

The Devon Historian

April 1985

30



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All correspondence relating to membership, personal local history interests and offers of work or assistance should be sent to the Secretary, John Pike, 82 Hawkins Avenue, Chelston, Torquay.

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The *Devon Historian* is available free to all members of the Devon History Society. Membership subscriptions for the current year are as follows: Individual: £5.00; Family: £6.00; Libraries, Museums, Schools and Record Offices: £5.00; Institutions and societies: £7.00. Please send subscriptions to the Treasurer, David Edmund, 16 King Street, Silverton, Exeter EX5 4JG.

THE DEVON HISTORIAN

Correspondence relating to the *Devon Historian* and contributions for publication should be sent to Mrs Helen Harris, Hon. Editor, The Devon Historian, Hironelles, 22 Churchill Road, Whitchurch, Tavistock. The deadline for the next issue is 1 July 1985. Books for review should be sent to Mrs S. Stirling, c/o Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter.

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY: CONFERENCES

One-day conferences will be held at the George Hotel, Axminster, on Saturday, 23 March and at Braunton on 1 June, 1985 (details later).

The print on the cover is *The Lace Factory & School, Tiverton*, lithograph by W. Spreat from Harding, Lt. Col. W.: *The history of Tiverton. 1845-7*. 2 vols. (Somers Cocks, No. 2983). The school is referred to in the article on J. N. Singleton in this issue.

Editorial		3
Devon History Society Publications		3
The Puffing Giant: origins of the Dartmouth Floating Bridge	KEITH S. PERKINS	4
The Church of St Mary at Totnes	E. N. MASSON PHILLIPS	9
Forthcoming index		12
J. N. Singleton: first headmaster of the first factory school in the South West	RUTH HARRIS	13
The dangers of enthusiasm	JEAN TSUSHIMA	18
A Charter of King Aethelwulf	HELEN MARY PETTER	21
Bradninch Manor	C. A. RALEGH RADFORD	25
Notes:		30
A history of Brixham		
Robert Fulton: a correction		
Barns Campaign		
Devon History Society, 14th AGM		31
New Contributors		32
Further observations on Plymouth's News-rooms, Reading Rooms and Institutions -- c. 1824	C. A. LEWIS	33
Reviews:		
Honiton: a history of the manor and the borough, by J. R. W. Coxhead		35
Raleigh's birthplace: the story of East Budleigh, by Lilian Sheppard		35
The Parliamentary Survey of the Duchy of Cornwall. Pt. 2: Isles of Scilly to West Antony and Manors in Devon; ed. Norman G. Pounds		36
Aunt Belle's Diary: transcribed by Constance Cowan and Lois Castledine		37
Outside the law: studies in crime and order 1650-1850; ed. John Rule		38
The Exeter Canal, by Kenneth R. Clew		39
The Lower Otter Valley; published by the Otter Valley Association		40
Books received		40

EDITORIAL

We were delighted to hear at our AGM last October that Mrs Helen Harris had agreed to take on the editorship of the *Devon Historian*. The next issue (October 1985) will therefore be under new management. Helen Harris is, of course, already known to historians in Devon and much farther afield through her books and newspaper articles, notably *The industrial archaeology of Dartmoor*, *The Bude Canal* and *The Grand Western Canal*, all of which are models of scholarship and technical production, auguring well for the future of the *Devon Historian*.

It was the enthusiasm and commitment of our first editor, Robin Stanes, which in large part provided the impetus to launch the *Devon Historian* and after eight years he handed over a very flourishing concern. Another seven years on, thanks to a never-failing supply from you the contributors and the constant support and advice of our officers, I can report that the journal is still reassuringly robust. Robin has always regretted that we do not publish more of the 'how to' articles, guiding amateurs in the methodology of research. Unfortunately such articles are rarely submitted. Helen Harris will perhaps not thank me for saying this but it is good to know that if none are forthcoming in future our new editor is exceptionally well qualified to remedy the deficiency!

I should like to thank in particular our Treasurer, David Edmund, for his many good counsels and James Gould of the University of Exeter Teaching Services Centre for his help in the production and printing of the journal. From now on, please send any manuscripts for consideration to: Mrs Helen Harris, Hirondelles, 22 Churchill Road, Whitchurch, Tavistock. Please continue to send to me at the Devon & Exeter Institution any books for review and also any details of society meetings, lectures, outings, etc. for inclusion in the combined list we send to members twice a year.

Sheila Stirling

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

The following numbers of *The Devon Historian* can be obtained for £1.00 (plus postage) from Mrs S. Stirling, Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter: Nos. 1-6, 8-10, 12-14, 17-21, 24-26. Also available (all prices plus postage): *Devon Newspapers*, 60p; *Index to Devon Historian 1-15*, 20p; *Devon Bibliography 1980* (=DH No. 22), 50p; *Devon Bibliography 1981*, 60p.

The Hon. Secretary, Mr John Pike, 82 Hawkins Avenue, Chelston, Torquay, would be glad to acquire copies of *The Devon Historian* Nos. 7, 11, 15, 16, 23 which are now out of stock.

THE PUFFING GIANT:
origins of the Dartmouth Floating Bridge

Keith S. Perkins

At 12.30 on the afternoon of Friday, 19th August 1831, the first Dartmouth Chain and Steam Floating Bridge (designated originally as a Flying Bridge Ferry¹ and known today as the Higher Ferry), was inaugurated across the River Dart between Lower Sand Quay and Lower Noss Point. Valentine Butteris, a contemporary author, called it 'the puffing giant'.



*Reproduced by permission of Rendel, Palmer & Tritton
James Meadows Rendel FRS, 1799-1856.*

In 1807, Lord Morley of Saltram (or Lord Boringdon as he was then) had established a Flying Bridge Ferry across the Catwater at Laira, estuary of the River Plym. In 1822, Morley employed Devon civil engineer James Meadows Rendel, to design a bridge to replace this ferry. An impressive cast iron bridge of five

elliptical arches was opened to the general public in 1827. Two years later, Rendel conceived the Dartmouth Floating Bridge.

Octavian Blewitt, Secretary of the Royal Literary Fund, wrote in 1832: "... The Dartmouth Floating Bridge was established by the joint exertions of the 1st Earl of Morley, Colonel John Henry Seale and George Stanley Cary, under the provisions of an Act of Parliament and by permission of the Admiralty. It was executed on the plans and under the sole direction of J. M. Rendel esquire of Plymouth, Member of the Royal Society of Civil Engineers...."

The idea upon which Rendel had based his Floating Bridge, actually originated with a then unknown 17 year old Scot named James Nasmyth who, whilst attending the Edinburgh School of Arts, presented to the directors of the Forth and Clyde Canal Company, the drawings of a system which would permit the movement of paddle steam tugs and barges along their canal without damage to the banks. His scheme involved laying a chain cable along the bottom of the canal. The steam engine on the tug boat could thus warp its way along the chain, taking it up between the rollers on the bow and dropping it into the water at the stern. But Nasmyth's new idea was 'courteously declined'. So, how was Rendel to hear of it?

On 19th May 1829, Nasmyth left Edinburgh and came to London to seek an apprenticeship with the eminent engineer Henry Maudslay. (Maudslay had been a member of the committee of practical and civil engineers engaged by Lord Morley to examine Rendel's designs for the Laira Bridge). Nasmyth wrote later.... "I had brought with me from Edinburgh some working models of steam engines and mechanical drawings to show him...." Maudslay was greatly impressed and although he had stopped taking apprentices, Nasmyth was employed as his assistant workman. He commenced work on 30th May.

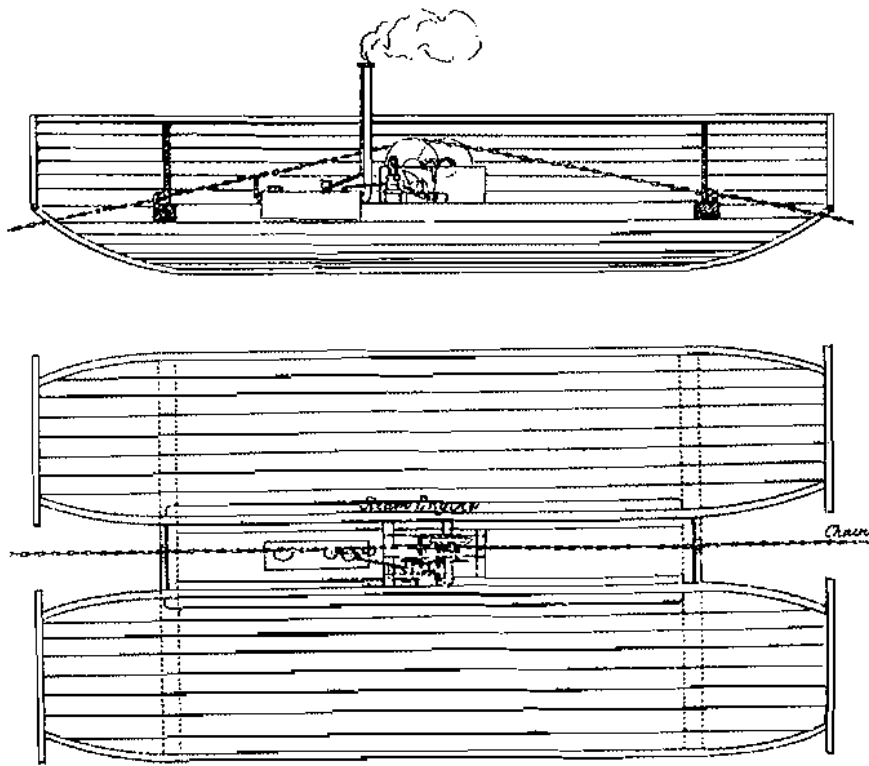
In the meantime, however, during late 1828 and early 1829, Rendel, together with Plymouth architect John Foulston, was surveying the River Dart at Greenway narrows near Dittisham in preparation for the erection there of a suspension bridge. But, by the time that Nasmyth had arrived in London to seek employment with Henry Maudslay, Rendel's suspension bridge project had come to an abrupt halt, occasioned by the intervention of James Elton, owner of Greenway House, who claimed that the bridge would materially affect the operation of his ferry at Greenway.

By his action, James Elton had effectively delayed the completion of the South Devon coast road between Exeter and Plymouth via Dawlish, Teignmouth, Torquay, Paignton, Dartmouth and Modbury; the River Dart remaining the last natural obstacle to be overcome!

Colonel John Henry Seale seems to have adequately summed up the situation when he wrote:

"... The fertility and beauty of the country on each side of the River Dart, from its mouth to Totnes, is proverbial, and within the last few years vast improvements have been made, and are now in progress in the roads in the districts. But these improvements are limited in their utility, from the want of a more commodious union than the two common ferries of Dartmouth and Dittisham afford...."

The two ferries referred to by Colonel Seale were, undoubtedly, James Elton's



*Reproduced by permission of James Woolloombe
Dartmouth Floating Bridge, designed 1829. Note single chain operation, changed
to twin chain before the bridge was inaugurated.*

ferry at Greenway (opposite Dittisham) and the Kingswear ferry,² some two miles down river. But the problem remained . . . How to bridge the River Dart?

In theory, the problem was resolved during the second half of 1829 when Rendel designed a new ferry-boat. This new craft appears to have been a modification of Lord Morley's Flying Bridge. It was designed to be operated by means of an endless chain cable which passed through brass collars fixed to the river bed and was to be worked by machinery on the shore. But it was never built. Indeed, the design was unceremoniously brushed to one side by Rendel himself when he introduced yet another plan; this time it was the Chain and Steam Floating Bridge, based upon Nasmyth's idea.

It is not known how Nasmyth – then Henry Maudslay's assistant workman – and the already eminent civil engineer James Meadows Rendel came to be acquainted, although Nasmyth himself makes confirmation that they were. It is however, probable that an introduction was arranged by Maudslay who had known Rendel for many years his work and his problems. Neither is it known what induced

Rendel to realise, immediately, the potential of Nasmyth's system for his own design, although Nasmyth confirms that he did.

On October 3rd 1829 (four months after Nasmyth's arrival in London), James Rendel and John Foulston, exhibited plans of the steam-driven Floating Bridge to a crowded and highly respectable meeting held at the Castle Hotel, Dartmouth where even James Elton decided (this time) not to throw any impediments in the way of the proposed plan. Despite further local opposition (much of it from the Dartmouth Corporation) the new communication was finally approved and, on the 17th June 1830, the Dartmouth Floating Bridge Bill received the Royal Assent.

The Floating Bridge itself was built by Isaac Blackburn at Turnchapel and was fitted with a steam engine and machinery by John Mare, ironfounder of Plymouth. 'The Puffing Giant' had arrived – the first-ever steam-powered Floating Bridge!³

On 15th June 1835, a letter to the Postmaster-General and signed by Lord Morley and Colonel John Henry Seale, records:

“ . . . that the plan of passing carriages, horses and cattle over broad rivers by a Floating Bridge, worked by Chain and Steam or other power was first conceived by Mr. Rendel in 1829 . . . ”

In 1843, the Royal Society of London honoured Rendel by electing him a Fellow. His proposal certificate – signed by men of great eminence, including William Cubitt, George Rennie and Sir Marc Isambard Brunel – records and gives testimony to the importance of Rendel's invention.

