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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 Hon. Treasurer, David Edmund, 16 King Stret, 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, Hirondelles, 22 Churchill Road, Whitechurch, Tavistock PL19 9BU. The deadline for the next issue is 1 July 1986. 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 Chagford on Saturday 15 March and at Winkleigh on Saturday 31 May (details later).

The print on the cover is *Oreston and the Cut-Water, near Plymouth*. Steel engraving by J R Davies after W H Bartlett, publ. Fisher, 1830/2. (Somers Cocks no.2386)

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MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

A new up-to-date list of members is being prepared, and it is hoped this will shortly be available for distribution. The acting Honorary Secretary would be glad to hear as soon as possible from any members who wish to amend or supplement information previously given regarding their particular areas of interest, etc. Following the issue of the new list it is planned to provide updating slips with subsequent editions of the *Devon Historian*.

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Current and back issues of the *Devon Historian* (except for numbers 7, 11, 16, 15, 22 and 23) can be obtained, price £1.50 post free, from Mrs S. Stirling, Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter. Also available post free are *Devon Newspapers* (£1.00), *Index to Devon Historian* (for issues 1-15 50p and 16-30 £1), and *Devon Bibliography* (1980 50p, 1981 and 1982 60p each, 1983 75p).

The Hon Secretary, Mr John Pike, 82 Hawkins Avenue, Chelston, Torquay, would be glad to acquire copies of the unobtainable numbers of the *Devon Historian* listed above.

CHARTISM IN DEVON: A CASE FOR RE-ASSESSMENT

Bruce Coleman and Richard Patterson

One of the pleasures of historical research is the chance to modify or even overturn orthodoxies that have passed, sometimes almost without serious questioning, into the historiographical canon. This article sketches some of the grounds for suggesting that the case of Chartism in Devon is one which merits just this process of examination and re-assessment.

Devon hardly features in the standard accounts of the Chartist movement. Both in the traditional accounts and also in the research monographs and critical syntheses published in recent years the south-western peninsula is conspicuous largely by its absence. For example the *Chartist Studies* (1959) which Asa Briggs edited were a significant pioneering contribution to the study of Chartism in the localities, but Devon did not figure among the counties studied in depth and the work probably helped to establish the assumption which still prevails that there was very little Chartist activity west of the textile districts of Somerset and Wiltshire. Agricultural districts and the small market towns provided very little support for Chartism, we are told, and Devon—usually implicitly rather than explicitly—seems to be characterised in these terms.

The only significant exceptions to this dismissal are the recognition that Newton Abbot was one of the towns where the Chartist Land Plan attracted substantial support¹ and some mention of George Julian Harney's temerity in challenging the Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston in the borough of Tiverton in the 1847 general election. So far as the present authors are aware, not a single work in the now vast bibliography of Chartism even mentions the fact that Tavistock elected the last Chartist MP, one Samuel Carter, as late as 1852 when the movement nationally is supposed to have been all but dead.²

Even in terms of the current orthodoxy Devon merits more attention. Asa Briggs noted that among the most fertile types of locality for Chartism were old and decaying textile centres like Trowbridge and several similar towns in Wiltshire and Somerset.³ But textiles, including the old woollen manufacture, had by no means disappeared entirely from east Devon by the 1830s, though by then most of the surviving pockets of production were in their death throes. It is already clear that most of these centres showed some evidence of Chartist activity, though the scale, social character and chronology of the support will require a great deal more study before definite conclusions can be offered. The support, however, was often significantly within the context of the local community. For example Cullompton, which reached its population peak of around 3900 at this time, witnessed a 'spirited meeting' in March 1839 at which the People's Charter and the National Petition were adopted and signed by 516 inhabitants.⁴ Ashburton, the subject of frequent reports of 'distress' in the county press in 1841-2, sustained branches of both the Working Men's Association and the National Charter Association, the organisations associated with Lovettite and O'Connorite Chartism respectively. In 1842 it was also the scene of activity by the Complete Suffrage movement, the semi-Chartist alternative led by the Birmingham Quaker, Joseph Sturge. Buckfastleigh, a town with problems similar to those of Ashburton, also figures in the local press

reports of Chartist activity in these years. Some of these towns seem to have been associated with the more radical, O'Connorite side of the movement and the local newspapers, predominantly hostile to Chartism and particularly to the kind represented by Feargus O'Connor, may well have underreported it. A study of O'Connor's own newspaper, the *Northern Star*, may yet reveal rather more detail of the support in Devon.

The larger towns will also merit close attention in the study the present authors are undertaking. Plymouth was responsible for one of the earliest showings of Chartism in the county: in October 1838 the Tory Woolmer's *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* reported a 'Radical demonstration' in Stonehouse attended by 2500. Plymouth, at least if Devonport and Stonehouse are included in it, may well have accounted for the nearest thing to mass support for Chartism in the whole of Devon, perhaps because the great dockyard had brought together the semblance of a classic proletarian workforce in the county. Here, in 1839 at least, there were even hints of an insurrectionary side to Chartism.⁵

Nor was the county town immune. From February 1839 Exeter had a Working Men's Association and it produced perhaps the most prominent of Chartist leaders in Devon in W.J.P. Wilkinson, a Nonconformist wine and spirit merchant and a former mayor of the city. Here Chartism seems to have been moderate in tone. An attempt to stage a mass demonstration by 2,000 'physical force' Chartists at nearby Ide in May 1839 turned into an ill-attended fiasco and the *Western Times* was able to reassure its readers that 'there are none of the Physical Force men in the City'.⁶ The city's popular radicalism seems to have been dominated by the class of shopkeepers, craftsmen and small tradesmen who already possessed a tradition of political activity and who here, as elsewhere where they held the ground, gave Chartism a decidedly reformist, pro-Liberal character with a strong emphasis on co-operation between classes. Exeter Chartism reached its peak in 1842 with a contribution of over 3,000 signatures to the National Petition.⁷ By this time it had developed an interesting and ambiguous variant of popular radicalism in the shape of a Liberal and Independent Working Men's Association which claimed considerable influence in the 1841 parliamentary election in the city, strongly denying the Chartist character with which its Tory opponents charged it and yet supporting the points of the Chartist programme of electoral reform.⁸ What this phenomenon raises is not only the problem of defining what was Chartism and what was not but also the relationship of Chartism to older strains of local radical politics. (Tiverton, for all Harney's dramatic intervention in 1847, illustrates just this point: the Tiverton Reform Association was meeting regularly as early as 1836 and carried on in parallel with Chartism during the years of the latter's existence.) What will need exploration are the local contexts which played host to Chartism in one or more of its variants during these years and which helped to shape its manifestations in accordance with the local economy, social structure and traditions.

The Land Plan phase of Chartism in the mid-1840s has already been recognised as having had some significance for Devon. O'Connor's scheme is reckoned to have enjoyed support in many small towns where Chartism had not made much previous impact and where craft industries lived cheek-by-jowl with agriculture. O'Connor himself visited Newton Abbot in September 1846 and the town, where a branch had been formed the previous April, served as the headquarters of the Land Company's entire South-Western district consisting of twenty branches. A number of other

towns in Devon formed branches too.

The parliamentary electioneering of these years has received less attention, save for Harney's spectacular foray to Tiverton. Though fruitless in terms of votes, the attempt was claimed to have enjoyed the support of some 3,000 out of the town's 10,000 inhabitants. In the previous year Henry Vincent, another of Chartism's national figures, had contested Plymouth in a by-election caused by the appointment of the Whig Viscount Ebrington to ministerial office.⁹ The 1847 general election also saw the first candidacy of Samuel Carter at Tavistock. Defeated then, Carter won a by-election in April 1852 against two Liberals and in the general election of July that year he took the second seat. The property qualification required of MPs prevented Carter from actually taking his seat in the Commons and, when he stood again in the 1857 general election, it was as a Liberal, not a Chartist, and he was defeated in any case.¹⁰ Unlike Vincent and Harney, Carter seems to have been a local figure of no national standing. The man and his position in Tavistock politics need further investigation, but at present it looks as though Chartist success in Tavistock may have owed something to local resentment of the Russell and mining company interests that dominated—or sought to dominate—the town. Here, as in Plymouth and Tiverton, the prominence of candidates and interests closely identified with a Whig government seemingly indifferent to lower-class grievances helped to put wind into the sails of Chartism. Lord John Russell, the Liberal leader and prime minister in these years, was of the ducal family that had dominated the representation of Tavistock for so long.

All this amounts, at the very least, to good reason for re-examining the accepted picture of a county virtually without Chartism. Though it is too early in the study now being undertaken for very firm conclusions, one feature which stands out already is the bitterness, the fragmented character, of Chartism here. Really there was no 'Devon Chartism', only Chartism in Devon. Though there are some signs of emulation among the various towns which formed centres of Chartist activity, support for the Charter existed in rather isolated pockets and it seems never to have cohered as a county movement. The local organisations were probably readier to look to national leaders, causes and models—Lovett or O'Connor, Land Plan or National Charter Association—than to Exeter, Plymouth or other towns in Devon. No Chartist figure in the county, even Wilkinson, seems to have made much impact outside his own locality. Small-town patriotism which rejected leadership from elsewhere in the county may have been a factor here, but so surely was the size of Devon and the diversity of the county's economy. As with so much else in nineteenth-century Devon, it is the diversity of its Chartist experience, not its homogeneity or unity, that stands out. Not only may the chronology of Chartism in Devon as a whole show itself to have been different from the national one; it is likely that the chronologies of Chartist activity in different parts of the county diverged. That at least is what the events of 1852 in Tavistock suggest.

The difficulty of piecing together the story of Chartism in the county—already the work has taken on something of a jigsaw puzzle character—may be one reason why historians have tended to ignore or under-estimate it. In seeking to remedy the deficiency the present authors would welcome any assistance which local historians may be able to afford them. It would be good to think that the county's historians might show more cohesion and co-operation than the local Chartists managed in their day and that such an effort might produce at least a detailed picture and just

estimation of the part—if still a modest one when compared with some other areas of the country—which this county played in the most celebrated popular movement of the last century.

Notes

- 1 For example, *Chartist Studies*, ed. A. Briggs (1959), pp.288 and 319-22.
- 2 *McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book. British Election Results 1832-1918*, ed. J. Vincent and M. Stenton (Brighton, 1971), p.290.
- 3 *Chartist Studies*, p.3; also R.B. Pugh's chapter on 'Chartism in Somerset and Wiltshire'.
- 4 *Northern Star* 9 March 1839.
- 5 Report of placards posted, *Western Times* 23 March 1839.
- 6 *Western Times* 25 May 1839.
- 7 *Ibid.* 30 April 1842.
- 8 *Ibid.* 27 February 1841, which reported that the E.L.I.W.M.A. was flourishing.
- 9 *McCalmont, op.cit.*, p.237.
- 10 *Ibid.* p.290.

JAMES GREEN, CIVIL ENGINEER, 1781-1849

A.G. George

The names of early civil engineers such as James Brindley (1716-1772), John Smeaton (1724-1792), Thomas Telford (1757-1834) and John Rennie (1761-1821) are familiar to many people. As the canal era waxed and then waned other engineers came forward to support these men and one of them spent much of his life in Devon.

