswell aerodrome played in the Battle of the Atlantic, and the activities of the US 479th Anti-Submarine group who flew missions into the Bay of Biscay hunting German U-Boats. Mr Brian Lane-Smith, Chairman of the Southwest Airfields Heritage Trust, will present this fascinating insight into a little known aspect of Devon's WW2 history.

£2 members, £4 visitors, includes refreshments. All welcome.

November 26th, 2.30 pm

'Sir Thomas Gates - Son of Colyton, Governor of Virginia' - Sarah Charman and John Dover have spent five years researching the fascinating story of Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Somers, the wreck of their vessel the Sea Venture on Bermuda in 1609 and the early colonisation of the Americas. Sarah has now written a book recording the life and times of Sir Thomas Gates and she and John will be talking about their findings.

£2 members, £4 visitors, includes refreshments. All welcome.

For further details, please contact the CPHS Secretary: colyton.history@btconnect.com

Crediton Area History & Museum Society

Our 2024 exhibition at Crediton Museum will focus on memories of local folklore, under the working title "Cures, Charms & Curses". We'll have some new stories – and inevitably, some old stories – to tell.

Opening dates, times and other details can be found at www.creditonhistory.org.uk.

Exeter Local History Society

Events have generally taken place in the Leonardo Hotel in Exeter, but there have recently been some changes to the venue, owing to the renovation of the hotel meeting rooms after serious flooding. Guests who book tickets for meetings are updated regularly..

Annual membership is £12 for a single member, (£16 for a couple). Non-members are welcome to book tickets for meetings, for a small charge of £3.

Meetings take place on the 2nd Thursday of the month

Upcoming events are:

Crediton and the Great Fire of 1743

with Tony Gale on **Thursday 14 March**

at 7 pm at The Mint Methodist Church Centre, Exeter (Wesley Room)

Bedless and Lifeless: The History of The Devon and Exeter Hospital

with Richard Holladay on **Thursday 11 April**

at 7 pm at The Mint Methodist Church Centre, Exeter (Wesley Room)

More information can be obtained by visiting the Exeter Local History Society website (<https://www.exeterlocalhistorysociety.co.uk>)

HOLSWORTHY HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society meets monthly from March to December in the Manor Suite which is situated behind the Memorial Hall. Talks start at 7 pm.

2024 PROGRAMME

14th March	Luffincott's Disturbing History	Paul Fitzpatrick
11th April	Holsworthy 1944	Ria Zoltan
9th May	Winston – The Early Years	David Kendrick
13th June	2.00 pm A Walk in Appledore	Peter Christie
11th July	Lundy – A Landmark 50 years	Simon Dell
12th Sept	Drinking in Shebbear Through the Ages	Paul Watts
Sept	Lynton and Barnstaple Railway Gala	
(date and time to be confirmed)		

10th October Winston – The Parliamentarian

David Kendrick

14th Nov Brief History of Bee Keeping

Christopher Smith

12th Dec AGM

ALL ARE WELCOME

For more information contact Julia Warren:

07938 833425 or holsworthyhistorysociety@gmail.com



Programme of talks for 2024

17 January History of Dawlish Central Hall (Bob Baker)

20 March Dartmoor Stone Circles (Alan Endacott)

17 April Wolf Hall (David Holland) [7 pm at Powderham Castle]

15 May Exeter Executions (Michael Richards)

17 July The Italian Garden
[Afternoon outing at Great Ambrook, near Newton Abbot]

18 September City of Exeter Sightseeing tour with Richard Holladay

20 November Oral History of Kenton

11 December Social with special local speaker Chris Britton

THE LUSTLEIGH SOCIETY

A talk by Emma Cunis

Ancient Tracks on Dartmoor

Wednesday March 27th 2024

7.15 for 7.30 pm

A photographic journey through some of the ancient tracks on Dartmoor used by farmers, tinnerns, monks, merchants, peat cutters, sailors, the dead ...and more. Based on a book of the same name by her grandfather Eric Hemery, Emma will share some of the history and mystery of these old beautiful old ways.

A talk by Dr John Allan

The Building of Exeter Cathedral

Wednesday 24th April 2024

7.15 for 7.30 pm

The presentation gives an account of the building of the medieval cathedral at Exeter. It will explain something of the cathedral's place in the development of English architecture and will include many photographs taken in the course of the speaker's work as the Exeter Cathedral Archaeologist.

Come and join us at Lustleigh Village Hall and have a glass of wine

Lynn Bartlett – 07852 998153 – jackchi4@gmail.com

OPEN DAY

Saturday 6th July

On Saturday 6th July the Lustleigh Society will be holding an Open Day in Lustleigh Village Hall.

The Lustleigh tithe map will be on display, along with other new and important items from the Lustleigh Community Archive. The Kelly Mine Preservation Society and the Devon Family History Society have agreed to attend, and it is probable that a number of other societies and organisations will also be there.

Further information will be available in due course.

Peter Mason

SHILLINGFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

PROGRAMME FOR 2024

The following meetings will be held in 2024.