Rendel went on to design and establish other Chain and Steam Floating Bridges: at Saltash, Torpoint, Southampton and Gosport, and it was during a visit to Devonport on 3rd July 1845, that (the now eminent engineer) James Nasmyth witnessed, for the first time, the application of his system. Many years later – after Rendel's death in 1856 – Nasmyth recorded:

“ . . . In 1845, I had the pleasure to see this simple mode of moving vessels along a definite course in most successful action at the ferry across the Hamoaze at Devonport, in which my system of employing the power of a steam engine on board the ferry-boat, to warp its way along a submerged chain (cable) lying along the bottom of the channel from side to side of the ferry, was most ably carried out by my late, excellent friend James Meadows Rendel Esq., civil engineer . . . ”

Today, Floating Bridges still operate across the River Dart at Dartmouth⁴ and the River Tamar at Torpoint where Rendel established such craft 150 years ago. The firm that Rendel went on to found, is today still very active. Rendel, Palmer and Tritton, Consulting Engineers, are now probably best known to the general public for the design and supervision of construction of the Thames Flood Barrier at Woolwich, officially opened on May 8th 1984 by H.M. the Queen.

APPENDIX

Dartmouth Floating Bridge (Founded 1830)

Principal Proprietors: First Earl of Morley, Col. John Henry Seale, George Stanley Cary, Henry Woolloombe.

First Committee of Management (From 17th June 1830)

Sir Laurence Vaughan Palk, Col. John Henry Seale, George Stanley Cary, William

John Clark, Henry Limbrey Toll, William Lamb Hockin, Charles Seale Hayne, Nicholas Gillard and John Foulston the eminent Plymouth Architect, who also helped to plan the project.

THE CHURCH OF ST MARY AT TOTNES

E. N. Masson Phillips

Capital Expenditure:

	£	s.	d.
Floating Bridge. (Twin hulls).	950	0	0
Engine and Chains.	750	0	0
Piers and Landing Places.	600	0	0
Contingencies.	250	0	0
	<u>£2550</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Daily Expenses (During first 3 years)

	s.	d.
1 Man to attend bridge.	2	0
1 Man to attend engine.	3	0
6 Bushels of coal.	5	0
	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>

Notes:

1. The term Flying Bridge (instead of Floating Bridge) was used on the foundation stone when it was laid at Lower Sandquay by Miss Seale on 28th April 1831. It was also used on maps of that period.
2. John Fownes Luttrell, proprietor of the Kingswear Ferry, was paid an agreed sum of £60 per annum by the Dartmouth Floating Bridge Co., to compensate him for loss of revenue due to the competition offered by the Floating Bridge when it was inaugurated in 1831.
3. In November 1836, the 'company' was forced to replace the steam engine, on the Floating Bridge, with horse propulsion using a treadmill winch, for economy reasons.
4. In September 1855, the Dartmouth Floating Bridge (after 24 years) sank at its mooring as the result of a violent storm. It was never again put into service, but in October 1856, the service was renewed when a similarly operated 'bridge' ordered by Sir Henry Paul Seale, and built by William Kelly of Dartmouth was established.

Sources:

Morley Papers: Acc.69 (West Devon Area Record Office)
 Seale Papers (Torquay Reference Library)
 Post Office Archives
 An Act for establishing a Floating Bridge over the Harbour at Dartmouth. *Local & Personal Acts, 2 Geo IV, cap.cxxvii, 1830.*
Exeter Flying Post, May 4, 1831.
Western Times, Sept. 3, 1831.
 Blewitt, Octavian *Panorama of Torquay*; 2nd ed. 1833.
 Butteris, Valentine *Guide to the Dart*. 1852.
 Nasmyth, James *An autobiography*; new ed. 1885.
 Barton, D. B. *The Cornish Beam Engine*. 1966.
 Rendel, J. M. 'Torpoint Floating Bridge' in *Trans. Inst. Civil. Eng.*, v.2, 1838.
 Welch, C. E. 'The Iron Bridge at Plymouth' in *Trans. Devon. Assoc.*, v.98, 1966.
 'Thames Flood Barrier' in *Rendels News*, May/June, 1984.

In Saxon times Totnes was an important burh with a mint and it is therefore probable that there was a Saxon church but, if so, no trace now exists although the suggestion is evidently confirmed by the inscription "SANCTA M...." on a Saxon silver penny of King Eadwig (A.D. 955-959) minted in Totnes. After the Conquest, Judhael the Norman lord of Totnes founded a priory, the later remains of which are said to be incorporated in the present guildhall and adjacent buildings. In 1088 Judhael gave the church of St Mary of Totnes to the abbot – presumably the original Saxon church; whether it continued also to serve the town or whether, even in early days, there were two separate churches, is uncertain and it is of little value merely to speculate.

Fortunately, by the 15th century there is abundant evidence, documentary and otherwise, to demonstrate that the bulk of the present parish church was then in the process of erection, or perhaps re-erection, as a result partly of Bishop Lacy's action of 1432 where indulgences were granted to all those who contributed towards the building and construction of the new church and in accordance with an agreement of 1445 between the priory and the borough. This new church consisted originally of a nave with north and south aisles, a chancel and an impressive west tower. There were doors at the west end, the south side, with a porch and chamber above, the north side, and a priest's door in the north wall of the chancel. The sanctuary and the north and south chapels were separated from the nave and aisles by a fine stone rood screen of 1459, and there were stone parclose screens between the chancel and the two chapels. The rood loft was approached by a porch inside the chancel leading to a spiral stone staircase and a gallery along the top of the north parclose screen. Also, at the northern end of the rood loft, a rectangular doorway and a spiral staircase in the north wall gave access to the roof above the north chapel. When, at this time, the chancel was extended eastward, its north-east corner actually touched the south-west corner of the separate priory church, the west tower of which was demolished to make room for the enlarged parish church. This accounts for the curious feature of a diagonal arched passage (now blocked) between the two buildings to allow for a processional path round the new church.

Soon after the reformation the priory church was demolished and the parish church stood alone, while the other remains of the priory were converted in 1553 into a guildhall, a grammar school and a small prison.

Early in the 19th century, by which time the church was full of box pews, it was found necessary to increase the seating accommodation by the provision of large galleries, and by the building of an exterior north aisle also with a gallery which was approached by a new stair from an external door in a turret against the north wall.

Later, in the restoration of the church by Sir Gilbert Scott (c.1867), all the galleries were removed, and the exterior north aisle was extended westwards to its present length. Also a new vestry was constructed on the north side of the chancel, and the old vestry above the south chapel was removed, together with the roof-loft on top of the screen. At the same time, the fine 18th century baldachino over the high altar was destroyed, and the 17th century Corporation seats in front of the

screen were moved to their present position west of the cross-passage from the south door to the north. The box pews were replaced by those now in the church, and new windows were inserted throughout the building. Some of the older windows were blocked up, either at this time or perhaps at an earlier period.

The fine west tower was built in the mid 15th century of red sandstone and conglomerate from the geological formation known as the New Red Sandstone or Permo-Trias. Much evidence as to the work is given in Totnes Court Rolls – thus in 1449 six supervisors, together with John Bastard, were appointed to organise the building of the tower, and Roger Growdon became the master-mason. Orders were given that stones were to be dug and the necessary tools provided. In 1450 the number of supervisors was reduced to four, and it was ordered that a stone quay be constructed at the riverside to land stones for the tower. The supervisors were required to visit the belfries of Callington, Buckland, Tavistock and Ashburton to select the best design. Most authors, copying one another, identify Buckland as Buckland Brewer but it seems much more likely that Buckland Monachorum was the tower visited. The quay was duly built the same year and in 1451 the quarrying began. It was ordered that large stones should be dug at the quarry by the parishioners and thence brought by barge as far as the bridge. The stones were not to be left in the water longer than a week but were to be taken promptly to the cemetery. At the same time, those who possessed horses were to provide stones for the widening of the way near the bridge. It has been variously suggested that the quarry was either at Stoke Gabriel or on the northern side of Galmpton Creek. Unfortunately for these rash assumptions, the fact is that there is no New Red Sandstone at either place – only grey limestone. In all probability the stone was derived from one of the medieval quarries in the Paignton area which also provided the red sandstone for Paignton church and for the adjacent walls and tower of the bishop's residence. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that Stoke Gabriel or Galmpton were used as river quays to ship stone from Paignton. If, for example, it were quarried in the Collaton St Mary area it would have been possible to transport it overland to Stoke Gabriel for loading on to barges. Another possibility, but this is pure speculation, is that the stone was shipped from the ancient harbour at Livermead (SX 904628) the remains of which are still visible at low tide, and thence up the Dart to Totnes. There were medieval quarries at Corbyns Head, nearby, from which the canons of Torre Abbey were taking red sandstone in the 12th century.

The handsome tower has angle buttresses set back from the corners, prominent pinnacles and a projecting stair turret on the south face. This turret and the two southern buttresses have niches with figures. The central niche has a head with a tall mitre above the inscription "I made thys fote" and is assumed to represent Bishop Lacy of Exeter who may have paid for one foot of the tower. On the left-hand buttress there is the figure of a knight, with his right leg crossed over the left and the foot resting on a dog. The right-hand buttress has the seated figure of a woman with a draped skirt. Her hands appear to have held something on her lap. Presumably this represents the Virgin and Child, with the child's effigy now missing. Lower down on the south face of the tower is a fractured block with the initials "IP". There is a fine west doorway in white freestone, badly weathered. It has a segmental arch within a rectangular frame with quatrefoils and shields in the spandrels.

The south porch, with a chamber above approached by a stair turret and a doorway in the south aisle, has an outer doorway in white freestone. This has a pointed segmental arch, with a corresponding hood-mould terminating in two heads. The arch is deeply hollow-moulded and ornamented with many square paterae,

resembling four-petalled 'flowers'. Above this, the south face of the porch gable is clad in white freestone (probably dating from the 17th century repairs) which has weathered so badly that three shields of arms are completely indecipherable. There is evidence that the porch once possessed a stone-vaulted ceiling but this has been replaced by wood. The inner doorway has a segmental pointed arch within a hollow-moulded rectangular frame with similar ornament to the outer doorway. The spandrels are filled with ornamental foliage and shields – that on the left is indistinguishable but the right-hand shield bears the arms (three shovellers) of Bishop Lacy. The wooden doors, of early Renaissance character, are ornamented with typical motifs but one door also has the figure of an ape. At the apex there is a statue of St Loy, with his anvil, and on the wrought iron lockplate is the figure of a horse. These doors are believed to date from the middle of the 16th century.

On the south aisle the embattled parapet and its large ugly gargoyles, like the gable of the porch, are in Beer stone and date from the 17th century. There is an entry in the borough accounts for 1640-41 when John Alford was paid for his journey to Seaton to buy freestone for the church. He purchased 15 tons and hired three boats to carry it from Dartmouth. The stone was needed to restore the South-east pinnacle of the tower after it was struck by lightning, and to repair the damaged porch.

The principal points of interest on the south side of the chancel are a fine tablet, dated 1676, to Richard Vavissor, and the curious weathered scratch-dial on the eastern buttress. This will be found incised on the third block of red sandstone above the plinth and consists of a small hole for the insertion of a simple gnomon, with several lines radiating downwards from it. Before clocks were commonly in use it was necessary for the priest to know when the principal services should be held and a simple (if inaccurate) sundial was used for the purpose. Such dials often show the third, sixth and ninth hours of the day, i.e. approximately nine am, twelve noon and three pm. At the north-east corner of the chancel there is a massive buttress which is, in fact, the remains of the south-west corner of the demolished priory church, and the arched passage (now blocked) formerly gave access for a processional path around the church. Beyond it, on the north side, a fragment of 'dog tooth' string course is built into the wall. A curious splay exists on the north aisle wall which suggests that an opening once existed, although for what purpose is unknown.

Just east of the entrance to the church is an internal doorway giving access, via a turret staircase, to the room over the porch. At the east end, St George's chapel contains the fine recessed chest-tomb, under an ogee arch, of Walter Smythe, one of the founders of King Edward VI Grammar School. He died in 1555 as recorded in an inscription, part of which is on the arch and the remainder on the flat top of the chest-tomb. It contains some curious spelling and contractions. There is no effigy. The front of the chest-tomb has three panels ornamented with quatrefoils and shields, one of which bears the initials 'WS' and the other two 'Ihs.' In the north-east corner of the chapel is a large diagonal squint giving a view of the high altar.

