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The Devon Historian

October 1990

41

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All correspondence relating to membership, personal local history interests and offers of work or assistance should be sent to the Vice Chairman, John Pike, 82 Hawkins Avenue, Chelston, Torquay TQ2 6ES.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Devon Historian is available free to all members of the Devon History Society. Membership subscriptions for the current year are as follows: Individual: £5.00; Family: £6.00; Libraries, Museums, Schools and Record Offices: £5.00; Institutions and Societies: £7.00. Please send subscriptions to the Hon. Treasurer, David Edmund, 5 Lark Close, Pennsylvania, Exeter EX4 4SL.

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 1990. Books for review should be sent to Mrs S. Stirling, c/o Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter. EX1 1EZ, who will invite the services of a reviewer. It is not the policy of the Society to receive unsolicited reviews.

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY AGM

The AGM of the Society will take place in the Seminar Room of the Library University of Exeter, on Saturday 13 October 1990 from 10.30 am to 4.00 pm.

The print on the cover is *Sidmouth, Devon*, steel engraved by J. Bingley after G.B. Campion, published Jennings & Chaplin, 1831. (Somers Cocks 2499).

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CONTENTS No. 41 — October 1990

Notices		2
Samuel Rowe: no ordinary man	ALAN KELLEY	3
Sidmouth and the electric light	MURRAY LAVER	8
The possible rediscovery of the Totnes Brodestone, and a description of the Brutus stone	JAMES BELLCHAMBERS	11
Lord Morley's flying bridge	KEITH S. PERKINS	15
To the great scandal of religion	JOHN YALLOP	20
An iron foundry in Exeter	CHRISTOPHER SCOTT	26
Generous benefactor: Francis Garratt of Ellacombe	JOHN PIKE	28

Reviews:

- Exeter architecture, by Hugh Meller (John Allan) 30
- The Bloody Eleventh, by R.E.R. Robinson (Ivan Roots) 31
- The Blind Devotion of the People, by Robert Whiting (Ivan Roots) 33
- The Magic Tree, by Nat. Counc. for Cons. of Plants (Steven Pugsley) 34
- The Old Farm, by Robin Stanes (Andrew Jewell) 35
- Out of the World and into Combe Martin, by CMLHG (Alison Grant) 36
- Whitchurch Down, by Tavistock LHS (Alison Grant) 37
- SW Coast Path: Falmouth to Exmouth, by Brian Le Messurier (Helen Harris) 38
- N. Devon Heritage No 2, by N. Devon Museum Trust (Helen Harris) 38
- Other publications received 39
- New contributors 39
- Dartmoor Bibliography 40

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Current and back issues of The Devon Historian (except for numbers 7, 11, 15, 16 and 23) can be obtained from Mrs S. Stirling, Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter EX1 1EZ. (Number 22, which is available, was not a 'normal' issue, but was totally devoted to being our first Bibliography). Copies up to and including No 36 are priced at £1.50, post free, and from No 37 onwards £2.00. Also available post free are Devon Newspapers (£1.00), Index to The Devon Historian (for issues 1-15 50p and 16-30 £1), and Devon Bibliography (1980 50p, 1981 and 1982 60p each, 1983 and 1984 75p each). Bibliographies for more recent years are available from Devon Library Services.

The Vice-Chairman, Mr John Pike, 82 Hawkins Avenue, Chelston, Torquay TQ2 6ES, would be glad to acquire copies of the out-of-stock numbers of The Devon Historian listed above.

NOTE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles are welcomed by the Hon. Editor to be considered for publication in The Devon Historian. Generally the length should not exceed 3,000 words (plus notes and possible illustrations), although much shorter pieces of suitable substance may also be acceptable, as are items of information concerning museums, local societies and particular projects being undertaken.

To assist the work of the Editor and the printers please ensure that contributions are clearly typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with double spacing and adequate margins, and also, as far as possible, that the journal's style is followed on such matters as the restrained use of capital letters, initial single rather than double inverted commas, the writing of the date thus e.g.: 13 October 1990, etc.

THE NATIONAL INVENTORY OF WAR MEMORIALS

A communication has been received from Dartmoor National Park inviting our members to contribute to this work. The National Inventory of War Memorials is managed jointly by the Imperial War Museum and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. It is funded by a generous grant from the Leverhulme Trust, corporate sponsors and The Friends of the Imperial War Museum. The NIWM was established in response to growing concern about the condition of the Nation's war memorials and the lack of information about them, particularly their location. A central record will assist researchers and historians in a variety of fields, it will facilitate country-wide comparisons and assessments which have hitherto been impossible, and provide a source of information for those involved with maintenance and restoration. Memorials to all conflicts will be recorded; the First and Second World Wars, the Boer War, the Crimean War, Korea, the Falklands and Northern Ireland. Earlier examples will be a useful inclusion: the Napoleonic Wars, the Seven Years War.

The recording of war memorials is being undertaken by volunteers of varying interests.

Instructions and record sheets, and further information, are available from Mrs T. Walker, Dartmoor National Park Headquarters. Tel. Bovey Tracey (0626) 832093.

SAMUEL ROWE: NO ORDINARY MAN

Alan Kelley

On the afternoon of Thursday 22 September 1853, Crediton came to a halt. The hush which had come over the town a week before moved into deep silence. The shops were closed. Trade and work ceased. Hundreds clustered at the churchyard. The vicar, the Rev. Samuel Rowe, incumbent for eighteen years, had died and was about to be interred.

'There was no display' reported the *Western Times*, 'no pageantry; no plumed horse; no succession of mourning coaches, or private carriages. All was plain and simple; for the outward trappings of woe might be well-dispensed with when every countenance was an index of the unfeigned homage of the heart'.(1) The observer was pointing to the sense on the part of all who were there that the loss was not only to family and friends, and the local community, but to the country.

The life of Samuel Rowe was crowded and many-sided. Apart from being an active churchman, reformer and educator, he was also an antiquary, topographer and author. He wrote the celebrated and seminal work, the 'Perambulation . . .' of Dartmoor. He appears in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, for Samuel Rowe was, as the *Western Times* declared, 'no ordinary man'.(2)

He was not a native of Crediton, nor even of that part of Devon. Born in November 1793 in the parish of Brixton, near Plymouth, he was the second son of Benjamin Rowe, a yeoman farmer – as his father had been before him. For the future vicar of Crediton however, as one memoirist was later to put it: '. . . the occupations of the farm possessed no charm . . .; and the summer hours were chiefly passed with his favourite books in his "study" – a leafy retreat which he had constructed for himself in the branches of an old elm near the house'.(3)

The tree was complemented by another centre of learning – the grammar school in nearby Plympton. Founded by Elize Hele in 1664 it was, in the early 19th Century, quite a prominent institution. Sir Joshua Reynolds had gone there, indeed his father had been headmaster.

By the time he left school, Rowe had apparently not formed any clear vocation – except that it was not to be on the land. The possibility of taking Holy Orders seems to have been only one among several competing options. However, whether by his own choice or through parental intervention the quandary was resolved, and when his career opened it was in the world of books. In 1811 he was apprenticed to a bookseller at Kingsbridge, and two years later (with the financial aid of his father) he struck out on his own. He was later joined by a younger brother, Joshua Brooking Rowe, and by 1820 they were solidly in business: Samuel and J.B. Rowe, booksellers, stationers, printers, bookbinders, music sellers, at 7 Whimple Street, Plymouth.

They were not only booksellers, they were publishers, and Samuel Rowe was not only publishing the works of others, he was presenting his own. His first, in 1814, was a most appropriate one: a directory of the town – the first ever produced.(4) Seven years later he followed up on this theme with his *Panorama of Plymouth: or, Tourist's Guide . . .*, which ran into a second edition, and in 1824 he put out two further topographical works on Plymouth.

In the meantime he had ventured along other paths with his pen. The same year the *Directory* came out he collaborated with Thomas Byrth(5) to produce the *Plymouth*

The Reverend Samuel Rowe (1793-1853). The photograph, taken in London, probably after the subject's death, is of a sketch of him, probably the original from which the one appearing in the 3rd edition of the Perambulation was reproduced.

