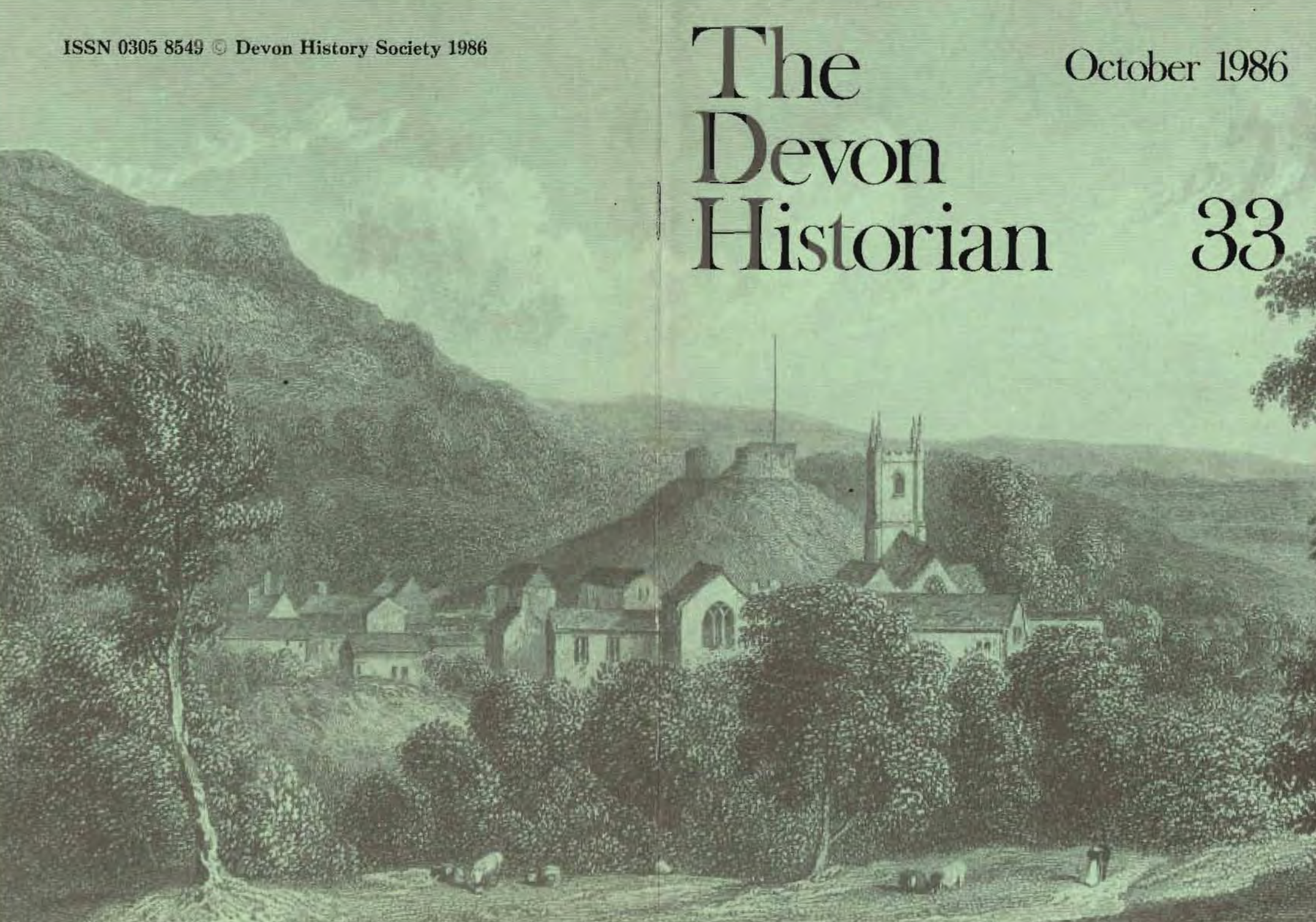


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The Devon Historian

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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, Whitchurch, Tavistock PL19 9BU. The deadline for the next issue is 30 November 1986. Books for review should be sent to Mrs S. Stirling, c/o Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter.

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY AGM

The AGM of the Society will take place in the Library, University of Exeter, on 11 October 1986 from 10.30 am to 4.00 pm. Following his inauguration the Society's succeeding President, Crispin Gill, Esq., O.B.E., F.R.G.S. will give an address on 'Prisoners of War in Devon 1750-1815'.

The print on the cover is *Plympton, Devonshire, birthplace of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Steel engraving by E. Finden after W. Westall, publ. C. Tilt, London, 1829. (Somers Cocks No. 2352).

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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.

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This two year course is intended for the serious amateur and the professional. It aims to provide a systematic outline of, and an historical context for, the many and varied sources of local and regional studies.

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THE GREAT COURTS OR PARLIAMENTS OF DEVON TINNERS --AN ANNIVERSARY

One of the most intriguing institutions of the Devon tinnners was the Great Court or Parliament, traditionally held at Crockerntor on central Dartmoor, and attended by ninety-six jurates from the four stannaries of Chagford, Ashburton, Plympton (St Maurice) and Tavistock.

The origins of these meetings are unknown but between 1474 and 1786 we know that at least thirteen were held, at irregular intervals, in order to enact statutes for the control of the stannaries.

The last was held in the White Hart Hotel, Moretonhampstead on 11th December 1786 and, in celebration of the 200th anniversary of this event, there is to be a dinner for ninety people at the same venue and on the same day (Thursday 11th December 1986). There will be a Georgian style menu and evening, including a talk by Dr Tom Greeves on 'The Great Courts or Parliaments of Devon Tinnners 1474-1786'. Tickets, priced at about £8, can be obtained from Peter Morgan, White Hart Hotel, Moretonhampstead (tel. 40406) who can also supply further details.

Tom Greeves

Nicholas Orme

No Devon historian works for long without encountering a parish, in respect of its church, its administration, or its social community. The parishes are indeed among the oldest institutions in the county, for their origins go back before the Conquest. True, the oldest churches we hear of in Devon were not parish churches but religious houses: monasteries of monks, or minsters served by canons. These occur in Exeter as early as the 680s, and later on at Axminster, Crediton, Cullompton, Hartland, Tavistock and other places.¹ Up to about the tenth or eleventh centuries, these churches and a few others like them acted as regional centres of Christianity, to which lay people went long journeys to worship, or from which itinerant clergy came out on missions. By the eleventh century, however, the religious houses were becoming supplemented by numbers of small local churches. One or two of these appear in pre-Conquest records, like St Michael's, East Teignmouth (referred to in 1044), and St Martin's, Exeter (dedicated in 1065).² Others are mentioned in Domesday Book, such as Colyton, Kingskerswell, Pinhoe and Woodbury.³ As Domesday Book does not list churches as such, but only by chance, there were probably many more such churches in existence by 1086. In due course, one or two of the old religious houses, like Axminster and Cullompton, ceased to be minsters and turned into ordinary churches, while Crediton, although remaining a house of canons, served as a parish church as well, for the surrounding area.

By the early eleventh century, local churches were beginning to acquire definite parishes over which they had authority. Laws of King Aethelred, issued in 1008, state that if a person shall be buried outside his parish, the burial fee belongs to the priest of his parish.⁴ Parish boundaries tended to follow manorial boundaries, because most of the smaller churches were associated with manors and were founded and operated by lords of manors for the benefit of their tenants. Domesday Book refers to the church at Axminster as 'the church of the manor', and says the same of Colyton, Kingskerswell, Pinhoe and Woodbury. Once manorial churches became fairly common there was a pressure on all lords of manors to provide them, lest their tenants should attend the churches of other lords and develop social ties away from their own manors. It is not possible to say when the whole of Devon acquired parish churches, but this is likely to have happened during the eleventh and twelve centuries. The county was certainly fully parochialised, as we shall see, by the end of the thirteenth. Because the chief influence on the formation of parishes was manorial, the units that eventually emerged varied widely, like manors, in size and wealth. The great manor of Crediton, which belonged to the bishop of Exeter, constituted a parish covering some 20,000 acres (including Kennerleigh and Sandford), while the little manor and parish of Upton Hellions next door was a mere 400-500 acres until enlarged in 1270.⁵ Smaller still was Dotton (now part of Colaton Raleigh) which remained a distinct parish of 214 acres down to 1894, while Broad Nymet (now in the civil parish of North Tawton), formed in the fourteenth century, covered 52 acres. The tiniest units of all were to be found in Exeter, where by the middle of the thirteenth century some 26 parish churches and religious houses shared a *total* area inside the walls of only 98 acres.

A parish church can be defined as a church with jurisdiction over its parochial territory in all matters. All the inhabitants in medieval times were subject to it and to its clergymen. They had to support him by paying him tithes and offerings, and they had to go to the church for baptisms, confessions and burials. In return they were entitled to the clergyman's spiritual services. Not all the early Devon churches, however, managed to survive as parish churches in the long run. Wolford in east Devon, mentioned in 1206, was swallowed up by nearby Dunkeswell, and drops out of the records shortly afterwards.⁶ Two small parishes in Exeter, St Cuthbert and St Mary Minor, were united to larger neighbours in 1285.⁷ Other churches endured but failed to keep their full parochial status. St Michael's, East Teignmouth, though a Saxon foundation, fell under the control of Dawlish two miles away. Rawridge in east Devon, though the church of an independent manor, passed in the 1190s into the care of the priest of neighbouring Upottery, and ended as a chapel-of-ease to that church.⁸ As a result, some parishes came to include dependent chapels in addition to the parish church. Increasing numbers of such chapels were founded after 1200, especially in large parishes, as chapels-of-ease for outlying communities whose people could not easily attend the parish church, or as domestic chapels in aristocratic houses. Crediton possessed as many as nine, reflecting its unusual size.⁹ But these dependent chapels were severely limited in their activities. Those who worshipped in them also had to fulfill their usual obligations to the parish church, and the chapels could not normally be used for baptisms or burials. Anything offered in them—money or candles—was appropriated by the parochial clergyman. The chapel-of-ease simply provided extra services for local people, at their expense over and above their normal parish duties. Only a very few chapels were exempt from such control: those eventually known as free chapels. They were usually small religious houses or domestic chapels, which through custom or agreement had acquired independent status. A free chapel was virtually on a par with a parish church, with freedom to carry out all religious services and to retain all offerings; it differed mainly in serving a very small area of ground (sometimes only its building), with few or no inhabitants. One or two churches like Blackborough and Dotton were sometimes called free chapels as well, though in origin and status they were both parish churches.

Two people were associated with the parish church: the patron and the clergyman. When landlords first built churches, they naturally expected to choose the officiating clergy, and as a result each came to possess a patron—bishop, cathedral, monastery or lay nobleman—who held the 'advowson' or right to appoint the incumbent. Between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, many lay lords of manors granted the advowsons of their parish churches to monasteries, while retaining the rest of the manorial rights. Thus Walter de Treminet conveyed 'the church of the manor' of Brampford Speke to St Nicholas Priory, Exeter, in the early twelfth century, though the manor remained in the hands of his descendants, the Speke family, throughout the middle ages.¹⁰ Monasteries thus came to have a disproportionate amount of patronage of parish churches, at least in theory; in practice, one suspects, they were often pressed by the lay aristocracy to appoint particular clergymen. The cleric in charge of a parish church was called the 'rector' or 'parson', because he was the ruler of the parish (Latin *rector*) and the person (Latin *persona*) legally representing the parish church and its property. He had the right to administer (but not to alienate) the property, to receive all the tithes and

offerings of the parishioners, and the obligation to care for their souls. In some (but not all) of the parishes where the patrons were clerics, i.e. bishops, cathedrals, monasteries or (later on) university colleges, the patrons themselves became rectors as well, with the financial motive of taking over the tithes and offerings. This process was called 'appropriation', and the churches where it applied 'appropriated churches'. At first, appropriation was little controlled, but by the fourteenth century it had to be approved by the bishops, and sometimes the pope and the king gave their approval too. As the appropriating clergy could not usually carry out the rector's work of holding services and giving pastoral care, they appointed a 'vicar' or deputy to do so, and gave him a proportion of the parochial income to live on, keeping the rest for themselves. By the reformation, about a quarter of the Devon parishes had been appropriated in this way and were served by vicars. A third kind of parochial clergy were chaplains employed by rectors or vicars to help them: 'parish chaplains' as they are best called, rather than 'curates' which meant rectors and vicars as well in the middle ages. Rectors and vicars had security of tenure, the so-called 'parson's freehold'. Once appointed, they could not be ousted (save by the bishop for a serious crime), until they died or resigned. Parish chaplains, on the other hand, were simply servants and could be hired or fired at will. It remains to note that a few parish churches closely involved with religious houses (like Hartland and Plympton) were served directly by members of the houses or by hired chaplains, and therefore had no operating rector or vicar.