The splendid rood screen, which has been described as 'a translation into stone of a typical westcountry wooden screen', and the two parclose screens also of stone, date from 1459-60 and still retain traces of the original colouring although all the original paintings of saints have been destroyed. The parclose screens are of a different design and the mouldings of the two chapel entrances are differently ornamented: the south chapel has alternate paterae and scallop shells – the symbol

of pilgrims to St James of Compostella, while the north chapel has what appear to be knots alternating with paterae.

The most noteworthy feature of the chancel is the curious rood-stair turret, with tall shallow niches and a heavy cornice. Access from this to the rood-loft was by a gallery on top of the northern parclose screen. On one of the risers of the upper steps is an incised inscription 'JOHN HOLMAN SEPT Ye 17 1754' the significance of which is obscure. The piscina and sedilia are modern, and the red sandstone doorway which now leads into the vestry is the original doorway in the north wall constructed in 1445 for the use of the Prior.

Several writers, copying one another, have claimed that the north aisle was about a hundred years later than the south and could not have been built before 1542. There is no valid evidence to support this theory and, in fact, there is documentary confirmation that wardens of St Leonards chapel (i.e. the north chapel) were appointed in 1444.

A curious feature in the north wall of the chapel, under a blocked window, is a long rectangular recess under a flattened arch. Suggestions as to its purpose include a tomb, an aumbry or part of an Easter Sepulchre. On the south wall there is a badly damaged piscina with a shelf; at the bottom the four drainage holes can still be seen and the base of the basin. High above the northern end of the rood-loft there is a blocked rectangular doorway in the face of the north wall, and from the outer north aisle it is possible to see a semi-circular projection behind the doorway containing a spiral stair which once gave access to the roof.

There was formerly an hexagonal sounding board over the pulpit with an angel on top and pineapples at the corners. The angel now rests on top of the rood staircase, but has lost the trumpet shown in an old engraving and in a photograph published in 1950. Two of the pineapples were used as decorative features below the gable of a building in the Butterwalk. Of these, one has apparently been lost but the other, recently removed, has been given to the town museum. The corporation pews which formerly stood in front of the rood-screen are now situated west of the cross passage from the south to the north door. They date from 1636.

Although Totnes parish church is essentially all of one period and may perhaps be said to lack variety in its architecture, the presence of the imposing tower and the remarkable stone screens more than compensate for the uniformity of the rest of the building.

Forthcoming index

Miss Lorna Smith, who compiled the index to *Devon Historian*, nos. 1-15 has kindly agreed to produce an index to nos. 16-30. Members should receive their copy of the index with the Autumn issue of the journal.

J. N. SINGLETON: FIRST HEADMASTER OF THE FIRST FACTORY SCHOOL IN THE SOUTH WEST

Ruth Harris

The rapid expansion of education among all classes during the nineteenth century was chiefly sponsored by the churches by means of the nonconformist British and Foreign Schools Society and its episcopal counterpart, the National Society. One immediate result was the swelling of the ranks of the teaching profession with men and women from all stations and backgrounds in life, dedicated to the intellectual development of their pupils and fostering the national passion for learning. One such member of that profession who made his mark on several aspects of the life of an important Devon town during this period was John North Singleton, first Headmaster of Heathcoat's British School, Tiverton, from 1842-1878.

Singleton's father, also John (1777-1862), was a native of Liverpool who left the Established Church of his parents and joined a Baptist Church.¹ There he received the call to the ministry and went to study in London, by which time he had married Ann North, of London, and had two daughters. It was at the beginning of his student life that his eldest son, John North, was born in 1811, and registered, as the girls were, at Dr Williams' Library,² Redcross Street, Cripplegate, Westminster.

The Rev. John Singleton's first and only pastorate was at the Baptist Chapel, Newport Street, Tiverton, a church with a long and noteworthy history,³ and where he served through thick and thin from 1814-1844. The family occupied the manse in Frog Street (now Castle Street) and by July 1820, numbered five surviving children, a sixth having died in infancy.

Newspaper references⁴ to John North Singleton having been educated at Bradninch may be correct but it is more reasonable to think that he went to the Chilcott School in St Peter Street, Tiverton, though we cannot know for certain. But the statement that he attended Blundell's School is not correct since his name does not appear on the school's registers of the time. As a son of the manse, John would have received every encouragement and opportunity to read and learn; both at home and in the Baptist Sunday School, which for many years numbered over 200 children, he and his siblings were thoroughly grounded in the Authorised Version of the Bible, the Book that was the chief cornerstone of nonconformist education.

The years between leaving school and 1834 are all but silent. In 1834, however, he became assistant master at a private boarding school near London where he remained for the next eight years. The middle years of the nineteenth century produced a tidal wave of literary activity. Newspapers and books multiplied in number and kind, thanks to improved printing methods and means of distribution. One not surprising result of all this activity was the proliferation of libraries, private and otherwise. In view of the rather large number of books about London which he acquired, it seems safe to say that it was during this eight year period in London, while gaining teaching experience, that John North Singleton laid the foundation of his personal library.

A significant factor in his life at this time was the Baptist Chapel in Eagle Street,⁵ Red Lion Square, of which he became a member. The significance lay not in his contribution to it for he seems to have attended only spasmodically, perhaps because it was a long way from his home in Bexley Heath; it lay, rather, in that Chapel's history and associations. Its first pastor was Andrew Gifford (1701-1784), a learned man and one-time assistant librarian at the British Museum. His father and grandfather had been pastors at Pitbay Chapel, Bristol, and the latter is recorded

as having been present at the formation of the Bampton (Devon) Baptist Church on 5 September 1690.⁶ Gifford bequeathed his many books and curios to the Bristol Baptist Academy which thereby came into possession of the only complete copy of Tyndale's New Testament known to exist.⁷ A later successor of Gifford at Fagle Street was Joseph Ivimey who, besides being a pastor, was a prodigious author, philanthropist, and campaigner for education. At his persuasion, the Eagle Street Church built its own school in 1833. It is interesting to speculate: did John North Singleton apply for a post there? In any case, he must certainly have been aware of the aforementioned facts and would have seen the school.

Sometime before 1842, John met and married a widow eight years older than himself, Elizabeth Price, of Chatham, who already had a son, Joseph.

Educational developments

John North Singleton was still in London when the educational pot came to the boil in Tiverton. The town already possessed numerous schools: Blundell's (built c. 1604), Chilcott School in St Peter Street (1611), the "Bluecoat" Charity School in premises in St Peter's Churchyard (1713), a National School in St Andrew Street (1820) and sundry Dame Schools and Private Schools, but no British School.⁸

The minister of Tiverton's Independents at the Steps Meeting House was William Harvey Heudebourck.⁹ He embarked on a vigorous campaign to give the strong nonconformist community of the town its own British School. To provide the means he summoned the support of the Methodist minister Mr Radford, the ageing and frail Baptist minister John Singleton, and Mrs Caroline Brewin, daughter of John Heathcoat the lace manufacturer who had moved his business to Tiverton from Leicestershire twenty-five years earlier. In March 1841 a historic meeting took place between Heathcoat and these earnest campaigners in Heathcoat's house at Balham, with the happy result that Heathcoat promised to build them a school adjacent to his factory in Leat Street. Moreover, he agreed to pay for the whole project himself. It was to cost him £2,000 and was to have the distinction of being the first factory school in the South West. Heathcoat's own position on education, almost from the beginning, had been that he would not employ children in his factory until they could read and write.

The School's official Opening Day was Wednesday, 1 February 1843, a day of jubilation for Tiverton's nonconformists, though the supporters of the Established Church seem to have had a somewhat jaundiced view of the proceedings. Though no record remains of how John North Singleton came by his prestigious appointment to the headmastership of this brand new school, it is not difficult to imagine!

As with all British schools, the principles laid down required that "religion" be taught daily but not "any catechism or peculiar religious tenets", and each child was required to attend the place of worship to which its parents belonged.¹⁰

The charge per child per week for education in this 'palace of concord', as Heudebourck described it, was 2d, compared with 1d at the National School which made the learning of writing an extra 1d. The building was designed by G. A. Boyce of Tiverton; described as Elizabethan in style, it consisted of a North wing which was used by the boys, a South wing (girls) and a central section (infants). Besides the three Rs, the curriculum ranged over Geography Sacred and Profane, Grammar, History and General Knowledge, with the addition for girls of Knitting and Needlework. In keeping with the principles of all British schools, Scripture was taught daily; in Leat Street it was the last subject of the day.

Most elementary schools at that time had only one or two, perhaps three, teachers. But at Heathcoat's school, John Singleton and his two headmistresses had

the assistance by 1850 of no less than fourteen pupil teachers, appointed by the Committee of the Council of Education. In that year, boys numbered 180, girls 150 and infants 240.¹¹ Where we have them, figures fluctuate over the next fifty years, reaching a peak of nearly 800 pupils in 1891-92 by which time the school ranked as one of the most efficient of its kind.¹²

Heathcoat's school did not remain the only British School in town for long. His business partner and son-in-law, Ambrose Brewin, paid for the building and maintaining of two more British Schools, one for infants in Bampton Street in 1847 and one for boys and girls at Elmore in 1848.

An interesting development was the introduction, some time before 1866, of evening classes, using the Leat Street premises, when about 400 juveniles were taught by a different staff; while at the Baptist Chapel in 1863, schoolroom No. 4 was set aside every evening except Saturday and Sunday for the Church's own young people to read the national and provincial newspapers and magazines provided. It would be surprising if John North Singleton had not had a finger in these two pies.

Later still, in 1875, Tiverton Art Classes were instituted, to which Science classes were soon added. In this pie Singleton certainly had a finger for he was a member of the Classes' Committee. As such, he was involved in the decision to rent from Sir John Heathcoat-Amory (grandson of John Heathcoat) the premises in Fore Street known as the Athenaeum, to accommodate the classes. He did not live, though, to see the building bought in 1884 for £1,200. To these Art and Science Classes may be traced the origin of the present day Technical College in the Bolham Road.

It was in the latter part of Singleton's life that some of the more important events in educational history occurred. Under Forster's Education Act of 1870, School Boards were initiated which should administer the affairs of schools in their own areas, excepting Public Schools like Blundell's. Local authorities were to provide financial assistance out of the rates. Tiverton's School Board was formed on 2 July 1874 and convened for the first time on 27 July at the Town Hall.

Elementary education became compulsory in 1876. Two years later when schools were obliged to keep more detailed registers of their pupils, John Singleton saw fit to retire and was succeeded by John Bidgood, one of his former pupils.

With time on his hands and 44 years' teaching experience behind him, Singleton was able to accept election to the School Board as an Independent in the summer of 1879 and it is recorded of him that he missed only one meeting. During his term of office, he succeeded Mr Stephen Fisher as School Board representative on the Middle Schools' Board of Managers while continuing as Governor of the Heathcoat School. He was nominated for a second term only days before his untimely death.

Chapel and civic life

On moving down from London, Mr and Mrs John North Singleton lived for the first ten years or so in Bridge Buildings, a terrace of four houses at right angles to Leat Street and backing on to the school. Although the West Exe side of the town, they were not a great distance from the Baptist Chapel which was an important part of John's life and where in due course he became a deacon. The records of the Baptist Chapel before the coming of the Rev. John Singleton were sparse; those that existed were arranged by him in narrative form in the Church Minute Book. His son John continued the story commencing with the disastrous and fortunately short-lived pastorate of Singleton's immediate successor. Not happy with what the new man was saying and doing, John resigned as deacon. But better days came with

the call to the pastorate of the Rev. Edward Webb, pastor of Cheddar Baptist Chapel and graduate of Bristol Baptist College. Under Webb's ministry, the Church prospered spiritually and numerically. When Webb retired to Exeter in 1872, he left a strong Church to his successor, Jonathan Pearce Carey, grandson of Dr William Carey, pioneer missionary to India. Carey shared Singleton's keen interest in education and was elected to the School Board on its formation. In 1876-77, Carey led the Church in a grand building project that gave us the present day Chapel. Singleton was a member of the building committee. The Dedication Service for the new building on 19 April 1877 scored a first in Tiverton's history. It was the first time the Corporation attended a service in a Nonconformist Chapel.

Singleton was also appointed to the Chapel's Home Missionary Board, and there are numerous references to him throughout the Church Minutes of those days showing him involved in all manner of activities.

Outside school and Chapel, Singleton turned his attention to civic matters. In November 1879 he was elected to the Town Council as an Independent for the Westex Ward. In due course, he sat on various Council Committees: Watch Committee (Police); Property, Bridge and Building; Lunatic Act; Petroleum and Explosives Act. Again it is recorded of him that he missed only one meeting.

Library

In the early 1850s, the Singletons moved out of Bridge Buildings and away from the constant noise of looms and of the giant factory waterwheel to the relative quiet of No. 2 Melbourne Place, where there was more room for John's ever-growing personal library, and where he was to remain for the rest of his life.

His library grew to over 1,000 volumes which was unusually large for one private individual who was not numbered among the gentry or well-to-do, and it doubtless afforded him much consolation in his closing years.