James Green was born in Birmingham in 1781, taking his names from his father who was a civil engineer and contractor in Warwickshire and the adjoining counties. It was from him that James received his early experience until in 1801 he was employed by John Rennie. Rennie employed Green on surveys, canal works, the drainage of bogs and fens and on engineering works generally in England and Ireland. Perhaps it was with Rennie that Green came to Devon, for in November 1805 Rennie was giving a surveyor, Charles Tozer, instructions on a survey of the river Dart on behalf of the Duke of Somerset and in July 1806 Green was doing likewise.

In the Spring of 1806 Lord Boringdon of Saltram contracted with Green for the construction of an embankment to enclose 175 acres of land formerly called Chelson Bay in the estuary of the river Plym. Green did his own research into the heights of the tides and successfully completed the work in 1807 despite losing some of his workmen to the naval press-gang. Lord Boringdon received a gold medal from the (Royal) Society of Arts for this enterprise. Chelson Meadow, as it became to be known, was successfully used for grazing, as a racecourse and as an airfield. Today it is a large Devon County Council tip, so the reclaimed land has been beneficial to Plymouth. Also in 1807 it was probably Green who reclaimed another 40 acres at West Charleton for Lord Boringdon, this time from the Kingsbridge estuary.

Green was then well positioned to undertake further projects in the county and he stayed in Devon as a direct result of the collapse of the newly built Fenny bridges which carried the London to Plymouth road across the river Otter west of Honiton. In April 1808 at 27 years of age he contracted for the design and construction of a replacement bridge with three arches of 42, 48 and 42 feet span in brickwork with a roadway of 20 feet between parapets. This now carries the A30 trunk road traffic.

During the Midsummer Sessions of 1808, the magistrates decided to appoint a bridge surveyor for the whole county and at the Michaelmas Sessions on 4 October Green was appointed. The number of bridges repairable by the county in 1808 was 236 and there can be little doubt that many were in a poor state. The Quarter Sessions Court had kept expenditure to a minimum for many years and many new bridges had short lives. By contrast Green was careful to build substantial structures with large waterways. Soon, large bridges had been completed such as New Bridge, Tawstock (over the river Taw), Hele Bridge, Hatherleigh (over the river Torridge) and Cowley Bridge over the combined rivers Exe and Creedy.

Green set to his task with great vigour. This was evident not only from the number of bridges he rebuilt but from the fact that in 1820 a committee began to examine expenditure and found that during the years 1812-1818 average cost of £226 per bridge in Devon compared with £52 for Cornwall and £78 for Somerset. Green's explanations were not convincing and expenditure began to fall in the 1820s and was still less in the 1830s. Green was unable to persuade the Devon magistrates



Cowley bridge, River Exe, 1814, Carrying Exeter to Crediton road. Photo: A B George.

that Devon's rivers are longer with higher catchment areas than those in the other two counties and that Devon bridges have to be larger to cope with greater river floods. Green is reported to have rebuilt or done major work on 110 bridges besides the general work of maintenance during his 33 years as county bridge surveyor. At first Green was allowed to contract with the county for the construction of the bridges he had designed but after he had had to have recourse to asking for extra funds this activity was forbidden. He was, however, allowed to seek work from others than the county and in the *Exeter Flying Post* of 10 November 1808 appeared the following:—

James Green, Surveyor and Civil Engineer, begs leave to inform the noblemen and gentlemen of Devonshire and the adjacent counties that in consequence of his recent appointment as general surveyor of the Devon County bridges he has taken up his residence in the city of Exeter and respectfully solicits their patronage in the several branches of his profession.

The words 'the adjacent counties' had significance and meant Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset and no more. His county salary at commencement was £300 per annum but out of that he had to provide all office and postage expenses and his travelling costs. His work for private persons became greater after ten years but meanwhile must have produced a useful additional source of income.

Such an example was when he became engineer for the Exeter to Crediton canal which had been authorised in 1801 and for which cutting began in 1810 only to be abandoned about a year later after half a mile had been excavated. An item in *Exeter Flying Post* of 13 June 1811 for 100 canal cutters was signed by Green.

It was for Lord Rolle and others that he carried out his most significant work of land reclamation when he built an embankment to enclose 2 square miles of Braunton Marsh. A survey of the marsh by Green and John Pascoe (later surveyor to the Exeter Turnpike Trust) in 1809 led to the Braunton Land Enclosure Act 23 May 1811 with works completed about 1814. This was followed quickly by another project for Lord Rolle when in about 1812 the wide lower valley of the river Otter above Budleigh Salterton was enclosed by an embankment about 1.25 miles long to yield 160 acres of grazing land. These successful works for Lord Rolle must have led to later work at Torrington.

As the county cut back on his work on bridges after 1820 Green was already looking for ways of fulfilling his professional ambitions. In 1817 he had been actively engaged in the design of new county gaols as part of his duties. None of the gaols survive but in June 1819 he presented a report to the trustees of Plymouth Eastern Division of Turnpike Roads, the trustees of the Ashburton division of Turnpike Roads and the trustees of the Exeter Division of Turnpike Roads. This was route location on quite a large scale for the proposals were for realignments of two, three and five miles at a time, and some 14 miles of the Exeter to Plymouth road were later realigned including the route from Chudleigh over Haldon to Exeter. On 30 September 1820 Green followed this by depositing a plan for the Exeter Turnpike Trustees of a new route for the Exeter—Okehampton road between Exeter and Tedburn St Mary. This followed the valley instead of the crest of the hill at Whitestone and was 6 miles long. It was quickly carried into effect.

During the previous decade Green had advised on many canal schemes and in July 1819 he commenced construction of the Bude Canal. The Torrington canal followed

in 1823 for Lord Rolle and after doing some maintenance work on the Exeter canal in 1820-21, between 1825 and 1832 he extended the canal to Turf, built a new basin at Exeter and completed a side lock to the Exe at Topsham. The new lock to the river Exe at Turf built in estuarial muds was a great feat of civil engineering because of the difficulties of construction. With the Bude Canal he successfully introduced his concept of the tub-boat canal, a canal more suitable for transporting smaller quantities than the canals of northern England and more adapted to the steep hillsides of Devon. Thirty-five miles of canal had six inclined planes, one with a vertical rise of 225 feet, for the major changes of level. Robert Fulton in correspondence with Lord Stanhope, one of the promoters of his canal, had developed highly ingenious ideas of wheeled boats and the bucket-in-the-well type of inclined plane but it was Green who put these ideas into effect in Devon. His dam across the river Tamar, built to ensure the supply of water for the canal, is the earliest significant dam in the South West peninsula and the earliest significant dam south of Derbyshire.



Turf Lock, Exeter Canal with Topsham in background, 1830. Photo: A B George.

During the 1820s he carried out surveys for a canal from Bristol to the English Channel, for one from Liskeard to Looe, and for a short canal from the Teign estuary to the centre of Newton Abbot. He carried out a drainage scheme for Westmoor, Kingsbury Episcopi in Somerset and this appears to have led to Green's advice being called on for the finalisation of the new routes to Devon of both the Ilminster and Chard turnpikes.

It was in 1824 that Green joined the Institution of Civil Engineers and he was one of its earliest members as it had been formed in 1818 and was incorporated in 1828 with Thomas Telford as its first President.

In 1831 the list of county bridges had risen from 236 to 277 when Green as county surveyor issued a specification for keeping in repair the parapet or guard walls and railings together with the roads over and adjoining the bridges. The list of bridges was divided into divisions covering a reasonable area. The parishes in which they were located and the magistrates' names and addresses were included. As the contractors had to report on the general condition of the bridges the seeds of a regular bridge inspection organisation had been sown. However, in 1831 his salary was cut from £550 to £300 per year and he appears to have sought more private work.

So Green continued his canal work in the 1830s in Somerset with the construction of the second part of the Grand Western Canal and the preparation for the Chard Canal. For the Grand Western Canal to extend from Taunton to link with Rennie's canal at Lowdells on the Devon/Somerset border, Green proposed seven canal lifts and one inclined plane. The height of the lifts varied from 12½ to 42 feet and their purpose instead of locks was to save both money and water. These lifts operated from 1838 to 1867 and drawings by Green are contained in volume II of Transactions of the Institution of Civil Engineers 1838. They were important because they were the only canal lifts to work in service in this country until 1875. Unfortunately the 42 feet lift partially collapsed during construction and the inclined plane had a bucket of insufficient size and failed to work at all until a steam engine was substituted. Consequently Green ceased to be engineer in January 1836 and his planning work on the Chard Canal also ended.

In 1826 Green had undertaken not to work outside the adjoining counties but in 1829 he was surveying for a dock at Cardiff for the Marquess of Bute. From 1832 to 1836 he was engineer for Burry Port and also for the connecting Kidwelly and Llanelly Canal. This canal extended for 5 miles up the Gwendraeth valley to Cwmmawr using 3 inclined planes. Planned expenditure was exceeded and so Green ceased to be engineer of both the canal and port in early 1836. As between 1833 and 1836 he was carrying out a survey for a further London to Birmingham canal route it seems he was trying to do too much, but his widening of Barnstaple Bridge for the Trustees was successful in 1834. Between 1836 and 1842 Green was engineer for the construction of Newport Dock which was successfully completed after the failure of the first contractor. It was an impressive project 795 feet long, 240 feet wide with room for twelve vessels to unload. The entrance lock was 61 feet wide with three sets of iron gates.

However, in 1840 a committee was appointed by Devon Quarter Sessions to examine him in his conduct of the County's business. They found his son was executing all the functions of the surveyorship except those which Green considered too important. He was given 12 months notice and instructed to live in Devon. At the midsummer Quarter Sessions of 1841 unanimous thanks were given to Green for his valuable and efficient services performed over 33 years. He was 60 years of age.

During his time as surveyor Green had his home in Exeter, first at Elmfield in St David's Hill, then at 36 Southernhay Place, next in Magdalen Street and then at Alphington. In 1841 his entries in the Exeter Directory changed from Green, James, Civil Engineer, to Green, James and Son, Civil Engineers and Land Surveyors.

Portview Cottages, Heavitree. In 1843 he moved to London but did not find it easy to obtain work. He combined with De la Garde, a former Mayor of Exeter, to present a substantial paper on the history of Exeter Canal and the engineering work of the extension to Turf to the Institution in 1845.

In 1846 Green was instructed by the Council of Bristol to advise on the measures necessary to abate the nuisance caused by the sewage in the river Frome entering the floating harbour, and after a further report in 1847 works were carried out in that year to clear the area of accumulated sludge. Green gave a paper on these reports and the work carried out to the Institution on 8 February 1848 when the discussion was initiated by the Dean of Westminster and extended over 3 evenings. By this time Green was in ill health, and on 13 February 1849 he died.

Green had shown that in his use of iron for bridges and in his mechanical work on canals he was not always at his best, though his lighter ironwork on Harnstaple bridge served well until the 1960s. Of his canal work, W. Buckingham, the historian of the Exeter Turnpike Trust, in 1885 wrote that Green 'entered into speculative contracts and died in reduced circumstances in Westminster'. Perhaps we can take a broader view in 1985. Green was, however, a master of earthworks as he had shown in his reclamation work and the construction of locks and docks in difficult ground. Generally his bridges were very well constructed with deep and secure foundations and adequate waterways requiring minimal maintenance today, a century and a half later. He contributed a number of papers to the science of engineering and he left a great heritage not only with his bridges in Devon but with his other civil engineering works in Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and South Wales.