Literary Magazine. Like many such periodicals it did not survive, but as Byrth was to remark later of the PLM: 'It stands now upon my shelves, among hosts of the mighty dead; and I have never heard one of them express contempt of its companionship'.[6] In 1819 there appeared (under the pseudonym Arthur Spenser) Rowe's three-volume romance, *Iskander or The Hero of Epirus.*

In 1817 he was elected to the Plymouth Institution – 'then the centre of all literary, scientific and artistic life in south Devon',[7] and four years later became its secretary. A feature of his involvement was a series of lectures, delivered at the Athenaeum, beginning on Thursday 16 December 1819 with one devoted to English Drama – an entirely suitable choice for one whose family was connected with that of Nicholas Rowe.[8] During the next thirty-one years he was to give over forty lectures, on topics as contrasting as ancient Athens, superstition, language, and (on 27 January 1824) one with the imposing title: 'Influence of Situation and Climate on Intellect and Feeling'.[9]

In one such address, in 1828, he reported his researches on a subject which was to remain very dear to him and the one for which he is now most closely associated: Dartmoor. His writing from these investigations culminated twenty years later with the publication of *A Perambulation of the Antient and Royal Forest of Dartmoor and the Venville Precincts*. It was dedicated, 'with gracious permission', to HRH Albert Prince of Wales, Master Forester.[10]

Rowe's interest in the Moor was manifold. As a topographer, he could not fail to be aroused by its 'tor-crowned steeps', its woods, rivers, ravines, and trackless wastes. As an antiquary, he was urged to catalogue the vestiges of ancient human presence, and as what we would now call a conservationist his motive in writing the *Perambulation* was to sound an alarm that not only the natural beauty of Dartmoor, but 'the venerable relics of past ages' sheltered in its highlands were in danger from the effects of 'multiplied population, increasing commercial speculations and economic improvements'.[11]

His Druidical theories were later proven incorrect, but the book was profoundly influential. To R.N. Worth, in 1871, it was 'the most complete and important work' about the moor,[12] and wrote another Dartmoor scholar, the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould: 'It arrested my attention, engaged my imagination, and was to me almost a Bible'.[13] Three years after the author's death a second, large format edition was brought out, and a third – edited and expanded by his nephew, the younger Joshua Brooking Rowe – followed in 1896.

The full achievement of Samuel Rowe's work is perhaps to be measured in another way. He could be said to have created the modern interest in Dartmoor, meaning not only that he stimulated further scientific curiosity, but that in being the first comprehensive and widely-read account of the moor, the *Perambulation* prompted its public rediscovery. The appearance of the book set the course for the installation of Dartmoor as a place of brooding mystery in the British mind.

Another of his abiding interests was architecture. He lectured on it at the Athenaeum, and at the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute. In the *Perambulation* he describes the notable buildings of the stannary towns, and in the same year as it was published his *Gothic Architecture: Its Decline and Revival* appeared. On settling in Crediton his expertise found a new focus, and in the early 1840s his observations and notes on the town and its environs, and most notably on the church, were sought in regard to a projected work on Devonshire. However, due to the death of its compiler, it was never completed.

According to the panagyrist quoted earlier Rowe had been a member of an Independent congregation in Plymouth,[14] and it is not known when he transferred to the Established Church, nor when he decided to take Holy Orders. Presumably he had made up his mind by 1822 when he left the business and entered Jesus College, Cambridge. Interestingly, Thomas Byrth, Rowe's colleague in the days of the *Plymouth Literary Magazine*, took a similar course. In his case it was from the Society of Friends, via Oxford, to the Church of England.

Four years later, on taking his degree, Rowe was ordained and after a stint as curate at St Andrew's, Plymouth, he took up the incumbency at St Budeaux. In 1832 he was appointed as first minister to a new church, St Paul's at East Stonehouse, and soon after he transferred to St George's, Plymouth. It was from there, then, from a field of seventy candidates, that he was chosen on 10 December 1835 to succeed the long-serving Rev. Rudall as vicar of Crediton.

The post – in a large rural parish, and once the centre of the Diocese – was a prestigious one, and it would be interesting to know more of the circumstances of his election. Since the choice was made by the twelve governors of the Church Corporation Trust, and that most prominent of these was the lord of the manor, J.W. Buller, there may be something in the suggestion that Mrs Buller, 'a lady of pronounced evangelical tendencies' knew of Samuel Rowe and played a key role in the choice.[15]

If one story is any guide the verdict was a popular one at Crediton. Tradition has it that when Rowe was in the town at the time of his candidature he was bade success by a shoemaker in the High Street. This fellow assured the cleric that if he won he would

be the first to bring him the news. True to his word, when the governors made their announcement the shoemaker rode through the night to Plymouth, awakening Mr Rowe to impart the tidings. The immediate response of the reverend gentleman to this unscheduled visitation is not recorded.[16]

By this time his personal situation was much changed. We can presume that about the time he was trying to unravel the arcana of Dartmoor he was pondering other secrets. He made a decision and, whatever may have been the circumstances of their meeting and courtship, on Tuesday 16 June 1829 he married Sidney, only daughter of Adam Neale, a Scottish-born army doctor, and his wife Margaret. One of Sidney's brothers, Erskine, officiated.[17] So far as one can tell it was a happy marriage. Five girls were born to them, and two boys (one of whom died in infancy).

Although he was to remain at Crediton for the rest of his life, Samuel Rowe did not allow his pre-occupation with parish affairs, and the raising of a family, to elbow out of the way an involvement with wider matters. With the same enthusiasm that he had, in earlier years, been active in the anti-slavery movement, he now became a champion of the Church Missionary Society, of which he became secretary for Cornwall and Somerset as well as his own county. He was a local founder of the Christian Knowledge Society. In 1842 he was evidently on the shortlist to succeed William Hart Coleridge as Bishop of Barbados.[18] Whether he declined that post, or simply was not successful, are among the many questions about the life of Samuel Rowe that further research may answer.

It would be fascinating to know where he located his sympathies in the ecclesiastical strife of his day. We can assume that the author of 'An Appeal to the Rubric . . .', which he issued in 1841,[20] would not have been indifferent to doctrinal wrangles. With the nature of his religious background, and his reputation for determined opposition to '. . . Popery, and its little nurseling sister, Tractarianism'[19] he was presumably hostile to the growth of the Oxford Movement.

Given his evangelicalism and low church affiliation one wonders whether he collided with the Bishop of Exeter, Henry Phillpotts. There is a clue. In 1850 the bishop, a conservative and a high churchman (and who seems to have been a kind of latter-day Devonian Wolsey) had caused a tempest when he barred the institution of the Rev. G.C. Gorham to the vicarage of Brampford Speke, on the issue of baptismal regeneration. After the Court of Arches held in favour of the bishop, Gorham appealed to the Privy Council – and won.

After the death of Samuel Rowe, copies of his collected sermons were sold (at a price of half a guinea) to raise money for his widow and children. A progressive list of subscribers shows the names of 93 friends, parishioners, supporters and fellow clerics. The name of Henry Phillpotts is not there, but appearing in the list of that of the Rev. George Cornelius Gorham.[20]

'Samuel Rowe was no ordinary man'. It is very likely that the modest vicar of Crediton would have sincerely dismissed this verdict as no more than a colourful kite flown on the winds of eulogy. To this intensely active man, evangelical in all his truths whether of deliverance or of Dartmoor, the restless cramming of his days with so many jostling enthusiasms was merely 'usefulness'.[21]

References

1. *Western Times*, 1 October 1853.
2. *loc. cit.*
3. Anonymous memoir, in the 2nd edition of Samuel Rowe's *A Perambulation Of The Antient And Royal Forest of Dartmoor and the Venville Precincts*, (Plymouth and London) 1856, p 344.
4. Rowe, Joshua Brooking, 'The Rev. Samuel Rowe, MA, Vicar of Crediton', *Trans. of the Devonshire Assn*, 14, 1882, pp 395-401.
5. Thomas Byrth (1793-1849). See *Dictionary of National Biography* vol. xiii.
6. Quoted in Rowe, J.B., op. cit., p 397.
7. *ibid.* p 398.
8. According to the researches of J.B. Rowe (papers in West Country Studies Library, Exeter), Samuel Rowe's gggg grandfather, John Rowe of Tavistock (1574-1652) was the great grandfather of Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718), poet and dramatist.
9. Rowe, J.B., *op. cit.*, pp 400-401.
10. Reproduced in the 3rd edition of the *A Perambulation . . . of Dartmoor*, (Plymouth?) 1896. Reproduced in facsimile by Devon Books (Exeter) 1985.
11. *ibid.*, p xvi.
12. Worth, R.N. *History of Plymouth* (Plymouth) 1871, p 323.
13. Baring-Gould, S, *A Book of Dartmoor* 1900, preface.
14. *Western Times*, 1 October 1853.
15. Venn, T.W. *Crediton als Critton als Kirton and Hereabouts*, privately published (Cambridge) 1957, p 151.
16. *ibid.*, p 150.
17. The career of Dr Adam Neale (1778-1832) is outlined (not with complete accuracy) in the *DNB*, vol. xl. The Rev. Erskine Neale (1804-1883) and his brother, W.J. Neale (812-1893), appear also. The Neale family lived in and near Exeter from c1804 until the 1820s.
18. Anonymous memoir in 2nd ed. of Rowe, S., *op. cit.*, p 350.
19. *Exeter Flying Post*, 29 September, 1853.
20. List of subscribers, printed presumably by J.B. Rowe the elder, among papers of J.B. Rowe, in WCSL, Exeter.
21. Quoted in anonymous memoir in 2nd ed. of Rowe, S., *op. cit.*, p 348.