Every field of science and the arts is represented though with a detectable bias towards history, theology and poetry -- Josephus and Gibbon, Pepys and Dunsford; Bunyan, Baxter and Beeches; Homer, Ossian and Hood -- not to speak of Hebrew Grammar, Recreations in Chemistry and Blackwood's Astronomy. Predictably there are many volumes of Baptist history and affairs, including two volumes of the History of the Baptist Mission presented to Singleton by Edward Webb.

Singleton had some kind of cataloguing system as every book has a neat figure written inside the front cover in the top left-hand corner, the highest so far found being 1,703. He drew up his will in 1879 bequeathing the entire collection to the Baptist Chapel, perhaps inspired by the example of Gifford. To-day the books occupy one entire wall in the Baptist Lecture Hall. With the will, Singleton drew up a list of precise instructions for the administration of his library, reflecting the conscientious mind of its compiler, and revealing a caring, even anxious concern for his treasures which had taken him a lifetime to collect.

Income from the Singleton Trust still accrues and contributes to maintaining the library and Singleton's grave. The only beneficiaries under the will were his sister Harriet Webb, and two nieces, Hannah and Mary Edwards; the residue, if any, was to go to the Tiverton Infirmary.

Family

Singleton's family life was overshadowed by sorrows. His mother was housebound from 1837 till her death in 1854, but despite lifelong poor health, his father lived to be 83 (died 1862). Both of John's sisters, the girls born in London, died in middle life, unmarried. Samuel, the youngest, born in July 1820, after attending

Blundell's School, appears to have qualified as a doctor in January 1843. He then held the post of Medical Officer of the Tiverton Union, moved to Brecon in 1850 and thence to an address in Fore Street, Edmonton, Middlesex, where he lived from 1852-57 when his returns to the Royal College of Surgeons ceased. John was left with one sister, Harriet, who became the second Mrs Webb sometime before 1855. Hence it is difficult to fathom how Singleton came by two nieces named Edwards unless they were Samuel's daughters, his widow having remarried. Harriet became the longest lived of the entire family, for she was still alive in Cheddar in 1907 aged 89. Her marriage seems to have cemented an already close friendship between Singleton and Webb -- both men appear as scholarly, unaggressive yet strong-principled characters who shared a great love of books. There are several volumes in the Singleton Library dedicated by Webb in his own hand to Singleton.

John had no children and his wife died in 1876. Unlike most of his family he seems to have enjoyed good health so that his death one pleasant summer evening in 1883 was unexpected. The funeral was impressive. The flag at the Town Hall was flown at half-mast, the Mayor and Corporation followed the mace-bearers, maces draped in mourning. All those organisations with which Singleton had had links were well-represented. Indeed, most of the town turned out. He was buried with his wife in the N.E. part of Tiverton cemetery reserved for nonconformists.¹³

From the record we glimpse in John North Singleton a man of broad intellect, creative energy and sensitive spirit. For all their Victorian superlative and sentiment, the tributes paid him by his contemporaries in Town and Church indicate that his contribution to society was well above average. In civic and educational matters the standards of excellence he set would be hard to beat, while the Baptist Church still enjoys to-day, a hundred years later, the heritage he left it.

The school building in which Singleton spent so much of his life and once described as "an ornament to that part of the town" may still be seen in Leat Street though it ceased to be a school thirty years ago or more; it now serves Heathcoat's factory as a store and shop. A mid-nineteenth century print of the school and factory is reproduced on the covers of this journal.

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THE DANGERS OF ENTHUSIASM

Jean Tsushima

In earlier days enthusiasm, "the possession of supernatural or fancied inspiration", was regarded with caution and disdain, and quite rightly so where scholarship is concerned. In the practice of etymology and genealogy nothing is more deadly than misplaced enthusiasm. Perhaps a few examples of problems I have encountered in Devon while engaged in Huguenot research will substantiate this statement. Consider the mysterious Huguenot M. Mazzard, of whom no trace has ever been found, but who, I have been told repeatedly, by word of mouth, by letter and by 'phone call, owned land in North Devon and introduced a special sort of cherry into Devon; furthermore, according to a newspaper article someone kindly sent me, 'the Huguenots' introduced it into North Devon in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages! – it is mind-boggling. Anyone doing Huguenot research must surely be aware that the earliest dates applicable are 1527–30 during which period John Calvin became a Protestant, and 1536 when he published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Strictly speaking few French Protestants came into England until just before the 1560s, and these, the persecuted Walloons, settled in East Anglia and Kent. Another informant, when I had commented on his French-looking surname, said, "Oh yes, I am sure we are Huguenot – I have our direct lines back to 1436" (or some such date). But to return to *Monsieur Mazzard*: I have repeatedly pointed out that 'mazard/mazzard' is a dialect word for head, being a variant of the old word 'mazer' a small, round goblet; many words denoting small, round, hard objects are used as slang for 'head' in all languages (cf. 'nob' or 'bean'), therefore it is not surprising to find that our fore-fathers used 'mazard/mazzard' to describe the small, hard, wild cherry, *prunus avium*, this use being noted in the *O.E.D.* as early as 1579. But the use of Mazzard for head was not confined to Devon, or even the West Country, for Edward Moor¹ instances its use in Suffolk in the late 18th century. He quotes Ray² (1768) "Mazzards, black cherries, West Country, not so with us. We call the little black cherry the Polstead; not from any reference to the head, but from a village of that name near Ipswich..." Moor goes on to quote Shakespeare, and it seems extraordinary that though the word occurs in two such famous plays as *Othello* and *Hamlet* its use in dialect should be ignored. "Let me go, Sir," shouts Cassio, "or I'll knock you over the mazzard." *Hamlet* examining the skulls the clown is digging up, remarks, "... and now my lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade". Jonson used the word as a verb, meaning to be hit on the head, and no doubt other Elizabethan and Jacobean writers used it. Being used in London it had wider currency than a dialect word. But all this is to no avail: Devonians are convinced that it was a M. Mazzard who brought over the wild black cherry and propagated it in North Devon. The fact that fields marked 'mazzard field' are found on tithe maps and other maps throughout North Devon cuts no ice either.

Another type of misplaced enthusiasm is the written source, often full of colourful facts but low on original sources. I have in mind Inkerman Rogers' *The Huguenots in Devonshire* (1948) which contains a lot that is true and can be substantiated, but at the same time puts forward claims for Huguenots that are doubtful. Whether a name in a list can be claimed as that of a refugee or the descendant of a refugee without any other form of verification is one of the major stumbling-blocks in Huguenot research. If we examine a few names from Rogers' list of Huguenots on pages 20–24 some awkward problems are revealed. Why is

Euen, probably a variant of *Owen*, considered Huguenot? Why *Dave*, which is not a form of the name *David* that appears in French lists³ though almost every other variant of the name does. While some names appear to be of impeccable French origin, such as Peter Delatour, or Elias de la Roche, others are doubtful, for instance, Fountaine, even though this is the name of a well-known Huguenot who settled in Barnstaple for a few years, yet it is a name that occurs in Devon for centuries. Although the Huguenots' registers for the churches in Barnstaple and Bideford have disappeared, if indeed they ever existed, and in spite of the almost total loss of Devonshire wills during the last war, it is still possible to check the occurrence and spread of surnames in Devon. There are the *Devon Protestation Returns* (1641)⁴ and should a 'Huguenot' surname appear in these lists then one must be cautious as this is forty years before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It is true that many French Protestants were already emigrating if they got the chance, but it is not likely that they would settle in Devon. There are also the *Devon Muster Rolls* for 1569,⁵ and if a so-called 'Huguenot' name appears in these, then it is not likely that name is of Huguenot origin, as this is well before the exodus after the Massacre of St Bartholomew (1572) and very few of these refugees came so far west as Devon. There are also the *Devon Subsidy Rolls 1524–76*⁶ and the *Devonshire Lay Subsidy of 1332*,⁷ should a 'Huguenot' name appear on these lists, then any idea of the family being of 'Huguenot' or even Protestant origin is nonsense as the Reformation had not taken place. Taking a few names from Rogers' list I can point out that they all occur on the *Protestation Returns* and the *Muster Roll for 1569*: *Basse: Bisse/Bysse: Bean(e): Britton/Brittan/Brytton etc.: Owen: Crosse: Fraine/Frayne/Frene: Hoile/Hoyle: Oliver: Joll/Jole: Fountain: Sarel (1):* The bulk of these names appear on both *Subsidy Lists*, for 1524–7 and 1332, among these being *Crosse, Oliver, Basse* and *Frayne*, all these in fact, could be called archetypical Devonian names. As indeed are *Moule/Mule* and *Burgess*, so widespread in Devon they are not worth considering in this context, so why are they on Rogers' list? And why the grand old Anglo-Norman name of *Poyntz*,⁸ a family dating back to 1086, though usually associated with Gloucestershire rather than Devon? It can be argued that as some of these names are common to both countries, allowing for vagaries of spelling, then they could be names reintroduced by Huguenot refugees, which is a valid argument but in that case, Rogers should have given evidence that they were French. Of course, the answer is that Devon has always been open to settlement by Normans, by Anglo-Normans, and Britons, as well as French, Gascon and Spanish merchants, seamen, and craftsmen. Glancing through the 1332 *Devonshire Lay Subsidy* one comes across irreproachable 'Huguenot' names – *Ballard, Barbour, Calle, Chamberleyn, Faber, Sage, Sarazin, and Sully*. If one looks at the *Letters of denization and acts of naturalization 1509–1603*⁹ which contains the names of aliens who were allowed to stay in England before the English invasions of France, usually because they were married to Englishwomen and had children, or because they were elderly and/or infirm, one finds among some of the names from Devon the following: "John Andrewe, Rockbere, Devon: a Britayn in England 65 years, married to an Englishwoman. 1 July 1544." "Sir Thomas Bearde, priest, Norman born, serving a chapel in Honyton for 10 years, aged 50 – 'of honest conversation'." "Martin Coffyn, bookbinder, from Normandy, 28th April 1524." "Simon Crespyn, Clerk from Pycardi, 60 years, in England 40 years. (Somerset) 11th July 1544." "Collyn Giles, a Britain, in England 6 or 7 years. Dwells at Tavistock and is a very good surgeon, 11th July, 1544." "John Hamlyn, tailor of Uffcolme, born in Brittany, in England

20 years, 28 years old, married to an Englishwoman and 2 children." "*Nicholas le Fontayn*, a Norman, in England 12 years, and a wife."

These people are all aliens yet their names have a familiar 'Devonian' look about them. There is yet another trap, and that is the wide range of surnames which are obviously 'English' yet with just a slight twist of accent, they are perfectly ordinary French surnames, both today and in former times: for example, Robert: Richard: Martin: Becket. These are never noticed in the 'Lucky Dip' type of genealogy as they are so obviously English to the inexperienced laymen. Who among them would realise that in the *Threadneedle Street Register* (vol. iv)¹⁰ — which has the greatest range of Huguenot surnames — one of the very commonest surnames is Lucas, a name that many would never consider French, let alone Huguenot. What does it all add up to? Quite simply, that one must not make guesses in genealogy and that one must give proof of descent.

The dangers of articles such as Rogers' are twofold. First, that the more innocent and untrained family history researcher is so easily led astray and will waste much valuable time, not only the researcher's own time but that of the specialist he or she pesters with fruitless queries based on wrong premises which lead nowhere except to yet more muddle. It is very difficult to persuade people that they are on the wrong track, for once they have read it, it is true! The *Darche* family haunts my correspondence as regularly as *M. Mazzard*, and no insistence on my part that there are entries for this family in Devon on the Protestation Returns, the Muster Rolls and the 1524-7 Subsidy Roll will shake the conviction of those who 'know' the family were Huguenot; this divine inspiration of 'knowing' without a shred of evidence is the most intractable form of enthusiasm one can meet.

The other danger of enthusiastic articles is that when evidence is presented uncritically and left unexamined no progress is made towards a solution of the problem in hand. This seems almost too elementary to be worth saying, but the fact remains that there is still no reliable study of the Huguenots in North Devon.

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A CHARTER OF KING AETHELWULF

Helen Mary Petter

In 846 Aethelwulf, King of the West Saxons and Father of King Alfred, assigned to himself a tract of land. The charter describing this grant has been in the British Museum since the seventeenth century and was published in 1840, but it was not until the 1920s that the whereabouts of the land was discovered. The Latin text of the charter gives no clue, but it is followed by a description in the vernacular of the landmarks defining the bounds of the land and this states that it was in *Homme*. The identification of *Homme* with the South Hams is confirmed by the landmark 'thurlestone', the holed stone on the coast which gives the village of Thurlestone its name.