During these times there were few other civil engineers based in the South West. The Institution of Civil Engineers recorded in 1838 that besides James Green in Exeter, there were Roger Rice and Thomas Hopkins of Plymouth and Bath, William Stuart of Plymouth and James Rendel of Plymouth. The latter had a particularly successful career and founded the oldest firm of consulting engineers now in existence. Green's son, Joseph, was also listed but as an associate member.

A selection of some of the bridges built or widened during James Green's surveyorship of the Devon County Bridges

BRIDGE	RIVER	MAP REF.
Weston	Otter	ST 143 001
Fenny	Otter	SY 116 985
Gosford	Otter	SY 102 970
Cadhay	Otter	SY 093 960
Newton Poppleford	Otter	SY 091 898
Otterton	Otter	SY 089 852
Clyst Honiton	Clyst	Widened in 1970s SX 985 935
Cowley	Exe	Ancient Monument SX 907 955
Higher Creedy, Crediton	Creedy	SS 846 011
Yeaton, Crediton	Yeo	SX 827 988
Dogmarsh	Teign	SX 713 893
Clifford	Teign	Widened in 1821 by Green SX 781 898
Steps, Dunsford	Teign	SX 805 883

BRIDGE	RIVER	MAP REF.
Sowden	Teign	SX 823 884
Crocombe	Teign	SX 848 811
Chudleigh	Teign	One approach raised 1971 SX 857 785
Teignbridge	Teign	SX 859 735
Bow, Bickington	Lemon	SX 794 725
Dart, Buckfastleigh	Dart	One side widened by Green SX 744 667
New, Loddiswell	Avon	SX 718 476
Lee Mill	Erme	Widened in 1960s SX 600 557
Cadover, Plym	Plym	SX 555 646
Longbridge, Plympton	Plym	Widened in 1930s SX 519 567
New, Tawstock	Taw	SS 570 283
Head	Mole	SS 668 183
Dipper Mill	Torridge	SS 438 065
Hele, Hatherleigh	Torridge	SS 538 065
Woolleigh	Tributary of Torridge	SS 522 171
Iron span bridges		
Axe, Colyford	Axe	Replaced 1912 SY 259 926
Landeross	Tributary of Torridge	Replaced 1926 SS 461 243
Polson, Nr Launceston	Tamar	Iron centre span replaced in 1930s SX 355 849
Work on Trust Bridges		
Bideford 1810	Torridge	Widening over half the length SS 455 264
Harnstaple 1834	Taw	Erection of cast iron footpaths and parapets SS 557 329

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RENDEL'S HYDRAULIC DRAWBRIDGE AT BOWCOMBE CREEK

Keith S. Perkins

The ever faithful Dictionary of National Biography (pp. 896-898) inform us that, in 1826, civil engineer James Meadows Rendel erected Bowcombe Bridge near Kingsbridge in Devonshire when hydraulic-power was first applied to the machinery for making swingbridges.

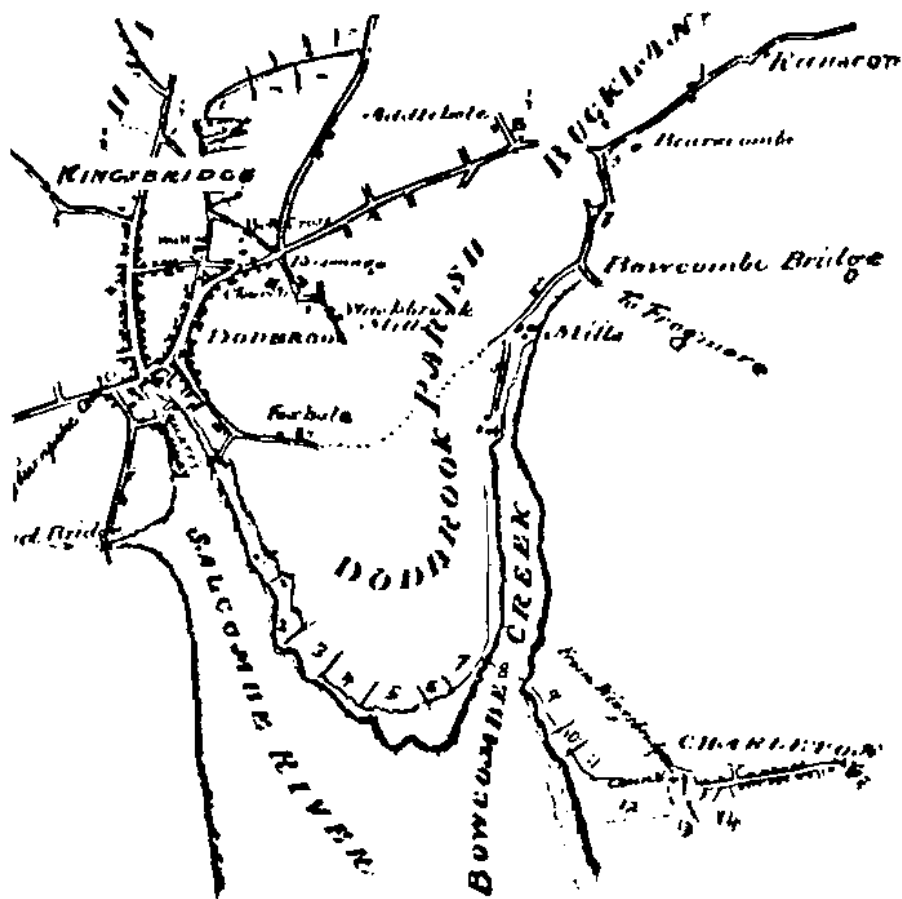
Well—not quite right! He did *not* erect the actual (ancient and still existing) Bowcombe Bridge, which is situated at the head of Bowcombe Creek a mile east of Kingsbridge near Shindle Mill, nor did he construct a swingbridge such as was contained in the five-arched bridge at the creek's mouth during the first half of the nineteenth century. But civil engineer George Clarisse Dobson¹, assistant to Rendel (and incidentally, his brother-in-law) tells us that Rendel did design and erect a drawbridge (not a swingbridge) across one of five openings in a stone bridge at Bowcombe Creek when he was engaged in improving the turnpike road in the south of Devon, about 1831.

During the 1820s, John the 1st Earl of Morley, of Saltram, (Rendel's patron) had engaged Rendel to design and construct the Laira Bridge² across the Plym Estuary, and, in order to attract travellers between Plymouth and Exeter to his bridge, Morley encouraged Bills for the construction of turnpike roads throughout the south of Devon. On 23 January 1824 he was chairman at a meeting of the Kingsbridge and Modbury Turnpike Trusts, when '... A petition was brought to this meeting from the inhabitants of Charleton, Stokenham, South Pool, Chilverstone and adjacent parishes, that a communication by a turnpike road may be opened between the town of Kingsbridge and the village of Frogmore: that Mr Rendel be ordered to survey (at the expense of the petitioners) the different lines of road between the above places, and point out and estimate any new line of road which may appear to him most eligible³ ...'

On 12 April 1824 'An Act for making and maintaining certain roads from Kingsbridge, Dartmouth, Modbury, Salcombe and other places in the south of the County of Devon' (Act 5 Geo.IV cap 31)—in which Act the turnpike road between Kingsbridge and Frogmore was included—received the Royal Assent. But it is reported that the petitioners objected to Rendel's high fees and, instead, the Trustees decided to employ John Loudon McAdam to carry out the work⁴. Later, however, new surveys for turnpike roads in this and other related areas were carried out by Henry Andrews⁵ (of whom more later).

At this time in south Devon, an interest in drawbridges seems to have arisen, such bridges permitting the free passage of large or masted vessels by lifting a section of the roadway. Sir William Elford (as Recorder of Plymouth) observed that, in Amsterdam alone, there were 200 such bridges. He then—unsuccessfully—demanded that Lord Morley order his engineer, James Meadows Rendel, to erect a drawbridge in the proposed iron bridge at Laira so that large vessels could reach his (Elford's) own quays in the Plym Estuary. At Shaldon, Roger Hopkins planned and erected a drawbridge in his wooden bridge across the estuary of the River Teign.

In 1827, Henry Andrews, surveyor of Modbury, produced a map of proposed turnpike roads in the south of Devon and from the book of references and other



Part of Henry Andrews' survey map of roads in the south of Devon 1827.

documents which accompany the map, we find that the cost of the new line of road, from Kingsbridge to Frogmore by way of Charleton, was estimated at £1,492, and that the land upon which the new road was to be laid had already been agreed and paid for. The sections of property taken over by the Turnpike Trust are represented on the map by the numbers 1 to 14 inclusive—in the areas Dodbrook parish and Charleton parish.

Act 5 Geo. IV cap. 31, contains none of this information, but on 26 March 1828, the Act was repealed and Act 9. Geo. IV cap. 12 (which was also the vehicle for Henry Andrews survey) was brought in to replace it.

Clause 15 of this Act, tells us that:

... Trustees are making an Embankment, and building arches, at great expense for carrying the said road across the estuary at Bowcombe...

There seems to be little doubt that this is a reference to the work in progress of a

bridge under construction, and not only do the numbers 7, 8, and 9 on Henry Andrews map seem to bear this out, but he also refers to 'Bowcombe New Bridge' as being located at this point, which is the site of the present-day New Bridge.

Clause 30, in the Act, is even more revealing:

... and be it further enacted, that if any person or persons shall with any boat or vessel, or in any way whatever, wilfully or carelessly injure, pull down or damage any part of the embankment across the estuary at or near Bowcombe aforesaid, or the arches, walls, posts, rails or fences, or the drawbridge or any erection or building made thereon by the said Trustees... shall for each and every such offence, forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding ten pounds...

The existence of a drawbridge at Bowcombe is further substantiated in an account: 'Description of a Drawbridge at Bowcombe Creek near Kingsbridge, Devon' by George Clarisse Dobson, in the *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*,⁶ 1843, as follows:-

... This drawbridge spans one of five openings in a stone bridge, built across a navigable branch of Salcombe Harbour; it is in one leaf 15ft 9in wide, and 32ft long from out to out, supported upon a cast iron shaft or axle, placed 7ft 6in in from the inner end, working in the abutment pier, which is built hollow to receive it, and thus the part within the axle-end acts as a counter weight.

To the centre of the end cross-beam of the counter part, a chain is attached, and after passing over cast iron sheaves in the masonry face of the abutment, is coiled on a drum fixed on a horizontal shaft, carrying on one end a pinion, worked by a rack, attached to the piston of the hydraulic press; by this means, motion is given to the shaft and drum, and consequently to the leaf of the bridge. Balance-boxes are hung to the counter-end by which means the shutting is regulated. The struts for supporting the leaf, when raised, are also thrown in and out of their places by a rack and pinion.

