





## STANDING CONFERENCE FOR DEVON HISTORY

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Correspondence relating to the Devon Historian or for possible publication therein or contributions for publication should be sent to The Editor, The Devon Historian, Culver House, Payhembury, Honiton.  
Contributions for the next issue should be sent to the Editor by 1st February, 1973.

The map on the cover is part of Braun's plan of Exeter first published in 1618 but is undoubtedly copied from Hooker's plan of 1587. Separate copies of this map are obtainable from Exeter City Library, price 10p.

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The annual general meeting of the Standing Conference on Devon History took place at Exeter University on 13th May 1972. The speaker was Professor Ivan Roots of Exeter University who spoke on 'The Civil War; the local dimension'. The business meeting took place in the afternoon. The list of officers and members of the council appears inside the front cover. About 60-70 people were present at the meeting.

The next conference of the Standing Conference on Devon History will take place on November 4th at Torre Abbey, Torquay. The speakers will be Miss Hilda Walker on the history of Kingskerswell and Professor Dyos of Leicester University whose subject will be 'Images of Urban Life in the nineteenth century'.

A further conference is being arranged for the spring in Okehampton.

## DEVON HOUSES: A REQUEST FOR HELP

N.W. Alcock

There are thousands of old houses in the Devon countryside, each one a historical document that can tell us about the way of life of its builder, about the techniques of its craftsmen and the periods when economic prosperity made money available for house building and improvement. So far, only very limited studies have been made of them, mainly in the form of detailed examination of individual houses. It is hoped to describe how to set about such detailed work in the future, but this article asks for a cooperative study by as many readers of Devon Historian as possible, to find out the areas over which some of the typical Devon features occur. An obvious example is cob. Cob is only important as a building material in Devon, but there it has been used and has survived from at least the 14th century, while in parts of E. Devon whole villages are built of it. What is almost unknown is its distribution. It is centred on a broad area of E. and N. Devon but the only further information is that it is not normal east of Honiton or on Dartmoor (and even this may be inaccurate).

What is wanted is a rapid survey for a parish of externally obvious features. About 10 or 20 houses should give a sufficient sample (if you want to cover more so much the better). The houses are to be roughly grouped by size according to the number of main rooms on the ground floor: SMALL with 1 or 2 rooms; MEDIUM with 3 or 4 rooms in line or L-shaped; LARGER in which one part of a 3-room plan has been replaced by a cross-wing. The few still larger houses that may be found should be left out as they may show non-traditional features.

A copy of the survey form is included in this number of Devon Historian. It looks complicated but should be easy to use. Pick the appropriate size for the house you are looking at and work down its column putting in tally marks. Repeat this across the bottom for farm buildings. Please return completed forms to Dr. N.W. Alcock, 18 Portland Place, Leamington Spa, Warws., from whom further copies can be obtained.

### Groups of Questions:

A - Site: Village/Hamlet (3-10 houses)/Isolated

The total of tally marks in this group also gives the total number of houses examined. It is worth noting that when a parish has both isolated houses or hamlets and villages, the more scattered houses usually cover the full range of large and smaller farms and cottages. By contrast, the villages often have most of the original farms converted into cottages (during 18th or 19th century farm consolidation and population expansion).

B - Materials: Cob/Cob over high stone/Stone I/Stone II

This is probably where the rapid survey can give most valuable results. Please note the type of stone found if you can. Some possibilities are: Flint;

Granite (either blocks or rubble); Limestone (e.g. Beer Stone); Sandstone; Slate stone (used as flat stones in rubble masonry in e.g. the South Hams). Stone II should be used if two different sorts of stone occur in the parish. 'Cob over high stone' refers to the common habit of using a stone wall, say 6ft. high with about 2ft. of cob on top of this. Brick is almost unknown as an early material in Devon and so is omitted.

#### Roof: Thatch/Early slates

Early slates can usually be distinguished by their small size. They are found in a wide range of stone, both true slate and other fissile stone, but distinguishing them can be difficult, particularly if the roof is gouted.

#### Shaped doorframe, stone/ same, wooden/Stone mullions/Wood mullions

As well as giving information about the use of materials, shaped (i.e. not square) doorframes often indicate an early house that would be worth individual study. So for these, it would be helpful if the farm name or location could be given under 'Remarks'.

#### C - Plan: Two end chimneys only/One end chimney/Front side chimney/Other side chimney/Axial chimney by entrance/Axial chimney away from entrance

The chimney positions give a rough but easily recorded guide to plan. 'Two end chimneys only' describes the symmetrical house that is the standard rebuilding design. This is normally 18th or 19th century with a central entrance and one main room on each side and hardly ever occurs earlier. It comes in a wide range of sizes (including the front part of L-shaped houses) and the number of these in relation to other types gives a good indication of the importance of late rebuilding. In some areas, e.g. N.W. Devon, the majority of houses are of this form. 'One end chimney' is found on small houses. Medium and larger houses generally have their main room (the Hall) in the middle with its chimney either on a side wall or rising in the centre of the house (Axial). A special feature of Devon houses is the large chimney on the front of the house, which is common in E. Devon and occurs occasionally elsewhere. Mark 'Front side chimney' when it is clearly at the front (e.g. facing the road or adjoining a porch). For a rear 'side chimney' or one that is uncertain, mark 'Other side chimney'. Many axial chimney stacks have their backs to the cross-passage (e.g. the normal Dartmoor house) and this can be seen because the chimney stack is close to the main entrance door (Axial chimney by entrance); there are also occasional houses with the main chimney away from the entrance (Axial chimney away from entrance).

#### D - Various: Slit windows/Length down slope/Single storey porch/Two-storey porch, thick wall/Two-storey porch, thin walls

A few further aspects of external appearance are collected here. Long-houses (with cattle using one end) are a very interesting plan type, found principally

on Dartmoor, but also known to occur west and south of the moor. It is important that they are identified positively and two features give a firm indication of a shippon: a central drain and Slit windows. Again it would be useful to know the location of particular examples.

Long-houses usually have their length down a slope and in some areas where actual long-houses have not been identified, there are a number of houses with their length down a significant slope. These may be rebuilt long-houses or there may have been a tradition of long-houses leading to the orientation being retained after they had passed out of use.

Porches: These are a traditional feature. Some are single storey (but a number of these are modern, so only include ones that appear old). Two storey porches are almost always old (usually 16th-17th century). Some are timber-framed (in E. Devon), important as the only rural use of this technique in Devon. The porch room then has very thin walls and this can be identified because its window is set right forward in the wall without the usual 4" reveal.

#### E - Farm Buildings

These are not usually of the same date as the houses and so may show systematic differences in material, and these questions are repeated. The relationship to size of house is not very significant in a general survey, but what is important is the distribution of different sorts of farm buildings.

#### Large barn/Small barn

'Large barn' is used to indicate the big and obvious barns with double doorways found in E. Devon. In other parts, e.g. N.W. Devon, most barns are small, without big double doors and are often partly used for stock. These are for convenience called Small barns here.

#### Two storey linhey/One storey shelter/Closed shippon

These are three types of cattle building. Single storey shelters with one side open are fairly common in Britain and are found in S.E and N.W. Devon. In E. and N. Devon (and to a lesser extent S. Devon) they are replaced by Two storey linheys, again with one side open (although sometimes recently closed in), with a hayloft over the cattle shed. Closed shippons with doors (and perhaps windows) on the front seem to occur particularly in W. and S. Devon.

#### Round house.

This is the name of the half-round or octagonal buildings attached to a barn, for the horse wheel driving a thresher.

SOME SOURCES

This survey of external features is based with considerable modification to suit Devon circumstances on:- R.W. Brunskill: 'Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture', Faber, 1970. Most of the recent work on Devon houses has been published in the Transactions of the Devonshire Association from 1962 (vol. 94) onwards. See also Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society, vol. 29, (1971) pp. 181-94, and Dartington Houses by N.W. Alcock, to be published early in 1973 by Exeter Industrial Archaeology Group.