In 'Two Acts of State', published originally in *Devonshire Studies* in 1952 and reprinted with corrections in *West-Country Historical Studies* in 1969, Professor H. P. R. Finberg discussed this charter and identified the land given to King Aethelwulf as most of the coastal strip between the rivers Erme and Dart. By a brilliant piece of detective work he discovered most of the landmarks defining its northern boundary. In the ninth century it cannot have been easy to find clearly recognisable landmarks in a countryside which was largely wild and sparsely inhabited. Natural features such as springs, streams, and tors are for the most part the only things to go by; it took Professor Finberg three weeks to go over the ground and by and large his interpretation is indisputable.

As well as natural landmarks there are some in the western section of the boundary, between the rivers Erme and Avon, which have Saxon names. This does not make them easier to identify but it does suggest that there were more people living in that part of the country than in the larger part to the east, between the Avon and the Dart, where there are fewer landmarks and all of them are natural features. This might explain the name Kingston, the king's ton or settlement. It first occurs in a thirteenth-century document but may go back to a tradition stemming from the ninth century when it was a settlement in the king's possession. An even earlier settlement is suggested by the field named Yellons in the Tithe Map, now Yellands Park, for the name indicates a pre-Saxon settlement.

The Kingston History Society has studied the boundary from the Erme to the Avon, hoping that local knowledge of the landscape might make it possible to resolve some of the problems in Professor Finberg's interpretation of the charter. It is remarkable how frequently there are two similar landmarks to choose from, and it is possible to decide which is the correct one only by studying them on the ground. The conclusion reached was that between the Erme and the Avon the line of the charter boundary was the same as that which later became the parish boundaries between Kingston and Bigbury to the south and Modbury and Aveton Gifford to the north, and that it enclosed practically all of the parishes of Kingston, Ringmore, and Bigbury.

In 'Two Acts of State' Professor Finberg gives the translation of the boundary landmarks and his identification of them, with grid references. The landmarks from the Erme to the Avon and Professor Finberg's identifications are given below in italics, followed by the alternative identifications suggested by the Kingston History Society.

1 *First into Merccumb,*

A comb which serves as a mearc or boundary. From the creek between Orcheton

Wood and Tor Wood the boundary enters the mercecumb at (628490).

The name Mercecumb suggests that there was an existing boundary before the charter was written. The brook running down the valley is the boundary between Oldaport and Kingston parish, and Oldaport is a site which predates the charter. This valley and the brook named after it would, therefore, be the Mercecumb.

2 then to the green pit,

The flat ground where Clyng Mill stands, at the foot of the steep combe.

Clyng Mill is very near the first landmark but there is a field further up the valley, where the road crosses the brook below Oldaport (638494), which is even more enclosed by steep hillsides and still looks like a green hollow.

3 then to the tor at the source of the Mercecumb.

A towering rock-pile, now known as Tor Rock (636488), pierces the skyline near the head of the combe, down which a rivulet flows into the Erme.

The identification of the green pit in 2 takes the boundary beyond Tor Rock (which stands above the side, not the head of the combe). Further up the valley Wastor, a cliff-like stone outcrop, overlooks the brook identified as the Mercecumb in 1 (645491). The source of the Mercecumb is about half a mile beyond Wastor; could the text mean 'then to the tor and the source of the Mercecumb'?

4 Then to Denewald's Stone.

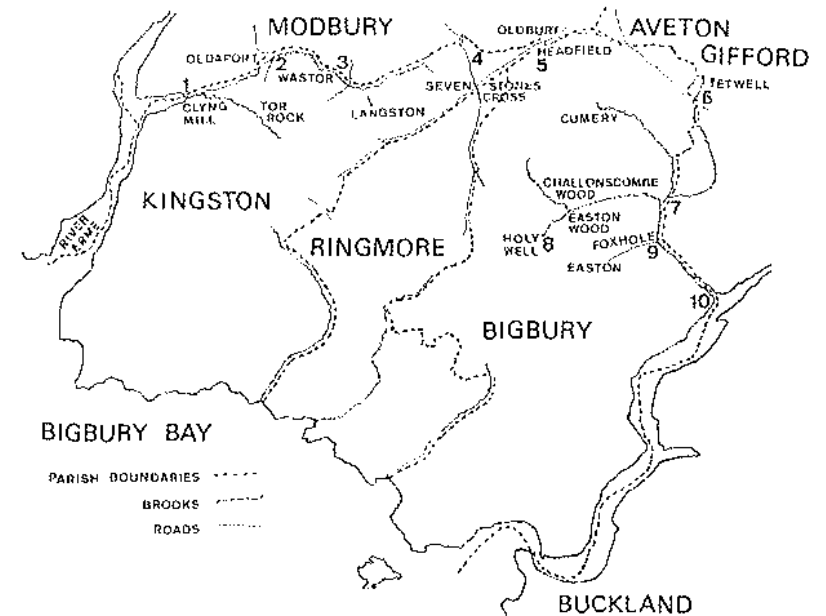
A longstone which is not now to be seen; the Devonians have shown a propensity to remove these antiquities and use them as gateposts. It has, however, left traces of its former presence in the name Langstone. There was a field named Great Stone Park near Seven Stones Cross (659493).

Langston (without *e*) is more likely to derive from Lang's ton or farm; many properties in the district are named after former occupants. There were Langes in Kingston in the seventeenth century and Langs Farm, which still exists, paid Poor Law Rates in the eighteenth century. There was a small stream running down from Langston Farm into the Mercecumb and also a nearby field called Pillar Field but if 3 is correct the boundary followed the brook to its source. From there it is a short distance to the higher ground and Great Stone Park. For a short distance the parish boundary follows the road from Seven Stones Cross to Modbury and on either side of this road there are two gates, each with a massive granite post cut from a larger stone (657494). The uncut faces are more weathered than the cut one. Could these gateposts be part of Denewald's Stone?

5 Then to the ditch where Esne dug across the road.

? at (667495), where there is a curious kink in the road (B3392) and a lane leading down to Cumery. The road has been straightened by road widening since this was written.

There is an Iron Age earthwork, probably a small fort or 'round', beside the (B3392) at (666494), now a more or less circular field called Headfield. It is



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surrounded by hedges with high banks; on the road side the hedge has been cut away for road widening to expose the high bank. On the opposite side of the road, in a field significantly called Oldbury, the ground falls away abruptly and it is possible that the earthwork stretched across the road. The road is probably ancient and Esne's ditch may have been part of the earthwork. This area seems to have been important in early times. There must have been standing stones near Seven Stones Cross, perhaps a stone circle, and the earthwork is well placed to command a wide view to the north, the direction from which danger would threaten. In addition, five parishes meet here, Kingston, Modbury, Ringmore, Bigbury, and Aveton Gifford.

6 Thence down to the source of the spring.

Either the spring by Upper Cumery (669491) or the one at Tetwell (682491), which is on the parish boundary between Aveton Gifford and Bigbury.

The Cumery spring is at the head of the valley that runs down towards the Avon but it is too near the earthwork to be a reasonable landmark. The Tetwell spring must be the right one; its name is Saxon – Tetta's or Tidi's well – and it is at the point where the boundary takes a sharp turn if, as seems likely, the charter boundary and the parish boundary are the same. It is now part of Bigbury parish boundary but near Tetwell it formerly bounded an outlying portion of Kingston parish.

7 Then down from there by the brook as far as Tiddesford.

BRADNINCH MANOR

C. A. Raleigh Radford

A ford over the Tetwell brook at (679478). There is no ford now; the brook is carried through a culvert under the road.

The parish boundary, now of Bigbury but formerly Kingston, runs down the Tetwell brook and then to below Challonscombe and down the brook coming from Cumery and Combe. The Tetwell brook runs into this brook at Tiddesford. The charter boundary may have followed the Tetwell brook all the way or have run along the line of the parish boundary; it depends which brook is meant.

8 *Then up the brook as far as Heott's ditch to the water-hole (flodan).*

The boundary now turns up another brook, one which flows down between Challonscombe Wood and Easton Wood. It rises at Holwell (665474) from a spring (later known as Holy Well) which gushes from the hillside.

This brook, part of which was the boundary of the outlying part of Kingston parish, runs into the larger brook near Tiddesford.

9 *From the water-hole down where the vixen's ditch meets the brook.*

I am told that foxes still come down from Easton Wood to drink at the rivulet which 'meets the brook' near Foxhole (676473). The brook here is the united waters of the three streams that have met at Tiddesford.

There is a steep lull between Easton Wood and Foxhole and a small stream beside Foxhole is more likely to be the vixen's ditch. If so, the Charter boundary makes a detour round the hill though Bigbury parish boundary follows the brook from Tiddesford. Bigbury Tithe Map shows that much of the land excluded by this detour was glebe.

10 *and then down the brook to the sea.*

The brook flows into the Avon at (684468), after which the boundary runs downstream to Avon Mouth. This portion of the charter land takes in some 6000 acres, comprising the greater part of the three parishes: Kingston, Ringmore, and Bigbury.

If the suggestions made by the Kingston History Society are correct, nearly the whole length of the charter boundary later became part of the boundaries of Kingston and Bigbury parishes and, with the exception of the hill excluded in 9, enclosed the whole of the three parishes. It would seem reasonable that the later boundaries should follow an existing one, which means that this Anglo-Saxon Charter still affects the political geography of the South Hams more than a thousand years later.

The charter boundary starts again at Thurlstone, running up the valley from the holed stone towards west Alvington. It turns west down to the Avon at Aveton Gifford, up the river to Sorley, and again down to the Avon at Gara Bridge. From there it goes east to the Ashwell Brook which flows into the Harbourne river, taking the boundary to the dart by Bow Creek and down the Dart to the sea. The area between the lower part of the Avon and Thurlstone is excluded from the charter land, probably because it had already been granted to someone else and so was not available to the King. The name Buckland indicates that it was 'book' land, that is, land granted by 'book' or charter, and a site earlier than the Charter has been excavated at Bantham.

The subject on which I have been invited to address you tonight is the house known as Bradninch Manor and for convenience I shall continue to refer to it as such, though the name is not historically correct. Bradninch Manor is not the manor house of Bradninch and apart from a short period had no connection with the lords of the manor. To understand the anomaly we must look far back into the Middle Ages and I shall start with Domesday Book, which was compiled in 1086.¹ In that document it is stated that William de Capra had a manor called Bradninch that was assessed for taxation at 2½ hides with land that could be cultivated by twenty plough teams. The population was rather over 60 households, say 300 persons by a modern census. The village was clearly a flourishing community that enjoyed a beneficial rate of taxation. William de Capra was a large landowner and his lands in Devon constituted an honour held directly of the Crown. He and his successors held by barony and were barons of the king, that is members of the king's court; they were lords of the Honour and Manor of Bradninch. The title Baron Bradninch was unknown in their day and has never been used by any of their successors. Lord of the Honour and Manor of Bradninch was the title used by Edward, Duke of Cornwall, later King Edward VIII, when he laid the foundation stone of the extension to the Guildhall in 1921.

The best known of the early holders of the Honour and Manor was William de Tracy, one of the four knights who, in 1170, murdered Thomas à Becket, the Archbishop in his Cathedral of Canterbury. William de Tracy belonged to a Gloucestershire family which descended from an illegitimate son of Henry I. He was a young man — probably about 30 — in 1170 and had held Bradninch for some years. In 1168 he paid the sum of £17 10s. in the tax raised on the occasion of the marriage of the King's daughter. At a rate of 13/4 per fee this represents 26 knights' fees, i.e. the number of armed and equipped knights that he was bound to provide when the feudal levy was summoned. But this old form of personal service was becoming obsolete and a commutation in money was becoming normal, hence the figure quoted from the Treasury accounts, known as the Pipe Rolls.²

As a result of his crime William de Tracy was forced to go into exile. His lands were not forfeited. The question has been fully discussed in a recent paper published by Lord Sudeley, a descendant of the Tracy family.³ William de Tracy appears in 1174 in Calabria in South Italy, a province then under the rule of Roger, King of Sicily, a cousin of Henry II. He there made certain gifts of land to the church in expiation of his crime and was enjoined by the Pope to serve in the Levant for the defence of Jerusalem against the infidel. The more fanatical followers of Becket alleged that he died in Calabria of a wasting disease, probably leprosy. But this is not borne out either by contemporary Italian records or by the Pipe Rolls, William de Tracy is shown accounting for taxation on his English lands in 1194 and 1196 through an agent, Hugh de Courtenay, an ancestor of the Earls of Devon.

In 1199 these records show that Oliver de Tracy, Lord of the Honour of Barnstaple, paid £666 13s.4d. to have possession of the lands of William de Tracy, who was clearly dead. These lands were stated to be worth £100 annually in England and about the same in Normandy, an income that may be estimated at £4,000 a year in terms of pre-1914 values. Oliver de Tracy was probably the head of the family in Devon. But the deal was cancelled and the lands granted to Henry, the

son of William de Tracy on the same terms. Henry (le bossu) a hunchback, seems to have been an unsatisfactory tenant. In 1202 Henry, son of the Earl of Cornwall, covenanted with the King to have the lands of William de Tracy for £800 and presented an impressive list of sureties for the payment of the sum. The transaction was complete before 1219 when Henry, son of the Earl, paid tax of £27 on the military fees of the Honour of Bradninch. Twenty-four years later the Honour and Manor, which had escheated to the King, were granted to his younger brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall and later King of the Romans;⁴ they have since remained with the Earldom and Duchy of Cornwall.