The hydraulic-press, used for opening and closing the bridge, is simple in its construction, and the whole works so easily that a female can open and close the bridge in about fifteen minutes without difficulty. The fresh water used for the pump is returned into the reservoir every time after being used.

The bridge was designed and erected by Mr J.M. Rendel, when he was engaged in improving the turnpike road in the south of Devon, about 1831.

The expense of repairing, oiling, packing & c., since its erection, has averaged under £7 per annum, including a small salary to a neighbouring millwright for occasional inspection.

Dobson's details enable us to identify the bridge to which he refers, of the three⁷ which span the Creek. They were:-

1 Bowcombe Bridge (Nat. Grid Ref: SX 750443), recorded by James Green⁸ who was surveying buildings and bridges here during the early 19th century as being of pre 17th century dating and as having a single arch 5ft in span. Today, it remains substantially the same, thus disposing of the report in the Dictionary of National Biography that Rendel ever erected a drawbridge (or swingbridge) here, since only a tiny un-navigable stream flowed through it.

2 Bowcombe Creek Footbridge (SX 748441), three hundred metres downstream, reported in recent years by the late Mr A.M. Chitty, architect and town planning consultant of Kingsbridge, as dating from the 16/17th century. It is of simple

masonry construction, 37.5 metres in length and 1½ metres wide at the top. The site of this bridge, which almost certainly has some pack-horse connection, also marks the Normal Tidal Limits (NTL) of the Creek, and so need not be considered further. 3 *New Bridge* (745431), spanning the mouth of Bowcombe Creek and carrying the present Kingsbridge-Dartmouth road (A379) is by far the largest of the three. It is the one referred to by Henry Andrews as 'Bowcombe New Bridge' when under construction in 1828. Furthermore, it is a masonry bridge with five openings, a feature reported in Dobson's account when he mentioned the site of Rendel's drawbridge, but not its location.

Today the bridge here is frequently referred to, also, as Charleton Bridge, a name much used during the 19th century. S.P. Fox (Sarah Prideaux Fox⁹) in her book *Kingsbridge and its Surroundings* (1874), writes:

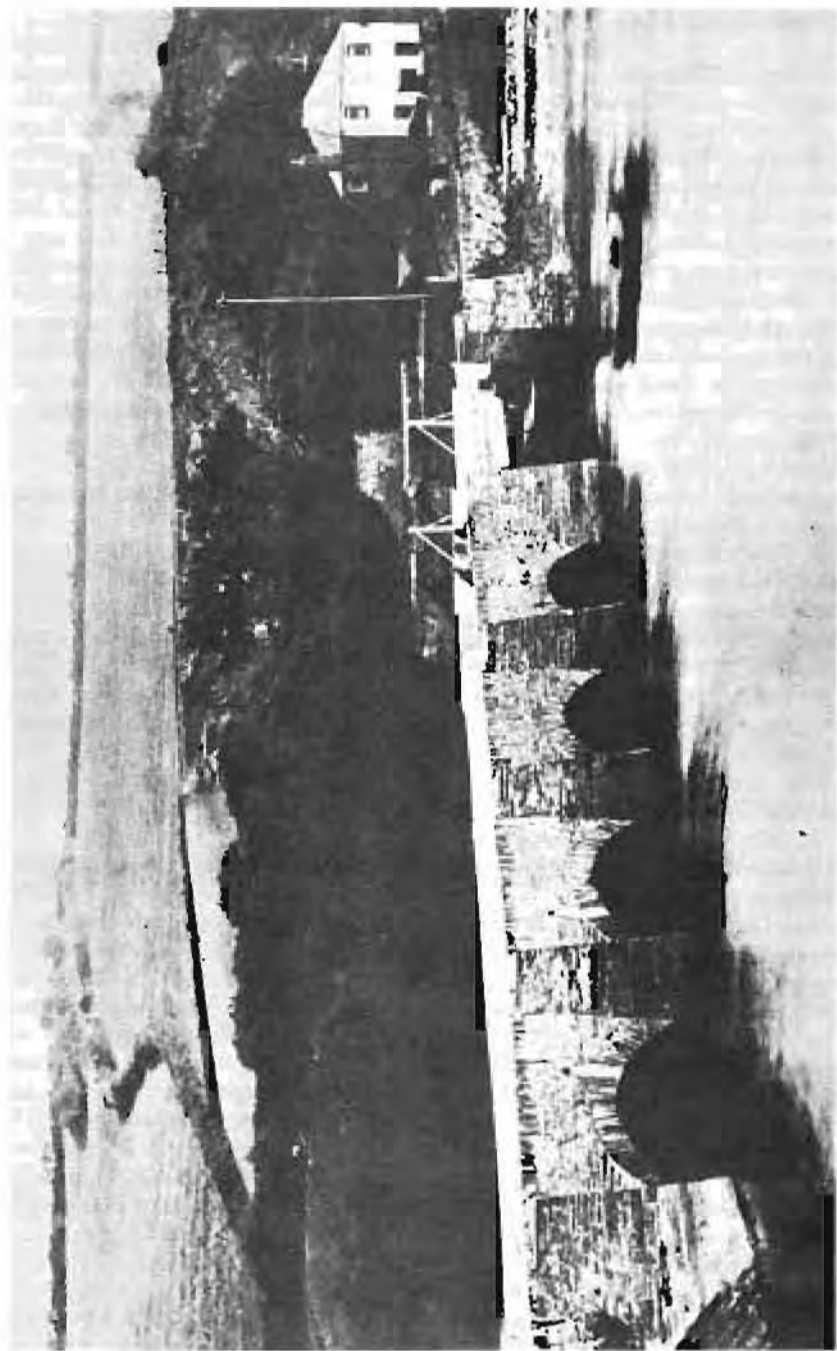
... Rather beyond the first mile-stone (from Kingsbridge) on this, the 'new road' to Dartmouth, is Charleton Bridge, crossing a Creek, near the head of which is Shindle Mill. This bridge possesses some peculiarities of construction, probably not to be found elsewhere. The following particulars were kindly furnished, in 1864, by Mr Joseph Pulliblack, builder, and son-in-law of Mr John Eddy, therein mentioned:

'The present horizontal swingbridge over Bowcombe Creek was erected in the year 1845. The contract for its erection was taken on the 1st January in that year by Mr A. Saunders of Kingsbridge, millwright and engineer, and the work was carried out under the superintendence of Mr John Eddy, surveyor. The principle of the bridge (being required to open to allow of the navigation of the Creek) is a strong fulcrum of timber, built into a solid mass of masonry and shod with tempered iron at its upper end—the weight resting on twelve *cannon balls*, which play freely in two grooved pieces of cast iron, one of which is fixed to a movable frame, and the other to the solid masonry below. This application of cannon balls excited the admiration of a very worthy member of the Society of Friends (Joseph Hingston), since deceased, who observed that it was such a use of cannon balls as he could approve of, and he wished they were always as well employed.'

Thus, all the evidence suggests that *New Bridge* (i.e. Charleton Bridge) is the one described by George Clarisse Dobson, and that the swingbridge of 1845 had replaced the earlier hydraulic-powered drawbridge, pioneered and erected by Lord Morley's engineer, James Meadows Rendel, about 1831.

* * *

In 1873 the swingbridge was rebuilt 'without important alteration of detail in construction', and by the turn of the 19th century it had been removed completely and replaced by another stone arch¹⁰—as we see it today.



New Bridge, Bowcombe, showing the swingbridge that replaced Rendel's hydraulic drawbridge in 1845. By 1900 it had been replaced with another stone arch, as seen today. (Courtesy of the Cookworthy Museum, Kingsbridge.)

Notes, Sources and Acknowledgements:

1 Biographical Note:

George Clarisse Dobson—born at Canteleu near Rouen in July 1801 (his mother was French) came to England in 1814 and was apprenticed to Professor John Millington. He was employed at Lanescote Mine near Fowey in Cornwall. In 1831, he became assistant to James Meadows Rendel and was occupied, among other things, on the drawings of the floating bridges established at Torpoint and elsewhere. In 1837 he became assistant and draughtsman to William Stuart, Superintendent of the Breakwater Department of the Plymouth Dockyard and in 1846—upon the recommendation of Mr Rendel, he received from the Admiralty the appointment of Resident Engineer for the purpose of superintending the works to be carried out for the improvement of Holyhead Harbour, Mr Rendel being the Engineer-in-Chief. At Holyhead Mr Dobson continued to perform his duties until the completion in 1873. He died there in 1874.

Extract: Minutes of Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Vol 41. (Rendel and Dobson married daughters of the same James and Mary Harris family of Plymouth).

- 2 **C.E. Welch MA**—'The Iron Bridge of Plymouth'—*Transactions of The Devonshire Association*, Vol. 98 1966.
- 3 **Morley Papers**, Accession 69. Devon Records Office (West). Public Announcement—Handbill. Committee Meeting of the Kingsbridge and Modbury Turnpike Trust, 23 Jan 1824, Signed by Morley (Chairman).
- 4 **C.E. Welch MA**—*The Iron Bridge at Plymouth*—page 378 (Also see) Alan Gibson, 'Man who remade Devon's Roads', *Western Morning News*, 29 November 1967 (P.4)
- 5 **Henry Andrews**—(surveyor). Survey map of proposed turnpike roads in the South of Devon (1827). (House of Lords Records Office).
- 6 **W.A. Morris**—Archivist, Institution of Civil Engineers.
- 7 **M.R. Hawkins**—County Engineer and Planning Officer, Exeter, Devon. (Devon Bridge Records).
- 8 **James Green**—Engineer of Birmingham (later Superintendent of Bridges in Devonshire), was contracted by the Rt Hon. Lord Boringdon (later Earl of Morley) in 1806, to construct an embankment at Laira and so reclaim 175 acres from the sea. Chelson Bay became Chelson Meadow upon which James Meadows Rendel later laid out Plymouth Race Course. At the same time at Charleton (near Kingsbridge), Morley reclaimed a further 40 acres from the sea but it is not known for certain if James Green was contracted to construct the embankment there also. (See also 'Old Devon Bridges', C. Henderson MA (Oxon) 1938 (p.29)).
- 9 **Sarah Prideaux Fox**—the compiler of the historical guide to Kingsbridge, was the great grand daughter of William Cookworthy's brother, Philip. She died in 1882 at the age of 72. Her brother George Fox provided the photographs illustrating her book.
(Incidentally—another Cookworthy, Dr Joseph Cookworthy—1792 to 1869—saved the life of James Meadows Rendel in 1825, when the latter fell from the scaffolding into the sea during supervision of construction of the Laira Bridge

... Dr Cookworthy, initially an objector to the erection of Laira Bridge, became a life long friend of the Rendel family.)

- 10 **Benjamin Wyatt**, *Kingsbridge and Neighbourhood*, 1900 (p.32)

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Elizabeth Chitty—(widow of the late A.M. Chitty, FRIBA, AMPTI. See also—Obituary, Kingsbridge Gazette, 29 October 1976)

A.W. Neal C.Eng—Notes and Correspondence.

Clerk of the Records—House of Lords Records Office.