The early history of the Devon parishes is often dim because, up to the middle of the thirteenth century, they were not systematically listed or referred to, and we are dependent on chance references. Then, in 1258, the bishop of Exeter (Walter Branscombe) started to keep a written register in which the appointments of rectors and vicars of parishes were recorded.¹¹ From this time onwards, all clergymen chosen or 'presented' to be rectors and vicars by their patrons, were supposed to appear before the bishop, be checked for suitability, swear an oath of obedience, and be formally 'instituted' or 'admitted' to the benefice by the bishop. The bishop thus insisted on involving himself with the appointment of clergy, though he rarely or never interfered with the patrons' choices. In theory, the bishops' registers should give us a complete list of all Devon rectors and vicars from 1258, except between 1288 and 1307 when the registers are missing.¹² Unfortunately, this is not the case. The bishops took a long time to compel all would-be rectors and vicars to come to them for institution, or at any rate to record the institutions. Branscombe's register refers to institutions in only 264 parishes in Devon during 22 years (a mere two thirds of the total), and it was not really until John Grandisson was bishop (1327-69) that institutions were recorded as a matter of course. Even after that, there are unexplained absences of institutions from the registers, and few parishes can show a complete list of them from 1258. Moreover, some appropriated parishes do not appear in the registers at all, since they were served by members of religious orders or parish chaplains, such as Abbot's Bickington (belonging to Hartland Abbey), Countisbury and Lynton (appropriated to the archdeacon of Barnstaple), and Plympton (served by the local priory). The bishops' registers, in short, do not provide us with a handy comprehensive list of Devon parishes, and for this we have to go to a different source. In 1291 Pope Nicholas IV levied a tax of 10% on all the incomes of the English clergy, to enable the king, Edward I, to organise a crusade. There had been papal taxes on the clergy before this time, but we do not possess for

Devon the assessments on which they were based. On this occasion, it was decided to make a new valuation, which was carried out in each diocese by assessors nominated by the local bishop.¹³ The work took place towards the end of 1291, and the resulting survey stayed in use for the rest of the middle ages, as the basis of taxation of the clergy.

The 'Taxation of Pope Nicholas' provides us, for the first time, with a virtually complete survey of the parishes of Devon. The standard printed edition of 1802, covering the whole of England, was badly edited, and the place-names in particular are mistranscribed in uncouth ways,¹⁴ but a better edition for Devon and Cornwall alone, based on an early fourteenth-century copy of the Taxation, was published by F.C. Hingeston-Randolph in 1889.¹⁵ Using this version, we find the parishes listed first, followed by the religious houses. Most of the Devon parishes are arranged under the three archdeaconries (Exeter, Totnes and Barnstaple), within the archdeaconries under rural deaneries, and within the deaneries in a rough topographical order. The parishes belonging to the cathedral and to the bishop, which were separately administered, appear in a section of their own, since they did not form part of the rural deaneries. The Taxation tells us whether each parish was a rectory (*ecclesia*) or a vicarage (*vicaria*), its annual value, and whether any of the income was diverted to a monastery or other clerical body. In principle, the survey therefore gives us both a gazetteer of parishes and an estimate of their values. In practice, neither is completely reliable. Three parishes: Bishop's Nympton, Chudleigh and Stoke Gabriel do not appear in the lists, and are only alluded to in relation to Exeter Cathedral. Eight others are completely absent: Bishop's Tawton, Bishop's Teignton and Braunton (also belonging to the bishop or cathedral), and Highhampton, Newton Tracey, Trusham, Upton Hellions and Virginstow, which were ordinary country parishes. We know they all existed by 1291 because there are earlier references to their rectors in the bishops' registers, and it is not clear why they were left out. The number of Devon parishes in the Taxation is 394, counting in Ashford, Haccombe and Shillingford which are called chapels but listed separately. Adding the eleven parishes partly or wholly omitted, we reach a total of 405 within the county borders as they were at that time.

The values of the parishes are even less reliable. Studies elsewhere in England show that when they can be checked from other records, they are usually much lower—sometimes only half as much—in the returns for 1291. It seems pretty clear that the Taxation, despite complaints at the time to the contrary, was underestimated, and that we should not take the values literally. Rather, we should use the figures comparatively, to see which were the poorer parishes and which the richer ones. Thirty-seven parishes in 1291 were rated at less than £1 a year. These included all but one of the 19 parish churches then existing in Exeter, two of which (St James and St Laurence) were actually said to be worth 'nothing, because of poverty', and most of their neighbours as 'scarcely sufficient to support a chaplain'. In the countryside, Clannaborough and Satterleigh were also assessed at nothing, Blackborough at 4s, Oldridge at 5s, and Huxham and Stockleigh English at 6s 8d each. Probably, the clergy of these 37 places were getting nearer £2 a year (the minimum living wage for a priest), but they were certainly very poor. The largest categories of parishes were those worth £1-£4 (147) and £5-£9 (119). Again, adjusting upwards suggests that the commonest parochial income was between about £5 and £15. The parishes above the average were those worth £10-£14 (54), £15-£19 (18), and

£20 or more (20). The wealthiest were Crediton (£35), Kenton (£36), Stokenham (£37), and Axminster (£51). In their cases, however, not all this income went to the parish priest, because the parishes concerned supported several clergy (like Crediton) or had most of their incomes appropriated to a cathedral or monastery. The richest clergyman to partake of the whole of his parochial income was the rector of North Molton, which was valued at £33 and was no doubt a good deal 'warmer' in fact.

It took nearly 250 years, until 1535, for a new survey of churches to be made. In that year Henry VIII's government organised a fresh assessment of Church property to supersede that of 1291, called the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, meaning 'ecclesiastical valuation'.¹⁶ Like the Taxation of Pope Nicholas, the *Valor* set out to present a complete list of Devon parishes and religious houses. It begins with the bishop and the cathedral, and then surveys the diocese under archdeaconries and rural deaneries. This time, the religious houses and the parishes belonging to the cathedral and the bishop were grouped within the rural deaneries, not separately, but as in 1291 there are some anomalies. Certain parishes whose revenues were appropriated to monasteries appear under the heading of the monasteries, not with the other churches of the deanery. Thus Plympton and Sutton (Plymouth) are listed among the possessions of Plympton Priory, and Mariansleigh is simply alluded to under Barlinch Priory, Somerset, in the diocese of Bath and Wells.¹⁷ In one case, Abbot's Bickington, where the parish was probably served by a canon of Hartland Abbey, the church is not even listed, but this is rather exceptional. Still, what it lacks as a gazetteer, the *Valor* amply compensates for in its extra economic information. The data is both fuller and more accurate. In 1291 we merely read that the church of Dunchideock, for example, was worth 10s. In 1535 we are told both the value, now £15 4s 8d, and its major sources: rent of the glebe land, tithes of corn, hay, wool, lambs and Easter offerings, all itemised, as well as the dues which the rector had to pay to the bishop and the archdeacon.¹⁸

The number of Devon parishes contained in the *Valor* (allowing for Abbot's Bickington and Mariansleigh) is about 409, a small increase of four on 1291. In other words, the county's system of parishes remained almost unchanged in the later middle ages. Such continuity may seem a little dull, but on the contrary it is illuminating. In 1291, as we have seen, there were a good many small impoverished parishes. In the following decades the national population fell, and the fall was much accelerated by the outbreak of the Black Death in 1348. Yet virtually every Devon parish survived, nevertheless. A few lost their own resident clergyman. Knowstone and Molland were joined under the same incumbent as early as 1310,¹⁹ and several of the little Exeter parishes were served part-time by cathedral clergy after the Black Death. Such parishes, however, kept their churches and identities. Only in three cases did they disappear completely: Oldridge in Whitestone, united to St Thomas (Exeter) at an unknown date, St James (Exeter) joined to Holy Trinity in the late fourteenth century, and Affeton in mid Devon incorporated into West Worlington by stages between 1439 and about 1455.²⁰ All these were poor in 1291, Affeton being rated at 10s, Oldridge at 5s, and St James at nothing, but poverty alone does not explain their disappearance when equally impoverished parishes like Clannaborough and Satterleigh survived. The extra, deciding factor was the church patronage. Oldridge, St James and Affeton were all united to other churches belonging to the same patrons: Cowick Priory, Exeter Cathedral, and the Stucley family respectively. We know that the merging of Affeton and West Worlington

took place at the patron's request, and this was doubtless true of the other examples. A poor parish was only at risk, it seems, if its patron had another nearby church to which it could be joined, otherwise he ensured that the parish survived.

It was not much easier for new parishes to be formed after 1291. Only about ten were created up to 1535. Ashford, Haccombe and Shillingford became full parishes, and they were joined by Broad Nymet, Jacobstow and Nymet Rowland (early fourteenth century), Calverleigh (later in the century), Templeton, Welcombe and Woolfardisworth near Hartland (early sixteenth century), and Netherexe at an unknown date.²¹ Not that pressure to create new parishes was absent. The lord of a manor served by a church elsewhere, outside his patronage, might covet to have a parish church of his own. Calverleigh was the creation of the Calwodelegh (or Calverleigh) family, who wanted independence from the mother church of Loxbeare. Again, where parishes had distant settlements and chapels-of-ease, the people of these places might attempt to gain their own parochial rights. In the 1430s and again in 1524 the inhabitants of Sandford near Crediton tried to develop their chapel as a centre of worship, against the rights of Crediton.²² Patrons, however, generally resisted the subdivision of parishes, not surprisingly, because it threatened the income and status of the mother church, and their resistance was an effective barrier to change. At Sandford the bishop himself, as patron of Crediton, intervened and stopped the secession. The tiny number of new parishes can only have come into existence with the approval of the patron of the mother church. Welcombe and Woolfardisworthy were created in this way; they were daughter churches of Hartland, and were given independence by Hartland's patron, the local abbey. No doubt the others were the result of private negotiations and probably compensation, by which the patron and the mother church were bought out.

All this provides an interesting insight into the pre-Reformation Church. The Church's political theorists declared that it was independent, self-governing and superior to lay powers. Reading bishops' registers, one sees the bishop exercising power over church buildings, clergy, and even laity in spiritual matters. But this power disappears when it encounters the parochial framework. The system of parishes itself was not so much the clergy's own creation as the by-product of landownership. Indeed, church patronage was legally a matter of the common law, not of Church law, and came under the jurisdiction of the king's courts, not the courts of the Church. The primary right of choosing the parish clergy belonged to the patrons, and the bishop only exercised a secondary, supervisory right. Nor did he take the initiative, as far as we know, to change the parochial structure. We look in vain for an episcopal document amalgamating Affeton, St James, Knowstone, Molland or Oldridge. Indeed, the evidence points to a reluctance of bishops to get involved. In 1384 when Archbishop Courtenay of Canterbury visited Exeter, he found that St James's church was still vacant and its future unsettled, 34 years after the last appointment of a temporary incumbent.²³ In 1439 when Bishop Lacy provided for the rector of West Worlington to minister to the people of Affeton, he specifically reserved the rights of future rectors of Affeton, and three more rectors are in fact recorded there. Similarly, there are no episcopal documents permitting the creation of new parishes; we simply start to find the bishop instituting rectors. Bishops, it is clear, worked along with the system of parishes, not in command of it. And the government of the medieval Church, as far as the parishes were concerned, must be seen as an alliance of bishops with patrons, many of whom were lay people.

References

'Reg' refers to the printed editions of the bishops of Exeter by F.C. Hingeston-Randolph (10 vols, Exeter, 1886-1915) and by G.R. Dunstan (5 vols, Exeter, Devon & Cornwall record Soc., new series, 1963-72).