PARISH..... Name..... Return to: Dr. N.W. Alcock,  
Address..... 18 Portland Pl., Leamington  
Central Grid Ref..... Spa, Warwickshire.

		SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGER	
S I T E	1. Village				
	2. Hamlet (3-10 ho.)				
	3. Isolated				
M A T E R I A L	4. Cob				
	5. Cob/high stone				
	6. Stone I				
	7. Stone II				
	8. Roof: thatch				
	9. " early slates				
	10. Shaped doorframe stone*				
	11. Shaped doorframe wooden*				
	12. Stone mullions				
	13. Wood mullions				
	P L A N	14. 2 end chimneys only			
		15. One end chimney			
		16. Front side chimney			
17. Other side chimney					
18. Axial chimney by entrance					
19. Axial chimney away from entrance					
V A R I E T Y	20. Slit windows*				
	21. Length down slope				
	22. Porch, single storey				
	23. Porch, 2 storey, thick walls				
24. Porch, 2 storey, thin walls					
25. Cob		26. Cob/high stone	27. Stone I	28. Stone II	
F A R M	29. Large Barn		30. Small Barn	31. 2-storey linhey	
	32. Single Storey shelter		33. Closed cowhouse	34. Roundhouse	

REMARKS: Please give details of materials and locations of starred features. It would also be useful to have a list of any buildings with dates inscribed on them.

On August 25th a plaque was unveiled in Dunkeswell Abbey Church to commemorate Elizabeth Simcoe the wife of Lieutenant General John Graves Simcoe, first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. The plaque was presented by the John Graves Simcoe Memorial Foundation of the state of Ontario, Canada and unveiled by Brigadier Willis Moogk, chairman of the Executive Committee of the foundation.

Lieutenant General Simcoe was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ontario in 1791 and held that post for four years. During that time he did much to develop Upper Canada, as it then was, and was instrumental in attracting many immigrants to the area. Many were to come from East Devon where he lived. He is regarded as one of the founders of modern Canada and there is a Simcoe town and a lake Simcoe. His wife, Elizabeth, accompanied him to Canada and left diaries and sketches recording their pioneer life in Canada which have been published, though not in this country. General Simcoe returned to England in 1796, and died in 1806. His widow, whom the plaque commemorates, survived him for forty four years and with her daughters was responsible for an immense amount of good work in the Dunkeswell area including the building of Dunkeswell Abbey Church out of the ruins and on the site of Dunkeswell Abbey. She and her husband were buried at Wolford Chapel near Wolford Lodge on the estate where the Simcoe family still lived until this century. The chapel, now the property of the Ontario Government, is a rebuilding on the site of a mediaeval Chapel recorded in the deeds of Dunkeswell Abbey.

At the unveiling ceremony the plaque was formally presented by Professor Sidney Wise of the Historic Sites Board of Ontario. Other speakers were Brigadier Cole, the great-great-grandson of General Simcoe, Mr. Keith Taylor and Mr. J.A. Sparks, trustees of the Dunkeswell Abbey Preservation Fund. Mr. Sparks is writing a history of Dunkeswell.

NAMES AGAIN. Another approach to Parish Registers.  
R.J.F.H. Pinsent

In her paper in Devon Historian of October 1971 Iris Woods has described the problems she met when examining the family names met with in the Parish Registers of Widecombe. Over the centuries a series of Parish Clerks contributed to records with uneven diligence and conscientiousness and the records themselves were in broken sequences. Sometimes gaps can be filled from other sources, more often they must remain wide open to speculation and conjecture.

Similar problems face the amateur enquirer who seeks to reconstruct family relationships between bearers of one surname, records of whom are scattered among the registers of many parishes in the county. An account of some of these problems and difficulties may serve as counterpoint to Mrs. Woods' excellent paper.

The problem as appreciated some ten or more years ago was to extract from the Parish Registers of East Devon as many mentions of persons sharing the same surname as possible and to examine the extent to which these could be related to one another, births to marriages to deaths within one parish and beyond parish boundaries, perhaps to marriages and deaths recorded elsewhere. From the start it was clear that the task could never be completed for in some parishes no records had survived or were available for study - an activity necessarily limited to days and afternoons stolen from family holidays and spent in the old Exeter search room of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, often with the August sunshine warm and bright in the garden by the Castle Wall.

The family was known to have long associations with the county. The name appears in the Close Rolls of 1230 and the Devon Feet of Fines of 1244 and no doubt earlier identifications remain to be made. At once, however, the problem of spelling variants came up. The number of permutations and combinations of a two-syllable surname is surprisingly large. Decisions had to be made on whether a given variant should be accepted and there seemed to be no principle on which such decisions might be based - at least until it was recognised that spoken dialect had perhaps changed less than orthography. Entries were made by parish clerks who interpreted the spoken word, in warm round syllables, in their own way and wrote a phonetic rendering of it. The test of speaking the name was applied, and if it sounded right down went an entry in the abstract. In rather comforting confirmation of this policy many instances are recorded of the birth of a child under one spelling and its death perhaps days or weeks later under a similar variant.

The family's traditions led to Hennock as the parish in which to begin the study and on opening the first page of the first transcript the name in one of its modern spellings leapt out from the list of names. Above and below were other names which were soon to become familiar, sometimes entering the family

itself as brides. From 'Septimo die mensis Novembris anno regni regis Henrici Octavi tricesimo tertio' when 'Thomas Pooke duxit in uxorem Johannam Fillam Johannis Pinsenta de Hucksbeare' the parish produced a stream of entries in the new looseleaf ledger on which one page was devoted to one year. Sometimes the parish clerk had excelled himself and included the name of the farm where the birth or death took place. More often, though, the entries were of names alone and the problem of differentiating between two homonyms was often insoluble.

Certain Christian names recurred not only in members of the family in Hennock parish but in those adjacent also, Robert, John, Williams, Thomas, Gilbert and Richard were common with the occasional biblical or classical exception, Pentecost, Bartholomew or Zacharias. Joane, Alwyn, Matlie and Margeria have modern counterparts but Julian and Urith as girls' names have not survived so well. Completing what records there were from Hennock showed up the gaps, and these were found also in the records of other parishes studied. These included Chudleigh, Chagford, Ilsington, Wolborough, Shillingford, Bridford and many others. Among the most rewarding were Bovey Tracey and Ilsington in which parish, as with Hennock, most of the farms on the contemporary ordnance survey map were in the hands of bearers of the name at some time between the mid-sixteenth century and the establishment of the General Register Office.

It was sometimes possible to trace individuals across parish boundaries as when, in 1602, a punctilious clerk recorded the death of John P. aet. 70 'born in Bovey Tracey and dwelt there thirty years'. Marriage would be recorded followed after a proper or improper interval by the first child who was usually given his father's name. If this child died before the birth of the second of the same sex, as not infrequently happened, the same name was sometimes carried forward and used again. The same names came up generation after generation, often from adjacent farms, making deduction of lines of descent a chancy business, in which the principle of probability had sometimes to be invoked. A child born in a given year might be expected to be marriageable about twenty years later and often enough a marriage turned up in the home or in another parish. Corroborative evidence was very occasionally forthcoming as when marriages of known siblings were recorded at the same time.

Certain farms were identified as strongly associated with the family, one branch of which could be traced from Huxbeare Barton to Pitt Farm in Chudleigh Knighton where a member built Pitt House on the proceeds of a successful marriage in London. Some other parishes contained records suggesting that one family had moved into a farm, worked it for one or two generations and then moved again. Many pages of many registers were scanned in vain, but now and again outlying parishes such as Woodland, Kenn or Ide produced one farming family apiece.

It was in the end possible to show that descendants of the Huxbeare family spread very far beyond their home county, but as they did so the name began to drop out of the registers in the parishes of their origin. By the end of

the eighteenth century the focus had moved south to Wolborough, Highweek, Kingsteignton and Alphington and the total number of name records diminished sharply. The old farms must have passed to other hands as the occupiers left for Bristol, London and the Midlands. Some of the deficiency in the information in the fifty years before the General Register Office was established in 1837 may have been in the records themselves for the reader gained the impression that parish clerks were beginning to get a little tired of the business. Abbreviations came in, place names were seldom used, and such gratuitous but helpful asides as 'base-born' or 'died of the small pox' appeared less often.