JOHN WESTERN, OF EXETER AND SYDNEY, 1824-1893

W.G. Western

The writer received a request from Australia, asking if John Western had been related to his own family. The Devon Record Office had referred the request to him since he had been engaged in writing the history of one branch of the Western family. John Western proved not to be connected with his own branch, but the story revealed by this research was so fascinating that the following biography resulted.

John Western, born in Stepcote Hill, in the slums of Regency Exeter, stepped into recorded history as a juvenile delinquent 16 years old, when he appeared before the Exeter Quarter Sessions of November 1840 'for feloniously stealing eight books value 1s 6d each the goods of William Spreat on 23rd November 1840 at St Laurences'. This shop was in the present High Street opposite the entrance to Bedford Street. For this he was sentenced to be 'imprisoned and kept to hard labour four calendar months fourteen days solitary two days at a time and twice severely and privately whipped'. Today such a sentence seems vicious for a young first offender, but in view of the times when the death penalty had only just been relaxed but could still be exacted for over a hundred different crimes, perhaps he could have suffered more. His family lived in the street which had been the old medieval way down out of the city. His grandfather, born in Newton St Cyres, had moved into Exeter about 1784 and John's father, a labourer, had seven children, of whom John was the third child. Young John, who could neither read nor write, seems to have been a product of that overcrowded, insanitary area of Exeter. Released from gaol in March, his back having barely recovered from the two whippings, he returned home and was soon caught up in his old anti-social habits.

At that time, one of the places at which the society folk of Exeter gathered was the Royal Subscription Rooms in Northernhay Street on the site now occupied by Boots store. Three months after his release he was apprehended here and taken once more into custody. On 5 July 1841 he appeared again before the Exeter Quarter Sessions and was found guilty of 'feloniously stealing a handkerchief value 1s 0d and a snuff box value 1s 0d the goods of Samuel Baker from his person on 12th June 1841 after a previous conviction for felony'. This being his second conviction the penalty was transportation for 7 years.

Reporting on these Quarter Sessions, the *Exeter Flying Post* prints three other transportation sentences: one a man of 29 for stealing 5 yards of velveteen and also a boy of 13 and one of 15 who belonged to a notorious gang of thieves. After their trial at Exeter Castle these convicted persons were taken back to Exeter Gaol, where leg irons were put on until they could be taken to the hulks at Plymouth. The railway to Plymouth had not been opened at this date and the prisoners were transported by sea from Topsham. Life in the hulks was very raw in the cramped, low-decked, rotting ships and to get out to do any form of daily work, even in irons, must have seemed a privilege.

John Western had a long wait. It was not until 24 April 1842 that the convict ship *Susan*, 550 tons, loaded up at Plymouth with 299 convicts, and sailed direct to Hobart in Van Diemen's Land. It made the passage in the remarkably fast time of 99 days and life aboard was certainly more tolerable than in the hulks. The ship had

been specially constructed for convict charters and the captains of such ships were paid about £20 per head for every convict delivered alive plus a bonus for each one in good health and fit for work. A naval officer was appointed to each ship to deal with the convicts' health, discipline and conditions. On this trip only two of the convicts died. The *Susan* anchored at Hobart on 24 July 1842 and John Western was stationed at the prison camp at Bridgewater. On his record sheet he was described as a plasterer's labourer, standing 5ft 3½ in high, of fair complexion with brown hair, and grey eyes. His chin was broad and dimpled and there were scars on his forehead and over his left eye.

During his first five months at Bridgewater his conduct was good, but in January 1843 his behaviour was marked 'tolerable'. He was in serious trouble with the prison administration and on 13 January 1843 he was found guilty of 'misconduct with 3 others in violently assaulting a prison officer'. For this he was sentenced to twelve months hard labour in chains, and recommended to be removed from the others to a different station on the Tasman Peninsula. Here at Impression Bay the work of the convicts was mainly in tree clearance and road construction. The treatment in these gangs could be brutal for often the overseer was a senior convict who delighted in brutality, and if one fell foul of such a man, life could be very terrible. John had his full taste of such a life. Five weeks after transfer he was ordered an extension of three months hard labour for disobedience to orders. Twelve weeks later he was given 25 lashes of the whip for having three files in his possession.

In June 1844 he was released from the first stage of his probation and returned to the prisoners' barracks, where life was a little more civilised, but in December of that year he was awarded ten days solitary confinement for gambling and neglect of work. He was now approaching his 21st birthday and seemed to be settling down, but in November 1845 he was found to have a pair of worsted stockings in his possession. For this he suffered three months hard labour on road building. Convicts were not allowed stockings, only canvas shoes. Many of them had to resort to binding their feet with strips of old clothing to give protection in winter.

In March 1846 John Western was released from service on the roads and was indentured as a servant to a Mr J. Aldridge of Liverpool Street, Hobart. He earned a good report and during the next twelve months worked for a number of Hobart citizens, each of whom gave him a good report.

His sentence was completed in June of 1847 and he was given a ticket-of-leave. To return to England would have meant either paying for or working his passage, so he chose to take his chance in the new colony. The next five years of his life are somewhat conjectural, but they were very fateful, for they set him on the path of literacy, of wealth, and social acceptance, and finally of respect and even of family honour. When he married in St David's, Hobart in 1852 he could still not sign his name on the marriage certificate, and described himself as a 'dealer'. One of the ways in which ticket-of-leave men earned their living was by buying household goods in Hobart and peddling them to the isolated farms and homesteads. It is possible that John accumulated his first capital in this way.

During these years he met the person who was to affect his life most profoundly and who, by her devotion, drive, and love, inspired him to become a literate, prosperous and much-loved family man. Lucy Williamson was the daughter of a free settler. The family was well set-up and comfortably off, an educated family from Kent. Her grandfather had been Rector of Westbere in Kent, and two of her uncles were Cam-

bridge graduates and ordained Anglican priests. Another uncle had obtained grants of land in Van Dieman's Land and Lucy's father had followed and set up a prosperous business in Hobart. She was an outgoing and adventurous person. John was tough, bold, handsome and determined. They met; they fell in love.

Lucy was only 19 at the time. Imagine the consternation and distress in this well-off, educated family when she told them that she wanted to marry this illiterate ex-convict. When their heads turned from her, imagine their alarm, their despondency and fury when she told them that she must marry him for she was carrying his child. The family forbade the marriage, and a little girl was born to Lucy Williamson on 1 December 1850. She was given the name of Lucy Western. Eighteen months later, when Lucy Williamson was just twenty-one years old, she was married to John Western in St David's Hobart. None of her family signed the marriage certificate. John and his bride faced the world without family blessing, with their little daughter and few assets save their strong personalities and determination.

The discovery of gold on the mainland, in Victoria in 1852, caused a rush of men from Van Dieman's Land and left the colony with a desperate shortage of labour. Inflation set in and the colony was in financial trouble. One of the Williamson brothers moved to the vicinity of Ballarat where fortune favoured him. About this time the Westerns also moved to Victoria and the family tradition has it that John may have set up a store on the edge of the goldfields supplying the mines with much needed goods at appropriate prices. Many Australian businessmen founded their fortunes in this way. The Westerns began to prosper and over the next few years John bought property in Sydney and Melbourne. In business he became very much respected and was known as 'Honest John'. His handshake over a business deal was as good as a signature on a contract. Tradition relates that he was always smartly dressed, wearing a gold watch and chain, and having an expensive diamond ring. He learned to read and to write, though somewhat shakily, and collected a library which he eventually bequeathed to his grandson. Lucy's love, determination and drive must have played a great part in his establishment in Australian society.

As their estate prospered they moved, first to Melbourne and then to Sydney, by which time he had become a wealthy merchant. Their daughter Lucy was married in 1871 at Maitland, near Sydney to John Tremaine. A son was born to them, who was christened John Western Tremaine and the name of John Western has been honoured in each generation of descent by one male offspring bearing his name.

John died in Sydney in 1893 at the age of 69. His will was farsighted enough to provide for his grand-children throughout their lifetime. But more remarkable was the thought he spared for his brothers left behind in Exeter forty-two years before. In that will each brother was to be paid an allowance of eight shillings per week. The eldest brother, James, died in 1899. He was living at 23 Bartholomew Street, with a younger brother, Thomas. William, another young brother, had married and moved away to Liverpool. It was the grandchildren of Thomas who provided the story of how their grandmother, the wife of Thomas, spoke of money from Australia, which had been the only means of providing shoes for the children. Thomas lived in great poverty and the letters acknowledging the receipt of the money say that in his last years he was 'practically dead to the world, neither being able to see, understand, or move'. The allowance 'was a godsend'. Thomas died in 1910. His grandchildren live today close to Exeter and are once more in correspondence with their Australian kinsfolk.

The will finally became inactive in Australia in 1981 when the last of John Western's estate was disposed of. John's widow Lucy, lived for another twelve years after her husband's death, dying in 1905. She wished to be buried alongside her beloved John in the Gore Hill Cemetery, Sydney and this was arranged. In the succeeding years the site was forgotten. But John Western's great-grand-daughter, thrilled by his story, determined to find it. After many hours of searching she and her brother stumbled upon the site of the two burials, overgrown and neglected, in a forgotten corner of the cemetery. They cleaned up and tended the graves and left one red flower on each.

On John's gravestone the following is recorded
In Loving Memory of
John Western
Died 5th Feb 1893
age 69 years
We cannot tell who next may fall
Beneath thy chastening rod.
One must be first, but let us all
Prepare to meet our God.

Today his descendants and their relatives back in England, treasure the memories of this unusual Exonian. A delinquent, born in the slums, imprisoned, whipped, transported, working in the chain gangs, but with the love of a determined woman, making of himself a worthy and respected citizen of Australia.

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Life in Old Van Dieman's Land

PLYMOUTH WORKHOUSE IN THE CENSUS RETURNS OF 1861

W.N. Bryant

In accordance with the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 the nation's Poor Law administration was reformed. In Plymouth an elected Board of Guardians came into being in 1835. They decided to build a new workhouse on old charity trust land at Greenbank in 1849.¹ There are no surviving official records of that workhouse in the nineteenth century. Therefore, the detailed statements concerning Plymouth workhouse in the Census Returns for 1861 are of unique importance. In this brief article, I shall examine these Returns in order to give some indication of the sort of information that can be gleaned from these documents.²

The Plymouth workhouse entries in the 1861 Census occupy nineteen pages. The list of inmates begins with the names of 14 Officers and then lists, in alphabetical order,³ the 452 paupers.

The list of Officers and their functions is instructive because it reflects the day-to-day work and organisation of the institution. The 'Master' of the workhouse was John Truscott, aged 50 and born in Devonport. His wife, Louisa, aged 45 and also born in Devonport, is described as 'Matron'. The educational needs of the large number of children in the workhouse were met by two teachers. They were 52 year old Henry Snowden, a widower, and 33 year old Helen Kelly: both were born in Plymouth. The cooking was done by William Stacey, a 36 year old Cornishman. His wife, Caroline, aged 50 from Dartmouth, was responsible for the workhouse laundry. The 'Keeper of the Male Lunatics' was Robert Lang, aged 58, born in Dawlish. The 'Keeper of the Female Lunatics' was Elizabeth Blight, 47 and unmarried. She was born in Totnes. These officials remind us that at this time the mentally deranged were lumped in with the disabled and the chronically poor: all, alike, were a charge on the poor rates.