1. On the earliest Devon churches, see C.A. Raleigh Radford, 'The Pre-Conquest Church and the Old Minsters in Devon', *Devon Historian*, xi (1975), pp 2-11.
2. Exeter Cathedral Archives, D&C 2526; Exeter, Devon Record Office, Book 53A (St John's Hospital Cartulary), f 36.
3. *Domesday Book*, vol ix; *Devon*, ed. Caroline & F. Thorn, 2 parts, Chichester, 1985, section U/11-13, 33, 52.
4. *Councils and Synods, A.D. 871-1204*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock & others, part i, Oxford, 1981, pp 296, 352.
5. In 1270 Upton Heliions was enlarged to its present size by the addition of the chapelry of Creedy Widger (*Reg. Bronescombe*, pp 279-80).
6. G. Oliver, *Monasticon Diocesis Exoniensis*, Exeter, 1846-54, pp 395-6.
7. D&C 2111; *John Lydford's Book*, ed. Dorothy M. Owen, Devon & Cornwall Record Soc., new series xx (1975), p 105.
8. N. Orme, 'Rawridge Chapel, Uptontery', *Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries*, Spring 1986.
9. On the Crediton chapels, see N. Orme in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. T.A. Reuter, Exeter, 1980, pp 119-20.
10. British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius D.ix (St Nicholas Priory Cartulary), f 32^v.
11. *Reg. Bronescombe*, pp 106-92.
12. For a descriptive list of the registers down to 1646, see D.M. Smith, *Guide to Bishops' Registers of England and Wales*, London, Royal Historical Soc., 1981, pp 76-88.
13. For discussions of the Taxation of 1291, see Rose Graham, *English Ecclesiastical Studies*, London, 1929, pp 271-301, and W.E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1307*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1939, pp 346-65.
14. *Taxatio Ecclesiarum Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicolai IV*, London, Record Commission, 1802, pp 143-57.
15. *Reg. Bronescombe*, pp 450-81.
16. *Valor Ecclesiasticus Temp. Henr. VIII Auctoritate Regia Institutus*, ed. J. Caley, 6 vols, London, Record Commission, 1810-34. For Devon, see ii, 289-391.
17. *Ibid.*, ii, 376-7; i, 219.
18. *Ibid.*, ii, 319.
19. *Reg. Stapeldon*, p 227.
20. For Oldridge, see the 19th century county directories; for St James, Frances Rose-Troup, *Lost Chapels of Exeter*, Exeter, 1923, pp 33-4; and for Affeton, *Reg. Lacy*, ed. Dunstan, ii, 146-8, and ed. Hingeston-Randolph, ii, 304, 393-4.
21. The evidence comes mainly from the first surviving institutions in the bishops' registers.
22. Orme (above note 9), pp 119-20.
23. Lambeth Palace Library, Reg. William Courtenay, f 107.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

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PLYMOUTH : HISTORIES AND HISTORIANS

David J. Hawkings

Due in part to its prominent place in English history, but perhaps more to the affection it readily wins in its sons, Plymouth has been the subject of many historical works. This essay reviews the changing approach to the subject during the last four centuries.

Systematic financial records were begun by the Corporation in 1486, and similar records of local bye laws, leases, legal matters, and important civic events were commenced in the following century. Intended as contemporary reference works rather than a conscious attempt at history, they have nevertheless formed an invaluable primary source for many historians.

Henry Woolcombe, FSA, who in 1812 founded the Plymouth Institution, was the first to use these records as the basis of a comprehensive history. His *History of Plymouth* (circa 1835) was never published, but remains available in MS form. Woolcombe was a distinguished lawyer and was the first to attempt a systematic catalogue of the corporate archives. Despite his efforts, however, they long remained fragmentary and inadequately catalogued, although his history remains the source and inspiration for many later writers.

Woolcombe's work on the archives was completed in the 1890s by the distinguished local historian and public figure R.N. Worth, FGS. Although Worth's *History of Plymouth* was first published in 1872, for the second edition of 1890 he was able to draw fully on his own systematic arrangement of the corporate records, together with documents which had come to light since Woolcombe's time. This book remains one of the most thorough and reliable of the city's histories. Equally importantly for later writers, Worth published the catalogue to the archives in 1893 under the title *Plymouth Municipal Records*; it has become almost a *vade mecum* for later generations of academic historians.

But the story stretches back long before the times of Woolcombe and Worth. John Yonge, mayor of Plymouth in 1694, recorded his *Plimouth Memoirs* of corporate life at the turn of the seventeenth century. They contain not only transcripts of Acts of Parliament, charters and the like, but lively anecdotal and often critical descriptions of the men and manners of the period. Thus Yonge the diarist might also be described as Plymouth's first historian.

Visitors also left a valuable legacy: Leland, the Royal Antiquary, came to Plymouth in the 1530s and there are several references to the town in his *Itinerary*. Camden, writing in the 1580s, spoke glowingly of the town's reputation in his *Britannia*. Other literary visitors were Celia Fiennes (1695), Daniel Defoe (1724), and two less well known travellers, Dr Richard Pococke (1750) and the Reverend Stebbing Shaw (1788). During the closing years of the century Plymouth featured—not always favourably—in the writings of Dr William G. Maton (1794-96) and is also noticed by William Marshall in his *Rural Economy* (1796). The early nineteenth century saw visits to Plymouth by Joseph Farington and Leigh Hunt, both of whom recorded their personal impressions of the town. Between them these writers left a valuable record, especially of the social and economic life of Plymouth during the eighteenth century.

The growth of popular education during the nineteenth century saw the emergence of a new breed of historian, with a more serious and intellectual approach than the earlier diarists and dilettante observers. Several learned societies and periodicals came into being, flourished and declined during the century. Their members and contributors, usually professional men, were keen amateur historians whose writings, though largely overlooked now, were an important contribution to the corpus of Plymouth history. Among the periodicals of the time was the *South Devon Museum*, published by the brothers George and Jonathan Hearder; it contained much historical and antiquarian material. Likewise, the *Transactions* of the Plymouth Institution (founded 1811) and of the Devonshire Association (founded 1862) contained a wealth of original work. These volumes continue the pattern of Plymouth historical research to the present day, but it must be said that the dedicated enthusiasm of local men with their Plymothians' passion for their subject made for livelier, more palatable reading than the scholarly but unromantic dissertations which dominate the pages of those publications today. Perhaps the nineteenth century writers' true descendants are the contributors to *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, to the Reports of the various specialist committees of the Devonshire Association, and sometimes to the *Devon Historian*.

Researchers in the fields of social and economic history have found much valuable material in the pages of local handbooks, directories and annuals. Amongst these are Nettleton's *Guide to Plymouth Devonport and Stonehouse* (1836), Hoxland's *Guide to Dock* (1792), Flintoff's *Directory and Guide Book* (1844), White's *Directory of Plymouth* (1850), and Doidge's *Annuals*, a long series running into the twentieth century.

The first full histories of Plymouth appeared almost together; the first edition of R.N. Worth's *History of Plymouth* in 1872, and Llewellyn Jewitt's identically named book in the following year. Jewitt, whose work had the support of the Plymouth Institution, protested against Worth's lack of literary etiquette, and the venture was a financial failure. In any event, Worth's was the better history, Jewitt's book being little more than a haphazard collection, although he did have access to a diarist and other sources subsequently lost. As noted above, Worth fully revised his second edition (1890) as a result of his work on the corporate archives.

The opening year of the present century saw the publication of a book which marked a turning point in the development of Plymouth histories. This was Henry Whitfield's *Plymouth and Devonport in Times of War and Peace*. In his preface, Whitfield stated his intention of departing from the academic approach of his predecessors in favour of depicting the people of Plymouth at work and play, in peace and war, in crime and at prayer. The work was nevertheless based on sound sources, corporate and state papers and local newspapers, but the bare bones were fleshed out with a wealth of lively anecdotal material.

The book was pioneering work in many ways; its author was a journalist, who naturally relied greatly on newspaper reports; it was produced in a large format liberally studded with illustrations, and it was privately published by the author, financed by subscriptions. Such features are commonplace in works on Plymouth today but Whitfield's book anticipated them by some seventy years.

Later histories of the first half of the twentieth century were worthy and respectable, but dull by comparison; C.W. Bracken's *History of Plymouth and Her Neighbours* (1931) was a compilation of 56 weekly articles in the *Western Evening*

Herald, enhanced by contributions, some anecdotal, received from readers. Bracken (former headmaster of the Corporation Grammar School) relied much on published material, particularly Worth's, although like Whitfield he drew also on primary sources. But somehow the formula works less well and the book is by no means as readable as *Plymouth and Devonport*.

The next major history of Plymouth appeared in 1950: this was R.A.J. Walling's *The Story of Plymouth*. Walling's approach was perhaps a fitting one at a time when Plymouth was rebuilding itself after suffering hardships and serving gallantly during six years of war—he placed Plymouth in its national and international context. Walling, like Whitfield, a journalist, devoted little attention to the early days, but provided a useful account of the war years together with an optimistic and not entirely fulfilled look into the future of Plymouth as envisaged by the planners.

Sixteen years were to pass before the next history appeared in the bookshops; and Crispin Gill's *Plymouth: A New History* was a further landmark in the development of Plymouth histories. Although a former pupil of an earlier historian C.W. Bracken, Crispin Gill, by profession a journalist, was much influenced by W.G. Hoskin's new approach to local history. History as revealed in documents must be supplemented by evidence from field work, and this approach is clear in Gill's history. He is concerned with why the City is shaped the way it is, and he demonstrates how its history can be read in its stones and in the very turns of its streets. Like his predecessors, Gill owes a heavy debt to Worth, but his research in primary sources largely untapped by earlier writers gives the book a balanced and authoritative feel.

Gill's *New History* was the first two-volume approach to the subject, although readers were obliged to wait thirteen patient years until the appearance of the second part in 1979. In this volume Gill presents much new material from newspaper files and the Public Record Office, whilst regretting that his researches were not sufficiently thorough; this comes across in the book's hurried, almost impatient air, as if its author was anxious to complete a long and exacting task. Nevertheless, the two volumes, the first to deal with what may be termed Greater Plymouth, are a fine example of the modern approach to local history and are among the most significant of the twentieth century's contributions to the literature.

Appearing midway between the two volumes of the *New History* was J.C. Trewin's *Portrait of Plymouth*. Trewin, yet another journalist, freely admitted that his book was not intended as a 'full dress' history to rival those of Worth, Jewitt, Whitfield, Bracken and Walling. It was a personal view of Plymouth and its people, written with affection from the journalist's privileged vantage point. It owed more in narrative style to Whitfield than to any other writer, and gave intimate glimpses into many of the byways of the city's history.

But the scope of Plymouth history does not end with these comprehensive studies. The early 1960s saw the beginnings of a remarkable upsurge in specialist histories, lavishly illustrated in historical sketches, and a wide variety of popular booklets touching on aspects of the city's past. This growth was aided by improved printing processes which enabled illustrations to be reproduced cheaply as text.

Among the first were *The Book of Plymouth* and *The Second Book of Plymouth* by the city's librarian, W. Best Harris. Their approach was largely pictorial, with the great majority of illustrations coming from the city's own archives, and concisely worded captions capturing in a few lines the flavour of the scene described. There is no doubt that the compilers of these volumes saw them at least in part as

histories, the introduction to the first having as its aim the placing on record of the 25 'momentous years' of the city's immediate past. But it is clear from the later illustrations that they were intended also as a proud introduction to a hoped-for prosperous future.

This approach, not surprising in 'semi-official' publications, of which handsomely bound editions were presented to local dignitaries, was not repeated by later authors. That apart, the *Book of Plymouth* established a pattern for countless sequels appearing over the next twenty years.