There is probably a good reason for the paucity of later records, though whether there was any special reason for the decline of the family, in terms of numbers, in East Devon, remains to be speculated upon. Perhaps a persistent gene, inherited in the male line, led to diminished fertility or earlier death through enhanced susceptibility to disease. Evidence to resolve this cannot yet be produced. Certainly when the fortunes of members of the family were studied in the years after 1837, through General Register Office material, the hand of suspicion appeared to fall on tuberculosis as a possible cause.

There are probably many other and better ways of approaching this problem. A card-index has been used as well as a series of loose-leaf ledgers containing the chronology. The index, however, was based on places, not people, and contained details of only those people who could be confidently related to them. Large-size graph paper has been used, pasted on to wallpaper to make a scroll on which lifetimes could be indicated visually. This proved cumbersome but valuable in establishing some negative relationships. A scroll covering four hundred years may serve to demonstrate continuities but the lateral extensions needed to accommodate collateral lines make this kind of manual plotting impossible on the larger scale.

An attempt is being made to convert the data - and such further material as will be forthcoming in future - to coded form in which it is capable of mechanical analysis. Reconstruction of family patterns has been shown to be possible granted the right computer programmes, but these require input differing greatly from that made in the vestry with a quill pen by a parish clerk who may well have not heard quite right what the parents really said the name was to be.

A byproduct of this exercise has been the accumulation of anecdotal material relating to the family in its broadest sense. All of this is interesting, much is amusing, some distressing. The name has been given to a waterfall in Newfoundland, a street in Nairobi, a hotel in the Australian outback and it appears as a saxifrage and a campanula in the catalogues of the better rock-garden nurseryman. The feeling remains, though, that this kind of task is better undertaken after retirement than before it. The piecemeal approach from a distant viewpoint with intermittent access to sources of information is not a good one, and an early mistake, made as much through academic diffidence as for any other reason, was failure to seek expert advice in planning the work campaign before it started.

Nonetheless there have been many years of absorbing interest, even if there are only conjectures instead of conclusions. It may be that others with greater experience and opportunity to work on Devon documents may come up with information relating to the Pinsent family, and if so, the writer would be delighted to hear from them.

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#### EXETER CITY RECORD OFFICE Margery Rowe

A reviewer in the last number of 'The Devon Historian' commented unfavourably on the practice of discussing the history of Exeter separately from that of Devon. Yet the official records of the county of Devon (now in the Devon County Record Office) and those of the city of Exeter (now in the Exeter City Record Office) have been separate for many centuries, although both offices now hold private and parish documents from the other's area. These private and parish documents are not regarded as having a lower priority on archivists' time than the official collections. Both are used equally, often information from one source being supplemented by the other, depending on the type of enquiry. Exeter City Record Office, now in the old City Library building adjoining the main City Library in Castle Street, houses both the Exeter City archives and the 'Devon' collections of documents which include private deposits, parish documents and some literary manuscripts. Together these amount to over 300,000 documents occupying well over one mile of shelving.

The connection of the 'Devon' collections with Exeter City Library is in fact older than that of the Exeter City Archives. From about 1920, the former City Librarian, Mr. H. Tapley-Soper, encouraged the deposit in the library (then in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum building) of collections of deeds, parish documents, court rolls, literary manuscripts of local authors and early volumes on heraldry and these were sorted and calendared by librarians on the staff. In this way the library acquired before 1939 some 70,000 documents, including family papers such as the Pine-Coffin and Champernowne collections, the Dartmouth borough archives, parish documents from both Devon and Cornwall (the Cornish ones were transferred to Truro when the Cornwall County Record Office was set up) and about 1500 court rolls and allied material, some of which relates to the Courtenay estates. Some manuscripts were purchased, usually for nominal sums. The deposit of Devon material in the City Record Office continued until the early 1950s when the Devon County Record Office was set up and the City Record Office now takes in documents from Exeter and its immediate vicinity except where part of a collection is already housed there. Post-war deposits include the family papers of Mallock of Cockington Court, Chichester of Arlington Court, Ley of Trehill and Lord Iddesleigh's documents. A large collection of Palk of Haddon and Kennaway of Exeter family papers was found in a cupboard which had been wallpapered over in Wynard's Almshouses in Magdalen Street, Exeter, about fourteen years ago and was subsequently deposited in the City Record Office. There was a little Indian material relating to the Palks amongst this which supplemented that described in the Historical Manuscripts Commission's Report (No. 74, 1922) which was already in the office and some household accounts of the Kennaways and business records which show that family's change over from the serge to the wine trade during the Napoleonic War. More recently collections of school log books and business records (Exeter's foundries were surprisingly well documented) have been added, but in terms of bulk the intake is not now large, chiefly because so many potential deposits perished in solicitors' offices in Bedford Circus in 1942.

#### TORBAY LIBRARY SERVICE - Local History Index.

An Index of local history information is maintained at the Central Library, Torquay. It covers Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset but by far the greatest volume of information is on South Devon and the Torbay area in particular. This index had been in existence for a number of years but in 1966 a proper programme of indexing was begun and since that period the Devonshire Association Transactions, The Torquay Natural History Society Proceedings, Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries and Devon Archaeological Society Proceedings have been indexed from their inception to the present time. In addition three senior members of staff index any useful piece of information that they find, very often this being found during private reading or heard on the mass media. Newspapers are also indexed but this usually only occurs when a specific piece of research is being done.

The index is held on 5" x 3" cards in metal drawers, the number of cards being in the region of 17,000. There are three sequences; a chronology of important events from prehistory to the present day; a biographical index; and a subject index. The form of the subject headings is based on Minnie Sears' 'List of Subject Headings' but geared to local needs. Local government boundary changes necessitate alterations in the subject headings.



However, this is more than compensated for at the moment by considerable deposits of modern Council records as departments move into the new Civic Centre. On the whole, the Record Office has kept less than one-third of this material offered, but it is hoped that these documents being added to the City Archives will give future historians some insight into Exeter's administration in the twentieth century. Documents are not produced to the public until they are at least thirty years old; in some cases a much longer period of restriction has been placed on access.

The earliest document in the Exeter City Archives dates from before 1100 but the collection of documents is such a fine one because of the continuity of its records like the Mayor's Court Rolls from 1264, Receiver's accounts from the early fourteenth century, Act books from 1508 and Quarter Sessions records from the reign of Philip and Mary, all in almost unbroken sequences. The contents of the collection were described in the Historical Manuscripts Commission's Report (cd. 7640) in 1916 which was based on the manuscript calendar prepared by Stuart Moore, c.1870, and which is still in use in the Record Office to-day. The volumes of the Exeter Research Group before the war publicised the medieval documents and more recently books by Professor Hoskins, Dr. Stephens, Dr. Clark, Professor MacCaffrey and Dr. Newton have given us a comprehensive history of the City for the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

The older City Archives were kept in the Guildhall, probably from their creation. John Hooker, the sixteenth century Chamberlain of the City did a great deal of work on them, and some of his manuscripts were added to them, including his list of documents. He also had cupboards made with locks for their preservation. Spasmodic attempts were made to reduce the contents to order in the next three centuries but it seems that it was not until Stuart Moore was engaged that any comprehensive list was again attempted. It is interesting that Stuart Moore found documents under the roof of the Guildhall which Hooker had not seen in his day. There were several early twentieth century attempts to move the archives to less cramped conditions, but it was not until 1931 that it was decided to move them to fireproof accommodation in the new (now the old) City Library building. As a result of a report by the newly appointed City Librarian (Mr. N.S.E. Pugsley) administrative control of the City archives was transferred to him, the Town Clerk remaining legal custodian. The first qualified archivists were appointed in 1947 and since then a comprehensive scheme of listing and indexing both the City and 'Devon' collections has been undertaken. However, the backlog is still considerable and it is hoped to deal with the pre-war private deposits on the same principle as the post-war ones, by producing a slip for each document, a copy of which can be filed under the parish concerned and by indexing for personal names and for subjects. There is a subject index to the City collection and a new inventory has been compiled to supplement the Stuart Moore calendar, as some nineteenth century documents of ad hoc authorities, such as the minutes of the Improvement Commissioners and the Corporation of the Poor, were not then kept in the Guildhall. A street and a name index to deeds to properties bought up by the City may also be consulted.