It has seemed desirable to deal with this matter at some length. Bradninch, it is clear, had no resident Lord of the Manor after the middle of the thirteenth century and it is unlikely that any of the earlier lords who have been mentioned lived in the village. There would be no manor house in the normal sense of the word. Some centre there must have been for the holding of the manor courts and similar administrative acts. I can only suggest, with some diffidence, that this was at Whorridge, a large farm within the parish boundary in the Culm Valley towards Cullompton. Whorridge is known to have been the meeting place of the Hundred Court and the Hundred of Hairidge took its later name from the farm, though it had earlier been known as the Hundred of Silverton, after the royal manor of that name.⁵

The Manor House is bound up with the history of the parish church. In the Middle Ages this was a fairly wealthy rectory, valued in 1291 at £8 13s. 4d, the same as the church of the royal manor of Silverton. Within the Deanery of Plymtree the only richer churches were Broadhembury and Cullompton; Cullompton was an ancient minster and so, in terms of property, stood in a class by itself.⁶ Wealth in the Middle Ages was largely expressed in terms of land, the glebe of a parish church. A survey of 1788 shows the glebe of Bradninch as a compact block reaching from the Manor House up to Procession Lane, with three fields beyond the lane and a small area, including Pendennis, on the other side of the road. There were also detached blocks near the head of the valley that runs up from Pacycombe and at Kensham,⁷ Kensham had originally been held by the Sainthills as copyhold; but the rest of the estate shown on the 1788 map probably approximates to the medieval glebe.

All this changed at the Reformation. The Rectory was granted to the Dean and Canons of Windsor, a distant cure, which they could hardly serve in person. Management was probably difficult so the Rectory – tithe and glebe – was leased to Peter Sainthill, a lawyer who prospered on pickings arising out of the disposal of church property.⁸ The value may be judged from the statement filed by his grandson, also Peter Sainthill, at the end of the Civil War.⁹ This includes the Rectory of Bradninch held of the Dean and Canons of Windsor at an annual rent of £53 and charged with a payment of £40 to the Curate, after which it showed a clear profit of £167. In addition he held the copyhold estate of Kensham Mills yielding £110 annually. The medieval priest's dwelling – the Old Parsonage on the site of the Manor House – passed into the hands of Peter Sainthill, the older name being preserved in Parsonage Lane. It proved impossible to identify any remains of the medieval house; it was probably a modest structure of cob.

Peter Sainthill built himself a grand house.¹⁰ A panel of stained glass in the window of the Job Room shows the arms of Sainthill and the date 1563; it probably marks the completion of the building. The fittings including the panelling were probably added over the years. The woodwork in the Job Room includes on one of the pilasters a trophy of arms, in which the banner shows the cross of St George

without the added saltire of St Andrew, which would have been normal after 1603. But the newels of the stair include the unicorn, pointing to a date after the accession of James I. I would also class the panelling in the bedrooms as Jacobean on stylistic grounds.

The house has a H-shaped plan, with a central block flanked by two projecting wings. It faces south-east. The central block is of five bays. The four bays to the south-west formed the hall open to the roof. It is mentioned in a doggerel verse satirizing Peter Sainthill, the grandson of the builder, who held the manor during the Civil War of the seventeenth century:

Now see them at the banquet, all
In Peter's great and lofty hall,
Seated in order for to dine
Swig cyder, beer and meady wine.¹¹

The jamb of the original door at the upper end, leading to the south-west wing can be seen behind the Georgian doorcase. The main entrance in the fourth bay was covered by a porch leading to the screens passage at the far end of which was a further door into the courtyard behind. The porch with its heavy nail studded door is represented in the panel showing the sufferings of Job. This door which had been removed in the eighteenth century was found in 1914 serving in an outhouse; it was restored and set at the foot of stairs leading to the cellar in the north-west corner of the house, which my father converted from its former use as a cyder cellar to serve as a billiard room. Beyond the screens passage were the service rooms – buttery and pantry – with the kitchen occupying the front part of the north-east wing.

The south-west wing formed the private apartments, the grandest part of the house. In front on the ground floor, was the Parlour, always known as the Job Room. It has a richly moulded plaster ceiling with some of the fine detail replaced in a later coarser style. The framed panelling is divided into bays by pilasters with trophies. The overmantle has large allegorical figures framing three scenes. In the centre are the sufferings of Job represented in considerable detail; this is flanked by the sacrifice of Isaac and Jacob wrestling with the angel. The entrance is covered by an internal porch, a feature which has seldom survived. Behind the Job Room the rest of the wing is filled with another panelled room of similar style, but less richly ornamented. On the floor above are two simpler panelled rooms forming the principal bedchambers. That in front, originally entered through an anteroom was occupied by Charles I on 27 July 1644, when, as recorded in the Diary of Richard Symonds, the king 'took up his quarters at Mr. St. Hill's house, justice of the Peace at Bradenedge!' Symonds adds that Bradninch was 'a mayor town, though almost all be clay without any timber in the wall, except the doors, roofe and windows, which is the fashion of the country.'¹² Above the bedrooms the whole length of the south-west wing formed a long gallery contrived in the roof space.

The large pond in front of the house is an original feature. It is fed by a small stream and would in normal years impound sufficient water to run a small mill for one or two days a week. The head of the present churchyard cross is said to have been recovered from the water in the nineteenth century. In 1914 during the clearance of mud a fragment of carved alabaster of high quality was recovered; it probably came from the tomb of Peter Sainthill the second, who died in 1618.

A notable feature is a flat terrace overlooking the pond, between it and the kitchen garden. This was originally the bowling green. At the far end is a very old

mulberry, which has fallen and regrown as a substantial tree. There is no reason to doubt that this was one of the trees presented to his principal supporters by James I to disseminate the breeding of silk worms and so encourage the manufacture of silk. When thanks had been duly recorded the recipient found himself presented with a bill payable to the Treasury. The fallen mulberry and one of the chestnuts planted by Admiral Pearse effectively destroyed the purpose of the bowling green. In 1914 my father laid out the central part with rose beds surrounding a sundial dated 1737: the sundial has now been removed to my sister's garden in Argyll.

Architecturally the stone-built house of Peter Sainthill is undistinguished, though it must have stood out against the cob houses of the village. Even the wealthier farmers often had houses of cob, though these at times included a partly panelled parlour of simple design. The panelling of the manor house is of exceptional richness and of high quality; it can stand comparison with the woodwork in the other great houses of the surrounding region, such as Bradfield, to mention a slightly later example.

Peter Sainthill the third,¹³ who entertained Charles I. died in 1648, leaving an only son Samuel, who died, unmarried, in 1708 and a daughter, Dorothy, who had in 1636 married Thomas Yarde of Honiton Clist. Their son, Edward, on inheriting the property at Bradninch, took the name and arms of Sainthill. Edward Yarde Sainthill married Margaret Stafford of Pynes and undertook the modernization of the Manor House. The main block was refaced in brick with a central entrance, the old porch being demolished. The open hall was ceiled over, creating two storeys, with additional bedrooms. The new entrance had a classical doorframe. Sash windows with heavy glazing bars were symmetrically arranged. On the ground floor the main entrance hall of four bays was panelled with an arcade of two Ionic columns marking the position of the old Tudor screen. The details of the woodwork were carried out in the expensive imported deal, but the filling of the panels was of the cheaper native oak. As the whole was painted white the difference of the material was not noticeable. The rest of the house was little altered, though the painting in white of the panelling in the two older bedrooms, cleaned off in 1914, may have dated from this period.

Edward Sainthill, the son of Edward Yarde Sainthill, died in 1782, leaving a daughter married to Thomas Pearse, a naval officer who rose to the rank of Admiral. He lived at the Manor House till his death in 1830. A number of minor alterations to the house were carried out in his day. The small room between the entrance hall and the kitchen was provided with a fireplace of Devon marble and redecorated in the prevailing style of the early nineteenth century, though the outdated sash window with the heavy glazing bars was retained. The small room above the kitchen was also reformed with a coved ceiling, now largely destroyed.

But Thomas Pearse's main legacy was in the grounds. He formed the walled kitchen garden and provided it with a churchwarden gothic doorway set in a battlemented wall with the Pearse arms above the opening. In the corner nearest the pond he erected a small thatched summerhouse with a moulded and plastered ceiling in the Gothic style carried out in deal. He also planted the fine row of sweet chestnuts on the far side of the pond, forming a terraced walk looking across the garden. To the north of the house on the rising ground he planted a number of fine and rare trees. These included a Cedar of Lebanon blown down about 1935, a cork tree and a Luccome oak, a sport developed in the late eighteenth century.

The main line of Pearse died out and the property was sold in 1861. The family portraits going back to the sixteenth century passed to a collateral branch and were

in 1920 in the possession of Revd R. W. Pearse, Rector of Feniton.¹⁴ The Manor House was sold to Captain Anthony Martin, who by arrangement with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, successors in title to the Dean and Canons of Windsor, acquired the freehold. A few years later Captain Martin sold the whole property to the Duchy of Cornwall, which already owned the greater part of the agricultural land in the parish and desired to round off their holdings. The manor house thus came for the first time into the possession of the Lord of the Manor, the Duke of Cornwall. It became a farmhouse only occupied in part. It so remained till 1914 when the Duchy rearranged their farms and let the house together with two orchards and paddocks to my father Arthur L. Radford, F.S.A. The house was put in thorough repair. The old kitchen in the north-east wing became our dining room and a new kitchen and other offices together with additional bathrooms were added at the back. The pond was cleaned and its walling repaired and a tennis court was formed behind the house. The structural work had been completed, but the interior decoration, electrical wiring etc. were still in progress, when my sister and I returned from school at the end of the summer term and joined our parents who moved into the Manor House on 4 August 1914. The house was finally put in order by the end of the year, but my father's plans for the gardens had largely to be abandoned. On 17 May 1921, on the occasion of his visit to Bradninch, H.R.H. Edward, Duke of Cornwall, was entertained to luncheon in the Job Room. He again visited the Manor House, on this occasion as King Edward VIII, on 3 June 1936 and received the Duchy tenants there. My mother was then a widow and I was not present, being detained in Rome, where I was Director of the British School. Our connection with the Manor House came to an end in 1940, when the terms allowed a break in the lease and my mother retired to a more convenient dwelling in Exeter. One relic of my Father's tenancy remains. His very fine collection of stained glass had been set in the Tudor windows in 1914. This included the royal Tudor glass from Cowick Priory.¹⁵ When this was acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum copies were placed in the windows of the Job Room. These I presented to the Duchy of Cornwall and left in the house, when I removed the rest of the collection after the expiry of the lease. The only piece of ancient glass is the coat bearing the Sainthill arms in the window in the Job Room.

(This article represents a talk given to the Bradninch Local History Society on Friday 1 June 1984. I have throughout written of the house as I knew it between 1914 and 1940 and saw it again, during the brief tenancy of the late Mr. Trevor, some twelve years ago. I have not seen it since the recent unfortunate removals).

Notes

1. Text and Translation of the two versions in *The Devonshire Domesday* (Devonshire Association, 1892), 766-7. See also *Victoria County History: Devonshire*, i. 505.
2. The *Pipe Rolls* cited for the reigns of Henry II, Richard I. John and the early years of Henry III are published by the Pipe Roll Society.
3. *Family History*, vol. 13, no. 97 (1983).
4. *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, xlii (1910), 242.
5. *Ibid.*, xlii (1910), 214-5.
6. G. Oliver, *Monasticon Diocesis Exoniensis*, 457.
7. C. Crosleigh, *History of Bradninch*, 352.

8. G. Oliver, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Devon*, ii, 13-7.
9. R. Sainthill, *Olla Podrida*, i, 313-4.
10. *Country Life*, 16th September 1916.
11. R. Sainthill, *Olla Podrida*, i, 300-6.
12. *Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army during the Great Civil War kept by Richard Symonds*, ed. C. E. Long (Camden Society, 1859), 39.
13. A. Sainthill, *The History of the Sainthill Family* provides a full account of the family at Bradninch.
14. *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 1 (1918), 405-10.
15. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, Series II, xxvi (1914), x 211-2.

NOTES

A history of Brixham

The widow of Robert Ellis, son of the well-known South Devon historian the late Arthur C. Ellis, has given to Torquay Museum his unpublished History of Brixham. This comprises nearly one thousand typescript pages some 200,000 words in all and is, according to the author's preface, the first attempt at a comprehensive history of the town. Mr Ellis was the author of the *Historical Survey of Torquay* and many other shorter works including a history of Torre Abbey. This gift, which includes letters written to various authorities during its compilation, is available to local historians by prior arrangement with the Curator of the Museum in Babbacombe Road, Torquay.