All the meetings will be held in Shillingford St George Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

Monday February 26	Ancient Houses of Exeter, by John Allan Followed by a buffet
Monday May 20	The Carys of Torre Abbey, by Stuart Tyler Annual General Meeting will precede the talk
Monday July 22	From "Lady Woodcarvers to Professionals" The Remarkable Pinwill Sisters, by Helen Wilson
Monday October 28	Dartmoor – a wild and wondrous region The portrayal of Dartmoor in art from 1750 to 1920 By Peter Mason

Membership Fees and Guest Cost

The membership year is from May to April. The current annual fee is £8 and is payable in May for 2024 to 2025. This includes free entry to the meetings and talks for the year, and for the buffet at the February meeting. New members are always welcome.

The cost per meeting for guests is £4, and £6 for the buffet in February.

Norman Harvey
Committee Member
Shillingford Local History Society



Woodbury History Society

Programme for 2024

1st February: Woodbury Village Hall, 7.30 pm: AGM, including a presentation on churchyard records by Chris Sheppard and Jim Champion.

7th March: Woodbury Village Hall, 7.30 pm: Talk by Charlotte Coles - Tombs and Headstones.

2nd May: Woodbury, St Swithun's Church, 7.30 pm: Talk by Ian Mortimer - Medieval Devon

27th June: Woodbury Village Hall, 7.00 pm: Society's 30th Anniversary Celebration

5th September: Woodbury Village Hall, 7.30 pm: Talk by Andy Crabb - Early inhabitants of Dartmoor

7th November: Woodbury Village Hall, 7.30 pm: Talk by John Allan - Exeter Cathedral archaeological dig

Website: woodburyhistorysociety.co.uk

Annual Membership Subscription: £10

Visitor Entrance Fee for Talks: £4

Way of the Wharves

Over the last 12 months Way of the Wharves have been leading a campaign, with other heritage charities along the River Torridge, to get recognition for Bideford and River Torridge as a Heritage Harbour under the scheme run by the Maritime Heritage Trust (MHT), in conjunction with National Historic Ships and Historic England.

On 5 January 2024 Bideford and River Torridge Heritage Harbour, along with Ipswich, was listed as a heritage harbour on the MHT website, joining Exeter and Bristol in the south west and becoming one of the nine heritage harbours around the UK coast and three inland ports on canals. www.maritimeheritage.org.uk/heritage-harbours/location-map

As a result of our media launch we have had coverage in local press, BBC local radio and BBC and ITV local television news.

The Bideford and River Torridge Heritage Harbour covers the historical navigable extent of the river from Appledore at the mouth, through Bideford, upstream to the Sea Lock and along the Rolle Canal to Torrington where it terminates in Rosemoor RHS Gardens.

The River Torridge Heritage Group (RTHG) is a partnership of ten heritage organisations, drawn from along the river, who have united around the heritage harbour application and will create its future management. It counts some 2000 members/supporters of whom 200 are the active volunteers who are stewards, painters, restorers, engineers on the partner projects. RTHG members: Way of the Wharves; Steamship Freshspring Trust; The Burton at Bideford; North Devon Maritime Museum, Appledore; Bideford Railway Heritage Centre; Appledore Maritime Heritage Trust; Bideford and District Community Archive; Rolle Canal and Northern Devon Waterways Society; Tarka Valley Railway; East the Water in Bloom.

The responsibilities of a heritage harbour are to promote heritage that can be visited (heritage vessels, building, port structures) and to create an asset register of maritime heritage locally. To achieve this, as we move from campaigning to action, we are developing:

Website www.barthh.org

Guided walk map for Bideford

Brochure and map for heritage along the River Torridge

Walks and talks

Obviously, it's still early days but longer term we look toward new publications, welcoming more visiting heritage vessels and a Maritime Heritage Day.

Michael Teare

Chair, Way of the Wharves and River Torridge Heritage Group



BRANSCOMBE PROJECT WINTER TALKS

Monday – February 12 - 7:30

**Dorstone Hill & Arthur's Stone:
A Neolithic Landscape in Herefordshire**

Julian Thomas

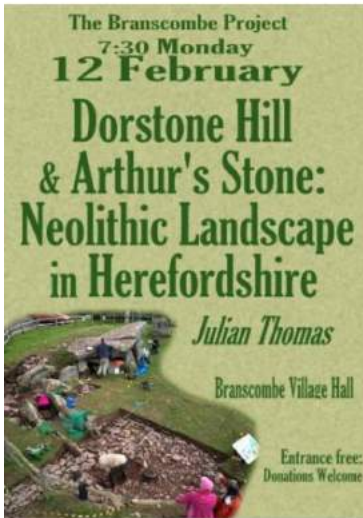
Investigations on an upland area between the Rivers Dore and Wye have revealed a complex sequence of Early Neolithic structures.

On Dorstone Hill, the team uncovered a group of three timber halls that had been deliberately destroyed by fire and replaced by three long mounds.

Later, a causewayed enclosure was constructed nearby, overlooking the Golden Valley.

On the next hilltop, the chambered tomb of Arthur's Stone went through a complex sequence of construction and elaboration.

In this talk, he will discuss the possible significance of these developments, and describe the various methods that we've used, including drone topography, 3D laser scanning, and Bayesian modelling of radiocarbon chronologies.