Approximately two thousand visits a year are made to the Record Office, excluding organised parties. Many of these people are trying to trace either a property or a family and this is where the parish files and the name index (the latter still incomplete) help. The training college student writing a 'project' will find the subject index of more use.

It would be reasonable to suppose that tracing a city property in a collection of records which form a good series and covering a compact area would be easier than finding the history of an isolated farm but this is not always the case. If the property can be proved to be one held by the city for many centuries it is fairly simple - the Receivers' accounts list the properties and their rents payable annually. There are rentals from the sixteenth century and often deeds from an early date, although it is necessary to have the owners' names as descriptions of the property are inexact by to-day's standards, for street numbers are rare until the second half of the nineteenth century. The practice of re-numbering streets in the city centre is also confusing. However if the property was not held by the city, the task is more difficult. The large scale Ordnance Survey maps of the late nineteenth century are a good starting point if the property is in the city and Coldridge's map of 1818/19 gives the owners of some central properties (there are no title maps for the parishes in the City centre). Voters' Lists (from 1843), Rate Books (a few from c. 1840) and a valuation of the city made in 1838 may also help but before this it is necessary to tie the property in with an owner's name and consult rate assessments.

Some of these documents are also useful for tracing back families and the entries 'by succession' in the Freemen's List can establish a relationship in question. John Hooker gives us biographical details of sixteenth century mayors and a number of these came to the city to be apprenticed, made good and then their sons bought estates outside the city and there is no doubt that this also happened but possibly not so often lower down the social scale and in other centuries. Yet there were families who lived in the same parish for generations and carried on the same trade. In which case the Record Office should have no difficulty in producing the information.

The City Record Office is open from 9.30 am. to 5.15 pm. Mondays to Fridays and from 9 am. to 12.30 pm. on Saturdays. All postal enquiries should be addressed to the City Archivist, City Library, Castle Street, Exeter, EX4 3PQ.

#### NEW ADDRESSES

Devonshire Association, Exeter Branch: Julia Gillespie, Lugg's Farm, Redlands, Exeter,

W.E.A. Tutor, South Devon: C.A. Tucker, 53 Dunstone Park Road, Paignton.

North Devon Archaeological Society: Mrs. J.E. Thorpe, Rose Cottage, Bratton Fleming, Nr. Barnstaple. (Hon. Sec.)

## ROADSIDE STONES IN DEVON

E.N. Masson Phillips

The vast increase in road improvements in recent years poses a very significant threat to those minor antiquities which may be loosely described under the title of roadside stones - direction stones, milestones, boundary stones etc. - most, but not all, of which are associated with the growth of turnpike roads in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As long ago as the mid-1930s I began making a record of these stones, as a logical extension of my work upon the medieval stone crosses of Devon. The onset of the second world war made necessary the somewhat premature publication of an incomplete account of the roadside stones of south-west Devon at a time when they were being removed or defaced in accordance with the provisions of the Removal of Direction Signs Order of 1940, a panic measure designed to confuse the enemy should invasion become a reality. In fact, the only effective result was the loss or destruction of many interesting stones all over the country. I like to think that my work in south-west Devon was at least partially responsible for the preservation and subsequent re-erection of a very large number of the roadside monuments in this area.

The roadside stones of Devon are, on the whole, not elaborate in character but at Otterton Cross in east Devon there is an elegant eighteenth-century brickwork pillar surmounted by a cross and bearing pious inscriptions and directions to neighbouring towns and villages which was erected by Lady Rolle of Bickton (fig. 1). The earliest direction stones in Devon are, in my opinion, those with capital letters (the initial letters of places) cut in relief (fig. 2). On the basis of the style of lettering they can be assigned to the seventeenth century and so are not turnpike stones. They seem to have been succeeded in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by direction stones with incised capitals (fig. 3) and then with the actual names of places (figs. 4 and 5). On occasion medieval crosses (some of which themselves acted as track markers) were used as direction stones by the subsequent addition of initial letters cut on their shafts.

By paragraph 119 of the Act of George IV (1823) it was laid down that Turnpike Trustees 'shall cause Stones or Posts to be set up or placed in or near the sides of every Turnpike Road, at the distance of One Mile from each other, denoting the distance of any and every such stone or post from any Town or Place, and also such Direction Post at the several roads leading out of any such road, or at any Crossings, Turnings or Terminations thereon, with such inscriptions thereon denoting to what Place or Places the said roads respectively lead . . . and shall also cause stones to be put up marking the Boundaries of Parishes where such Boundaries shall cross any Turnpike Road'. Here is the historical explanation for the presence of these stones beside our roads. The penalty, on conviction, for removing or damaging any such posts or stones or obliterating their inscriptions, was a fine not exceeding ten pounds. Malicious damage to toll gates or toll houses was a much more serious offence; it was stated to be a felony, punishable by transportation to one of His Majesty's Plantations Abroad for seven years.

Milestones may be simple round-headed structures with inscriptions on one face or, especially in later times, the familiar stone with two inscribed faces at an angle. In addition to such stones there are some very interesting roadside monuments which do not fit into the classes already mentioned. We have, for example, one of the very few remaining 'Take Off' stones (at Beardon, near Lydford) (fig. 6). This marked the point at which a 'toll-free' extra horse must be 'taken off' a heavily loaded waggon. There is another in east Cornwall, at Cadson near Callington, and I know of two in Derbyshire but they are by no means common and merit careful preservation. There are also a number of 'End of . . . Turnpike' stones. A simple tablet near Tavistock tells us that 'This road was made by Public Subscription in a period of great distress. 1817' (fig. 7). Here is the very essence of road history. Among the boundary stones, a series north of Plymouth is of special interest since some of the stones bear the archaic title of 'Tything' (fig. 8).

It is noteworthy that the majority of Devon roadside stones are cut from granite. In the Receiver's Book of Plymouth Corporation there is an entry for 1699-1700, 'Item paid towards defraying the charges of putting upp Moonestones on Dartmoor in the way leading from Plymouth towards Exon for the guidance of Travellers passing that way. the sume of £2'. This is believed to refer to the stones still existing near Merrivale which bear an incised T on one face and an A on the other (ie Tavistock and Ashburton).

Relatively few mileposts are of cast iron but there are instances of the re-use of older granite stones by the addition of cast iron plates; there is a series of these between Kingswear and Teignmouth which can be dated to the middle of the nineteenth century.

Somewhere in the records of the Turnpike Trusts there may exist accounts which would reveal the sources of both stone and metal posts; this would make a useful research project for a student of road history.

We are very fortunate in Devon in that the county authorities show a most enlightened and considerate attitude to the problems of preservation when attention is drawn to specific instances and one of the objects of this paper is to make a plea for constant vigilance on the part of all of us and rapid action to inform the County Roads Surveyor whenever danger threatens a particular roadside monument. The Exeter Industrial Archaeology Group, under the leadership of Professor W.E. Minchinton of the Department of Economic History of Exeter University, is recording roadside stones in Devon with the object ultimately of producing a complete county list. I have agreed to co-ordinate this work and to draw up the final list. In this task help is needed and, on behalf of the project, I shall be glad to receive information regarding roadside stones in the more inaccessible parts of the county. South Devon, south-west Devon and the Dartmoor area have all been covered but information for north, central and east Devon is rather scanty and these areas need attention. Any information sent to me at Chestnut Cottage, Maudlin Road, Totnes, will be gratefully acknowledged and eventually incorporated in the detailed county list.

#### NOTES

1. Edward N. Masson Phillips, 'The ancient stone crosses of Devon', 'Transactions of the Devonshire Association' (TDA), LXIX (1937) 289-342; LXX (1938) 299-340; LXXI (1939) 231-2; LXXII (1940) 265-72; LXXV (1943) 259-66; LXXXVI (1954) 173-94; XCI (1959) 83-91.