Their format follows a now familiar pattern, a mix of old photographs—some postcards, some archival—of familiar and forgotten scenes in the city's past. Their approach is anecdotal, their appeal is to nostalgia and they have perhaps brought the city's recent history alive for more people than any number of previous scholarly works. One of the most lavish examples of the genre was Andrew Cluer's *Plymouth and Plymothians*, which appeared in two volumes in 1974 and 1975. The pictorial format takes many forms—sometimes a derivative of Whitfield's approach, as in John Gerrard's *The Book of Plymouth* (1982), financed by public subscription, sometimes highly specialised as in R.C. Sambourne's *Plymouth—100 years of Street Travel* (1972), or comparative, as in *Plymouth Old and New* by Owen Baker, 1976. In many cases the authors are not professional writers or trained historians, merely citizens with a sense of history and an ambition to record the minor matters of the city's past. The approach is conversational, the subject matter often trivial, of human scale and yet curiously compelling. The books are usually printed and marketed at the owner's expense, selling to a small but enthusiastic market. Notable examples are Gerald W. Barker's six volume *Days in Devonport* (1982 et seq) and Arthur L. Clamp's prolific output on a wide range of topics in the margins of the city's history. Such books are true folk history and as such are perhaps as valuable as the more serious works of the past.

Their popularity continues unabated, recent additions being Sarah Foot's *Views of Old Plymouth* (1983) and Brian Mosley's *Vanishing Plymouth* (1982), the first book to concentrate on the immediate post war years. Thanks to the enthusiasm of these and many other authors, valuable pictorial and anecdotal records of the city's economic and social history are being compiled. Through their love of their city, they reveal its *genius loci* in a more immediate and intimate way than their scholarly colleagues. But to all Plymouth historians humble or renowned, we owe a great debt.

TREVOR FALLA'S VERMIN TRANSCRIPTS FOR DEVON

P.J. Dillon and E.L. Jones

Vermin records are the entries in churchwardens' accounts relating to payments for the destruction of animals deemed to have nuisance value, generally to the farmer. The statutory destruction of vermin dates from 1532-33 when every township, hamlet and parish was required to provide itself with the means to trap and kill certain categories of birds.¹ Further enactments of 1566, 1572 and 1597-98 refined and extended the list of categories and species for which payments could be made and also extended it to include mammals. The means by which pests should be procured and the terms and responsibility for making the payments were specified. As the responsibility lay with the parishes, the payments appear as dated records in the churchwardens' accounts and often supply details of just what was paid for and in what numbers. Occasionally details and costs of equipment such as the nets used for trapping appear in addition. These records, although they vary considerably in detail, form and completeness from parish to parish, were kept between the late sixteenth and the early (rarely the late) nineteenth centuries.

Apart from their value as components of parish annals and thus as sources for local history, which was noted by W.E. Tate as long ago as 1946,² vermin records are of much environmental, biological and agricultural interest. Pioneer work on the source was carried out by T.N. Brushfield, who had retired to Budleigh Salterton and whose paper of 1897 was substantially based on Devon material.³ Brushfield gave a detailed outline of the vermin legislation, some summary extracts from parish accounts illustrating the terms under which payments were made, a species-by-species report on his findings, detailed accounts for East Budleigh and Littleham, and an appendix on payments for killing birds in parish churches. His was primarily an exercise in historical method, being concerned with the nature of the information and its utility as a precise record of the working of the legislation. A similar approach was adopted by J. Steele Elliott in 1936 in an analysis of the Bedfordshire records in a booklet published by Luton Museum, which included many more parish extracts.⁴ These two publications appear to be the most detailed works on the subject, although many fragments of vermin data have been recorded in local histories and magazines for a variety of counties. What none of this published material does, however, is to exploit the source systematically for the light it can throw on past changes in agriculture and in the environment.

More recently the late Trevor Falla, Assistant Archivist in the Devon Record Office, undertook as his private research the extraction of the full vermin records from the churchwardens' accounts for Devon parishes. We were in contact with him during this work. By the time of his tragic death he had not written up his findings, other than a preliminary paper for Professor Joyce Youngs' Renaissance Seminar at the University of Exeter. We are deeply grateful to Trevor's widow, Mrs Gillian Falla, for allowing us to consult all of her late husband's papers and transcripts of vermin records. A full listing of this material is given in Appendix I.

We are interested in these records for reasons connected with the economic history of agriculture and ecological history/historical ecology. In terms of agricultural history, it should be possible to assess the changing levels of the cost of pest control

and of the incidence of particular pest species. For the former purpose the records need to be adjusted so that fluctuations in real expenditures are revealed, which involves indexing the monetary payments to the price of some other commodity, say bread.

In terms of ecological history (the study of human modification of ecosystems and the significance of this for society), vermin records provide information on the notion of what a 'pest' was conceived to be, which species were so designated and whether the target list changed over time. Again, it should be possible to calculate the actual or presumed damage inflicted, to assess the effectiveness of pest control, and to raise wider issues of civic responsibility in managing the countryside. In terms of historical ecology (the study of the past distribution and status of species and ecosystems), vermin records constitute a data source that as far as we know has no parallel. This is because, for all the difficulties which arise in interpreting them, they offer much the best collection of geographically-wide, long-term, numerical information on a number of species of both birds and mammals.

We feel sure that naturalists have a tendency to assume that present-day animal populations are merely the remnants of much larger numbers present in some hypothetical 'Wild England' of the past, battered down by trapping and shooting amongst other human pressures. While this may be true for some species it is unlikely to be true for all, and we are particularly concerned with two flaws in the story. Firstly, the processes of land reclamation leading to 'traditional' agricultural landscapes (i.e. those which evolved prior to modern monocultural systems) have often created a *wider* range of habitats. The 'making of the English landscape' in terms of its physical structure and human artefacts may be an accumulation, although the present contains fewer and fewer of the works of the past or their archaeological debris as one goes back through time. But the living biological landscape has a much greater capacity for renewal, and despite some losses it may be richer and fuller now (or until recently) than it was in the remote past. The historical creation of the wider range of habitats permitted the potential for a greater variety of species to spread and, in certain cases in greater number than one would find in more uniform environments.

Second, pest control measures often leave greater resources, especially unoccupied territories, for surviving individuals and immigrants from elsewhere so that for those species with a potential for rapid population growth numbers can build up again quickly. In other words, pest control was not necessarily something that gradually crushed the wildlife out of the landscape. It is to be thought of as an endless succession of skirmishes rather than a decisive battle. Thus we expect the vermin records to reveal relatively static breeding populations or cycles in wildlife numbers rather more than they reveal a long downward trend although there are almost certainly ecologically-vulnerable species like the wild cat and pine marten where long-term decline is to be anticipated.

There are a number of difficulties within the data and related to interpreting them. One of the most trying is that before a proper system of nomenclature was adopted in the nineteenth century, and even after its adoption, a wide variety of local and colloquial names for animals was used. This problem has been addressed for similar historical material in Wiltshire, with the help of a collaborating etymologist, and with care identification to species usually proves possible, except where a collective name is used for two or more biologically-similar species.³ A list of the species and

categories of animal, including typical synonyms, for which vermin payments were made in Devon is given in Appendix II. Furthermore, the geographical coverage for Devon, and of course elsewhere, is incomplete, as is the chronological sequence within many parishes. Other data problems include inconsistencies or suspected inconsistencies in recording, notably with respect to the month or season of the kill and the length of lag between kill and payment, and the proportion of entries which simply record gross payments for unspecified vermin, or alternatively gross numbers of vermin for which no payment is specified. Finally there is the problem that different rates of payment for given species of vermin at different dates within the same parish have to be adjusted to allow for changes in the real financial incentive to hunt or trap. Without some adjustment the kill data may reflect changes in rewards rather than real changes in bird and mammal numbers. Fortunately the indexing to pick up fluctuations in the real expenditure on pest control, already mentioned, can be adapted for this purpose.

Snippets of information and summaries for small localities do not reveal all the patterns in which the historian may be interested, but it is quite clear that previous students shied away from comprehensive studies because they could not handle the sheer volume of data which survives. Nowadays the computer brings a full analysis within reach, but the time required to input the data, even from Trevor Falla's transcripts, is absolutely enormous. Nevertheless, current research by the authors and co-workers at Bulmershe College of Higher Education, Reading, is attempting to employ the computer technology now available in order to process the Falla data, and is seeking to resolve the problems of interpretation outlined above. We hope eventually to be able to publish a detailed report on the historical incidence of 'pest' species in the Devon countryside as recorded in Trevor Falla's notes, and thus to bring to fruition the analysis he began.

References:

1. W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest*, Cambridge: The University Press, p 106.
2. *Ibid.*
3. T.N. Brushfield, 'On the destruction of vermin in rural parishes', *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature and Art*, Vol XXIX (1897), pp 291-349.
4. J. Steele Elliott, *Bedfordshire 'Vermin' Payments*, Luton: The Public Museum, 1936.
5. Malcolm Jones and Patrick Dillon, *Dialect in Wiltshire and its historical, topographical and natural science contexts*, Trowbridge: Wiltshire County Council Library and Museum Service, in press. See the chapter 'Specialised Lexicon: Bird Names'.

APPENDIX I

TREVOR FALLA'S VERMIN TRANSCRIPTS FOR DEVON AND RELATED PAPERS

1. Vermin record transcripts for Devon
Four notebooks: 6¾" x 5", 196 pp; 6¼" x 3½", 188 pp; 6" x 4", 188 pp; Cr 8 vo,

88 pp and c150 loose leaf sheets, various sizes.

The "working documentation" which consists of direct transcripts from churchwardens' accounts of vermin data and occasional notes on church music and its provision, another subject which was under investigation by T.F.

2. "Tudor Vermin Legislation" Unpublished MS, 9 pp + 4 tables. Presented at Professor Joyce Youngs' Renaissance Seminar at the University of Exeter, c1982.
3. Correspondence Nine items, 1978-1981.
M.H. Hughes concerning vermin at Lustleigh; H.G. Hurrell concerning Dartington records and the interpretation of them; Assistant Archivist, Cornwall Record Office including a list of seventeenth century churchwardens' accounts in the Cornwall Record Office; a correspondent in Bedfordshire giving a list of references to churchwardens' accounts at Eversholt in that county.
4. Collection of papers on churchwardens' accounts, vermin records and related subjects. Cuttings and photocopies, fourteen items.
Listing of Devon Record Office Tavistock churchwarden material; contents list for Swete's *Picturesque Sketches of Devon*; newspaper articles by R. Longrigg and A.W. Boyd; papers by E.L. Jones, W.G. Hoskins and H.G. Hurrell; T.F.'s working copies of Brushfield (1897) and Steele Elliott (1936).

APPENDIX II

ANIMALS FOR WHICH VERMIN PAYMENTS WERE MADE IN DEVON

Common Name	Scientific Name	Typical synonyms
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Furze pigg
Mole	<i>Talpa europaea</i>	Want
Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Pfoxe; vixon
Pine marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	Marting; marten cat
Stoat/Weasel ¹	<i>Mustela erminea/M. nivalis</i>	Statt; stot
Polecat	<i>Mustela putorius</i>	Fitch; fitcholl
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Brocke; gray
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Awter
Wild cat ²	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	Wyld catt
Cormorant/shag	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo/P. aristotelis</i>	Shags
Raptor ³	Order Falconiformes	Kyte; hawk
Pigeon ⁴	Family Columbidae	—
Woodpecker ⁵	Family Picidae	Woodpicker; woodwall
Crow ⁶	Family Corvidae	
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Gee; jee

Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Pie
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Chough ⁷
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	—
Sparrow ⁸	Family Ploceidae	—
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Hoop; vpes

NOTES

1. No distinction is made between these two species in churchwardens' accounts.
2. Some feral cats, particularly in more recent times, may have been paid for under this heading.
3. Unfortunately, no distinction is made between different birds of prey and this category includes members of the Family Accipitridae such as the buzzard, sparrowhawk and harriers and members of the family Falconidae such as the peregrine and the kestrel.
4. Most records probably relate to the woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*).
5. Brushfield (1897) believes that the green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*) is the species alluded to.
6. Records of "crows" may relate to the carrion crow (*Corvus corone*) but it is also a collective term applied to other members of the family, notably the rook (*Corvus frugilegus*).
7. Used as a local name for the jackdaw, the Cornish chough being known as "fulica" or "fulia" and not recorded in Devon accounts (Brushfield, 1897).
8. Mainly the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) although undoubtedly some tree sparrows (*Passer montanus*) were also taken.