QUERY

A query from Dr R.R. Sellman, Pound Down Corner, Whitestone, Exeter, EX4 2HP:-

The Stoke Canon burial register, surviving from 1655, shows between that date and 1695 no fewer than 29 'prisoners', two of whom, from a fly-leaf note, were gentry and actually buried inside the church. A Bishop's Transcript fragment shows another in 1620. Can anyone offer, or suggest, an explanation for this obscure phenomenon?

SIDMOUTH AND THE ELECTRIC LIGHT

Murray Laver

Sidmouth Urban District Council received a proposal for electric street-lighting in July 1902, signed a contract in March 1903 and switched on in November 1923. The council was not unusually dilatory. Sidmouth experienced in microcosm the troubles of the infant electrical industry; two factors shaped its early days. First, electricity was seen as a local matter, and that led to ruinous competition between small suppliers. Second, it was regulated by the Board of Trade, and permission to supply was given in a 'Provisional Order'. Private suppliers needed the consent of their local authority, and some authorities obtained Orders simply to pre-empt those who might take business away from their own gas companies.

A Little Local Colour

In 1902, the council had a contract with the privately-owned Sidmouth Gas Company which provided an exiguous illumination of the streets and a never failing source of acrimony. Dazzling illumination was neither sought nor provided; people were not used to it, and many thought it bad for the eyes. Indeed, the street lamps were not lit on the three days before and after each full Moon. Relations with the gas company were heated also by friction between the newly-fledged council and an older local power – the Manor.

Throughout most of its history the Lords of the Manor of Sidmouth were remote, or institutional, or both. In 1886, however, a northern business man bought the manor, but quickly died leaving it to his six-year old son. The boy became Col. J.H. Balfour, D.S.O., and his affairs were managed by a pertinaceous solicitor, W.H. Hastings. Acting for the manor, Hastings was Secretary or a Director of the Sidmouth Railway Co., Bath Co., Hotel Co., Water Co., and the Gas Co. He was also a member of the council. In 1950, two years before he died, Col Balfour lamented that 'The town has always been suspicious of the manor, and usually actively hostile'. It was his misfortune to live when benevolent autocracy was going out of fashion, and when the new councils were bound to flex their democratic muscles.

Various occasions offered themselves for conflict: for instance, the steam roller. At the turn of the century, Sidmouth's streets were surfaced with cracked flints set in a bed of clay, and were as muddy in winter as dusty in summer. The council's horse-drawn roller was too light to consolidate them, so in 1900 it hired a 12-ton steam roller. This improved the streets but cracked the gas mains; those had been laid a parsimonious ten inches below the surface; it also cracked the water mains, for they were no deeper. As the Secretary of both companies, Hastings was infuriated by what he saw as the act of incompetent councillors, and threatened an injunction. With such shallow mains, one councillor remarked, it was a wonder he didn't seek an injunction against wheelbarrows. The dispute dragged on until 1906 when, despairing of electricity, the council placed a five-year contract for lighting the streets with 80 gas lamps fitted with incandescent mantles.

In July 1902 a Mr Purvis had sent the council a proposal for electric street-lighting[1] and two months later, 'in view of certain applications', the gas company sought the council's consent to its application for an Order. In council, Hastings adverting to the building of the Victoria Hotel, and noting that no public supply could be ready in time, sought permission to lay a cable from Sidmouth Mill. The manor was challenging the council through both the gas and the hotel companies. The council refused to grant either request and applied for its own Order 'to supply electricity within the whole of the Urban Sanitary District of Sidmouth'. A lively correspondence erupted in the local press, with vituperative letters over such *nommes-de-plume* as 'Vigilans', 'Anti-cant' and 'A Mere Tradesman'.

The council obtained its Order, tenders were invited, and a contract was placed with Messrs Crompton's in March 1903. Crompton's, however, was finding it difficult to finance work in its factory. The shine had worn off electrical shares as continual innovation boosted manufacturing costs, damagingly competitive tendering depressed selling prices, and customers withheld payment until after several months of satisfactory operation.[2] In May 1904, Crompton's informed Exmouth Council that it 'could not give a date for commencing the electric light works . . . entirely owing to the state of the money market': it did not bother to write to Sidmouth.

The Sidmouth Observer reviewed the scheme in May 1906 saying, 'There is not the slightest indication of the Provisional Order being given effect to'. Referring to the City of London's reversion to gas lamps, it concluded, 'What is good enough for London ought to be good enough for Sidmouth': Sidmothians have rarely taken kindly to that view. Three years later several hotels and most businesses were connected to private generators, and the Crompton proposal collapsed in March 1909 when the Board of Trade roused itself to enquire about progress, and finding none revoked its Order. Six years had been lost in waiting for Crompton's, but the council had not been energetic in pressing the company and must share the blame.

Public or Private Monopoly

Next year, the Sidmouth Gas Company advertised its intention to embrace electricity. Sidmouth opinion instantly polarized. Some thought that the company could not fail to operate more efficiently than the council; others feared a private monopoly of the two main forms of lighting. The council opposed the gas company's Bill and was heard before a select committee of the Lords which accepted the Bill, but allowed the council 12 months to acquire the new 'Sidmouth Gas and Electricity Company'.

A series of animated public meetings culminated in a poll of electors on 30 January 1912: the result was 555 for the purchase of the company by the council, 303 against; 356 did not vote. The Bill became an Act in June 1912, and after arbitration the council bought the gas company for £43,000. The manor had lost in power but not in pocket: Hastings was grimly pleased.

In 1914, the council was still absorbed in taking over the gasworks when war broke out; rations and regulations dominated the next four years. The end of the war was followed by two major projects. The first was whether to construct a harbour: that perennial topic had been debated for over a century, and yet again it was shelved unresolved. Much more urgent was the repair of the sea defences. The saga of the sea wall has been related by John Tindall[3,4], here it is enough to say that although 'upwards of £30,000 was spent' the wall was breached by a violent storm in the winter of 1924, and a further £68,880 was needed.

In May 1920 the Chairman of the Council 'felt certain that a town supply of electricity could be arranged very shortly', but funds were lacking and in September the council 'had not definitely decided to give up their electricity scheme, but had only deferred it in view of the extra-heavy expense of the sea wall'.

Finale

The subject was not revived until January 1922 when, lamenting that 'Sidmouth was one of the few towns which had no public installation', the council noted that there were many small private supplies whose oil and gas engines 'caused an absolute nuisance to neighbours'. The Chamber of Commerce pressed for a public supply – 'provided it could be established without recourse to the rates'; but in a letter to the Sidmouth Observer 'Ratepayer' pointed out that electric gains would be gas losses, and argued that the many still using oil lamps were unlikely to leap over gas into electricity.

Almost twenty years after the first approach, the council met Mr Harris of Gilbert Gilkes and Co. who proposed to erect on the gasworks site two engines which would run on 'suction gas', made by drawing steam over red-hot coke: the system would, he said, come into profit in three or four years. The council took what the Observer headlined as 'The Great Decision' and agreed to go ahead. A fortnight later, Harris substituted steam engines: two months later he proposed to use one steam and one gas engine. Silence fell for the space of six months: Harris blamed the new Electricity Commissioners who had objected to the initial losses being carried on the rates, and who thought that the steam engine would suffer from condensation in the long pipe from the gasworks.

At the beginning of 1923, tenders were invited, some sixty replies were received, and the council awarded contracts to: Messrs Pratt of Clyst St Mary, £1100 for buildings; Messrs Hood and Co. of Bristol, £4287 for plant; and The Craven Electric Telegraph Co. of Skipton, £1437 for distribution poles and lines. The installation would generate direct current at 220-0-220 volts, with a storage battery to help with the nighttime peak load.