2. Edward N. Masson Phillips, 'Notes on some old roadside stones in south-west Devon', TDA, LXXV (1943) 141-65.

3. TDA, LXXV (1943) 165.

4. David C. Prowse and Richard Hansford Worth, 'On some guide-stones standing on the course of the old track from Tavistock to Ashburton', TDA LXVI (1934) 317-22.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Direction pillar, Otterton Cross, East Budleigh, 1743. An elaborate brickwork column surmounted by a cross. Tablets on the four sides bear the following inscriptions: Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace West; To Woodbury, Topsham, Exeter; O, hold up our going in Thy paths, that our footsteps slip not North; To Bicton, Ottery, Honiton; O, that our ways were made so direct that we might keep Thy statutes East; To Otterton, Sidmouth, Culliton A D 1743; Make us go in the paths of Thy commandments, for therein is our desire South; To Budley, Littleham, Exmouth.

Figure 2. Direction stone, Cross Furzes, Buckfastleigh, late seventeenth century. Small four-sided stone with letters in relief on three sides: T for Tavistock across the moor; B for Brent; A for Ashburton.

Figure 3. Direction stone, roadside in lane from Rolster Bridge, Harberton to Combeshead Cross (formerly at Combeshead Cross), eighteenth century. Incised letters on four faces: A for Ashburton; K for Kingsbridge; T for Totnes; M for Modbury.

Figure 4. Milestone, Chollacott, Whitchurch, early nineteenth century.

Figure 5. Milestone, Shaldon Bridge. There is a similar stone at Kingswear by the ferry landing.

Figure 6. 'Take off' stone, Beardon, near Lydford.

Figure 7. Tablet in a wall opposite Newton House, one mile north-east of Tavistock. Tavistock.

Figure 8. Boundary stones, Hartley, Plymouth. The left-hand stone is incised 'Tything of Weston Peverell'; the right-hand stone 'Tything of Compton Gifford'. Between them is the head of a late medieval granite cross.



Fig. 2. Direction stone, Cross Furzes



Fig. 1. Direction pillar, Otterton Cross



Fig. 3. Direction stone, Harberton



Fig. 4. Milestone, Challacott, Whitchurch



Fig. 6. "Take off" stone, Beardon



Fig. 5. Milestone, Shaldon Bridge





Fig. 7. Tablet in wall, Newton House, Tavistock



Fig. 8. Boundary Stones, Hartley, Plymouth

## POPULATION AND LOCAL HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

R. Schofield

Nowadays local population history is practised by both local historians and historical demographers. Traditionally the two groups approach the subject in rather different ways, for while local historians study their population primarily for the light it may throw on local history, historical demographers are more concerned with the implications of the local experience for national demographic trends. I believe, however, that this difference may soon disappear, for the way in which historical demographers came to be interested in local case studies suggests that further advances in demographic understanding can only come about if demographers involve themselves much more in the stuff of local history.

Originally historians asked themselves relatively straightforward questions about population, such as the number of people alive at a given time in the past. But knowledge of the size of a population is seldom informative on its own. It becomes so when it is compared to other information, for example the size of the population at another date, so that the direction and rate of population change can be discovered. Sometimes the knowledge that a population is growing or declining is all that we need to know; but once we have discovered this fact, few of us can resist going on to ask why this was so. If we exclude migration, populations change in size through the operation of two simple processes: more people are added by birth, and existing people are removed by death. The first question we ask therefore is which of these two processes is responsible, or the more responsible, for the growth or decline in population which we have observed. This is usually done by comparing changes in the birth rates and death rates. These rates are easily calculated by dividing the annual numbers of births and deaths by the number of people in the population, and then multiplying the result by a thousand to get rid of the fractions. Essentially, therefore, the rates tell us the number of births or deaths that our population would have produced if it had contained a thousand people, and we express it in this rather quaint way to make it easier for ourselves to compare populations which are actually of very different sizes. Birth and death rates, or more properly baptism and burial rates, were first calculated for the country as a whole using Rickman's collection of the totals of baptisms and burials recorded in parish registers in every tenth year in the 18th century. Since there was no Census in the 18th century, the size of the population at each date had to be estimated by starting from a date in the 19th century for which there was a Census, and then working backwards subtracting the surplus of baptisms over burials found in each decade.<sup>2</sup> The birth and death rates calculated in this way were therefore doubly dependent on the accuracy of the original totals of baptisms, marriages, and burials; but these have been called into question because of the inadequacies of the Church of England and the prevalence of nonconformity, particularly in urban areas in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.<sup>3</sup>

This ill-fated attempt at a more detailed understanding of population change through calculating national birth and death rates sprang out of an interest in the

relationship between population change and industrialisation. As industrialisation came to be seen more as comprising a series of local developments, population study too began to take on a local aspect. Two important advantages were immediately apparent. First, local studies brought out the wide local variations, which, like local variations in economic experience, had been masked by taking national, or even county, aggregates. By studying population changes in adjacent, but economically dissimilar parishes, as in Chambers' classic study of the Vale of Trent, a greater insight could be gained into the relationship between population change and economic development.<sup>4</sup> The second advantage lay in the greater ease with which it became possible to assess the evidence in local studies. The debate on the national figures has so publicised the deficiencies of Anglican registration that it is perhaps worthwhile emphasising that what is true of registers in the industrial north in the early 19th century is not necessarily true of registers in parishes throughout the rest of the country since the mid-sixteenth century. When working on a local scale it is usually possible to investigate whether the parish did suffer from under-registration through neglect or nonconformity, and then to make due allowance for this fact. On the other hand the calculation of baptism and burial rates is much more uncertain on a local scale than it is nationally. This is because the method of estimating the size of population by subtracting the surplus of baptisms over burials backwards from a known 19th century census figure is likely to give misleading results if, as was usually the case, the population size was changing through people entering or leaving the parish, as well as through the natural surplus of baptisms over burials. Indeed the inaccuracies involved in constantly having to guess at the size of the population is a powerful argument against using the conventional baptism and burial rates in local studies, and I believe we can discover much about the general course of population change in a parish by using the simple totals of baptisms, burials and marriages alone.<sup>5</sup>

But even if we were in a position to calculate accurate birth and death rates we should not be very much the wiser, for these rates are very summary ones, and are in consequence difficult to interpret. Let us consider, by way of example, what a rise in the birth rate might mean. Since births are produced by women of child-bearing age, a rise in the birth rate may merely reflect the fact that women of this age now comprise a rather larger proportion of the population than they did before, perhaps as a result of a bout of influenza which has killed off most of the over-fifties. And since illegitimacy was relatively uncommon in the past, the number of children born, and therefore also the birth rate, will also be influenced by changes both in the age at which women got married and in how many women never got married at all. In addition, the birth rate may reflect changes in fertility within marriage which may come about for a number of reasons. The frequency of intercourse or the frequency of miscarriages may vary because of changes in diet or disease, or because of changes in social custom. If prolonged breastfeeding is practised the chances of conception will be reduced, thereby lengthening the interval between successive births and reducing the total number of children a woman is likely to bear. Finally, fertility may be deliberately reduced through birth control.

There are therefore many elements affecting birth rate and if we are really interested in knowing why more births occurred in the past we need to be able to investigate these different aspects of demographic behaviour in considerable detail. Today this can be done by taking advantage of the wealth of information available from modern censuses and vital registration, but before the 19th century we have to rely on the parish registers alone. The technique of family reconstitution was developed to meet this problem by basing demographic calculations on family forms which contain details of the baptism, marriage and burial entries for each member of the family taken from the parish registers.<sup>6</sup> Thanks to family reconstitution we now have detailed knowledge of the population history of a few parishes. It is, however, unlikely that it will ever be possible to study the majority of parishes in such depth, for many do not have sufficiently good registration for family reconstitution to be successful, and in any case the whole process is extremely time-consuming and expensive.