EARLY STEAMPOWER LINKS DEVONPORT AND TORPOINT

Keith S. Perkins

It is true that James Watt was the developer of the steam engine but, to coin a phrase, 'he missed the boat'. While his patent covering these improvements, granted on 5 January 1769, made the steamboat—although a long way off—practically possible, he was resolutely opposed to adapting the steam engine to power vehicles or vessels.¹ In 1812 American artist and engineer Robert Fulton mentioned in a letter a conversation he says he had with James Watt, during which he believed that Watt was 'of the opinion that it was impracticable to make a useful steamboat or vessel'.² If true, how wrong an opinion that was!

John Perry in his compelling book *American Ferryboats* (1957), quotes from *Harpers Weekly* of 1876:—

... The truth is, the engine was Newcomen's and then Watt's and the boat was anybody's; and persons went to work here and there, with varying degrees of success, depending upon political influence, social standing, moneyed resources, or friends thus provided, and last (but) not least, mechanical talent for harnessing the engine to the paddle or propeller used to push against the water...

By the end of the eighteenth century, success had *not* been achieved and the commercially successful steamboat still remained a dream in the minds of those pioneers who strove to conceive it. However, as we shall see, it was in Devonshire in 1793 that the seeds of attainment were sown,³ and where Robert Fulton—long after his death—influenced the establishment of a steamboat ferry across the Hamoaze between Devonport and Torpoint in 1831... This is that story.

★ ★ ★

First we go back to 1790 when the Right Honourable the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe and Reginald Pole Carew Esq, as owners of a large property in the neighbourhood of Plymouth Dock (as Devonport was then known) obtained an Act of Parliament which authorised them to:

... establish and maintain a Common Ferry over and across River Tamar, between a certain Place north of Plymouth Dock, in the parish of Stoke Damarel in the County of Devon, and Torpoint in the parish of Antony in the east, in the County of Cornwall... (Geo. III cap LXI)

Already the lower Tamar boasted two ancient ferry passages: at Cremyll, and at Saltash—where the great engineer James Watt and his second wife Ann (nee McGregor) had reluctantly chosen, in 1777, to cross over on their way from Birmingham to Cornwall.⁴ Not until 4 July 1791, however, did the new ferry service with its horse boats and foot passenger boats begin to operate across the half-mile wide estuary with its perilously strong tidal currents. Those who feared this crossing were obliged to traverse those dreaded waters by the bridge at Gunnislake, a journey of 32 miles.

Whilst the inhabitants of both Torpoint and Plymouth Dock were preoccupied



Powderham Castle—(Devon Library Series).

with the inauguration of their new ferry in 1791, a seemingly unrelated situation (which was to have far reaching effects in the field of steam navigation) was unfolding just forty miles away at Powderham Castle, near Exeter, where the young, little-known American artist Robert Fulton had been invited to paint a portrait of William, Viscount Courtenay (later the Earl of Devon).⁵ Fulton, of Scottish-Irish descent, had arrived in London from Pennsylvania in 1781, and trained under Benjamin West,⁷ artist and sometime President of the Royal Academy. During his stay in Devonshire, between 1791 and 1793, Fulton was introduced to two 'English gentlemen' who would have a profound influence on the changing direction of his career—Charles, third Earl Stanhope, and Francis Egerton, third Duke of Bridgewater. Both men were particularly drawn to the idea of propelling boats by steam, a subject that '... would have been infinitely interesting to a young man', as Fulton wrote in a letter to Lord Stanhope on 4 November 1793. He continued:

... I have made some slight drawings descriptive of my ideas on the Subject of the Steamboat which I submit with diffidence to your Lordship. In June '93 I began the experiments on the steamship...⁸

This seems to be the time in Fulton's life when he crossed over from art to engineering, and when he was also busy inventing a mill for sawing marble and stone at Torbay. Fulton then became involved with canals at Bude⁹ and elsewhere to such an extent that in 1796 he produced 'A Treatise on the Improvement of Canal Navigation', for which—in 1800—he was castigated by Thomas Telford for claiming the substance of such work as his own invention.¹⁰

In 1797 Fulton travelled to France where—initially—he promoted small canals and continued experiments towards steam navigation. By 1804, after carrying out



Robert Fulton (1765-1815). (Birmingham Library)

warlike acts with the French against the Royal Navy (the Napoleonic wars were active again at this time), he was coaxed back to England by Henry Addington (Viscount Sidmouth, leader of the British Government)¹¹ where he purchased from Boulton, Watt and Company of Birmingham a steam engine, which later—on his return to America in 1806—he fitted into a boat. On 17 August 1807 his steamboat, the *Clermont* made its historic voyage up the Hudson River from New York to Albany. And so Robert Fulton (financially backed by Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York) became the first person to operate a steamboat successfully in commercial service.¹²

Although it was generally known that . . . steamboats had succeeded perfectly in America, and their employment was daily increasing, yet little or no attention was paid to the subject in England.

So wrote Sir John Rennie, in his 'Retrospect of the Progress of Steam Navigation (1847)'. After he had described the endeavours of pioneer William Symington with

his steamboat *Charlotte Dundas*,¹³ he stated that Fulton had examined the vessel in 1802, a statement which to this day remains unsubstantiated. An enigma!

Fulton now turned his attention to the improvement of steam-powered ferries and so, on 4 May 1814, his:

. . . new and beautiful steamboat *Nassau* (commenced running) as a ferryboat between New York and Brooklyn. This noble boat surpassed the expectations of the public in the rapidity of her movements. Her trips varied from five to twelve minutes according to tide and weather . . .¹⁴

Nassau was built with twin hulls, between which a large paddle-wheel was rotated by means of steam power. The vessel could be navigated in either direction by locking or unlocking the twin rudders at each end. Carriages and waggons as well as pedestrian traffic could embark and disembark from stem or stern.

Robert Fulton died at Trenton on 24 February 1815—his 49th year—but the immediate success of his steam ferry *Nassau* on the East River did not go unnoticed. In Britain, during 1878, the steam ferry *Etna* (constructed at Liverpool upon the Fulton plan) was established across the River Mersey between Liverpool and Birkenhead.¹⁵ In 1819, at Dundee in Scotland, the Ferry Trustees debated the use of such vessels across the Firth of Tay, but before coming to any decision upon the matter it was decided to send a retired captain, James Sturrock, to New York in command of the brig *Scotia* to inspect and report upon the twin-hulled steam ferries operating there. In the event, the long arduous voyage of some months ended in tragedy when passengers contracted typhus and many died. Captain Sturrock survived the voyage only to die soon after from the disease, at Norfolk, Virginia.¹⁶

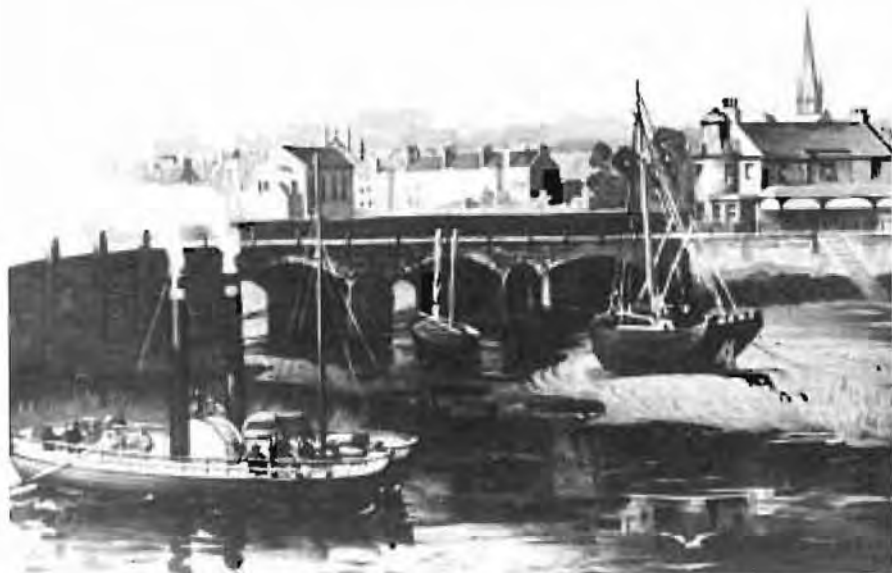
The fate of any report on the New York ferries is not known but we learn from an account of the Dundee Ferries, by Captain Basil Hall R.N., F.R.S., published in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*, July 1825, that the Ferry Trustees:

. . . after careful inquiries, decided upon trying experiments with a double or twin-steam vessel such as they had learned had been in use for some years on the American rivers, and also Hamburg, and on the Mersey at Liverpool . . .

Meanwhile, in 1819, Thomas Telford was engaged to carry out surveys, and to design low water piers at Dundee and at Newport (Fife). In 1821 the first Tay steam ferry, the twin-hulled *Union*—built by James Brown at Perth—came into service. A second vessel *George IV* followed in 1823.¹⁷

Just three years later, at Torpoint in November 1826, Devon civil engineer James Meadows Rendel (he had served as an apprentice under Thomas Telford c.1817-1822) who was now engaged in building the Laira Bridge for the Earl of Morley, was summoned to attend Reginald Pole Carew (one of the principal ferry proprietors) at Antony House on the matter of designing and constructing low water piers at Torpoint and Devonport. Later, in a letter to Lord Morley (his patron) he wrote:

. . . I am to inform your Lordship that there is every probability of an improvement in the Torpoint Ferry to an extent which will greatly facilitate the communication between the Counties of Devon and Cornwall. The effect of which must have a corresponding influence on your Lordships bridge as it will beyond doubt induce much of the travelling which now goes through Launceston on the route from Exeter to Falmouth through Plymouth . . .¹⁸



'Union'—the first steam ferry to operate across the Firth of Tay at Dundee, in 1821. Rendel tells us that 'Jemima' (built at Stonehouse 1829) was modelled upon this craft. (Dundee Art Galleries and Museum).

In fact earlier that year, on 2 January, Pole Carew had written to James Brown—builder of the Dundee ferries—with the request:

Antony,
January 2nd 1826.

Sir, Having lately read a pamphlet giving a description of a twin steamboat built by you for the ferry at Dundee and conceiving that a boat . . . built on the same principle might be adapted to a ferry in which I am interested . . . I write to request that you will have the goodness to inform me for what sum you would engage to build a similar twin boat of twelve horse power . . .

Pole Carew also intimated that, alternatively, he would consider (at less cost) a steam tug which he could use in conjunction with the existing sail ferries operating in Torpoint.¹⁹

Ultimately, a 'Company was formed to establish a steamboat similar to that at Dundee', a statement which certainly implies that the proposed steam ferry at Torpoint (as the ones at Dundee, Liverpool and Hamburg) was to be modelled upon those of Robert Fulton which had operated at New York since 1814. ' . . . All the respectable people about Torpoint', says Rendel, 'are most anxious and have come forward liberally with subscriptions' and, by the end of November 1826, £3,000 had been taken in £100 shares from a total sum of £3,500. The promoters had contracted with Reginald Pole Carew for a 21 year lease of the ferry at £460 a year. But it seems James Brown of Perth did not get the contract to build the new vessel!

A.G.K. Leonard in his account of the Torpoint Ferry, says that later a steamboat—destined for the Torpoint passage—was under construction at Neath²⁰ in South Wales. But a contradiction to this is difficult to ignore. The Devon Telegraph and Plymouth Chronicle, dated 3 October 1829, tells of the launching of the Torpoint steamboat from Richard Hocking's shipyard at Stonehouse, Plymouth:

. . . On the afternoon of Tuesday last (29th September), the launch of the Twin Steam Boat (Jemima), intended to ply across the Torpoint passage, took place from Hocking's yard, at Stonehouse, in the presence of the Earl of Mount Edgcombe, Lord Valletort, the Earl and Countess of Saint Germain, Lord Eliot and Lady, and a great number of other persons of distinction, and accompanied by a vast concourse of spectators. After the launch, which went off to the satisfaction of all present, Lords Saint Germain, Eliot and about forty other proprietors, partook of an elegant collation provided for the occasion by Corydon Roberts Esq, of Trevol, near Torpoint, one of the proprietors, and treasurer, we understand, to the company. This fine vessel went off the stocks about twenty minutes before six, without the slightest incident, amidst the cheers of thousands of spectators who lined Mount Wise, and every other accessible spot which commanded a view of the exhibition . . .