In August 1923, steel poles and overhead lines became evident to the citizens of Sidmouth, and they disliked what they saw. Councillors muttered ingratiatingly that the company's first profits would be used to put the network underground. In fact, many of the poles remain in use today; and the engine-house on the Ham is used by S.W.E.B. for engineering stores. At last, the Sidmouth Observer was able to report that at 6.15 p.m. on 22 November 1923, 'A proud and important day . . . the Sidmouth Electricity Works were shown to actually exist'. Miss Tyrell, the only lady councillor, switched on a string of lamps suspended in the Market Place. Fifty customers were connected, and it was evident that the two Petter oil engines produced a somewhat 'penetrating noise'.

The York Hotel had applied for service, but Mr Dagworthy had undercut the council's price of 1/- a unit by 2d; he was a councillor, and a dim view was taken. Four months later, 100 customers were connected, but two private suppliers continued to undercut the public supply. One of them, Dagworthy, criticized the council's pricing policy which left the plant under-used even though the marginal cost of generation was only 1d per unit. He offered to buy and run the plant; to supply at 9d a unit, and to cut the price to 8d within 12 months. His twelve years' experience was, he said, 'at the council's command', but he added sourly 'because I'm a Sidmouth man you won't listen to or believe in me' – the perennial fate of prophets, and even of experts, in their own country.

In December 1924, the council offered discounts rising to 4d for quarterly consumptions of more than 300 units – electricity was then used only for lighting, and not too much of that. There were no motor-driven household appliances, no electric fires, no cookers, and Sidmouth did not have the electric trams which provided a life-saving daytime load in larger towns.

Postlude

Less than seven years after installing its electricity system the council sold it to the East Devon Electricity Company which was owned by the Whitehall Securities Corporation – an investment company that had sold its South American interests in order to seek larger profits from rural electrification in Britain. In 1933, the system was converted to AC using the same distribution network; in 1934, Sidmouth's last few private systems were replaced by the public supply; in 1948, nationalization transferred control to the South Western Electricity Board; in 1990, the wheel has turned full circle and electricity supply is being returned to private companies.

Notes

(1) *The Sidmouth Observer and Visitors List*, 1902 to 1925, contains full and frequent accounts of the Town Council's discussions, and of public meetings, plus a lively correspondence between partisans.

(2) Byatt, I.C.R. *The British Electrical Industry, 1875-1914*, Oxford University Press, 1979.

(3) Tindall, John. 'A Summary of Observations on the Foreshore of Sidmouth, Devon', *Transactions of The Devonshire Association*, **58**, 337-350, 1927.

(4) Tindall, John, 'Sidmouth Foreshore', *Transactions of The Devonshire Association*, **61**, 327-342, 1929.

THE POSSIBLE REDISCOVERY OF THE TOTNES BRODESTONE AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE BRUTUS STONE

James Bellchambers

H.R. Watkins published the first volume of his painstaking translations of medieval documents relating to Totnes in 1914.[1] This work was principally derived from the collection of family papers of W.G. Hole of Parke, Bovey Tracey, which are now in the Devon County Record Office.

Three particular parchments record orders of the manorial court seeking to distrain various persons from interfering with the flow of water from Harpers Well to the town. They are dated 1428[2], 1459[3] and 1471.[4]

The order of 1459 is the first known reference to *'le Brodeston'*. The court sought to distrain Richo Hoigge (Richard Hodge) from diverting the waters near *'le Brodeston'* which in times of war and necessity, *'guerre et necessitas'*, ran into the castle moat by an aqueduct, *'curret in fossatum castris per Aque conducta'*.

The 1471 order gives a detailed description of the location of *'le Brodestone'*. The secretary script is mostly clear though some abbreviations are used. The following is the author's transcription of the relevant section:

Y Wille Aque pernemens et decurrens a font vocat Harpers Will in alto vico ibin extra portam occid Burgi Totton predce directe sum heret / cursum ad quedam locus vocatus

The possible Brodestone, number 79 High Street, Totnes.

le Brodestone. In quo loco olim positus erat latus lapis int ten imper Roberti Kente et ten quondin Johis Kyng Carnifus modo ten Johis Gybbes / Arnusi (?) in pte australi subtus quem quidin latus lapidem quivis modo remotus ex antiquo tempe cursus Aque superdones hint et adhuc here debt directe suns iter Ut in nullo modo nerr Ults perpe terrs possat Roberti Kente quas upes sum viperit (?) de priore prioratus / Tottonis extra predcaius protam occidentat tennit /.

The following is the translation of this passage from Watkin:

Those watercourses proceding and running from the spring called Harperswille in the old street (in alto vico) there without the west gate of the burg of Tottonia aforesaid should have a course directly to a certain spot called the Brodestone. In which place in times past was placed a broad stone between the tenement formerly of Robertus Kente and the tenement formerly of Johannes Kyng the gaoler (carnificer) now the tenement of Johannes Gybbes esquire on the south side below which certain broad stone, now removed, from ancient times the above mentioned water course had and hitherto ought to have its straight course and in no manner further than the land of the aforesaid Robertus Kente which he himself as long as he lived held from the Prior of Tottonia without the west gate.

The key word in this passage must be *remotus*. Watkin translates this to mean removed whereas the more literal translation is remote or hidden. Thus the Brodestone was hidden beneath the southern point of the tenement of John Gybbes.

A massive stone forms the plinth to a false column of the facade of no. 79 High Street, a small 19th century building currently used as an optician's surgery. The stone

Tenement of
JOHN GYBBES
formerly of
JOHN KYNG
No 79
Assumed
location
of
WEST GATE
HIGH STREET
N
0 1 2 3 4 5 M
No 72
Tenement formerly of
ROBERT KENT held
from the PRIORY
No 83
LE BRODESTONE
To
HARPERS WELL
CONDUIT
dated 1607
SOUTH STREET
No 74

TOTNES Suggested location of 'le Brodestone'. 1471.
(related to present properties)

is a typical local compact vesicular tuff of the Devonian Ashprington Volcanic Series. The exposed section stands 5 ins (12.5cm) above the present pavement and the principal, east facing, vertical surface measures 18 ins (46cm) and projects 4½ ins (11cm) from the wall. A north facing surface is apparently worked to a right angle to the principal face. The southern corner has been damaged by a water board drill in recent times. The apical surface and corners show evidence of abrasion having occurred prior to the construction of the present building. In order to expose the stone it was necessary for the author to clean off a number of layers of oil based paints and cement. Beneath the layers were traces of a dark red pigment.

It has been suggested that the name Brodestone in corruption becomes Brutus Stone and is the origin of the story first recorded by Geoffrey of Monmouth.[5] Brutus is said to have landed at Totnes and set his foot first upon the stone! A stone now called the Brutus Stone is set within the pavement between nos 51-53 Fore Street. This stone was completely exposed during repaving in October 1988. It proved to be a boulder of coarse grained granite, 2 ft 9 ins (84cm) long, approximately 1 ft 8 ins (50cm) wide and 10 ins (27cm) deep. It lay on compact clay and could easily be moved by two men. It did not show the typical rounding which might be associated with fluvial transport and deposition and the southern face showed fracturing which might have been the result of some working.

Russell[6] dates the first record of the Fore Street stone to near 1675[7] and a paragraph in Cotton[8] states that the stone had formerly projected 18 ins above the ground but was levelled c.1810. Inconsistencies in the described location of the Brutus Stone and the recollections of a daughter of a former owner of the adjoining premises suggest that it may have been moved on various occasions.

Russell suggests that Broadstones were originally waymarks and boundaries, a Broadstone having existed at Dartmouth. The present stone in Fore Street is still used as a site for proclamations.

References

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3 Devon County Record Office ref 312M/TY174 Watkin page 432.
4 Devon County Record Office ref 312M/TY175 Watkin pages 472-473.
5 Monmouth, Geoffrey de. *Historia Regum Britanniae.*
6 Russell, P. *The Good Town of Totnes.* Devonshire Assn. 2nd Edn 1984 with introduction by E.N. Masson Phillips.
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LORD MORLEY'S FLYING BRIDGE

Keith S. Perkins

Laira

Years have flown Sweet Laira
Yet thy banks, uprushing still,
Charm as of old,
And Saltram's pensile wood
Seems beautiful as ever.