This search after ever more detailed demographic measures, culminating in family reconstitution, has brought historical demographers down from the clouds of statistical abstraction to the real life events which individuals experienced in the past. The case, for example, of a man suddenly marrying at age 35, a few months after his father's death, raises the question of how far marriage opportunities were determined by customs governing how property was to be handed on from one generation to another. The study of individuals, in other words, forces the demographic historian to consider much more carefully the social and economic setting in which the population lived. The conditions governing marriage are obviously important. If, for example, a couple was expected to be economically independent, and to live in a separate house, marriage will have depended on the ability of young people to save in order to accumulate sufficient household goods, and on the availability of housing. Social and economic considerations of this kind will therefore have led to a slower rate of formation of new families than would have been the case if men and women had married immediately on attaining physical maturity. If, as may have been the case in some agricultural areas, economic independence presupposed the acquisition of a landholding, opportunities for marriage will also have been bound up with customs governing the transmission of property between the generations. If property was usually handed over only on the death of a parent then inheritance customs will have played a part in determining the expectations of the children, and marriage will have also been linked with adult mortality. Economic and social arrangements of this kind may indeed have led to a considerable geographical mobility on the part of the children, for some parents will have had no surviving children to succeed to their property when they died, while others will have been outlived by several children. Thus in such a society demography, social custom, economic practice and geographical mobility may all have been closely linked together.

This an attractive possibility to many demographic historians because it provides them with a means of understanding how the various demographic measures of fertility, mortality and nuptiality may have fitted together through their interaction with the local social and economic setting. But it also means that they must begin to study that setting and work with documents which are more familiar to the

local historian; for example, wills, inventories, manorial court rolls, and Poor Law assessments and payments. Taken in conjunction with the parish registers, these sources open up a wide range of new questions, or new ways of looking at old questions. These might include: what were the ways in which property was bequeathed? How much, and what kind, of property was left to widows and what to sons and daughters? What in practice were the consequences for children's inheritances if their widowed mother remarried? Did sons in fact wait for their father to die before marrying? And if they married before he died, did the father transfer any property to them? Or did they get married and make their own way regardless of their expectations of inheritance? Did the amount of land that a man held depend on the number of able-bodied children that he had, so that he began his married life with little land, acquired more as his children grew up, and then gave away or sold off land as his children left home and he grew old? Or did he keep roughly the same amount of land right through his life? Did the number of children that he had depend upon his wealth, with relatively rich people marrying earlier and having many children? Or was it the other way round with poor people marrying earlier, having many children and falling on parish relief, while the rich remained rich just because prudently they married late and practised family limitation?

Questions of this kind clearly touch on many aspects of local history, and just as demographers have much to learn from exploring more thoroughly the local context in which a population lived, so local historians might gain much from studying in detail the demographic experience of the families who inhabited their parish in the past.

#### NOTES

1. I discuss some of the issues raised in this article more fully in an article 'Historical demography: some possibilities and some limitations' in the 'Transactions of the Royal Historical Society' (1971), as does E.A. Wrigley in his book 'Population and History', (Weidenfeld and Nicholson [World University Library], 1969).
2. The various ways in which this was done are well summarized by D.V. Glass in chapter 9 of D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley, eds., 'Population in History' (Edward Arnold, 1965).
3. See J.T. Krause 'The changing adequacy of English Registration', chapter 15 in the same book.
4. Published as 'Economic History Review, Supplement 3' (1957).
5. See, for example, my article in 'Local Population Studies' No. 5 (Autumn 1970), pp.9-16; D. Turner on 'The effective family' in 'Local Population Studies' No. 2 (Spring 1969) pp.47-52, and articles by L. Bradley on seasonality in 'Local Population Studies' Nos. 4 (Spring 1970), 5 (Autumn 1970) and 6 (Spring 1971).
6. The process of family reconstitution as applied to English registers is described fully in chapter 4 of E.A. Wrigley, ed., 'Introduction to English historical demography' (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966).

#### RURAL EDUCATION; PROBLEMS AND SOURCES.

R.R. Sellman

The existence of school logbooks from the later nineteenth century is sufficiently commonplace to require little comment, beyond the caution that they start only when a school comes under inspection under 'Payment by Results', which in Devon may be any date from 1862 to 1892 (or even later). The opening of a logbook, therefore cannot be accepted without other evidence as showing the opening of a school; and the interpretation of logbook evidence requires a knowledge of the successive Codes under which schools operated, for which reference must be made to the Reports of the Committee of Council. Surviving schools mostly still have their original logbooks (though some have vanished, probably into the hands of the incumbent); and those of most, but by no means all, closed schools may be found in the County Record Office.

But for Devon there is a wealth of evidence going back for two centuries before 1862. The Diocesan records in the CRO mostly begin with the Restoration, in the form of Visitation Books, Licence Books, Petitions for Licences, and the Subscription Book required by the Act of Uniformity. Taken together, these reveal a surprising amount about educational provision in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in the period when all schoolmasters were required to be licensed by the Bishop. They also reveal that legal requirements were not always enforceable - a situation which in some respects prevailed until the appearance of Local Education Authorities in the present century - since some petitioners naively state that they have already been teaching for many years, and have been spurred to apply for a licence only to frustrate a newly-established rival.

One discovers, for instance, a flourishing Grammar School existing in Thorverton before and after the Civil War, alongside a preparatory English School, both under licensed (lay) masters; and at the same time it becomes obvious that a number of 'Grammar Schools' incautiously reported by some historians in unlikely places represented no more than an incumbent from time to time taking a few pupils to occupy his leisure and supplement his income. Licence Books specify for what subjects the licence is given, and together with petitions indicate which places offered Latin and which only English subjects, and whether there is a succession of licences implying an established school or a single one indicating an ephemeral venture. The decline of interest in Latin by the later eighteenth century is well documented; and some endowed schools which originally taught it, as at Clyst Hydon, Colyton, Bow and Silvertown, ceased to do so.

Licence Petitions often reflect the contemporary background. Those immediately after the Restoration sometimes urge previous royalist service as a justification; by the turn of the century there is frequent anxiety to exclude, and to get the Bishop to deal with, Dissenting schoolmasters; and likewise, in some

places, anxiety to restrict teaching to the local poor to 'keep them off the parish'. Some petitions, incidentally, are masterpieces of florid penmanship.

For the eighteenth century the returns from each parish to the Bishop's Visitation Queries (preserved in the CRO for 1746, 1764, 1779, and 1798, as well as for 1821) offer valuable evidence on the success or failure of the contemporary Charity School movement in a rural context, and on parish schools in general. They also show whether the incumbent was a remote absentee, and in such cases caution may be needed in interpreting a nil return. Occasionally they reveal that the Charity Commissioners of c.1820 had been successfully misled by defaulting charity trustees, as at Slapton, where their report of the endowed school's continuation since 1746 is flatly contradicted in every eighteenth century return. We learn instead that it had been established before that date, but by then and for the rest of the century was extinct because 'the parish was cheated of the money'. In general the returns allow a distinction to be made between established parish schools and the 'private adventure' and dame variety, and give some evidence of endowments and curriculum.

Not till the nineteenth century do State-sponsored enquiries begin. The first of these is the 1818 Return to the Select Committee on the Education of the Poor, of which the County Library HQ has a copy. This is not invariably trustworthy in detail (as Parson Froude's ridiculous return for South Molton shows) but nevertheless contains much that is useful if approached with caution. It records provision (or lack of it) in each parish, sometimes with telling comments, and gives the first general evidence for National and Sunday schools. Almost contemporary are the 1819-1823 Reports of the Charity Commissioners (County Library HQ), which detail educational endowments of all types, from Grammar Schools (mostly in a very parlous state) and substantial endowed schools like Silvertown and Walkhampton, to tiny rentcharges of £1 a year (or less) to support one or two pupils in a dame school. They also show (as at Marwood and Farrington) how an educational endowment could be diverted to relieve the Poor Rate when a teacher became unfit to carry on.