Four of the remaining five officers were all Plymouth-born. They were: the store-keeper, William Trevaillar, 34, and unmarried; the fireman, Thomas Horne, a widower aged 48; a barber, John Wills, 45, and unmarried; and a gate-porter, William Poole, aged 58, and unmarried. The workhouse also employed a nurse: 53 year old Sarah Dustin, a widow. Finally, there was a midwife: Sarah Dimford, married, aged 38, and born in Staffordshire. Her presence was necessary because some of the women who entered the workhouse would have been pregnant.

The 452 paupers in the workhouse in 1861 Census included 128 children (aged 15 and under), which represents 28.31% of the total paupers. There were 136 adult males, representing 30.08% of the total; and 188 adult females, representing 41.59% of the total.

An examination of the age structure of the adult workhouse inmates yields the following figures:

Age Range	Males	Females
16-29	22 (= 16.17%)	55 (= 29.25%)
30-39	11 (= 8.08%)	22 (= 11.70%)
40-49	20 (= 14.70%)	22 (= 11.70%)
50-59	18 (= 13.23%)	22 (= 11.70%)
60-69	32 (= 23.52%)	27 (= 14.36%)
70-79	23 (= 16.91%)	31 (= 16.48%)
80-89	8 (= 5.88%)	9 (= 4.78%)
90-99	2 (= 1.47%)	0

Without further information it is impossible to explain why over 29% of the female paupers were aged between 16 and 29; but this high proportion is clearly very interesting. I have examined the first 22 names on this list and there is a monotonous consistency about the details: most were unmarried, most had been servants, and most were born either in Plymouth itself or elsewhere in Devon. Twenty of the twenty-two were unmarried; three of the twenty-two had small children with them. Two were married, but there is no sign of the husbands. The youngest member of this group was 17 years old Esther Aaron (?)

The 1861 Census returns list the inmates of the Plymouth workhouse in alphabetical order. This greatly facilitates the historian's task. It helps, for example, to establish at a glance which children have come into the workhouse without either parent. William, Emma and Catherine Gilchrist had neither parent with them; nor had the three Hake children, nor the four Stewart children. The list could be extended. There was also a fair sprinkling of unmarried mothers. Mary Ireland, aged 34, was unmarried with three children. Her occupation had been sugar boiler. There were several unmarried ex-servants with children: eg Eliza Wellington, aged 17, unmarried, and with a four month old daughter, Bessy. The workhouse also contained some widows with children: one interesting point I noted here was that of four examples (Alice Gill, Mary Gray, Jane Manning and Eliza Seage) none had been born in either Plymouth or any other part of Devon. Three were born in Kent, Wales and Wells respectively; the fourth girl did not know her place of birth. Since most of these female paupers had been servants, seamstresses and dressmakers it is interesting to note that Mary Brown, aged 42, was a former schoolteacher.

Amongst the male inmates there are some who are listed as naturalised British subjects: eg Conrade (?), Adame (?), a widower of 50. He was born in Germany and had been a labourer. So, too, had many of the other male inmates: 'labourer' is the commonest entry in the 'Occupation' column. Other listed occupations included: seaman, groom, gardener, tailor, blacksmith, mason, shipwright, bookbinder, ropemaker, railway labourer, butcher, printer-compositor, wool-comber, sugar boiler, velvet weaver, paper maker, musician, shoe-maker, french-polisher, scavenger, anchor-smith, whitesmith, tanner, stableman. I counted half-a-dozen ex-railway workers. It is possible that these men had been too seriously injured to find further employment. Poverty was sometimes the result of physical disability. Amongst the male inmates there were a Chelsea Pensioner and ex-farm labourer, William Easton, aged 70, and a Greenwich Pensioner and ex-seaman, John Matthews, also aged 70. The two oldest paupers in the workhouse were both men in their nineties. They were: John Collins, aged 90, widower, formerly agricultural

labourer, born in Totnes; and Owen Williams, aged 92, widower, formerly seaman, born in Anglesea.

I have not systematically examined the place of birth entries in this list, but my impression is that the overwhelming majority of these workhouse paupers were born in Plymouth, other parts of Devon, and Cornwall. Interesting exceptions were the German already noted; Esther Aaron (?), born in Poland, and a naturalised British subject; John Baker, aged 5 and George Baker, aged 9, who were born in Australia (neither parent was with these two boys); and William Berkley, married (but not accompanied by his wife) who was 64 and born in the West Indies. Other inmates hailed from Norway, France, the Cape of Good Hope, and America.

Notes

- 1 C. Gill, *Plymouth: A New History, 1603 to the Present Day* (1979) pp.150/155.
- 2 The reference for the 1861 Census Enumerators' Return for Plymouth in 1861 is: RG9/1438.
- 3 Except for the 3 people at the very end of the list. Presumably they had entered the Workhouse very recently; maybe on the actual day in which the census was taken.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Bruce Coleman lectures in the Department of History and Archaeology, Exeter University, and specialises in nineteenth century British history.

Richard Patterson, who graduated recently at the College of St Mark and St John, is a postgraduate student in the Department of History and Archaeology, Exeter University, researching into the history of Chartism in Devon.

A.B. George, a graduate of Birmingham University, is a civil engineer. He joined Devon County Council's Surveyor's Department in 1952. Seconded to the South Western Road Construction Unit (1968-74) he was responsible for the design of bridges for the new Exeter-Plymouth and Exeter-Okehampton roads. He was Chief Bridge Engineer for DCC 1974-80, and since then a member of the independent panel of inspectors of the Department of Environment and Department of Transport for highway schemes in England and Wales.

W.G. Western is a former general science teacher and writer of books on the subject. He was headmaster of Sandye Place School, Beds, before retiring to Exeter.

Dr W.N. Bryant is a lecturer in history at the College of St Mark and St John and is specially interested in nineteenth century census material relating to Plymouth.

STRANDING OF 'WHALES' AT SEATON

C.A. Raleigh Radford

An entry in the Register of Walter de Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter 1307-26, (Stapledon, 367¹) illustrates one of the more unusual duties of a medieval vicar. It may be translated: 'Note that on 24 October 1309 at Newenham—Newenham Abbey, near Axminster—the Bishop obtained 15 pieces of graspesius in settlement of tithe from William (Gladwyne), Vicar of Seaton, which the said William had received from his parishoners, as a render of this kind of tithe. Also, on 25 October, at Little Windsor, he received through the same William, Vicar of Seaton, 12 pieces of graspesius in settlement of the aforesaid tithe from William de Gravestone and John Craf, parishoners of the said church of Seaton'. The Latin word graspesius, better craspesius²,—literally fat fish (piscis crassus)—has the specialised meaning of grampus, but in the Middle Ages, it is often used as a generic term for cetacea. The amount, representing a total of at least 270 pieces, is large and suggests that whales were involved and that there was more than one carcass, perhaps a school of whales, stranded on the beach at Seaton.

Whales and porpoises were among the royal fish and the Bishop's right to tithe rested on a charter of Henry II to Bishop Robert (1155-60), which states that the tithe had been paid to earlier bishops of Exeter in the time of Henry I (1100-35). The charter was confirmed in 1314-5. This confirmation is entered in the Register of Bishop John de Grandisson, without note or comment, immediately after an entry dated 23 March 1336 (Grandisson, 839).

Stranding rather than an organised hunt, like those which occurred in Orkney until recent times and still occur in the Faroe Islands, is suggested, as a parallel charter of Henry II to St Stephen of Caen (1189) makes the grant in respect of craspesius and every kind of fish that may come accidentally on to their English lands.

How often such strandings took place in the Middle Ages cannot be estimated, but an entry in a later Register indicates that the tithe was of some value to the bishops. On 20 February 1376, Bishop Thomas de Brantyngham wrote to the Vicars of St Gluvias and of Fowey, authorising them to collect this tithe throughout Cornwall and to use ecclesiastical censure against defaulters (Brantyngham, 153).

Notes

- 1 Episcopal Registers. Diocese of Exeter. Edited by F.C. Hingeston-Randolph. Cited by name of Bishop and page.
- 2 Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources (British Academy), s.v. craspesius. The operative clauses of the two charters quoted are printed.

PLYMOUTH CITY MUSEUMS & ART GALLERY

Cynthia Gaskell Brown
(Keeper of Archaeology and Local History)

In common with most museums set up in late Victorian times Plymouth City Museum acquired collections that were intended to provide a wide education in the natural sciences and the arts.

These collections include Egyptian antiquities, pottery and glass from ancient Greece and Rome, and some 3,000 artefacts from 'primitive' and exotic cultures as far apart as New Guinea and India, Barbados and Japan. These ethnographic collections have fallen out of fashion and most principal museums during the last twenty years, have moved towards collecting and displaying local history and archaeology. Plymouth has been no exception and amongst its resources of archaeological material the finds from Bronze Age sites on west Dartmoor and from the Iron Age trading port of Mount Batten are the most important. Medieval and later archaeological material from Plymouth urban sites, from Plymouth Priory, Okehampton Castle, Meldon reservoir, the Cattewater Wreck, *et al*, together with their excavation archives is also deposited in the museum. Local and social history collections (some 4,000 items) range from Devon tokens, Plymouth police truncheons, bone ship models made by French prisoners of war in Napoleonic times through to World War II gas masks. Much of this is on show in the Merchants' House Museum where the old rhyme 'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor, Rich Man, Poor man, Apothecary, Thief' is illustrated by Plymouth's history.

Two Tudor half-timbered houses in Plymouth (The Merchant's House, St Andrew's Street and the Elizabethan House, New Street) and a Cistercian Abbey converted to a gentleman's residence (Buckland Abbey) are part of the museum service and offer architectural resources in themselves.

A large collection of photographs (at least 15,000) mostly of Plymouth streets and buildings is constantly growing as the Museum plays an active role in the recording of buildings under threat. Many of these photographs have been published but offer a continuing source of information.

Other topographical resources are provided by a fine collection of paintings and prints showing many aspects of Plymouth, in the care of the Art departments, which also have a fine collection of Cookworthy porcelain—England's first true porcelain developed in Plymouth by the chemist William Cookworthy in the 1750s.

An identification and enquiry service is available but as our staff is small it helps us if enquiries can be specific and in writing.

Plymouth City Museum, Drake Circus

Main collections of archaeology, natural history and fine and decorative arts. Reserve collections including photographs. Admission free. Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm.

The Merchants' House Museum, St Andrew's Street, Plymouth

16th Century house displaying aspects of Plymouth's history. Small admission charge. Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm.

The Elizabethan House, New Street, Plymouth

A 16th Century house with period furniture. Small admission charge. Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm.

Buckland Abbey, Yelverton

A 13th Century Cistercian Abbey, later the home of Sir Francis Drake. Drake relics, rural life displays, carts and carriages. Admission charge (National Trust). Winter opening restricted—Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday. Opening times and charges may vary slightly.

Plymouth Museum curatorial staff:—*Curator* Mr T. Besterman; *Senior Keeper* Mr J. Barber; *Keeper of Archaeology and Local History* Mrs C. Gaskell Brown; *Assistant Keeper* Mr W. Scutt; *Keeper of Art* Miss M. Attrill; *Assistant Keeper* Miss C. Hampshire; *Keeper of Natural History* Mr D. Curry.