. . .Noel Thomas Carrington
(Devonshire Poet, 1777-1830)[1]

The flying bridge ferry, which Lord Morley of Saltram in South Devon established across the Plym estuary at Laira in 1807, might be considered the forerunner or ancestor of those floating bridges of Devonshire, which civil engineer James Meadows Rendel later introduced at Dartmouth, Saltash and Torpoint.[2] Rendel, who later became Lord Morley's engineer, tells us that:

> 'His Lordship being proprietor of the neighbouring ancient passage between Oreston and Cat Down, was enabled to establish a *Ferry Boat* of an improved character. By means of this boat, which from its peculiar construction and accommodation was called a Flying Bridge, carriages of every description, with their horses attached, were ferried across the river with much greater safety and convenience than any ferry boat of common construction. The success of this establishment sufficiently proved its utility to the public; but although superior to all other ferries in the neighbourhood, it was liable to interruption in bad weather and spring tides, and in proportion as the public became practically acquainted with its advantages, these interruptions were felt and regretted'.[3]

Lord Morley (or Lord Boringdon as he then was) had originally intended to erect a fixed bridge across the estuary; and early in 1807 he had engaged the services of architect and engineer Daniel Asher Alexander 'of Buckland Abbey' to survey the Plym estuary for that purpose.[4] Alexander was, at that time, architect to the then Prince of Wales and of Trinity House. Later, Dartmoor Prison was built from his design; lighthouses at Harwich and Lundy Island were also his as were many of the buildings in the London Docks.[5]

On 27 August 1807, the *Sherborne Mercury* reported: 'It is contemplated to build a new bridge of iron across the Laira at the head of Cattewater. This will be a great convenience to the inhabitants of both sides of the water. (Mr Alexander) has been driving piles to ascertain the firmness of the foundations which is said to be very good though nearly 30 feet deep through sand and mud . . .' In the event, however, Alexander's report was not encouraging: 'That in consequence of the unfavourable nature of the bed of the river, the erection of such a structure would (if at all practicable) be attended with enormous expense'. The idea of a bridge was therefore abandoned![6]

Morley was not put off by this disappointing turn of events; instead he immediately took steps to establish a flying bridge (a temporary bridge, originally of military application). To this end he engaged Isaac Blackburn the Turnchapel shipbuilder who would build the craft for him.[7] This was included in an *indenture of lease* made between His Majesty George III and the Right Honorable John, Lord Boringdon (later Morley) as part of an Act of Parliament of 1812.[8] Blackburn later constructed two large 74 gun

warships: the *Armada* in 1810 and the *Clarence* in 1812; whilst in 1831 he constructed the twin-hulls of the Dartmouth floating bridge, with the Saltash floating bridge being built by John Pope at the same yard.

An on-the-spot observer to a number of these events was an unnamed correspondent to the *Mechanics Magazine* (vol. 31 - 1839), in which he describes his personal knowledge with respect to Lord Morley's flying bridge, and other Devon ferry-boats; but he is highly critical of James Meadows Rendel.[9] Author R.N. Worth mentions an old Plymothian by the name of Harris, who, in his diary of 1808,[10] and with reference to the flying bridge, explains that: 'The bridge communicated North East part of Cat Down near Prince Rock and the opposite land in Plympton Parish but this is by a large, slow moving machine or like the floor of a barge having a passage at each end for wagons, coaches etc, but although the communication is exceeding good and regular yet it (is) quite the reverse of *flying* – *Creeping* certainly would be a more proper name . . .'

Schedules of regulations for the ferry were detailed by Harris, indicating that the flying bridge would be convenient to the public from 6am until 9pm from Lady Day to Michaelmas, and from 7am to 8pm from Michaelmas to Lady Day. And, for the further accommodation of the public at any hour of the night upon payment of a sum not exceeding 5/-. The bridge had always to pass as expeditiously as possible upon the arrival of passengers and no person was to be kept waiting on the side where the *bridge* happened to be above 5 minutes:

Tolls

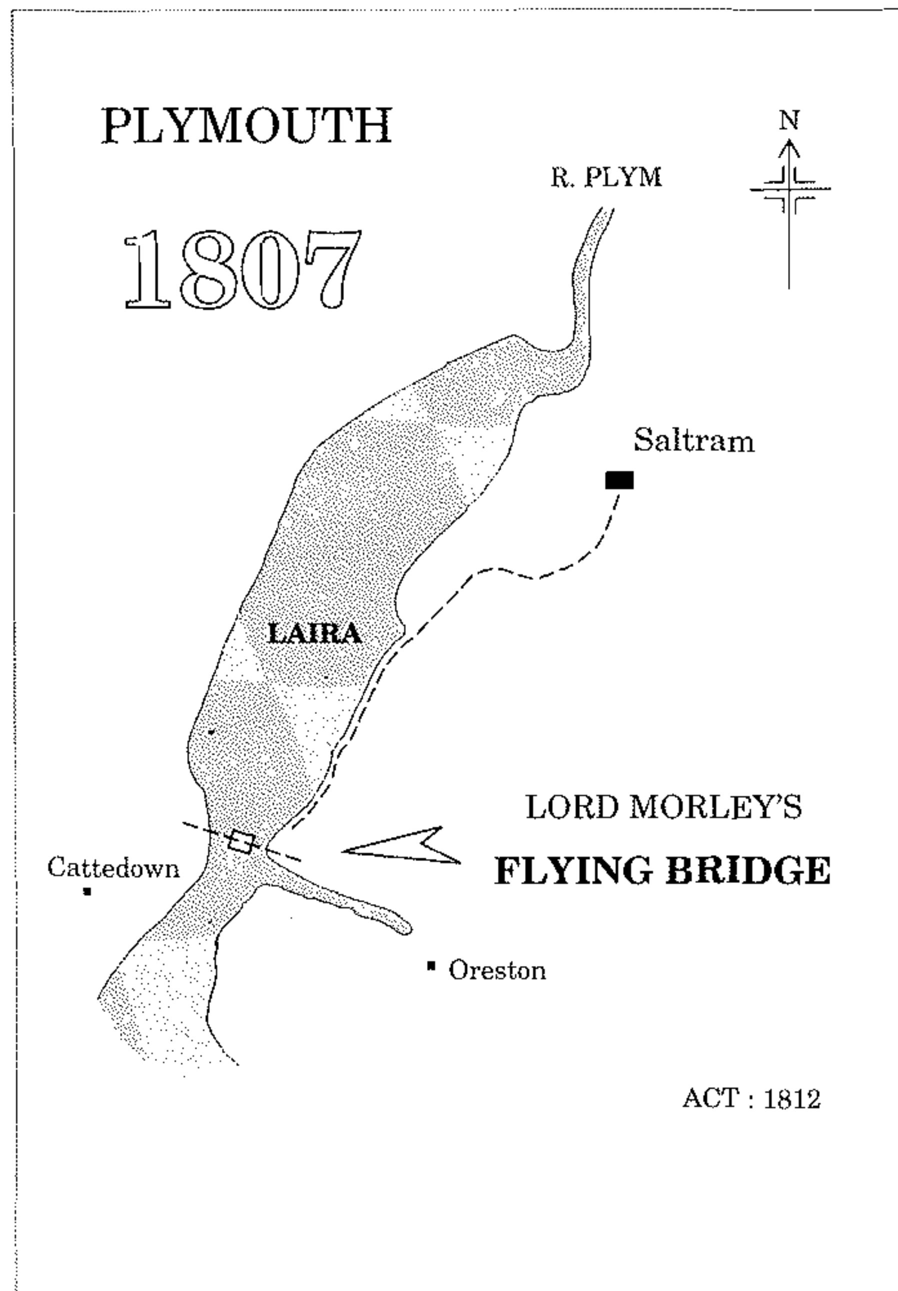
Single Person	1d	Wagon + 4 Horses	3s. 6d
Horse, Ass or Mule	3d	Wagon + 3 Horses	2s.
Four wheel Carriage + 6 Horses	2s. 6d	Wagon + 2 Horses	1s.
Four wheel Carriage + 4 Horses	1s. 9d	Bullock	5d
Two wheel Carriage + 2 Horses	1s. 2d	Cow or calf	4d
Gig + 1 Horse	8d	Pig	2d
		Sheep	1d

(Double tolls on Sundays)

In 1829, the management committee of the *Dartmouth Floating Bridge Company* produced a document which gave retrospective detail to the effect that during its first year of operation from 1807, the Laira flying bridge earned £200, and £600 during the year of its abandonment in 1827. The document bears the signatures of Robert Sheddon, Sir Lawrence Palk and Henry Woollcombe.[11]

Amongst the few descriptive accounts of the flying bridge in existence, the one published in the *Plymouth Tourist Guide of 1823* is, perhaps, the most interesting of all. It states:

> 'It has been justly remarked that the term 'floating' would describe this bridge much better. It is properly a large ferry boat open at both ends for the purpose of admitting wagons, carts, carriages and other vehicles as well as horses and cattle which are transported over the ferry with great facility. The bridge is impelled from side to side by means of a strong chain stretched across the channel, and passes over *trucks* in the bridge which are made to revolve with the aid of 2 (manually operated) winches. This commodious ferry, which owes its establishment to the public spirit and enterprise of the Earl of Morley, affords the greatest convenience to the inhabitants of Wembury, Brixton and Yealmpton by saving a considerable distance in resorting to Plymouth'.