The 1833 parish Returns (PP 1835 XLIII, University Library) are somewhat more reliable, though still requiring caution. Schools "at parents' expense" alone are generally well distinguished from those having some measure of public character and external support; but the numbers of children quoted tend suspiciously to multiples of ten, and cannot be uncritically accepted as evidence for actual attendance. Sunday as well as day schools are recorded, and the prevalence of the former at this time to some extent reflects the shortage of daily provision. The 1851 Census of Education (CRO) unfortunately gives figures only for Unions, but has valuable general information on day and Sunday schools in the county. Comparison with the contemporary religious census highlights the Church's quite disproportionate control of day schools, reflecting rural Nonconformity's lack of funds (while its proliferation of unpaid Sunday school teachers reflects its enthusiasm).

Meanwhile, the essential Annual Reports of the Committee of Council for Education become available from 1839-40, and up to 1870-71 these may be consulted in the Cathedral Library, though later volumes are obtainable only in or from central libraries. These show the gradual, and at first very tentative, injection of State aid and influence into rural schools. For a few years in the 1840's and early 50's many individual school reports are included, showing the whole gamut from such paragons of contemporary excellence as the Bampton Street Infants School in Tiverton to the merest dame schools masquerading under the title 'National'. Amongst the latter one finds, for example, Holcombe Burnell, where in 1848 the 'very earnest and careful' mistress (paid £5 and collecting about £6 in fees) kept good discipline but had not much method, and gave no secular instruction at all; or Cadeleigh, with its 'good, quiet, uneducated dame'. The chronic difficulties which then beset rural education are amply documented in the general reports of successive HMI's, as well as the tendency for the Department's cumulative efforts to overcome these to result only in enlarging discrepancies, since, on the principle of aiding only self-help, grants and improvements were confined to the minority already enjoying adequate local support.

Concurrently come the annual reports of the Diocesan Board of Education, established on the initiative of the National Society to improve Church schools, which survive in St. Luke's. These to some extent supplement the already massive evidence of those of the Committee of Council, because dealing with schools then outside HMI's orbit, and also with the training of teachers. Up to 1887, when the Diocesan Board transferred its interest in schools to the Diocesan Conference in order to concentrate on teacher-training, these reports continue to illuminate the Voluntary School response to changing circumstances.

The Newcastle Report (PP 1861 XXI) contains a further parochial return for 1858, and a particular report on rural districts including Axminster Union; and that of the Endowed Schools Commission (PP 1867-8 XXVIII) has something to say on endowed elementary schools and a great deal on the sad state of most Grammar Schools which had not already sought salvation by converting themselves into boarding establishments for outsiders. Both may be obtained with the help of local librarians from the National Central Library; but in the latter case it is advisable to specify firmly that the Devon volume only is required - otherwise two dozen massive tomes will arrive at vast expense. The 1870 Return for parishes outside municipal boroughs (PP 1871 LV) is also useful, though again needs careful interpretation. It classifies as 'private' a large number of schools which other evidence shows to have been Parochial, National, or Church village schools; some known to have been then extant are omitted; and its figures for average attendance, where these can be checked against the Grant List, show an average exaggeration of about 11%.

One of the less unfortunate results of the 1862 'Revised Code' was the requirement already mentioned that each school receiving grant should keep, *inter alia*, a logbook. From that date an increasing number of schools have such



individual records, though most start in the 1870's. Managers of schools which remained Voluntary kept Minute Books; but these, if they have survived, have nearly all remained in private hands and are hard to trace. More accessible are the Minute Books of post-1870 School Boards, some of which may be found in schools or Record Offices, and these give information on administration and internal Board politics to supplement the logbook. The Committee of Council reports also give the detailed income and expenditure figures for every School Board until 1895, which allow interesting and significant calculations, as well as comments by local HMI's which bear out the almost universal logbook evidence that compulsory attendance remained a dead letter in rural areas so long as every village was its own Education Authority. Minute Books, as well as HMI's remarks recorded in logbooks, do much to explain the extent to which small School Boards evaded, or failed to carry out, the intentions of legislators. At Bratton Clovelly the letter of the 1870 Act was used to frustrate its spirit, by transferring the management of the rate-supported Board School to the Rector, his wife, and his daughters. Elsewhere spirit and letter were often alike defied, in giving denominational religious instruction, neglecting to enforce attendance, starving a school to keep down rates, and rigging Board membership repeatedly to avoid the cost (and uncertainty) of an election.

The files of the 'Western Times' (Devon and Exeter Institution) and of similar local newspapers are informative on School Board politics and other educational issues, particularly in the 1870's. They help to explain the vagaries of the 'cumulative vote' electoral system, and explain local scandals (like the dissolution of the Braunton School Board) on which official sources are evasive. Directories, from White's 1850 onwards, also contain much information on schools, and Kelly's 1902 is particularly useful, though care should in some cases be taken to check that later entries (as in 1890) are not simply uncorrected repeats of an earlier version. Local memory is also worth consulting.

Space compels much more to be omitted; but it must be said in conclusion that schools existed in a social and economic setting very different from that of today, and that a real appreciation of their history must take this into account. The sources mentioned above contain much that is directly relevant here, but also need supplementing from the general social history of the locality. The system of parish apprenticeship, widespread in rural Devon down to the middle of the last century, was in its time a serious limitation on the length and effectiveness of schooling, as was the current belief that reading and religious instruction were enough for the future labourer. Poverty, and the consequent need for children to earn something as early and often as possible, continued to frustrate the intentions of legislators and the hopes of reformers throughout the last century; and an almost feudal social stratification lasted in villages at least till 1914. In the absence of modern mass-media and the petrol engine, the physical and mental isolation of villagers (on which some schoolmasters could be quoted) was an obstacle now hard to appreciate. The history of rural schools is therefore to a large extent a reflection of the communities which they served, at least until after the Act of 1902 brought them under the equalising influence of outside control.

## TOMBSTONE RECORDING.

Jennifer Barber

Over the last few years we have had to face the truth that much of the visible evidence of our past is disappearing rapidly, for ours is an era of demolition, redevelopment, road-building and industrialization, on a quite unprecedented scale. "Preservationist" has become the latest word of abuse in the English language, but if we cannot find a compromise between inevitable change and the need to preserve some tangible links with the past in which our culture, indeed our very society, have their roots, then our lives and the lives of our children will be irretrievably impoverished.

We have become accustomed to the sight of our town centres being disembowelled to make room for supermarkets and multi-storey car parks, and we have grown used to the inexorable advance of the motor-way, regardless of all in its path, but less dramatic destruction is taking place all the time through our own neglect and indifference. This is true even in churchyards and burial grounds where few people seem to recognize that the old gravestones, such a familiar part of the landscape, are in fact valuable records for the genealogist and local historian, or that their sculpture illustrates a long tradition of English folk art, kept alive by the work of generations of local craftsmen. Thousands of tombstones are destroyed every year without any kind of record being made, as disused burial grounds are cleared and churchyards are 'tidied-up' for easier maintenance. In some places they are laid down as paving and soon worn smooth; elsewhere they even find their way into private houses where they are used to repair old slate or flag-stone floors.

The epitaphs on tombstones, often quoted for their unconscious humour or the quaint naivety of their sentiments, can in fact supply more information about the deceased than is to be found in the parish register. Age at death, occupation, place of abode, and close relationships are likely to be stated. The cause of death may also be mentioned as at Instow in north Devon, where a young brother and sister were buried together on the same day in March 1690. Their double headstone, cut from a single slate, records

"Their tender age the small-pox did not spare,  
That mortal sickness to the young and fair."

Epidemics, ship-wrecks, mining accidents, and other disasters of great importance to the local community are all chronicled in the graveyard.

The carvings which adorn so many tombstones range from simple traditional motifs to highly elaborate artistic designs, and they form a unique record of the achievements of countless humble craftsmen who would otherwise be unknown to us. The most common subjects are such symbols of mortality as skulls and bones, coffins and grave-diggers' tools, while hour-glasses, sun-dials and clocks remind us of the relentless passing of time. Angels, sometimes

no more than stylized heads with wings, sometimes fat-cheeked, curly-headed cherubs, and sometimes full length figures in night-gowns, blowing the trumpets of Judgement Day, are also frequently depicted with a happier emphasis on the hope of resurrection.