THE DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY

Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting held at Exeter on Saturday 12 October 1985

Apologies were received from Messrs Bosanko, Hulland, Madge, Paley, Havill, Stanes, Major Anderson, Mrs J. Slocombe, Mrs S. Stirling.

- 1 The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (printed in October 1984 *Devon Historian*) were read and approved.
- 2 Arising therefrom:
 - (a) **Devon Historic Buildings Trust** The Chairman reported that 18 & 19 Market Street, Tavistock were due for completion next month and that offers for their purchase were being sought. Nos 19 & 20 were due to be renovated shortly. Some acquisitions have been made at the Plains, Totnes and estimates were being sought for the first stage of the project. Mr Bedward asked if there was any action contemplated for the Maitings. The Chairman undertook to raise the matter at the next meeting of the Totnes Trust.
 - (b) **One-day conferences** The Chairman commented briefly on the success of these held at Axminster and Braunton and reported that tentative arrangements had been made for the next two to be held at Chagford on 15 March 1986 and at Winkleigh on 31 May 1986.
- 3 The Hon Secretary presented his last report. He said that there had been an excellent response to the Hon Publicity Officer's leaflet "An invitation to join . . ." with the result that nearly one hundred new members had been registered. Further work on the members' list and computer-record had also been completed. The meeting recorded its thanks to the Hon Secretary for his work over the past years.
- 4 The Hon Treasurer submitted his income & expenditure accounts for 1984-85. It showed that at present the expenses of the Society were being met by

subscription income, so that he was not proposing any increase in the current rates for 1985-86. He also explained that there were problems with printing *DH 31* and the new *Index* which had not yet been resolved. The thanks of the meeting were recorded to the Hon Treasurer who explained that he was only continuing in office until the end of the financial year or earlier if a successor is appointed.

- 5 The Hon Editor submitted her report. She reported that there had been difficulties with the printer over the typesetting of the current issue; however it was finally distributed on time. She paid a special tribute to the former Editor, Mrs Sheila Stirling, who was continuing to receive and send out copies of Devon books for review. She further indicated that she would like to introduce a new feature using short extracts from old newspapers possibly on a specific theme. This might also include anniversaries of places and people. It was resolved that the Editorial Committee be revived consisting of the Hon Editor, immediate-past Hon Editor, Chairman and Treasurer. A vote of thanks was recorded to Mrs Harris for her work on *DH 31*, the first under her editorship.

- 6 It was unanimously resolved that the next President be Mr Crispin Gill for the period 1986-89.

7 **Council, 1985-86**

The Hon Secretary reported the resignations of the Vice-Chairman, Mr Robin Stanes, Mr C. Hullah and Dr R. Taverner. The Hon Treasurer, Mr David Edmund also indicated that he would be continuing only to the end of April 1986 at the latest. The Chairman reported that Mr George Tatham and Mrs Freda Wilkinson had been nominated to fill the two vacancies. They were declared elected. Mr John Pike was appointed to fill the office of Vice-Chairman. Mr Owen Baker, Miss Joy Beer and Mr John Bosanko, who retired under the constitution of the Society, were declared re-elected.

At this stage Dr Grant raised various matters concerning the Council and the manner in which it operated. The President proposed (seconded by Mrs Edmund) that the Council should meet three times a year. After discussion this was approved with only two dissenting votes. (It was later agreed that the Council should next meet on Saturday 30 November 1986 at 10.30am in Exeter).

The following were nominated by the meeting to bring the Council up to the numbers permitted in the constitution: Messrs R. Bedward, A. Reed, M. Stoneman and E. Yates. All were declared elected.

Professor W.E. Minchinton was appointed Chairman of the Council for the coming year.

- 8 **Notice of Motion** The Hon Secretary submitted the following which had been approved at the last meeting of the Council:

"That the Chairman, like the other officers, should be appointed by the Annual General Meeting."

This was declared carried.

9 **Other Matters**

(a) **Oral history** It was agreed that this be discussed by the Council at their next meeting.

(b) **Annual General Meeting** It was agreed that the choice of the Seminar Room at the University Library had been a good one and that the Librarian

be thanked for making it available. It was further agreed that the meeting next year (on 11 October 1986) be held there also if this can be arranged.

(c) **Devon Union List, Part 2** The Chairman and Mr Maxted reported briefly on the present position. Mr Maxted indicated that this is likely to be a substantial publication with 4/5,000 titles and will therefore be a major project for the future.

(d) **Centre for South Western Historical Studies** The Hon Secretary reported a one-day conference had been arranged for 16 November 1986. It was agreed that Mr Maxted should represent the Society there.

(e) **Braunton Great Field** It was reported that following the recent sale it was for the present in a 'holding situation' but the matter must continue to be watched.

(f) **Devon Great Consols Mine** The Chairman reported that the arsenic fumes had been reprieved for the time being.

(g) **Council for Christian Care—Graveyard Project** The Hon Secretary reported details he had received from the Co-ordinator. He had information for any members interested.

10 **Resignations of Messrs Hullah, Stanes and Taverner from Council**

Following the resignations of the above the Society formally recorded their thanks for their efforts over the past years.

REVIEWS

Recovery and Restoration in an English County—Devon Local Administration, 1646-1670 by Stephen K. Roberts, University of Exeter, 1985 xxiv + 252pp £9.95

Since A.H.A. Hamilton's pioneer work of 1878, the wealth of Devon Quarter Sessions records for the seventeenth century has remained almost unexplored. We now have a most thorough and scholarly examination not only of these records, but of a quite astonishing range of related records, both national and local. This book is an outstanding contribution both to the history of Devon and to seventeenth century studies generally.

Descriptive accounts of the work of the justices exist for other counties, so Dr Roberts has preferred to concentrate on an analysis of changes in the structure of county government after the Civil War, continuing the investigation into the period of the Restoration. He deals in turn with the influence of national events on Devon affairs, the nature and work of jurors and county officials and the impact of the Restoration, ending with a study of some special subjects such as petty sessions, the poor and bastardy. Throughout, he is concerned especially with the interaction of those participating in local affairs; he investigates the social hierarchy from justices to petty jurors and hundred constables and considers the element of continuity in a period of change, especially in the substructure of government.

Dr Roberts approaches his subject largely through a detailed examination of the politics and background of those participating in government, at all levels, and his success in tracking down men, often of the utmost obscurity, is a model of patient research. He analyses their changing relationships and their response to local and

national tensions, often using statistical methods, and the footnotes alone are a mine of information on the period. He has written a most detailed and illuminating study of what happened to county government at a most troubled time.

The book has been well produced and there are some helpful maps and charts, though a few misprints remain.

Readers should perhaps be aware that this study is expressly intended as a contribution to the ever-extending academic debate that began with the controversy over the gentry. Perhaps inevitably, terms of art abound and much of it is written in a kind of historians' shorthand that places it towards the hermetic end of the market—required reading for researchers but near inaccessible to the layman. It should be added, however, that Dr Roberts is generous with explanation when dealing with purely county affairs. This book must long remain the authority for its subject, and since historical perceptions are in constant flux, it is perhaps regrettable that when revising his thesis for more general publication he did not feel freer to bypass some current controversies. As it is, the search for historicosociological significance can sometimes seem relentless, even faintly absurd. When examining why certain parishes sent more jurors to sessions than others, he considers magisterial domination, the field/forest or pasture antithesis and the incidence of Puritanism, only to conclude that historians have neglected 'the secular pattern of participation', that is, that most jurors came from the nearest parishes. The jury chapter has been admirably revised for a recent article in the *Bulletin of the Institute for Historical Research*; this concludes that most jurors depended ultimately on 'semi-literate bailiffs, trudging through the rain-washed Devon landscape to knock on the doors of yeomen.'

Unsupported by statistics of literacy, rainfall or modes of transport, this is merely atmospheric writing, which this reviewer found most refreshing.

R.L. Taverner

Take Care of Your Fire and Candle by F.D. Gentry. Devon Books: Exeter, 1985. £6.95

The South West was notorious for its continued town fires in the 19th century when numbers had diminished in the rest of the country, and F.D. Gentry provides an account of disastrous fires in 11 small towns and villages in Devon. His principal source is newspaper reports, chiefly from the *Exeter Flying Post*. As fire after fire is described, the tale becomes depressingly familiar; poor housing stock—usually cob and especially thatch—fed the wind-fanned flames which spread from house to house and across streets. Inhabitants were ill prepared and almost helpless once a fire caught hold, and frequently the major part of a town or village was destroyed before the flames could be extinguished by a combination of demolition to create fire breaks and water from all too often inadequate fire engines. Local colour is provided by the reluctance of one neighbouring town to supply assistance when requested and by the North Tawton sufferers who sought redress by a charge of arson after their fire. A combination of eyewitness reports, a fertile imagination, and well-written prose, has produced some vivid descriptions. It is almost possible to believe that we really are in Chudleigh after its 1807 fire where 'Quantities of the old,

rotting thatch still blocked the thoroughfares, hot and smoking and giving off a stench like some fetid cesspit in the heat of high summer' (page 16).

A strength of this book lies in its use of newspapers to study social history, but this emphasis on published reports is also its principal weakness. Newspapers are not always the most reliable of witnesses as comparison of differing reports on a Bradninch fire of 1832 demonstrates (pages 28-29). Furthermore, although a number of newspapers record the opening of subscriptions and the quantity of insured properties, there is little information on the mechanics of rebuilding, for the event is less newsworthy once the embers have died down. Research is necessary elsewhere to discover how these towns and villages were rebuilt, as a study of the ensuing constraints can help to put these fires in their economic and social contexts. Reconstruction using brick and slate occurred in some places, such as Stoke Canon, and there materials helped to contain subsequent fires in neighbouring streets. But what was happening in South Molton or in Cullompton which had fires almost every decade for much of the period? Nor is rebuilding simply a case of bricks and mortar. Gentry has described the rebuilding of Chudleigh in a little more detail (for which he relies chiefly on both editions of *Mary Jones' History*). Here, local gentry had the foresight to obtain a rebuilding act—partly to settle post-fire building disputes. More importantly, the fire was a stimulus to improve the small market town by widening and straightening the principal streets. The flames had already achieved the necessary demolition and, consequently, the legislation doubled as a local improvement act. A subsequent housing increase in early 19th-century Chudleigh led Gentry to conclude 'The Act's main purpose seems to have been to give compulsory purchase powers and to enable redevelopment of the town by the principal landlords' (page 21). He implies that tenants lost their rear orchard plots for redevelopment, although careful study of the act's clauses indicates that the powers conferred on the rebuilding commissioners were no greater than those given to contemporary improvement commissioners throughout the country. In fact, the Chudleigh commissioners only had jurisdiction over property affected by the fire, and they were required to ensure that adequate compensation was paid to those who lost land through improvements.