Robert Fulton (b. 1765 d. 1815), American inventor: a correction.

In my article on the Devonian and Cornish associations of the Royal Society of Arts (*D.H.*, 29), I stated that the Robert Fulton of Torbay, who gained the Society's silver medal in 1793, was not the celebrated American inventor. Mr Keith Perkins has kindly written to me to say that the Society's Fulton was the same person as the great pioneer of steamboats and has referred me to H. W. Dickinson's *Robert Fulton: Engineer and Artist* (London, 1913). I am most grateful to him for the correction. - D.G.C. Allan, Royal Society of Arts, 6-8 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6EZ.

Barns Campaign

The relaunched Domesday Survey of Barns still needs hundreds more volunteers throughout the country. Volunteers, who require no special qualifications, are being asked to choose a local parish and complete a questionnaire for each traditionally built barn in that parish. If you would like to join in this enormous national exercise, please write for details to The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY.

THE DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY

Minutes of the 14th Annual General Meeting
held at Exeter on Saturday, 13 October 1984

Apologies were received from Mrs Chiswell and Major Anderson.

1. The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (printed in the October 1983 *Devon Historian*) were read and approved.
2. Arising therefrom it was reported:
 - (a) that there had been no progress in arranging the Exhibition of Devon History proposed for 1985. It was explained that Exeter Guildhall was not available and that St Nicholas Priory was unsuitable. There being no alternative proposal the matter was declared deferred for the time being.
 - (b) the Hon. Editor intimated that the next issue of the *Devon Historian* would be the last under her editorship but that Mrs Helen Harris had agreed to edit Issue No. 31 and subsequent issues.
 - (c) *Devon Historic Buildings Trust*. The Chairman reported that the next project would be 18-21 Market Street, Tavistock. He said that there may be a scheme later involving the Warehouses and old Chapel at the Plains, Totnes but that it was too early to make any observations on the matter.
 - (d) *Monmouth Tercentenary*. The Vice-Chairman reported that a joint meeting with the Somerset and Dorset local history groups had been arranged at Taunton on Saturday 29 June 1985. More details will be circulated later and the possibilities of arranging a coach would be investigated.
3. The Hon Secretary submitted his Report. He said that a new Members' List was ready in draft form but that it would be necessary for an agency to prepare copies for circulation to members.
4. The Hon Treasurer submitted his Income & Expenditure Accounts for two years ending 30 April 1983 and 30 April 1984. The latter showed a balance of £1,227.10 but he pointed out that the costs of producing the *Devon Historian* were rising constantly and that the matter would have to be kept under review. He said that it did not appear that a rise in the subscription rate would be necessary in the near future. The accounts were approved.
5. The Hon Editor submitted her Report. She made special mention of Mr Geoffrey Paley for the work he had done in connection with the compilation of the *Annual Bibliography*. She said that the 1983 volume looked like being a "bumper issue" and that it was hoped it could be distributed with *DH No. 30*. She reported that the arrears of the cataloguing of Westcountry books by Devon Library Services was making compilation much more difficult. Miss Lorna Smith had kept her card-index of the journal up-to-date and the Hon Editor hoped that an Index to Nos 15-30 would be available in 1985/86. The appointment of Mrs Helen Harris as the next Hon Editor was confirmed. A vote of thanks was recorded to Mrs Sheila Stirling for her efforts in producing so successfully the past thirteen issues.
6. The retiring members of the Council, Mr I. Maxted, Mr G. Paley and Dr Taverner were re-elected for a further three year period together with Mrs H. Harris in place of Mr M. Dickinson (resigned).

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON PLYMOUTH'S NEWSROOMS, READING ROOMS AND INSTITUTIONS — c.1824

C. A. Lewis offers some additional notes to the extracts "A Young Scotsman in Plymouth . . . pages from the Diary of Patrick Grant Beaton . . . edited by Sir Edgar Vaughan" (*Devon Historian*, 25, 26).

Beaton speaks of being introduced to two Newsrooms and at a later stage identifies one as the Exchange Newsroom. Sir Edgar Vaughan interprets Newsroom as Reading Room and locates them at the Athenaeum and the Exchange, though he adds that the Public Library also had a Reading room. This raises two points: when is a News room a Reading room or vice versa? and the location of the News rooms. Developments at the Devonport Mechanics Institute suggests possible contemporary usage. At Devonport there is reference to a Reading room in 1827 (*Royal Devonport Telegraph* 29/9/1827) which seems to be the Library which was open every evening as a reading room for books (as opposed to the issuing of books) and periodicals. Newspapers appear only in 1844 (*Devonport Telegraph* 5/10/1844) when part of the new building was used as a Reading and News room. An additional subscription was charged for the use of this room; not perhaps surprising when some four daily and fourteen weekly papers were taken. On this basis, the essential characteristic of a News room would appear to be the availability of newspapers, whereas a Reading room was more flexible and could be either a Library with facilities for reading — a reference library — or merely a room in which periodicals, as opposed to newspapers, were available. This usage seems true for commercial premises as well, though here the usual link is 'Circulating library and Reading room', though there are also 'Reading and News rooms' or 'Subscription News rooms'.

There seems no doubt that the Public Library has a News room, though admittedly the evidence post-dates Beaton (Rules 1843). It is equally certain that the Athenaeum did not. It had a Library (*Panorama of Plymouth*, 1821) and though it must have been possible to consult books there, the term Reading room is not used. The position at the Exchange is less certain. Beaton refers specifically to the 'Exchange News room', yet the description of the building from the *Tourist companion* (1828) which Sir Edgar quotes, speaks of a Reading room. White's *Directory* (1850) reports: "Until a few years ago, it (the Exchange) was only partially occupied, and had a large open area, surrounded by a colonnade; but this area has recently been built upon, and covered with a glass dome, and offices have been built under the galleries. The building is now very spacious and fully occupied. It comprises a very large room, for sales and public meetings; a News Room 41 feet by 20; the Hall of Commerce; and numerous mercantile and public rooms. The Exchange Subscription Reading and News Room Association, was established in 1848, and has already about 200 members." Clearly all this is much later than Beaton's visit and though it is possible that there was an earlier News room, Beaton's reference to remaining an hour or two in the Exchange News room suggests a rather more comfortable room than seems to be implied by the description in the *Tourist companion*: "As a specimen of architecture the Exchange has no pretensions to elegance or beauty, but is a very substantial erection; . . . It contains a spacious area beneath surrounded by a colonnade; a stone staircase leads to a great room for sales, meetings etc., an adjoining corridor gives access to the Reading room, the Chamber of commerce . . ." Accordingly Beaton's two News rooms would appear to have been

7. *One-day Conferences*. It was reported that these had been arranged as follows: Axminster — 23 March 1985; Braunton — 1 June 1985, Annual General Meeting at Exeter — 12 October 1985; to be followed by meeting in Chagford in March 1986 and at Winkleigh in June.
8. A *Notice of Motion* was put to the Meeting as follows: The Devon History Society urges the County Librarian to immediate and effective steps to reduce the backlog of the cataloguing in the Westcountry Studies Library. Further, it pledges its support for any approaches to the County Council the County Librarian feels are necessary to achieve this end. It was explained that there were now 3,000 Westcountry items awaiting cataloguing and inclusion in Devon Library Services catalogue. As 1,500 books and pamphlets are published annually this work is now eighteen months to two years in arrears. Apart from the inconvenience to local historians it was delaying the compilation of the *Annual Bibliography* and the proposed publication covering the "Brockett Gap". The Motion was carried unanimously and it was resolved that copies be sent to the Chairman of the Amenities and Countryside Committee and the local Press as well.
9. *Devon Biographies*. Mr Ian Maxted spoke at some length on the desirability and problems likely to be encountered compiling such a publication. He explained that a computer-based retrieval system might be considered a more practical solution. After discussion it was agreed that the Officers should join Mr Maxted in devising a scheme for further discussion and which would avoid duplication of effort by the various Authorities.
10. It was reported that the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings was undertaking a Domesday Survey of Barns and that an organiser for Devon was required. It was resolved that a note be included in the next *Devon Historian*.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Ruth Harris is a farmer's wife living near Bickleigh, Tiverton, and is interested in Nonconformist and family history.

Keith Perkins is a retired electrical engineer. He is a Plymothian now living in Coventry and is researching the life of Devon civil engineer James Meadows Rendel (1799-1856).

Helen Mary Petter was Illustrations Editor at the Oxford University Press before she retired to Devon. Since then she has been working on the history of Kingston.

Jean Tsushima is Hon. Archivist to the Honourable Artillery Company. Her work on the history of the Company and a biographical dictionary of its members includes the revision of a list of Company members of Huguenot origin. Mrs Tsushima is a member of the Huguenot Society and a frequent speaker on Huguenot history and genealogy.

C. A. Lewis was formerly Deputy Director of the University of Exeter's Extra Mural Department.

those at the Public Library and at the Exchange, since although the change of title is puzzling, no other candidate, not even a commercial one, offers itself.

With regard to the Plymouth Institution: Sir Edgar refers to the Athenaeum as a continuation of the Plymouth Institution and Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society whereas the title Plymouth Athenaeum was not adopted by the Institution until 1961, though of course once the Athenaeum was built, the name of the building and the institution tended to be used interchangeably. Furthermore although the official title 'Plymouth Institution and Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society' was used for 110 years, in 1824/5 the Plymouth Institution stood alone. It was not until 1838 that a number of the members of the Institution decided that it was 'pursuing the path of preference as respects literature' (*Western Miscellany* 1849) and formed the Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society to follow more scientific interests, under the Presidency of Lt. Col. Hamilton Smith. The Society proved so successful that it achieved a membership of 150, mainly at the expense of the Institution. However, later, both the Society and the Institution suffered losses at the hands of the Mechanics Institutes and in 1851 they amalgamated under the title of Plymouth Institution and Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society with Col. Smith occupying the newly created office of Honorary President and continuing to do so until his death eight years later, after which the office was abolished.

REVIEWS

Honiton: a history of the manor and the borough, by J. R. W. Coxhead. Exeter: Devon Books, 1984. 96pp. £5.95. ISBN 0 86114 751 0

Ralph Coxhead was a dedicated collector of historical facts, traditions and legends concerning Devon. Most of his small books and booklets took the form of presenting his material as collections of stories of the folklore genre. Twice he ventured into the field of history, with *Honiton and the Vale of the Otter* and with a booklet on the industries of Honiton. In these he was less successful. In the former he set out a formidable body of the factual material that he had gathered, but the result was in the nature of an anthology since he did not attempt to offer any interpretations of his material. The book has, nevertheless, proved to be a valuable mine of source material. I last saw Ralph three days before his sudden death. He told me that he had prepared a new version of his Honiton history but that he could not find a publisher. On his death the manuscript went with his papers to the Exeter City Library and the newly formed Devon Books has published it as a memorial to the author. The book is shorter than its predecessor since it is confined to the town of Honiton. Otherwise it is much like it and a more appropriate title would have been "Honiton: a sourcebook of facts". The publishers asked me to advise on revisions in the text. In so doing I confined myself to such amendments as were necessitated by advances in knowledge and changes in the town since the author's death, deeming it right that a posthumous volume should retain the author's typical style and approach.

John Yallop

Raleigh's birthplace: the story of East Budleigh, by Lilian Sheppard. Budleigh Salterton: Granary Press, 1983. 84pp. £4.00. ISBN 0 96236 019 6

East Budleigh has long needed an historian, not only because of its associations with one of the great Elizabethans but in its own right as the centre of an interesting part of Devon, the Otter valley. In fact it was sensible to include in the book a few details about the neighbouring parishes of Otterton, etc. One can only sympathise with the author in her efforts to unravel the complexities of the manorial history of Budleigh itself which, like those of so many Devon parishes, did not disappear when, in the sixteenth century, various ecclesiastical corporations gave way to laymen, in this case largely the Duke family. Eventually came the Rolles and more use could have been made of their papers in the Devon Record Office, especially for details of the Raleigh connection. Walter Raleigh senior's lease of 1551 (which incidentally only concerned the principal farm of the manor, the later Hayes Barton) shows that at that time there was a chapel there dedicated to St James. Has any trace of it ever been found? It would be useful, too, to have an expert opinion on the date of the present farmhouse. By 1569, when young Walter was only 15, his parents had moved into Exeter and it was his oldest half-brother George who mustered at Budleigh. Then there is the little church-manor of Budleigh Polsloe, but here the author is misleading in her assumption that the nuns lived in the parish. From their priory in the parish of Heavitree near Exeter they merely drew the rent of the glebe and the tithes of the parish, all of which they would lease to laymen, and they only 'served' the church in the sense of providing a stipend for a vicar. The maintenance of the fabric was the responsibility of the parishioners. Most of the tithe wool will have been sold to local manufacturers of

cloth, Devon wool having little or no sale abroad. And while on the subject of cloth, the shears so beautifully depicted on one of the benchends in the parish church (and also in one of the author's many delightful sketches), being square-ended must be cloth shears, not sheep shears which would have pointed ends.