During the latter half of the 18th century these subjects are gradually overtaken by the Georgian concept of classical design, which introduced the pagan urn into graveyard sculpture together with festooning draperies, fluted columns, wreaths and weeping female figures. The early work of John Deacon of Milton Abbot shows this tradition very much alive and artistically valid in the 1820s, but although classical taste continued to dominate the scene its imagery becomes increasingly lifeless and heavy until we are left with the dismal stereotypes of the 1850s and 60s.

Not all masons confined themselves to the well-worn paths of convention, and occasionally a highly individual choice of subject is to be found such as the 1769 Adam and Eve at Peter Tavy. In Bideford churchyard, a slate to the memory of Captain Henry Clark, who was once 'Master of a vessel all his own' yet died in the Workhouse, is carved with a beautifully incised illustration of a small sailing ship. Flowers, musical instruments, tools belonging to the trade of the deceased, mermaids, and allegorical figures such as Faith and Hope, are all to be found on tombstones.

From about the middle of the 18th century it became increasingly common for the mason to sign his work, usually at the bottom of the stone where it may now be covered by grass and a rising soil level, but sometimes at the top among border decoration. Signed stones make it possible to assess how widely one man's work was distributed outside his own parish, and to what extent his style developed during the course of his career. Even in the smallest community the local mason would turn his hand to carving tombstones in addition to his usual work, just as the village carpenter would provide coffins when required and probably the majority of early tombstones in our churchyards were carved by non-specialists.

By the end of the 18th century some masons had established workshops in close proximity to the quarries, and like John Parsons of Cann Quarry, Plymouth, were beginning to specialize. Others maintained an active interest in several branches of the trade simultaneously. Richard Isbell of Stonehouse was the mason appointed to supervise the building of Plymouth's new Guildhall in 1800. He also engraved tombstones and was responsible for numerous interior monuments described by Pevsner as 'elaborate and rather tasteless'. In 1815 he called himself a stonemason, but by 1822 this had become 'builder and sculptor'.

Different types of local stone afforded different opportunities to the mason and also imposed different limitations, giving rise to such distinctly local variations as the small and stumpy, disc-headed gravestones, mostly belonging

to the late 17th and early 18th centuries, which are to be found around Lydford and Tavistock, cut from moorland granite and carved roughly with initials, a date, and a simple motif such as a heart. Some stones weather so badly that after a few decades of exposure to rain and frost and the growth of lichens and ivy they are completely illegible; others, particularly slate which is impermeable, remain astonishingly clear in every detail after centuries.

Slate was quarried in many parts of Devon before the quarries of Delabole cornered the market, and it has inspired some of the finest graveyard sculpture in the county. Also, the complete history of English post-Reformation lettering is illustrated on slate headstones, including the elaborate cursive scripts of the 18th century, which were painstakingly copied from the popular hand-writing manuals of the period. Calligraphic devices of great ingenuity - birds in flight, angels and other designs - demonstrate a formidable and highly-sophisticated engraving technique.

The historical and aesthetic value of tombstones was recognized in the very first issue of this magazine when Professor Minchinton included them in his suggested 'Tasks for Devon Historians'. Since then, members interested in making a record of tombstones in their own areas have met to discuss a uniform approach, and to agree on the best recording methods. It is hoped that copies of the completed lists of inscriptions will be deposited at the County Record Office and local libraries. Where possible these lists will also specify the type of monument, its material, and the name of the mason, and describe the style of decoration and lettering. A visual record of particularly interesting tombstones, either by drawing, rubbing, or photography is also planned, and the National Monuments Record has generously offered to help with photographic costs. Members are already at work in the parishes of Bideford, Clyst St. Mary, Chardstock, Dawlish, Widecombe and Egg Buckland, but many more volunteers are needed to make a survey adequate to the needs of such a large county as Devon.

If these monuments are allowed to disappear unrecorded it will be entirely due to our indifference; we will not be able to plead ignorance as our excuse.

## DEVON BIOGRAPHY

The compilation of a biographical dictionary takes a long time even when undertaken on a full-time professional basis, and when it is done by volunteers working in their spare time it must inevitably be spread over a number of years. Therefore, it is all the more important that the job should be tackled systematically from the outset, and one essential task which must be part of the system is the creation of a card index of Devonians who are deemed suitable for inclusion in the dictionary. The ultimate object would then be to produce a concise biographical article for every person in the index.

The Burnet Morris index at Exeter City Library and indexes in the local collections at Plymouth and Torbay contain a vast number of biographical references, and a co-ordinated effort to sift through these could produce a suitably representative index of names in a comparatively short time. This index in itself, provided it contained information as to sources, could be a useful publication.

If anybody has an occasional spare hour which could be devoted to going through any of the three above-mentioned collections, their help would be appreciated. The exercise is not such a chore as it first appears, for one comes across many interesting characters on the way through. If you can help, please contact John Thorne, Rock Cottage, Combeinteignhead.

At the same time volunteers are required for writing biographical articles on Devonians whose names are already on the list, and, in addition, family historians are invited to submit either biographical notices or index entries for any families or members of families whom they consider worthy of inclusion. To qualify for an entry in the biographical dictionary they should have had some significance in the history or economic life of the county.

Index entries should be in the following form: 1. Surname 2. Christian names (and title if any) 3. Birth and death dates 4. Birthplace 5. Designation, or particular reason for inclusion 6. Sources (printed and MS).

Biographies should be laid out as follows: 1. Surname 2. Christian names (and title, if any) 3. Birth date and death date 4. Designation 5. Birthplace 6. Biographical material 7. Bibliography (printed and MS.) 8. Initials of contributor. Members of the Peerage will appear under their family name, followed by their title, e.g. Bouchier, William, 3rd Earl of Bath. In the case of families the heading should be the family name, followed by a note on origins and significance, after which any noteworthy members can be dealt with in chronological order.

of the strikers' chief weapons seems to have been community hymn singing at all times of the day and night. But perhaps Cornwall in 1913 was an exception; cataloguing the economic disasters which befell Cornish miners, farmers, fishers and clayworkers in the late nineteenth century, Mr. Ravensdale remarks, "Cornwall became very Celtic; a century of such gloom might well make Celts of us all."

The other two papers are not specifically about the South-west, but of interest to it. F.C. Mather writes on "The General Strike of 1842: A Study of Leadership, Organisation and the threat of Revolution during the Plug Plot Disturbances". The Plug Riots were very widespread, though apparently centred on Manchester. Mr. Mather asks to what extent these disturbances were chiefly motivated by industrial grievances and towards economic objectives, and to what extent political, bound up with Chartism and the Corn Law movement. The answer, not surprisingly, seems to be that some leaders were able to inject political elements into a general situation of economic discontent. On the whole "working

THE STORY OF WILLIAM COOKWORTHY by Hubert Fox, written for the Cookworthy Museum Kingsbridge, 1972, 30pp. price not given.

This pamphlet was written to coincide with the opening of the Cookworthy Museum, Kingsbridge. It is in fact almost as much a brief history of Kingsbridge as it is an account of Cookworthy, since there are three chapters on the Civil War and on 17th century Kingsbridge and on Thomas Crispin the founder of the Grammar School. These are however all relevant to Cookworthy's early life

the approach of the authors to their subjects and the treatment of their material varies greatly, but the papers are all of high standard. Interesting particularly is the greater attention which is now being paid to the British ship registry as source material for economic and social historians. Rupert Jarvis's paper is of particular value and the contribution by C. H. Ward Jackson shows very ably how this material can be applied in analysing the social and economic background to shipowning in rural areas.

"Ports and Shipping in the South West" is to be highly recommended and the Department of Economic History of Exeter University to be congratulated not only on holding these symposia, which are continuing, but on so competently publishing their results.

Basil Greenhill

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- Exeter and its Region edited by Frank Barlow, 1969, £ 2.50.  
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Benjamin Donn's Map of Devon: 1765, 1965, £3.00.  
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To be published shortly:  
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