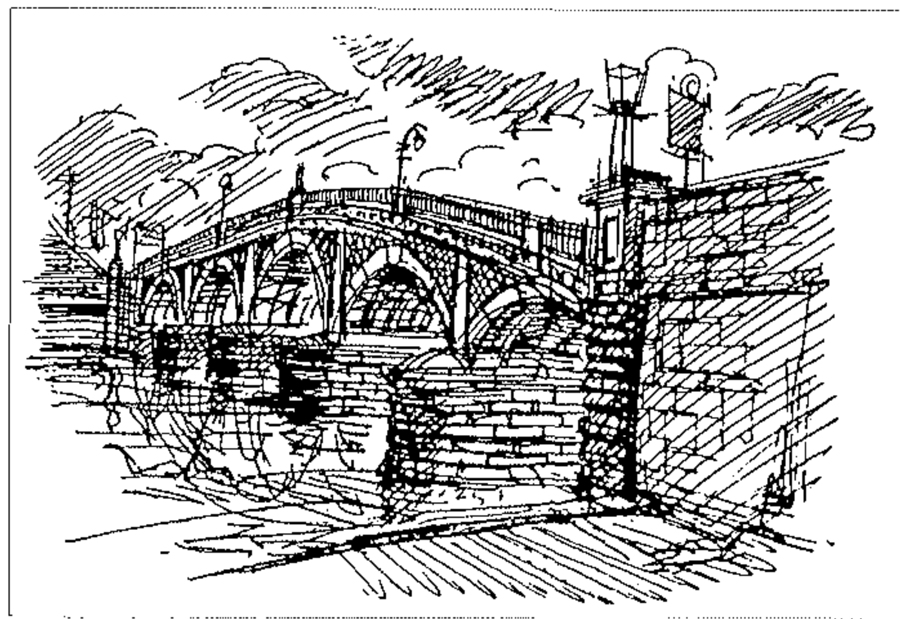


Nevertheless, one visitor in particular to Plymouth in 1824, Lady Harriott Silvester, indicated in her diary[12] that the flying bridge was one thing neither she nor her friend, Miss Williams, liked to cross over when going to Saltram. Lady Harriott was the daughter of the Reverend Owen Davis, Rector of Oxon and Curate of St Mary's, Southampton, and with Miss W., was – like Celia Fiennes, many years before – touring through South Devon. She wrote: 'This ferry, Lord Morley constantly crosses in his carriage when he goes to Plymouth, but he has just got an Act of Parliament passed to erect a bridge, and they were just beginning to drive the piles for it when we passed, it will be a great acquisition to the neighbourhood for unless people cross by that ferry, they must go several miles round to get to Saltram'.

And so, seventeen years after the failure of Morley's first attempt to bridge the Plym estuary at Laira, a cast iron bridge of five elliptical arches – from the design of James Meadows Rendel (previously a student of Thomas Telford) – was now under construction. At the same time Rendel became responsible to Morley for the operation and maintenance of the flying bridge and was ordered to Exeter by his patron to encourage coaching companies to make use of it. He was not easily successful and sought Morley's approval in offering some inducement. 'How far can I go?' he asked.[13]

However, these day-to-day activities paled into insignificance late in 1824 when the entire population of southern England faced the arrival from the south-west of a devastating storm of hurricane force:

> At Plymouth: '. . . on Monday, 22 November, the wind blew in violent squalls during the greater part of the day; towards evening it increased in violence, and early on the succeeding morning rose a tremendous storm. Fears were entertained on Monday evening for the safety of a considerable number of vessels which lay in various parts of the harbour and were principally out-ward bound with valuable cargoes, many of them having also numerous passengers aboard. Between three and four o'clock in the morning dreadful havoc commenced amongst them. Some of them were driven from their moorings in the Sound; and others in Cattewater, that might perhaps have withstood the storm, were run foul of and forced on the rocks. An extraordinary flow of the tide which rose in some places seven or eight feet above high-water mark, contributed to increase the devastation. At Dead Man's Bay, on an extent of shore perhaps not exceeding 350 yards, lay the wrecks of seventeen fine vessels . . .'[14]



Laira Bridge – completed 1827. (Permission – Francis and Joan Lawson).

From Falmouth to Dover and beyond, the devastation continued. In Portsmouth Harbour, HMS *Bellerophon* (which brought Napoleon Bonaparte to Plymouth Sound after his surrender in 1815) was driven on to mud banks. Off Portland Bill a West Indian vessel under the command of a cousin of the poet William Wordsworth, foundered with all lives lost. The Plymouth paddle-steamer *Sir Francis Drake* was blown ashore at Stonehouse, and Rendel's bridgework at Laira was damaged when a loose barge was thrown against it. The flying bridge broke from its chain and was 'carried to a great distance' before being tossed upside-down upon the shore. Rendel conveyed his anxiety to Morley on the next day, and on the 26th he attended the vessel's recovery.

In 1825, Rendel was called away to survey for improvements to Poole Harbour. The following year, Mr Knight – a representative from Poole – came to Plymouth to purchase the flying bridge which Morley had, provisionally, put up for sale. That is to say, it would not be available for removal until some time after the completion of the new bridge. On 14 July 1827, Laira Bridge was formerly opened by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Clarence. In November Rendel attended the disposal of the flying bridge,[15] which leaves us to ponder: To whom and for what purpose? The fate of Lord Morley's flying bridge is obscured in the passing of time.

Notes, Sources and Acknowledgements

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3. Rendel, J.M., 1830. *Trans. Plym. Athenium I*. 'The Iron Bridge at Plymouth'.
4. *Ibid*.
5. Dictionary of National Biography – (for Daniel Asher Alexander 1768-1846 page 272).
6. Rendel, J.M., 1830. *Trans. Plym. Athenium I*. 'The Iron Bridge at Plymouth'.
7. *Mechanics Magazine vol. 31* – 1839 – *'The Tamar Floating Bridge* . . . Provides excellent information on construction and operation of Lord Morley's flying bridge and all Devon floating bridges. It is, nevertheless, strongly biased against J.M. Rendel: 'I beg to state that Mr R (Rendel) is not the inventor of the Floating Bridge . . .' See also: 'Torpoint Floating Bridge' – J.M. Rendel. *Trans I.C.E. vol 2*. 1838: in which Rendel disclaims any credit for the principle upon which the floating bridge was conceived. Indeed such credit is claimed by James Naysmyth, see: *The Rendel Connection* by Michael R. Lane page 24. Also: Samuel Smiles ed *James Naysmyth* – 1885.
8. Act of Parliament 1812 – 52 George III, c.i; MP 11/3.

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11. Seale Papers – Torquay Reference Library.
12. Lady Harriott Silvester – Diary 1824 – Southampton Records Office.
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Acknowledgements:

J.R. Elliott, Area Librarian and Staff – Plymouth Local History Library.
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A Painting of Lord Morley's Flying Bridge, by an unknown artist, can be seen at Saltram House. See also Local History section: Plymouth Museum & Art Gallery.

TO THE GREAT SCANDAL OF RELIGION

John Yallop

Preamble

In 1825 one of the pews in Honiton parish church was used[1] jointly by the Lathy and Clarke families, they having two and four seats respectively.[2] During the course of that year the pew was relined and two hassocks purchased, making three in all, the costs being divided proportionately between the two families. The new hassocks were treated as being common property whilst the original one, covered in green baize, was claimed by Mrs Nancy Clarke as her own. On 2 August the relationship between the two families became closer still when Theophilus Clarke and Esther Lathy were united in marriage.