This curious contradiction, however, might be explained if *Jemima* was constructed at, and launched from Hocking's yard, Stonehouse and then removed to Neath, South Wales to have engines and machinery fitted. Such was the case of the *Glamorgan* built at Rotherhithe in 1822 and fitted with two 20 hp steam engines at Neath Abbey Iron Works the following year.²¹ It might also account for the long delay of 16 months from the launching of *Jemima* to the day of her inauguration in February 1831. Whatever the truth of this, *Jemima*—like Fulton's *Nassau*—had twin hulls with a large paddle-wheel between them. She was 70ft long and 25ft in the beam. She was powered by two 12 hp steam engines and was designed to transport vehicular as well as pedestrian traffic.²²

Apart from her public utility, *Jemima* could be used for the transportation of troops and military stores—thus promoting quicker response to garrisons along the Devon and Cornish coasts where, particularly at the time of the Napoleonic wars, poor roads and cross river communication posed a serious problem to the movement of troops. Rendel commented: ' . . . A coast proverbially exposed to an enemy will be immediately opened to military depots of Plymouth and Devonport'.²³

An issue of the Cornish newspaper, *West Briton*, (date unknown), reports:

. . . The great facility which will now very shortly be given to the intercourse between the Counties of Devon and Cornwall is likely to be not only of considerable advantage to the proprietors of land on both sides of the Tamar but will also facilitate trade, and aid greatly to the supplies of the inhabitants. We earnestly wish that the most sanguine expectations of the proprietors will be fully realised . . .

But alas, this understandable jubilation on the part of the proprietors of the Torpoint Steam Boat Company, and echoed with great enthusiasm by the inhabitants of Torpoint and Devonport, was soon to be irrecoverably shattered. Rendel records:

. . . In less than two years (February 1831) their energy and anxiety for the

accommodation of the public enabled them (the proprietors) to make a trial of this vessel, which, though built upon the Dundee model, both as regarded the machinery and boat, and executed under the most able and professional advice, proved a complete failure. The tides were found too strong, and the line of passage too direct across the current to enable the vessel to make her passage when there was either tide or wind to encounter. This failure was the more discouraging from the liberality with which the work had been conducted, and the disappointment was great to the whole of the populous neighbourhood, which had expected from the establishment of this steamboat the means of easy transit for carriages &c., as well as for foot passengers . . .²⁴

Thus sadly, Devon-built *Jemima*—with the power of her two 12hp steam engines dramatically overwhelmed by the strong tidal currents of the lower Tamar—was eventually retired, and the now ‘ancient’ horse and foot passenger boats (established in 1791) were brought back into service.

James Meadows Rendel, on the other hand, found himself the centre of attention. In 1829 he had conceived the Dartmouth Chain and Steam Floating Bridge which was inaugurated at Dartmouth in 1831. The initial success of this vessel and another at Saltash was immediately reflected in the interests of the proprietors of Torpoint Steam Boat Company. Rendell recalls:

. . . In the dilemma occasioned by the failure of the twin steam boat, the practicability of establishing a Floating Bridge (at Torpoint) after the model at Dartmouth was made a subject of enquiry and I was applied to as the author of that work . . .²⁵

On 11 April 1834, Rendel’s Steam Floating Bridge, protected upon its passage across the Tamar by the two heavy iron chains along which it travelled, was inaugurated. *Jemima*’s failings had been overcome and the steampower link between Devonport and Torpoint was re-established.

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Illustrations:

Robert Fulton (1765-1815)—Birmingham Library.
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Footnotes:

Gregory Watt, the son of James Watt and his second wife Ann (nee McGregor), died in Devon in 1804, and is buried in Exeter Cathedral.

James Meadows Rendel, was engaged at Dundee 1842-1843, to establish a Floating Bridge or Floating Bridges across the Firth of Tay. Rendel suggested that an existing ferry—the new twin-hulled *Princess Royal* (a Fulton type vessel)—be converted into a Floating Bridge. An Act of Parliament Vic. Reg. Cap lxxxiv, received the Royal Assent on 28th July 1842, but the project came to nothing.

Torpoint Horse-boat Ferry (1791). The Ferry was capable of accommodating one large coach and four horses besides foot passengers. In dimension, it was: 28ft 3in long, 8ft 1in wide and 2ft 4in deep.

Robert Fulton (in partnership with Chancellor Robert R. Livingston), after the success of the steamboat *Clermont* in 1807 was given exclusive rights for twenty years to operate steamboats in New York State.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF URBAN CHANGE IN THE BOROUGH OF PLYMPTON, 1500-1780

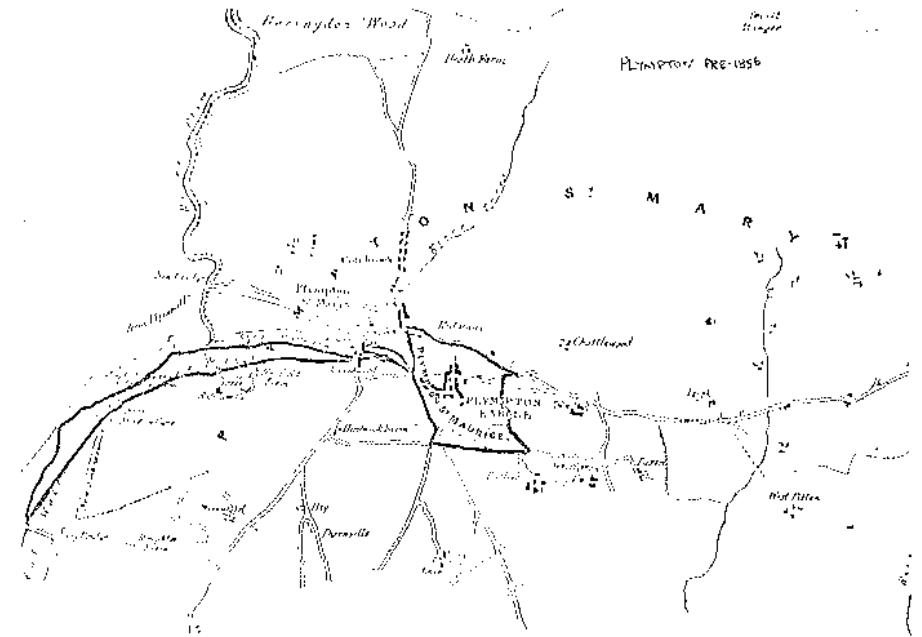
Doreen McGrail

The Reverend John Swete, on a walking tour of Devon in 1792, passed through the town of Plympton. He described the area as 'finely wooded', and said that it was 'principally of one street of no inconsiderable length, with more good houses in it than almost any private town in the country.'¹

The earliest surviving maps shows that the extent of the borough was almost exactly that delineated in the perambulations of 1729 and 1759.² It was a very small town of one long street, Fore Street, running east to west, curving round the moat of the motte-and-bailey castle built by Richard de Redvers in 1107, widening slightly in front of the Guildhall and making a T-junction with Old Street (now George Lane) and Clapper Street (now Longbrook Street). In the angle of the junction to the north, an 'island' is formed with Church Street, beyond which is the medieval parish church. The town lay in a narrow valley with steeply wooded hills to the south and east, gentler slopes to the north and opening out to join the Plym valley in the west. The ridges of the hills formed the borough boundaries, except for a long neck of borough land which extended through Underwood, called West Town in old documents, skirting Priory land until it reached the river. Until the reclamation of land on the eastern side of the Plym and the subsequent silting up, the Plym was navigable for the shallow draught ships of the early part of the period. It seems likely that this narrow strip of land was deliberately maintained within the borough to give the town its own quay on the river, probably at Blackston, or Blaxton, so avoiding the paying of dues to ship goods through the Priory quay higher up the river.

Plympton became a seignorial borough in 1194, evidence of a growing mercantile community outside the influence of the Priory on the border of the town. The earliest extant charter was granted by Baldwin de Redvers in 1242 and granted a weekly market and annual fairs to be held freely. It reserved rights of rent, assize and burgage in the outlying lands to the feudal lord, who clearly intended to assist the town to flourish.³ It sent two members to Parliament from 1295 to 1832, became a stannary town in 1328 and was incorporated in 1602, with a Mayor and Common Council until 1859. However, St. Peter's Priory of Augustinian canons exerted considerable economic influence on the town both before and after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, for the Priory owned several farms within the borough and received tithes from the townsfolk. Although only a small house, its interests were widespread throughout the country and there must have been much movement of people and goods through the town. With the breakup of monastic property a great deal of land was acquired by local people, fortunes were made in the town and families rose and fell.

The town always had a mixed economy, the primary industry being agriculture, and the provision of crafts, markets and fairs to serve both the town and the outlying hamlets and villages. Alongside this was the tin trade. Although the smallest of the four Stannary towns of Devon, Plympton was important in that it



Plympton Pre-1866

was the only port with its own quay and could distribute the output of its Stannary district. Besides this, we know of small scale industries like cloth-making, brewing and tanning, coopering and hat-making, all of them probably for a purely local market.

Most of the old borough records are missing and a picture has to be built up from the deeds and leases, wills and inventories, lawsuits, Manor court rolls and rentals. There are some good secondary sources, notably Bracken and Brooking-Rowe but most useful are the unpublished typescripts by John Stevens. The main problem for economic history is their pre-occupation with the family history of the upper classes; only Stevens makes the effort to unravel the workings of the community lower down the social scale, in his work on the merchant families and the yeoman farmers. There is more printed source material on the early part of the period up to the mid-seventeenth century, but a 'back' picture can be gained for the eighteenth century from nineteenth century sources like directories, census, and government reports.

Agriculture was always the primary industry and was the basis of the prosperity of the town. Several substantial farms lay within the borough boundaries; the largest was Grange Farm, the desmesne farm of the Priory. Many inhabitants must have been partly or solely engaged in agriculture for their livelihood. Town houses were also part farmhouse, for deeds, leases and wills refer to barns, stables, shippens and orchards and of 'small closes'. Among the household goods of Samuel Bury, who died in 1678, were 'three milch kine, 120 sheep, 3 fleeces, 6 pigs, 2 nags and a mare'.⁴ On the borough boundaries were the substantial farms of Merifield, Hardwick, East and West Pitton, Challengesleigh, Ford, Voss, Langage, Holland, and lastly, Ley, the

farm worked by the Priory bailiff, Nicholas Stanning and his descendants. To the north were the lands owned by the Strodes of Newnham, the only surviving medieval farmhouse, and the Mayhowes, (later the Parkers), who owned Boringdon. Beyond these farms was an extensive hinterland of small hamlets and villages within a day's walk of the market town of Plympton.

Geologically, the area lies within the Culm measures,⁵ so called from the soft, sooty texture of the soil, and is poor for arable farming, which has only been possible on the more level plateau of the farms on the borders of the town. The steeply wooded and scrub covered sides of the valley did not support cultivation, but would have provided for goats, pigs or sheep and this is borne out by the wills surviving. It is probable that small narrow garden plots, or closes, sloped up behind the town houses, while the gentler, lush meadows towards the settlements at St Mary's and Ridgeway would provide good grazing, for they are still well watered. Actual crops or measurements are not mentioned in leases or sales, although it is known that the acreage of arable land under cultivation in 1377 was one hundred acres.⁶ In 1831, twenty-seven families within the borough were wholly engaged in farming, indicating that agriculture was still an important occupation.⁷

The chief landlords were the Priory before the Dissolution and the Courtenays, until Henry Courtenay lost his lands when he was attainted in 1536; the Strodes until the seventeenth century and then the Parkers of Boringdon and Saltram. Evidence of homage certificates, rentals and court rolls shows that most land and property, when it was not owned outright, was either leased or held by copyhold. A court held at Plympton Grange in September 1537 gives lists of tenants who should attend court to do service for property held.⁸ Defaulters were ordered to be distrained, evidence that feudal customs died hard in remote areas. Copyhold was a type of tenure by which a person might secure the rights to a property for himself, and his or her children, the terms to last for a stated number of 'lives'. From the frequent references to properties along the main streets of the town, they were usually held by burgage tenure, i.e. a fixed money rent, while the fields, orchard and closes were usually copyheld.⁹ The rent roll of Eliseus Hele for 1632 lists fields and holdings of people in Plympton. Some properties are called 'messuages', i.e., dwelling house with outbuildings, yard, garden and enclosed area, evidence of small scale farming.¹⁰ So a picture emerges of small sized farms, often held in part with family or partners, often contentious, from the many lawsuits, but with the people engaged in mixed arable and animal husbandry and the cultivation of garden plots, allotments and orchards.