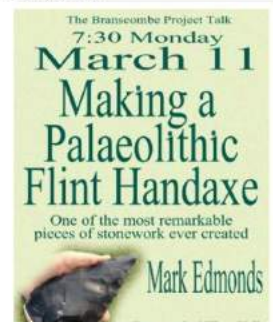
Monday – March 11 - 7:30

Making a Handaxe

Mark Edmonds

Mark will talk about one of the most remarkable pieces of stonework ever created, the lower Palaeolithic handaxe.

And if he can find some flint, he may even make one on the night.

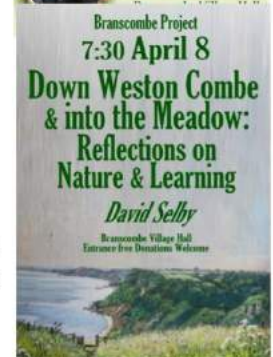


Monday – April 8 - 7:30

**Down Weston Combe and into the Meadow:
Reflections on Nature and Learning**

David Selby

David Selby will give an illustrated talk drawing on his just-published book, *Down the Combe and into the Meadow*, a month-by-month study of the natural world in Weston Combe. David will also take us on excursions to farther afield in East Devon and West Dorset and to two Hebridean islands. Wherever he takes us, David will reflect on present-day loss of nature and the need to restore a deeply immersive relationship with the natural world. Artwork by Sandy Macfadyan



2024 Exhibition Open Days at Providence Chapel, Throwleigh, near Okehampton

Providence Chapel (built in 1839) is holding a series of free monthly Open Days featuring a special exhibition of the Dartmoor Photographs of Chris Chapman from May to October 2024. The dates (all Saturdays) are: 11 May, 8 June, 13 July, 10 August, 14 September and 12 October and the exhibition will be open from 12 noon to 6.00 pm on each day. Home-made cream teas will be served throughout the afternoon. Publications on sale will include a new souvenir guide (£3) to the chapel which draws on documents held in the Devon Heritage Centre and includes a fine selection of Chris Chapman's photographs. See <https://thedartmoorphotographs.com/#opening>

Providence launched its Open Days in 2022 after years of uncertainty about whether this small remote Dartmoor chapel would have to close. Such has been their success in attracting visitors that in November 2023 the National Churches Trust awarded Providence two National Church Awards. And in February 2024 Chris Chapman posted this new 8-minute film about his Dartmoor Photographs on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJL_Kk4_cHw

Simon Timms

Would you like to be a Second World War Gallery handling volunteer at RAMM?

The Second World War collection in the local history gallery at RAMM tells the story of Exeter and the Blitz. Twice a month we provide the opportunity for visitors to engage with objects in the gallery.

The role of World War Two Gallery handling volunteer is to welcome drop-in visitors to the collection, provide information about the objects and general information about the war in Exeter and Devon.

The time commitment for this volunteer role is a minimum of 2.5 hours once a month, with timeout for holidays and other responsibilities.

If you are interested in participating, please drop an email to Simon Tootell at ramm.volunteer@exeter.gov.uk or call 01392 265984.



Celebrating RAMM: Inspiring past, present and future generations

Saturday 27 April 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm

Gallery 20

Tickets £25 (including drinks and canapés after the talks)

[Book online](#)

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery opened its doors in 1868. For more than 150 years RAMM has been a beacon for cultural and social life in Exeter and beyond. Following a major extension and the award of Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2012, it continues to inspire young and old, and be an important part of the cultural landscape in Devon.

How does RAMM continue to develop, meet challenges and thrive?

Join the Friends of RAMM to hear a wide range of speakers from arts and funding organisations, universities and others discuss their connections with RAMM and look to the future. It promises to be a stimulating afternoon and a fitting celebration of RAMM's achievements.

Speakers:

Richard Bellamy, Head of Engagement London and South, National Lottery Heritage Fund

Lucy Bird, Policy Manager, Art Fund

The Rt Hon Sir Ben Bradshaw MP, Vice President of the Friends of RAMM

Professor John Wedgwood Clarke, Associate Professor in Creative Writing and Director of Arts and Culture, University of Exeter

Emeritus Professor David Coslett, former Vice-Chancellor Plymouth University

Jon-Paul Hedge, Exeter City Council Director with responsibility for Culture, Tourism and Leisure

Dr Julien Parsons, Collections and Content Manager, RAMM



2024

Upcoming Events

5
MAR

19:30 PM - 20:30

Women's History Month – Dame Elizabeth Simcoe – A Creative Genius in Devon



20
APRIL

10:15 - 15:45

Devon's Maritime History in the 1920s: Change, Progress and Decline



7
MAY

18:00 - 19:30

Lady Harriot Acland's American Adventure 1776-1778



14
JUN

11:00 - 15:00

The Dartington Archive & the Dartington Experiment. Study Day at Devon Heritage Centre



22
JUN

10:00 - 13:00

Crownhill Fort, Plymouth guided tour



29
JUN

11:00 - 15:00

Society Showcase at Salcombe Maritime Museum



MORE INFORMATION:

www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk

 Online
 In-person