But these are minor shortcomings in a book upon which a great deal of time and trouble has been lavished. That being so, when a new edition is called for the author should be persuaded, for the benefit of those who will follow in her footsteps, to provide a more adequate and precise list of her sources.

Joyce Youngs

The Parliamentary Survey of the Duchy of Cornwall; Part II (Isles of Scilly to West Antony and Manors in Devon); edited by Norman J.G. Pounds. Devon and Cornwall Record Society. New Series v: 27, 1984. 271p. Available from the Assistant Secretary, D & CRS, 7 The Close, Exeter, Exeter. £8.00 including postage.

This volume completes the Devon and Cornwall Record Society's publication of the Survey of Duchy possessions in Devon and Cornwall, initiated by Parliament in 1649-50, prior to the sale of Crown lands. This second volume is of particular interest to historians in Devon, as it includes the Duchy properties in that county. They consisted of the Manor of Bradford (scattered over Pyworthy and Clawton parishes); the Honour, Manor and Borough of Bradninch; the Borough of Lydford and its castle, the Manors of Shebbear, South Teign and West Ashford, and the Honours of Plympton and Okehampton. In addition, the Survey gives an account of the Water Liberties of the port of Dartmouth and of Sutton Pool, by Plymouth.

The Cornish surveys are also completed in this volume by the inclusion (alphabetically) of all properties from the Isles of Scilly to West Antony. One interesting point which arises on the large and important manor of Tewington and its neighbour, Treverbyn Courtney, is a reference to the state of the local tin industry. In this immediate post-war period it was reported that manorial dues from tin were unusually low, owing to "little tin being wrought in respect the mines do fail". Another report of interest, this time on Trematon Manor, related to the castle there, which was in an even more advanced state of dilapidation than when Richard Carew wrote fifty years previously. The unfortunate Keeper lived (if indeed he did) in "one old ruined house", and the chapel had become a barn.

The amount and variety of detail for the Devonshire manors nearly equals that for Cornwall. Information includes names of tenants and their tenements; types of tenures; details of woods and of trees on tenants' holdings; commons; mills; and manorial courts and customs. There is less detail of manor and barton houses, but the "Mansion House" for Bradninch Manor was Exeter (Rougemont) Castle, and there is a nice comment that the ditches had been made into gardens and set with fruit trees until the castle was garrisoned in the war, when they were laid waste and reverted to castle ditches. Elsewhere, frequent mention of farm buildings -- linneys, barns, shippons, ox and pig houses -- and of field names and acreages could contribute valuable data for a study of local farming in the mid seventeenth century.

One weakness in the first volume of this publication (reviewed in *D.H.* 25) was the faulty or inadequate identification of place names. Since that volume came out, Professor Pounds has wisely sought the advice of Professor Charles Thomas and

Mr Oliver Padel (of the Institute of Cornish Studies) on this thorny question, and includes a list of corrections for Volume I.

Even so, historians must still approach these surveys with caution. It might be supposed from what is known of their compilation that they represent accurate and up-to-date accounts of the Duchy's possessions in 1649-50, but it seems this might be too naive and optimistic a view. In *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, v. 22, pt. XVIII, 1946, Mr Croft Andrew gave a list of Duchy tenants in the Borough of Saltash, from a document in his possession which he dated to the years 1617. This list is virtually identical with the names on the Survey of 1650. Mr Peter Hull,¹ Archivist of Cornwall County Record Office (where this document is now lodged) puts the upper date limit at 1641, but it is still obvious that the Parliamentary Surveyors were perpetuating an out-of-date rental, some of whose tenants were dead by then.

One has to face the fact, therefore, that the survey material cannot be assumed to be true to 1649-50 unless checked from other sources. Nevertheless, even taking this into account, publication of these Surveys gives historians in Devon and Cornwall invaluable material and a starting point for many investigations. This publication increases the indebtedness of historians in both counties to the work of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society and its editors.

Veronica Chesler

I. I consulted Mr Hull on this question and am grateful for his opinion, which substantiates my suspicions.

Aunt Belle's Diary: transcribed and compiled by Constance Cowan and Lois Castledine. Duhuth, Mn. 1984. iii, 337pp

On November 9th 1892 the Misses Jean and Isabella Cowan sailed from New York on the steamship "City of New York" for a journey through England and Scotland. Isabella, who was then twenty-nine years of age kept a daily journal of their activities which the family has now published privately in the United States. As soon as the sisters had landed in Liverpool they set off on the "Rail Road" for Torquay where they stayed for nearly four months before moving on to Cheltenham. Nearly half the diary concerns the Torquay part of their vacation. Isabella was an observant and articulate young lady and her account is therefore a unique record of life in late-Victorian Torquay seen through American eyes. Belle and Jean "travelled Second class from Liverpool to Torquay; a distance of 305 miles for \$9.15 in 8 hours and 30 minutes. We were quite disappointed with English travel accommodations... All the arrangements are so different, that we were two or three hours enroute before we felt at ease. I have often heard of English cars being divided into apartments but was not prepared to be so shut up as we were. Our apartment was about 5 feet wide. Its one long seat, placed so that we rode backwards, was much more comfortable than its rather shabby appearance promised..." She also commented at length on the difficulties operating "the clumsy leather-strap" used to open and close the carriage window. The Cowans visited Kents Cavern, attended Torquay Natural History Society lectures and walked to all the local beauty-spots including Ansteys Cove and Cockington. The vagaries of English politics were noted. On November 29th 1892 they were taken to the Carnival (with torch-light procession) by Annie, their housemaid "and her mother who are

Conservative, accounting it inferior because it was under Liberal management. They tell us that the Liberals are so stingy they even refused to mark the event of Torquay's organisation as a town [the granting of Borough status], until forced to do so by the Conservative sentiment".

It is however in the small matters of life that the Diary's special charm lies. Having recorded supper with bread and butter, tea and whittings, Belle wrote: "All was of the best, as it ought to be, costing as it did 2/6 each. Chilled through and through by the fog and damp, we sat around, or rather before the fireplace, warming our feet, airing our night-garments, and as usual, when alone, talking of scenes and people far away." On another occasion they called "at a shop which handles only "Honiton Lace". We found the lady very talkative. She showed us some very nice pieces, ranging in prices from 5s. to 30s. for lace and from 9s. to £3 for handkerchiefs". This was of course Miss Tregale who died aged nearly one hundred a few years ago, well-known locally as the shop-keeper who never accepted decimal coinage. This fascinating book is illustrated throughout with prints and photographs from the Borough of Torbay's *Portrait of Torbay*.

John R. Pike

Outside the law: studies in crime and order 1650-1850; edited by John Rule. University of Exeter, 1983. viii, 129pp. (Exeter Papers in Economic History, no. 15). £2.50. ISBN 0 85989 188 7.

This book consists of five essays by different historians on aspects of crime and order in Southern and South Western counties of England. The first deals with the enforcement of a Commonwealth Act of 1650 to reduce incest, adultery and fornication in Devon but the remainder are concerned with the period 1780-1850 and deal with trickery in market places, riotous militia men, erosion of wood-gathering rights by owners of estates and sheep stealing. The essays are all well written and comprehensible, being indeed a refreshing contrast to some recent historical work about crime and pauperism which can unhappily only be understood by the small number of readers conversant with the language used. Furthermore they are rigorously researched and impartially argued while containing much interesting and colourful detail about the various activities under discussion.

There is in some of the essays consideration of various themes developed by E. P. Thompson in *Whigs and Hunters* (1975) and by D. Hay *et al* in *Albion's Fatal Tree* (1975) who illustrated the relationship between local custom, disorder and criminal law enforcement during the earlier part of the eighteenth century. Thus there is considerable discussion of the intricacy of rights to gather wood and the struggle between landowners and local people and detailed examination of the considerations underlying exemplary sentencing of riotous militia men and sheep stealers together with analysis of motive among sheep stealers and discussion of the diversity of local market-place traditions which, despite the desire of government for greater uniformity, plainly made more prevalent both confusion and sharp practice among traders.

One underlying theme of much of this book is that of tension between local practices and customs and formal centrally determined legal obligations and state administrative requirements. Indeed the relationship between "local administrative procedures" and "centralist ukaze" (p.15) and the replacement of an intimate, reciprocal, localised society by a "new form of social order in which the importance

was placed upon contract, the cash nexus... and responsiveness to market forces" (p.99) have received much attention from historians who have tended to see the urban, demographic and industrial changes of the period 1780-1850 as catalysts of the decline of institutional idiosyncrasy and the acceleration of centralization, institutional uniformity and organizational efficiency (Perkin). These essays, with other local crime and destitution studies, suggest to me that we need to deepen our understanding of the relationship between the state and locality as far as social and penal policy are concerned in other centuries in order to test the adequacy of this analysis. Thus the essayist on sexual morality in seventeenth century Devon points to fairly determined, if short lived, attempts by the State to compel reluctant justices zealously to enforce moral legislation and other examples of more forceful central intervention earlier in that century readily to spring to mind (the Poor Laws). In contrast, as another essayist remarks, in some areas rights, for example of wood collection, survived the statutory definitions of property offences up to the twentieth century. These essays are predominantly about the history of crime, but they are also of interest to historians who are concerned with the tension between local idiosyncrasy and the growing tendency towards administrative uniformity and should be read by those who are studying either.

W. J. Forsythe

The Exeter Canal, by Kenneth R. Clew, Chichester. Phillimore, 1984. 112pp. £9.95. ISBN 0 085033 544 2

In terms of production this is a handsome volume, with twelve pages of plates, several illustrations and five maps. The history of the canal itself, as described by this experienced writer of canal histories, is in comparison one of physical neglect and financial disaster. Only in its recent metamorphosis as a leisure facility can the canal be regarded as a success.

From the time the city of Exeter built the lighter canal in the late sixteenth century (to undermine the economic power of the Courtenays) till the nineteenth century, the story of neglect, under-investment and unprofitability dominates the life of the canal. In the process, too, it damaged the reputations of John Trew and James Green when they took responsibility for its improvement. By 1820 when Green produced his report on necessary improvements the canal was dilapidated and inefficient, but the serge trade had collapsed and so revenue could not finance the improvements which were done on mortgage. The new Corporation after 1832 was horrified to find the costs had run up to £113,000 of which £20,000 was unauthorised. Moreover no profit had been made and the railways were approaching.

This frightened the mortgagees and they secured restrictions on canal expenditure in the hope of recovering their capital. The canal laboured under this stranglehold until the city bought them out in 1883, by then it was too late. A temporary improvement in trade came in the 1890s but the two world wars deepened the decline. A revival in the 1950s proved to be only momentary and by 1964 a new peak deficit was expected. There were those who argued that the canal was as much a part of the city's heritage as the cathedral and thanks to the initiatives of the Maritime Museum this was to become so — though it was also cheaper to keep open the canal than to close it. Commercial traffic on the canal ceased in 1972 and for the rest of the decade the City Council prevaricated. But for the success

of the Maritime Museum the dereliction would have deepened, two pubs been lost and the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust never launched.

Throughout its commercial history it seems likely that the canal never made a profit, but, surprisingly for such an experienced canal historian, profit is a term which confuses the author. The table of *profits* given on p.45 is, with due acknowledgement, taken from Hadfield's *Canals of the South West England* but Hadfield's table is of *receipts* which makes questionable Mr Clew's subsequent discussion of profitability.

J. H. Porter

The Lower Otter Valley: published by the Otter Valley Association, 1984. 104 pp. £2.25 (Orders by post to Mrs Kathleen Coleman, 22 Clinton Terrace, Budleigh Salterton EX8 6RX - £2.50 incl. post.) ISBN 0 9507534 1 6

This is a co-operative work by over a dozen members of the Association. Each is responsible for a chapter (with one exception) and between them they cover the history of the five villages, Budleigh Salterton, East Budleigh with Bicton, Otterton, Colaton Raleigh and Newton Poppleford with Harpford and Venn Ottery. In addition there are general introductory sections on the early history and agriculture of the Lower Valley: the coastal belt from Straight Point to Ladram Bay being dealt with under the heading "Maritime Affairs". There are specially-drawn maps and black-and-white drawings, some of the latter taken from prints and photographs and which combine together to produce a lasting record of one of the most attractive parts of East Devon. The compilers have been well-guided in their studies; the bibliographies at the end of each chapter show a wide range of sources and indicate the care taken in the research. There is only one criticism which can be made of this little volume; the paper used is too absorbent and fine detail particularly in some of the maps has been lost: this is unfortunate as in every other way it is a model other local history groups could copy.

John R. Pike

Books received:

Parish poor law records in Devon. Devon Record Office, 1984. 22pp. Available from Devon Record Office, Castle Street, Exeter. Price 50p (80p incl. p. & p.)

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