At some time during the next two years one of the two Lathy seats was transferred to Mr John Pidgeon. At some time also during the next two years there was a deterioration in the relationship between some members of the Clarke and Lathy families, culminating in an unseemly brawl in church during evening service which led to an action in the Archdeacon of Exeter's court.

The brawl in church

The earliest known evidence of the deterioration in relationship occurs in a statement by John Wish in which he describes what occurred on 26 February 1827 when he went into Mr Hender Clarke's shop to make purchases and fell into conversation with Mr Clarke's wife, Nancy. '. . . Nancy Clarke began to relate to this deponent a dispute that had taken place in the church of Honiton between the said Ann [an error for Amy] Lathy . . . the day before That the said Theophilus Clarke [Nancy's son] came into the shop and joined in the conversation and said to his mother the said Nancy Clarke "Damme why had you not taken her by the hair of her head and thrown her into the aisle I'll be damned if I don't do it if she kicks or insults me in the Seat" on which this deponent said that he had better not if he did he would suffer for it on which the said Theophilus Clarke repeated "that he would be damned if he did not" . . .'

The obvious ill feeling came to a head during the afternoon service on Sunday 18 March. The account of the affair given in Amy Lathy's subsequent deposition, which does not appear to have been disputed, was as follows:-

> '. . . Complainant went to Church in the afternoon no one was in the Pew and Complainant took one of the Hassocks – Miss Eliza Clarke and Mrs Clarke soon after came in and Eliza Clarke put her foot on the Hassock which the Complainant was using – Mrs Clarke took the green Hassock – Mr Hender Clarke came in soon after but he took no Hassock – Mr Pidgeon next came into the seat but he did not use any of the Hassocks there was one under his Seat and lastly in came Mr Theophilus Clarke – the parties were seated as below very comfortable.

Aisle			
	Theophilus Clarke	John Pidgeon	Amy Lathy
	Hender Clarke	Mrs. Clarke	Eliza Clarke

Presently after Theophilus came in Complainant saw Mrs Clarke look over at Theophilus and from him to the Hassock Complainant was using upon which Theophilus reached across Mr Pidgeon and pulled the Hassock violently endeavouring to take it away this he did without saying one word – In doing this he pinched Complainant's feet violently who endeavoured to retain the Hassock with her feet but at length Theophilus Clarke succeeded in getting it in his own hands and put it under his own seat and used it himself – All this while Mrs Clarke was using the green Hassock which was quite enough for her and Theophilus – As Complainant was endeavouring to keep down the Hassock with her feet Theophilus Clarke in drawing it away drew her Feet with it towards Mrs Clarke and as Complainant's feet fell when the Hassock was pushed off they touched Mrs Clarke's gown upon which Mrs Clarke said to Complainant "Do you mean to kick me" Complainant looked up and said "Oh Mrs Clarke an old woman like you certainly ought to know better if not her best place was at home" And with the same she said to Theophilus Clarke "put the Creature out of the Church" upon which Theophilus said to his mother "you change places with me" and said something about Iron on the Heels of his Boots and would see if Complainant would put her feet on the Hassock but the words the Complainant cant remember being much agitated – He then gave Complainant three violent kicks and said "God damn your blood Madam" Complainant said "Oh Mr Clarke I cannot be too thankful that there is a person here to witness your cruel treatment" Service was just commenced – Several persons in the adjoining seat amongst whom were Mr Lewis's Scholars – This is not the first second or third time Deft. Theo Clarke has insulted Complainant in the Pew.'

This account was supported by Mr Pidgeon who, having described how Theophilus Clarke had grabbed the hassock said that he had taken the unused one from under his seat and had given it to Amy Lathy who put it under her feet, 'Mrs Clarke at the same time saying to Deponent there is no occasion for it Mr Pidgeon you can rest your feet on my hassock upon which Deponent said that he did not want it or to that effect – Miss Amy Lathy appeared very much agitated and Mr H Clarke turned his head but put his hand before his face – Deponent also felt much hurt and agitated in what took place – Mrs Clarke then said something to her son upon which he said "Well then you come here and let me sit there I have iron on my heels for the damnation she devil" as well as Deponent could catch the words – They then exchanged places and after a lapse of a few seconds Theophilus Clarke let drive violently with his heels two or three times towards Miss Amy Lathy's feet during this time Defendant Theophilus Clarke used very violent words and as witness believes oaths but the exact words the witness cannot repeat – During this time Amy Lathy did not make use of any violent words or give the least cause of provocation. As witness came out of Church a great number of persons spoke to Theophilus Clarke I should be ashamed if I were you to have behaved as you have done.'

Theophilus Clarke's language was confirmed by Lawrence Richards who deposed that he had heard him say to Amy Lathy 'God damn your blood.' James Walround Burrough, one of Mr Lewis's scholars – that is a boy of Allhallows School – stated that '. . . as soon as the service was ended [I] spoke to Theophilus Clarke . . . and asked him how he came to be guilty of such a breach of good manners and that his reply was "Do you think that I am going to be kicked by such a damned bitch as that and not kick her again".'

With such a story it does not come as a surprise to find that the Archdeacon was informed '. . . that more irreverent and improper conduct in so Sacred a Place and in time of Divine Service was never before the subject of any suit . . .'

Proceedings in the Archdeacon's court

Behaviour such as this could not be overlooked and the matter was referred to the Archdeacon's court, with Amy Lathy as complainant and Theophilus and Nancy Clarke as defendants. In consequence on 26 March the Archdeacon ordered the Clarkes to appear before his court '. . . to be held in the Parish Church of St Mary the More in the City of Exeter on Friday the thirteenth day of March Instant between the Hours of Ten and Twelve in the Forenoon', but the defendants failed to appear. The Archdeacon was, presumably, satisfied that there was a case to answer, for preparations for formal proceedings were put in hand.

On 7 May a proctor was appointed to act for the defendants and on 6 July it was determined that the witnesses would be examined and depositions taken on 26 July. However, on 18 July the Honiton solicitors Messrs Cox and Aberdein asked for a change of date on the grounds that 26 July was the day of Honiton fair! This argument was accepted and 1 August substituted. The proceedings on that day were confined to appointing a proctor for the complainant and to certifying that Lawrence Richards and James Walround Burrough were necessary witnesses. The depositions were finally recorded on 17 August after which there appears to have been a lull in activity. The somewhat unhurried proceedings and also this lull can, perhaps, be explained in the light of an observation made to the Archdeacon by Amy Lathy's proctor. 'The Promenant and Defendants are nearly connected – Theophilus Clarke married the older sister of the Promenant – the present case is not the only one of Violence committed against the Promenant – many offers of Settlement were made previous to the commencement of the suit and even at the time the Witnesses were produced for examination – it was delayed in order if possible to avoid the Expense but refused by the declaration of the Defendants that they would rather sell everything they had than pay a shilling towards the costs.'

The lull was broken on 30 November when the Complainant's proctor informed the Archdeacon that he understood that the defendants were about to leave Honiton and he requested a hearing '. . . on Friday next being the only Court till Janry . . .' At this hearing judgement was given in favour of Amy Lathy, Theophilus and Nancy Clarke were admonished to refrain from such behaviour in future and ordered to pay taxed costs.[3] The bill of costs for no less than 84 items came to £58 2s 10d. One matter which had entailed considerable expense was the examination of witnesses on 17 August, when the legal fees amounted to £4 4s 0d, chaise hire for the witnesses together with their expenses £4 15s 0d, and for witnesses loss of time £6. When the bill was taxed on 1 February 1828 it was reduced to £45 8s 1d.

On 29 February the defendants were once more summoned to attend and '. . . to pay unto the said Amy Lathy or her Proctor the sum of Forty Five Pounds eight shillings and one penny the Costs in which they are condemned and duly taxed in the case aforesaid together with the Costs and Charges of the Monition.' However, a note in the margin of the summons dated 7 March 1828 states that the defendants were called, failed to appear and were pronounced to be in contempt of court.

There, tantalisingly, the documents in the court bundle leave the story and we remain in ignorance of whether the money was eventually extracted from the Clarkes. If it was the process probably took a long time for, apart from their determination not to pay already noted, there is an entry in the Archdeaconry Day Book[4] headed Lathy v Clarke which is undated but internal evidence suggests that it is from 1829 or even early 1830. The entry relates to a bill for interrogating three witnesses, using the depositions and reading sentence.