This study also suffers from inadequate analysis. Each town or village is treated in a self-contained chapter, and a more thorough introduction and an attempt to identify unifying themes would have been worthwhile. A map of Devon to locate each town would have been useful to non-Devon readers; it would also have shown that all the major fires were clustered in North-East Devon around Exeter. This geographical distribution is worthy of further study for it is not just a reflection of the area covered by the *Flying Post's* roving reporter. Readers whose imagination has been fired by this book will find a useful starting point for further work in Gentry's appendices which list almost 200 *Flying Post* reports of fires. These newspapers are acknowledged as being in the West Country Studies Library, Exeter, where Gentry's researchers must surely have made extensive use of the Library's comprehensive and invaluable subject index to the *Flying Post*. Armed with this information, the Devon Record Office is only across the corridor . . .

Michael Turner

Totnes in the English Civil War, c1625-1646, by Deborah Goodwin. 1985. **Totnes and Bridgetown Races**, by Urban Earle. 1985. £1.25 each. (Both available from the Totnes Community Archive, The Mansion, Fore Street, Totnes, TQ9 5RP)

These are the first two titles in a series of booklets on the history of the ancient town of Totnes: the former is written by a graduate of Exeter University; the other by a member with a special research interest in the subject. Mrs Goodwin consulted an impressive list of sources including contemporary material (accounts, letters, etc) in Devon Record Office. The book's appeal lies in the justifiable 'name-dropping' of prominent Totnes inhabitants of the day—names such as Goodridge, Kelland and Seymour, well-known families in South Devon over a very long period of its history. Urban Earle's little book is quite different; original research written up by an enthusiast it indicates a knowledge of the racing-game as well as of local history. The Archive is a Manpower Services Agency-funded project and in the research stage at the present time are the forthcoming titles: *the Totnes Volunteer Movement; Poor Law & the Workhouse in Totnes* and *the Totnes Cider Industry*. There is one criticism of the two books reviewed; the print quality is not good enough for the effort put into them or for the contribution they make to the history of the town. This is being rectified in future publications.

There is another interesting project nearing completion—a series of four-page 'newspapers' for children called *Changing Times*. Using the examples of the popular dailies *Medieval Totnes* is a normal tabloid; *The Norman Invasion Issue* is however a special edition and has a front page portrait of the winner, William I. The publishing programme is only part of the Archive's work. If similar organisations could be set up throughout the County, the long-term benefit to local history would be inestimable.

John R. Pike

A History of Ilfracombe by Lois Lamplugh. Chichester, Phillimore, 1984. 145pp. £8.95. ISBN 0 85033 525 6.

As one would anticipate from this publisher and the author of *Barnstaple: Town on the Taw*, this volume offers a fund of detailed information for the local historian and much pleasure to the many with affectionate memories of this resort. With chapter headings which reflect the change of emphasis from a major medieval port of embarkation for Ireland to a proposed—but, thankfully not fully realised—'Brighton of North Devon', Lois Lamplugh highlights the changing fortunes of this town, so largely governed by its Channel links and but tenuous access by road and rail. Not, it seems, that all who arrived by sea were totally welcome: following the Sunday Closing Act of 1881, steamers from Wales were 'nothing but floating beer shops', or so the House of Commons were told. Nevertheless when, as on the 1905 August Bank Holiday Monday, the excursion steamers *Normandy*, *Brighton*, *Ravenswood*, *Gwalia*, *Albion*, *Westward Ho!* and *Britania*, each with up to 800 passengers visited the harbour (in a year which saw approaching 150,000 passengers landing at the Promenade Pier), it needs little imagination to sense Ilfracombe's dependence on tourism. Included among these

visitors—though doubtless in a more genteel style—were some who recorded their times for later readers: Charles Kingsley, Mary Ann Evans alias George Eliot and Beatrix Potter who incorporated facets of the neighbourhood in her *Tale of Little Pig Robinson*. We read, too, of 'a not remarkably tall, rather delicately made, and of prepossessing appearance' fifteen year old future Edward VII's visit in 1856, enjoying apple tart and Devonshire cream and riding a pony (whose death some thirty years later 'deprived Ilfracombe of an attraction to its visitors and a large income to its owner'!)

This reviewer's one regret is that these Phillimore publications still do not integrate photographs and text but leave them to be 'found between pages x and y' in manner reminiscent of a pre-war geography textbook. An instance which mars the over-all satisfaction of this kind of book occurs on page 100, where an account of concerts given by the Season Band in the Pavilion and the inclusion of songs such as 'Dear Old Ilfracombe' fails to draw attention to a fine illustration, plate 16 (several pages distant) of one such 'Season Band', or indeed to the later reproduction of the cover and first page of the song itself. But these are minor objections, the important thing is that such items have been included in a highly recommended further volume towards our better knowledge of this county.

David Edmund

Passenger Steamers of the River Tamar by Alan Kittridge. Truro, Twelveheads Press, 1984. 98pp. Paperback. £3.75 ISBN 0 906294 10X.

On a casual glance this may appear to be yet another example of the currently popular 'annotated postcard' type of publication. Which is not to dismiss totally such items as of mere nostalgia, but their very nature all too often results in a disjointed, scrapbook approach. However, it very soon becomes evident that this is not so with Alan Kittridge's information-packed chronicle of the 160 years of passenger steamer services which followed the aptly named *Sir Francis Drake's* trail-blazing Tamar cruise in 1825.

The book is divided into four chronological chapters, each with a well researched and lucid introduction followed by a total of 98 illustrations accompanied by particularly informative captions—frequently including fascinating asides on the social aspects of life on the river and the rivalry between companies . . .

The favourite tactic of *Lady Ernestine's* crew was to move in very close to a slower Millbrook steamer, dragging it along in the suction created by their combined wake, at the same time edging the unfortunate victim into the shallows. By suddenly altering course back into the deep channel, *Lady Ernestine* left the Millbrook steamer racing helplessly towards the mud where the passengers would be left stranded until either they could cross the mud to the shore, or the tide refloated them. These and other incidents earned *Lady Ernestine* the nickname 'Bumper'. Some lady!

The author credits the late Frank Booker as his main inspiration for writing this book but there is no doubting the contagious enthusiasm and regard Alan Kittridge has for all who worked or enjoyed these journeys. For the more technically minded, three appendices offer fleet liveries, fleet lists and a 1923 Cremyll ferryboat

specification. Apart from a minor personal dislike of funereal edging to photographs, the illustrations are well chosen and well reproduced, with a selection from the camera of Fredrick Paul portraying the construction of the graceful Calstock railway viaduct adding yet another interest to this most enjoyable and modestly priced book.

David Edmund

Boundary markers on and around Dartmoor by D.J. Brewer. £1.25. (post free) from the author at 95 Barton Hill Road, Torquay TQ2 8GF.

A wide variety of boundary marks on natural rocks, cut stones and granite crosses are noted and interestingly described in this booklet, in many cases illustrated by drawings and, for Widecombe and Pew Tor sitings, by maps. A fair amount of detail is given, gathered from the author's extensive moor-walking and from his listed reading. Somewhat detracting, however, is the rather poor quality of production that perhaps unfairly conveys an unfortunate 'homespun' effect. This is seen in the confusing and evidently unintended positioning of page 1 of the text before the author's notes, by occasional errors of spelling and placing of inverted commas, and by the use of script type. The latter, particularly since upper parts of many capital letters fade away, makes for slow and uneasy reading. Many readers with less acute vision will however be grateful to Mr Brewer for recording and making available in friendly style the fruits of his own undoubted sharp sight and observations.

Helen Harris

Dartmoor Magazine Quay Publications, P.O. Box 16, Brixham, Devon TQ5 8LW. £1.25. ISSN 0268 5027.

This is a new quarterly publication which, initially at least, gives generously of its space to historical aspects. Included in issue No.1 (Winter '85) is an illustrated article on Prehistoric Dartmoor by co-editor Elizabeth Stanbrook, and a centrefold photograph showing old machinery at Haytor Quarry. The other editor is Laurie Manton, and it is good to note Harry Starkey's name amongst the contributors—his well-packed 'Moorland Views' column includes useful information on developments concerning various archaeological and historical features. The magazine is attractively produced, carrying numerous informative articles and very little advertising. We wish it well.

Helen Harris

Horsepower. Dartington Rural Archive. Spindlewood, 1985. 80pp. £3.95. ISBN 0 907349 21 8.

This little book comprises a series of personal reminiscences from notable contributors, mainly from the years 1900-1930, covering ways in which horses featured in everyday rural life. Although local place names are mentioned throughout and a map is given on the last page, the fact that south Devon is the area concerned is not given at the outset, as one might expect. The early definition would have been helpful to readers unfamiliar with this part of the country. The short sections, generously illustrated with old photographs, are a delight to peruse: informative for younger readers, nostalgic for older ones. Often today it is hard to realise the extent to which horses were relied upon in the past for work and transport. At the present time, when in many directions consideration for animals is given greater prominence, it is heart-rending to read of the great horses, fitted with pointed horse-shoes to latch into horizontal ridges of the granite slipway, getting right down on their haunches in their struggle to drag heavy loads up the slope from the Dartmouth Lower Ferry. But there was kindness, too: we read of the young Anthony Mildmay learning to drive a wagonette during the First World War, and making family members alight and walk up all the hills on returning from picnics at Mothecombe, 'because he thought it was unkind to expect the horses to pull us'. In some ways horses were cleverer than motor cars—as when a rider, caught on Dartmoor in foggy darkness or blinding snow could throw the reins over the horse, sit tight and say 'There you are old horse. Take me home.' And it did. 'A Day at the Races' is the subject of one section, and it was pleasing for this reviewer to find her great grandfather mentioned in the establishment of Buckfastleigh Races in 1884. A criticism of the production is the way in which type is set with uselessly wide outer margins and the print close to the pages' inner sides, almost in fact into the spine. This makes for less than easy holding and reading of a booklet which is otherwise attractive and pleasant to handle.

Helen Harris

NOTICES

Mr R.F. Whidborne, a new member resident in St Peter Port, Guernsey is a descendent of Richard Whidborne, Kt, the 16th century captain and merchant of Exmouth who played a prominent part in the development of Newfoundland. His account was published at the express wish of James I in 1621. Mr Whidborne is researching into the life of his ancestor and in the maritime history of east Devon generally. He would welcome any additional sources known to members at his Channel Islands address (Pres de l'Eglise, The Grange).

Mr Raymond Rossiter lives in Hamilton, New Zealand but through his cousin, a member of the well-known Paignton family has recently joined the Society. He lists his interests as: farming in 16th and 17th century Stokeinteignhead, Rocombe, Blagdon Barton and Colyton St Mary (ie Collaton St Mary in Paignton). He is also interested in the Blounts and Cary of Torre Abbey families. It is perhaps therefore not surprising that he has named his house in the far-off Antipodes 'Rocombe'.

Miss Emma Bond, 96 Barton Road, Torquay has a particular interest in Exeter and Torquay before 1500 and would like to contact anyone who is working on this period. She is also interested in social conditions in South Devon in the 19th century.

Mr Peter Jackson, 23 Langaton Lane, Exeter has just completed his Ph.D. on Nonconformity, the Courts and Society in Devon, 1660-89; he is therefore prepared to respond to any queries on Puritans, Nonconformists, Church Courts and Quarter Sessions in 17th century Devon.

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