The weekly markets and annual fairs were the life blood of the town during the three centuries, bringing in people and goods and stimulating economic activity. Hooker¹¹ in 1599 speaks of a weekly market and two fairs, which the charter of 1602 confirms, while the 1692 charter added a Wednesday market to the Saturday one and another annual fair. Lysons¹² says that a cornmarket was held in the Guildhall and that by his time all the fairs included the sale of cattle. The market stalls were probably set up under cloth tilts or awnings along Fore Street, a right often granted to burgage tenants,¹³ with the main market area at the T-junction at the eastern end of the town. As in all corporate towns the regulation of the market was the responsibility of the town authorities. Market officers were elected or appointed, as toll-gatherers, 'lookers' or 'searchers' to deal with disputes. The 1602 Charter¹⁴ carefully lists the bye-laws relating to the conduct of markets. It makes it plain that

no merchandise is to be sold except in the appointed place; it lists the charges for use of the common beam compulsory for the sale of wool—and says that all animals must be brought into open market. In a lawsuit of Henry the Eighth's reign¹⁶, 'the market Provost and Commonalty of Plympton Earle, complain that the market had been interrupted by unruly persons.' It goes on, 'From time out of mind a market has been held every Saturday for barkers, smiths and shoe-makers', and complains that stalls were knocked down and there was much disruption. It shows the serious nature of the crime that the complaint was heard in Chancery and that the authorities were determined to uphold the prosperity of the market.

By the eighteenth century there was sheep-selling on market days in the Long Cause, a lane running east from George Lane beyond the church. The farmers used the boundary wall of Plympton House, built in 1700 on the site of Grange Farm, and hurdles were driven in up to a cobbled footpath to make sheep pens. Cattle fairs were also held on this site, away from the main street, but by the end of the century the market switched to the Ridgeway as the centre of trade had moved away from the old borough to the new turnpike road.¹⁶

Also contributing to the economy of the town were the mills sited on the streams feeding the Plym and Yealm. From west to east, they were Priory, Marsh or Woodford, Earls, Loughtor and Lee Mills. The latter lay some way from the town and comprised two grist mills and one malt mill. The Loughtor Mills came to the Strode family by marriage. They too are described as 'greiste' mills in the earliest documents, but Strode money was used for repair and extension and they were later used for 'tuckinge and fullinge',¹⁷ evidence of a modest local cloth-making industry. Earls Mill, the manorial mills of Plympton Manor, where all except Priory tenants were obliged to grind their corn, stood just outside the borough on the Torrey brook and was in use until early eighteenth century.¹⁸ By the middle of the seventeenth century a mill-leaf had been run off the northern creek of the Torrey brook where it entered the Plym and here also there was a grist and tucking mill.¹⁹ Priory Mill was also set on a mill stream cut out from the Torrey brook and continued in use until at least 1782 when a bill shows improvements made to the mill-house.²⁰

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the port of Plympton was already in decline. The river had been silting up for some time, probably due to the tinworks on the tributary streams. Leland noted that, 'the Torrey Brook is redde by the sand it rennoth and carryeth from the Tynne Works with it.'²¹ In 1512 Richard Strode, M.P. for Plympton, brought a Bill before Parliament to stop the, 'perishing, hurting and distroying of rivers, ports, havens and crekes in the county of Devon',²²; notwithstanding that he was an owner of tin pits himself. He incurred the wrath of the Stannary Courts and was imprisoned in Lydford Castle for a time as a result. The really irrevocable silting up did not occur, however, until the mid-eighteenth century when John Parker began the building of the New Embankment and reclaimed the land called Chelson Meadows, thereby enlarging his estates. It was this work that diverted the course of the channel and over the years caused the sea sand to be brought up on the tides to render the river unnavigable to sea-going craft. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was more a matter of the rise of Plymouth with its deep water anchorages that could shelter a war fleet, and the harbour of Sutton that could be entered at all states of the tide. Plymouth had room to expand and fostered a lively, thriving merchant community, so that gradually Plympton merchants and traders found it more profitable to move themselves and

their businesses into Plymouth, though many, like the Sparkes, kept their connections with Plympton. It was a process that had begun well before the sixteenth century, possibly as early as the Crusades and certainly by the time that ships sailed from Plymouth for the French Wars in the fifteenth century. Plympton must always have been a difficult port to use because of the tides and probably only ever had two quays, the Priory quay and Blaxton, used mainly for the shipping of tin, some wool, and basic commodities for local consumption that were difficult to carry overland.

After agriculture, the tin trade was still the main source of economic activity in Tudor times. The involvement of Plympton in the industry goes back to 1198 when jurors from the town went to Exeter to help set up the stannary system. The outcome was an almost autonomous organisation, operating under Royal Charter, to direct mining, control standards, protect tanners and collect tolls. It was an enviable position for those engaged in the industry, for they were freed from manorial restrictions and relieved of military service; they were in essence an industrial elite, outside the regulations controlling economic activity. For example, Stannary laws gave them the right to dig up cultivated land and direct streams for their own use. No wonder so many landowners went into the tin business for themselves! From the poorest single prospector, to owners of estates like the Strodes, all exhibit a sturdy independence from baronial and clerical power.

From the time when it was designated a Stannary town in 1328, Plympton became the 'capital' of a Stannary district, each of which was an arbitrary wedge shape radiating out from Crocken Tor, on Dartmoor. Each district elected twenty-four 'justices' to represent them in the Stannary Parliament; all classes had a voice in these elections from owners of tin works to labourers and adventuring prospectors.²³ Courts met locally each week for routine business and proceedings were entered on court rolls, many of which still exist.

Evidence of tin workings can still be seen in depressions in the ground and in pits and trenches—called 'coffins' by the tanners, to the north of Newnham Park, indicating the line of the main lode. Written evidence in the form of share certificates name many sites, such as Great Hemerdon Bole, the Park Worke and Elverlee—named after Elis Elforde, the successful entrepreneur from the north of the country²⁴—and can be identified on the modern O.S. map. From the Strobe Rental,²⁵ an entry for November 1545 shows twenty shillings paid in tin dues to William Rede, receiver, and tin is sold to a London agent for £27-11s-6d at thirty-two shillings a hundredweight. The Strodes also owned a blowing house for the smelting of tin beside their Loughtor Mills.

All tin produced had to be smelted, then taken to a Stannary town to be stamped and taxed before selling. These taxing or 'coinage' days took place twice a year. The word is derived, not from the minting of coins, but from the 'quoin', or corner struck off a block of tin by the public examiner, to test for quality. The ceremony of testing, weighing and stamping took place publicly, probably in front of the Guildhall. There the King's Beam was set up and the blocks weighed one by one, the weights being called off for record. Then the quoin was struck off by the assayer and the block stamped, and the sale of tin began. After purchase the tin would be sent by ship or by pack animal to be used mostly for the manufacture of pewter, for bells and for solder. Finberg²⁶ gives details of tin prices for the years 1493-1523, and they show that Plympton tanners took roughly one-eighth of the amount of their nearest rivals,

Chagford, over the thirty years, and, compared with the total for Devon in 1513, a peak year of production, Plympton tin was worth £31-8s-6d against a total of over £285 for the four stannary towns. However, with the price of tin at 4d a pound and a duty of 1s-6³/₄d a hundredweight, both tanners and government profited from their industry. In 1523, one hundred and four tin producers are listed, including two women; it is interesting to note names like the Martyns who became wealthy and influential in the seventeenth century, a Drake and a Treby, and to notice that the citizens with other means of livelihood, like bakers, tuckers and tanners, invested in the tin trade,²⁷ also parish gilds.

Even when a recession in the industry began in the middle of the sixteenth century, it must still have had a stabilising influence on the economy of the town. At its height it attracted to the town people of vigour and ambition for whom homes, goods and services were needed. But in the end, fluctuations in prices and amounts of tin produced acted against the smallest of the stannary towns and anyway by the end of the eighteenth century the focus of the trade had moved to Cornwall. Together, these developments contributed to the long, slow economic decline of Plympton.

Over the three centuries 1500-1780 the town managed to survive because it was a small integrated community with a mixed social and economic base, seated in the land itself, and this cushioned it against economic crisis and change, but it was not able to adapt to the forces at work in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Under the Reform Act of 1832 the town lost its two members of parliament and the eventual end came in 1857 with the loss of borough status. The last mayor was chosen in 1859.

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REVIEWS

A Short History of the Building of St David's Church by the Reverend M.G. Smith, M.A., B.D., Vicar of St David's Exeter; Exeter, 1984; 24 pp. £1.00.

Over the last twenty five years understanding and appreciation of the extraordinary achievement represented by Victorian and Edwardian architecture has been growing steadily, though much of the history of this developing awareness is to be charted, sadly enough, by the loss of some of the finest buildings of the period. Much remains to be done, and among the many areas still inadequately explored is the relationship between local architectural practice—whether in the output of an individual firm or in the design of an individual building—and national developments in architectural thinking and design. St David's Exeter, built 1897-9, is among the best Victorian churches in Devon; it is also a building of undoubted national significance. Its London-based architect, William D. Caroe (1857-1938), was one of the most impressively original ecclesiastical designers working at the turn of the nineteenth century and St David's has been seen as his best church.

The Reverend M.G. Smith's short study of the building of St David's makes available some of the specifically local material essential for understanding the church. Most of this is drawn from parish records and magazines: Mr Smith traces the first moves to replace the pre-Caroe church, built in 1816, to the growing dissatisfaction expressed in vestry meetings of the 1880s and the fresh impetus given by the appointment of Cyril Valpy-French as vicar in 1892; he describes the 1895 competition for a new design and the long process of fund-raising, dominated by the large donations of the West family of Streatham Hall; after an account of the church itself, consecrated in January 1900, he briefly outlines the subsequent provision of additional fittings, largely complete by the time of the First World War; the final financial statement and list of subscribers, published in 1903, is also reported.

Useful as Mr Smith's account is overall, it would have been more so if sources had been cited and proper references to documentation given. Other shortcomings indicate the limitations of the booklet as a whole. One of the strengths of local architectural studies is that they can reveal the specific factors that determined the complex of decisions underlying any building process. If such specifics are to become more than a list of names and dates, however, they need careful explanation and this is often lacking in Mr Smith's account. Thus we are told very little of the doctrinal complexion of St David's, though this was a critical element in Victorian attitudes towards the church fabric: providing for High Anglican worship like that at St David's was, moreover, expensive and the relationship between financial and liturgical considerations was often crucial. Similarly, insufficient detail is given about the people involved: although the author notes that Valpy-French's first curacy was in Knightsbridge he takes the information no further, though Knightsbridge was an acknowledged centre of mid-Victorian ritualism—particularly under the *aegis* of W.J.E. Bennett. Surely a connection needs to be made between this kind of liturgical pedigree and the explicitly Anglo-Catholic lavishness of the St David's chancel. More exploration is also needed of the role of the West family: though they were indeed 'far and away the wealthiest family in the parish' (p.3) this

hardly explains why they were prepared to put up more than half of the £20,000 the church eventually cost. Although some background information on Caroë himself is given, much more needs to be said about the contractors and craftsmen involved: for example, the contractor for the church, given here simply as 'William Dart of Crediton', was in fact the founder of the Dart and Francis partnership, and St David's, their first major contract, initiated a long and important connection between Caroë and the firm.

However, one should not be too critical of deficiencies in interpretation: the scope of the booklet is necessarily limited and many of the issues it simply touches upon could usefully be made the starting points for future research.

Chris Brooks

Family, Servants and Visitors, by Mary Bouquet, Geo Books, Norwich, 1985. 167 pp. Hardback: ISBN 0 86094 185 X. £21.50. Softback: ISBN 0 86094 186 8, £18.50.

This very highly priced publication is an outcome of Devon-born Mary Bouquet's studies in Social Anthropology at Cambridge University, and her doctoral thesis on the division of labour in the farm household, completed in 1981. It examines the relationship between dairy farming and the taking-in of summer visitors in the north-west Devon parish of Hartland, and ways in which systems and domestic arrangements have changed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The author describes how, in earlier days, Devon cattle were kept in this area for draught purposes and beef, with farmers' daughters and servant maids being given charge of the calf rearing. Women then performed many of the farm jobs, particularly those involving livestock. Theirs also was the responsibility of making cream, butter and cheese, in the dairy within the farmhouse, for sale locally or in Bideford market. Changes came, however, with the establishment of the Torrington creamery in 1874, which provided an outlet for dairy products and later for liquid milk for the London market—made possible by the railway advance which also brought holiday visitors to the district. With farmhouse dairy manufacture diminished, and fewer servants sleeping in, surplus bedrooms could be adapted for accommodating paying guests. In modern times dairy work has been removed entirely from the domestic department and in many cases farmers' wives have developed summer catering to a high degree.

This, basically and in simple terms, is the theme of the work which is a detailed academic study, extensive in its examination. Some sections, in fact, may appear somewhat laboured to those who know the area reasonably well. A factor in the removal of dairy operations from the dwelling house that could have been mentioned were the Milk and Dairies Regulations of 1949 (when Hartland had around 100 milk producers—more than double the 1980 figure) which required provision of a 'milk room' near the milking shed. The farmer's wife was often the one who crossed from the house to wash and sterilise the milking equipment, but dependence on the monthly milk cheque made maintaining prescribed standards very much a matter for the farmer's own concern. But research has evidently been carried out faithfully and unhurriedly, and Mary Bouquet has clearly come to grips with the human situation, such as, for example, when assessing reasons for previously visitor-taking

households ceasing to do so. The book, illustrated with photographs and diagrams, will undoubtedly continue as a reliable source of reference in years to come.

Helen Harris

Estuaries and river ferries of South West England, by Martin Langley and Edwina Small. Waine Research Publications. 1984. £10.95 ISBN 0 905184 08 4.

Having recently borrowed a copy from Devon Library Services I was delighted to find that all the river estuaries of South Devon, together with those of the Taw and Torridge, were dealt with in detail. How this excellent book has escaped being reviewed in my local newspaper is surprising as it is the result of four year's dedicated research by the writers. It includes many anecdotes and memories given to Mr Langley by men who in their earlier years stoked the engines, or played other roles in keeping the vessels water-borne in all weathers and seasons. Present day operators are also given. As a book of reference it is valuable because of the lists of named ferries and the principal vessels used by them over the years.

John Pike

DEVON ANNIVERSARIES

1. **Nicholas Stone** (1586-1647) Mason and architect. Born at Woodbury of poor parents, he served as apprentice and journeyman to Isaac Jones in London before going to Amsterdam to work under Hendrik de Keyser, the leading Dutch architect and sculptor of the day, whose daughter he married. Returning to England in 1614 he was appointed Master Mason to James I in 1619. He was associated with Inigo Jones in the building of the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall and in 1626 became Master Mason and Architect for Windsor Castle. His reputation rests mainly, though, on his monumental masonry, for example the Villiers tomb in Westminster Abbey. He was the leading English practitioner and his surviving notebooks show that he was a very highly paid one. Buried in London.
2. **John Ford** (1586-?) Dramatist and poet. Baptised at Ilington in April 1586 he was possibly born at Bagtor Manor House. Details of his life are sparse but he is believed to have gone to Exeter College, Oxford, and entered the Middle Temple in 1602 (his mother's brother was Lord Chief Justice Popham). Of comfortable means his main interest was poetry and drama rather than the law. Between 1629 and 1638 he wrote a number of successful tragedies of which *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is today the best known. He also collaborated with Dekker and Rowley in the *Witch of Edmonton*. By temperament he is said to have been melancholy and withdrawn. It is not known when or where he died.
3. **James Holman RN** (1786-1857) "The Blind Traveller". Born October 1786 the son of a chemist in Fore Street, Exeter, he entered the Navy in 1798 as a First

Class Volunteer. Promoted lieutenant in 1807 he was invalided out three years later. Totally blind at the age of 25 he studied at Edinburgh University and in 1812 was appointed a Naval Knight of Windsor. From 1819 he made a series of tours, unaccompanied, through Europe and Asia, being arrested as a spy in Siberia. He twice went round the world. He published accounts of his earlier travels and was working on the later ones at the time of his death.

4. **Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846)** Painter. Born at 6 Whimble Street, Plymouth. His father was a printer, publisher and bookseller in a small way of business, strongly opposed to the artistic interests early displayed by his son. After Plymouth and Plympton Grammar Schools and some uncongenial jobs forced on him by his father, he went to London in 1804 to prepare for his self determined career as an historical portrait painter. He produced a number of very large canvasses (eg *The Raising of Lazarus*) which displayed great imaginative and conceptual powers. Initially successful and with a good reputation as a teacher he lost friends and clients by his sensitive pride and quarrelsomeness. He indulged, often unwisely, in literary polemics against other artists and the Academy. His last years were full of disappointments and the news that Tom Thumb was drawing bigger crowds than his latest picture led him to suicide. It was said that his was a talent which might have achieved more if it had expected less.
5. **Edward Cardwell (1813-86)** Statesman. His fame is based largely on his successive services as Colonial Secretary, when he abolished transportation, and as Secretary for War, 1868-74, when he introduced much needed army reforms. He did not hold office again and died at the Villa Como, Torquay in 1885. He is buried in Highgate Cemetery.
6. **John Tulloch (1823-86)** Presbyterian Divine. Principal of St Mary's College, Aberdeen University, Moderator of the Church of Scotland (1878) and Dean of the Thistle, he visited Torquay in 1880-81 to recover from an illness. A second visit in 1886 was unsuccessful.

Adrian Reed

EXETER HERITAGE PROJECT

The Exeter Heritage Project is an MSC funded community programme set up to develop guided tours of the city, and to produce educational materials on its history and heritage. The project has links with, and support from, the West Country Studies Library, the Devon and Exeter Institution, the Devon Record Office, the Royal Albert Museum and the Exeter Archaeological Field Unit. Free guided tours in the 1986 season have covered such areas as the Cathedral Close, the modern city, the Quay, and the city's walls and churches. As a schools resource, subjects are researched by members of the project team and material mostly printed and distributed by the Devon Education Television Service. Interested enquiries to: Mr Ralph Mackridge, Education Co-ordinator, Exeter Heritage Project, Civic Centre, Exeter. Tel: Exeter 77888 ext 2530.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY PROJECT

Further information concerning any of the following current projects may be obtained from Devon County Library:--

Barnstaple Archaeological Project
 Barnstaple Historic Buildings Survey
 Bideford Community Archive
 Buckfast Abbey Educational Project
 Buckland Abbey 'Armada 1988' Resources Project
 Cadbury Deanery Burial Records Project
 Chumleigh Community Archive
 Devon Heritage Project
 Devon Newspaper Indexing Project
 Exeter Archaeological Rescue Dig
 Exeter Business Directory
 Exeter Cemeteries and Graveyards Project
 Exeter Heritage Project (see above notice)
 Exeter Maritime Museum
 Exeter Photographic Survey of Listed Buildings
 Exeter Photographic Survey of Modern Architecture
 Exeter Societies Index
 Exeter Valley Parks Education Project
 Exeter Visual Survey
 Green Lanes Project
 Hartland Deanery Burial Records Project
 Holsworthy Local History Research Group
 Ilfracombe Community Archive
 Local Studies and the Community
 Okehampton and District Local History Research Group
 Out and About in Plymouth
 Plymouth and South Devon Co-op History Project
 Royal Albert Memorial Museum—Local History Project
 School Curriculum Resources
 South Molton Deanery Burial Records Project
 Tavistock History Project
 Teignbridge Arts Action
 Topsham Museum
 Totnes Community Archive
 Wembworthy Community Archive

COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTICES

Lt-Commander K.E. Moxon Browne, Highweek Close, Newton Abbot, writes:

My family have had in their possession for many years two seventeenth century portraits in oil on panel of two members of the Reynell family—though we are not related. One, the better portrait, depicts Sir Thomas Reynell of West Oghwell and the other his father-in-law, Sir Henry Spiller of Laleham and Shepperton in Middlesex. Thomas Reynell and his brother Richard Reynell of Forde were knighted by Charles I at Forde in September 1625 when the king passed through Newton on his way to Plymouth.

I have recently completed arrangements with Teignbridge District Council to lend the portraits for display at Forde House. It appears to me that it will be of interest to any members of the Society who may be studying the portraiture of prominent Devonians to know of the existence and future location of these Reynell paintings.

From Mr Mervyn Madge, President of the British Society for the History of Pharmacy, Chelham House, 1 Saltburn Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth:

The mention of Bishop Brantyngham in 'Stranding of whales at Seaton' recalls another event concerning this bishop—the legend of the Torre Abbey ghost. The Abbot of Torre Abbey (Torquay), a William Norton, also had the powers of Lord of the Manor. It was the time of much ecclesiastical power, the era of the bishop kings. There was a canon whom he particularly disliked, and he decided to get rid of him, permanently, by cutting off his head. Eventually the news reached Bishop Brantyngham who would not accept the word of the abbot that the canon was alive and well and requested that Canon Hastings be produced in the flesh before the bishop. The abbot got out of the difficulty by using what is known in modern racing parlance as a 'ringer'. The ruse was successful though Brantyngham had some misgivings. The murder had taken place in November and the legend is that every November the headless ghost of Simon Hastings makes hideous those nights by galloping on a spectral horse in the avenues of the area of the ruins of the old abbey.

The canal historian, Mr Charles Hadfield, 13 Meadow Way, South Cerney, Cirencester, Glos., would be grateful to know of any original material on William Jessop, engineer (1745-1814), born at Stoke Damerel.

Mr Keith Perkins, 15 Malam Close, Coventry (a DHS member) seeks biographical and other information on the Rev. Henry Addington Greaves' family. He was Vicar of Charles Church, Plymouth, 1846-78. Greaves' connection with the Devonport United Mathematical and Commercial School is also sought.

The latest local history society to join the DHS is the newly-formed Cullompton Society. The members' first task is to prepare a "Town Trail" which will be available this year. The Hon Secretary (Mrs J.E. Mead, Nork House, Cullompton EX15 1DA) would like to hear from any members who could give talks on the locality.

Exeter University Publications

NEW BOOKS

EVER WESTWARD THE LAND by A.C. Todd with David James

Samuel James, a successful farmer, left the Lizard area of Cornwall with his wife and four young sons for North America in 1843. A born leader, a man of skill, resourcefulness and deeply held religious views, he eventually took his family in covered wagons drawn by oxen on the 'Oregon Trail'. They reached the Pacific coast in the present state of Washington in 1850. From Samuel's detailed diary and surviving family letters, A.C. Todd and David James, a direct descendant, have written the first complete account of this search for a new homeland. It makes compelling reading for all who delight in reliving the triumphs and disasters of those who pioneered the westward expansion of the European peoples.

Hardback, 244 x 170 mm, 128 pages, illustrated.

ISBN 0 85989 233 6

£7.95 net

Publication date: September 1986.

AT HOME IN DEVON: DOMICILIARY CARE FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE by R.A.B. Leaper

This book is based on a practical study of the services of all kinds for people at home in the County of Devon, which has a very high proportion of elderly people. The general lessons and practical recommendations drawn from the local study apply to all parts of Britain—and indeed to other countries.

Paperback, A5, 64 pages

ISBN 0 85989 277 8

£3.95 net

Publication date: March 1986.

RALEIGH IN EXETER 1985: PRIVATEERING AND COLONISATION IN THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH I edited by Joyce Youngs

Privateering, ship design, contemporary society, the lost colonists, the drawings of John White and Sir Walter Raleigh himself and his adoption as one of America's folk heroes, are all dealt with in an authoritative way, each essay embodying the results of the most recent research, and all are eminently readable, making this a book both for the more informed reader and also the general public. It is especially suitable for sixth formers and first-year undergraduates.

Paperback, A5, 128 pages, 4 plates.

ISBN 0 85989 252 2

£3.95 net

Publication date: December 1985.