Discussion

The Archdeacon's court was concerned with the question of whether there was evidence to support the case against the Clarkes and not with inquiring into the motivation which led to the brawl. We can, therefore, only attempt to deduce the cause or causes of the Clarkes' immoderate behaviour from available evidence not specifically recorded for the purpose.

The relationship between the families appears to have been perfectly amicable in 1825. They shared a pew, they agreed to pay proportionate parts of the costs of its renovation and provision of extra hassocks and Theophilus Clarke married Esther Lathy on 2 August, when two of the witnesses were Amy Lathy and Hender Clarke.[5] Clearly, however, tension existed by early 1827 for on 25 February there was a dispute in the church between Nancy Clarke and Amy Lathy, the nature of which is not recorded. It seems reasonable to suppose that it was connected in some way with the pew and, in view of what happened subsequently, one or more of the hassocks could have been involved. Both Theophilus on 26 February and Nancy on 18 March made reference to the idea of Amy kicking somebody. It could be, therefore, that on 25 February Nancy rightly or wrongly took the view that Amy had kicked her, an imaginary or real accidental action which could have arisen if both women shared a hassock. The actions at

the time of the brawl clearly show that it was instigated by Nancy, who may have seen in her son's propensity to threaten violence a chance to get her own back by proxy.

Consideration of the language used by both Theophilus and Nancy at the time of the brawl suggests, however, some animosity more deep seated than would have been occasioned by some such reason as a dispute over a hassock. Nancy told Theophilus to 'put the creature out of church' whilst Theophilus, who appears to have been addicted to the word 'damn', called Amy 'the damnation she devil' and referred to her after the service as 'a damned bitch'. What Amy had done to incur such animosity is not apparent but one possibility arises from the striking anomaly in the pew party, namely the absence of Esther Clarke. As Amy's sister and Theophilus' wife one would have expected her to have had the sixth seat rather than John Pidgeon. Is it possible that Amy was responsible in some way for this state of affairs and that it was resented by the Clarkes?

Another possible cause for the development of animosity arises from the fact that the sharing of a pew and an intermarriage were not the only connections between the two families, for they were both concerned in the Honiton lace industry. Amy Lathy is described in the court documents as a lace manufacturer, that is one who organised the making of lace as well as being an exponent of the craft. She also had a shop.[6] In 1830 she was appointed 'Manufacturer of thread lace' to Queen Adelaide,[7] in 1850 to Queen Victoria,[7] and she continued her distinguished career in Honiton until she was over 75 years of age.[8] Her sister, Esther, was appointed 'Honiton lace manufacturer in ordinary' to Queen Victoria in 1837[9] and in 1851 was responsible for a flounce shown at the Great Exhibition: the judges who awarded it a prize medal[10] stated that 'the design and quality are unequalled in its class.' She continued in business in Honiton until after 1844[11] but had transferred to London by 1846[12] where she remained and contributed items to important exhibitions.[13] For her 1851 flounce she turned to her sister-in-law Eliza to carry out the design.[14] Theophilus Clarke is described in the court documents as a laceman, that is a retailer. References to him in subsequent directories are as a lace manufacturer, but the Devon directories of the period did not provide separate classification for lacemen. He was with his wife in London in 1846,[12] after which nothing more is known of him.

There are obvious possibilities for friction between Theophilus and Amy in business matters. Theophilus may have obtained supplies of lace from her and have been dissatisfied with the terms of the trade. He may have had male chauvenistic tendencies and have become jealous because she was a lace manufacturer whilst he was only a laceman. Her royal appointment in 1830 could well have been galling to him, offset, perhaps, by his wife's similar honour in 1837, though if the hypothesis of male chauvenism be correct he would hardly have relished the reflected glory of the fame of his wife, his sister and his sister-in-law!

Although Theophilus suggested that his mother should have attacked Amy by pulling her hair and threatened to do so himself, the actual attack which he made took the form of kicking. It may be wondered whether he derived this idea as a follower of the Devonshire style of wrestling in which the contestants, wearing hard shoes, were permitted to kick each other's shins.[15] Matches had taken place at Honiton at least on 10 and 11 August 1825[16] and on 17 August 1826,[17] the latter at the Baker's Arms Inn, so he would have had opportunities for viewing this so-called sport, which could well have appealed to his evidently impetuous temperament.

Conclusions

This episode of social history has hitherto escaped the notice of Honiton's historians, which is, perhaps, not surprising since the Archdeacon's court records might be expected only to contain material of interest to forensic ecclesiastical historians. It seems that they could be sources of wider interest. The verbatim reports of Theophilus Clarke's language, as is always required in court records, suggest also a possible hunting ground for historians of linguistics, for whom contemporary printed sources would at best have reported that Theophilus Clarke described Amy Lathy as 'a ———', or perhaps 'a ****** *****'.

References

1. All statements of fact in this paper are, unless otherwise stated, derived from the Archdeacon of Exeter's Court records, bundle AE/IV/2/57.
2. The exact location of the pew is uncertain but it was apparently near the pews used by the boys from Allhallows School. Since a plan of the church seating in 1755 (DCNQ XI, 1920-21, p305) shows No 66 as that of the Lathy family and those used by the boys as 69, 70 and 71 it is possible that the Lathy/Clarke pew of 1825 was 66, situated near the centre of the south aisle and very much in the public eye.
3. *Exeter Flying Post*, 13.12.1827 4d.
4. Archdeaconry of Exeter, Day Book 1826-1830, AE/VIII/13.
5. DRO, Honiton parish church registers.
6. Woolmer's *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 10.9.1831 3b.
7. Warrants in the collections of Allhallows Museum, Honiton.
8. She is recorded as 53 years of age in the 1851 census return and was last recorded in business in Honiton in Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1873.
9. PRO, LC 13/2.
10. The Great Exhibition of 1851, Reports of the juries, 1852, p1026.
11. Pigot and Co., Royal National and Commercial Directory, 1844.
12. Post Office Directory of London, 1846.
13. See catalogues of the Universal Exhibition (Paris) 1855 and the International Exhibition (London) 1862.
14. Woolmer's *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 18.10.1851 3b.
15. Porter J.H., 'The Decline of the Devonshire Wrestling Style', *TDA 121*, 1989, pp195-208.
16. *Exeter Flying Post*, 18.8.1825 4bc.
17. *Exeter Flying Post*, 10.8.1826 4e.

AN IRON FOUNDRY IN EXETER

Christopher Scott

Next to the Locomotive Inn, on New North Road, is a squat white building with a figure of a sphinx over the doorway. This building was the showroom of the Devon and Exeter Iron Foundry, built during 1837 by the Exeter ironmonger Charles Coldridge.[1] An advertisement described the foundry as 'comprising a spacious Show Room, 53 ft long by 27 ft wide, communicating with a Store Room below of like dimensions; and an extensive Smithery, Machine and Model Rooms, with Stabling, Cellars, Yard, &c., behind the same. These Premises, from their locality and extent, with the advantage of a side entrance from Longbrook Terrace, are adapted for any Trade requiring room, having a Frontage of 54 ft by a depth of 134 ft, and 136 ft wide at the back.'[2] This description fits the group of buildings on the site today. These buildings have been renovated and used as separate businesses thereby obscuring their original function as one large integrated unit – the Devon and Exeter Iron Foundry of 1837.

During 1844, Coldridge advertised the sale of his Stock-in-Trade, consisting of the moulds used for manufacturing his products.[3] These castings show he made: cider presses, apple crushers, chaff cutters, Bedford ploughs, turnip cutters, water pumps, patent kitchens, Arnott stoves, cast iron bronzed fenders, bedroom and drawing room grates, sash weights, wheel and gear work, water closet work, water pipes, cistern

Coldridge's Devon and Exeter Iron, Foundry. Showroom.

Rear of foundry showing outbuildings at an angle to the showroom.

heads, iron pallisades, gutters, and associated products. Also for sale was a hydrostatic engine for proving water pipes, and a blowing engine and furnace. An earlier advertisement claimed that Coldridge's furnace could produce 'two tons of metal per hour'.[4]

The prices of some of Coldridge's products were given in an 1841 advertisement[5]: patent kitchens from £8 10 shillings to £13, bronzed fenders 14 shillings, a polished front grate with bronze foliage £3. These prices were for 'ready money', meaning cash, with a higher price set in 'guineas' for those requiring credit – being known as the 'trade price'. This suggests that cash flows were more important than profit. Of interest is the use of the guinea, (£1 1 shilling) last minted in 1813, replaced by the gold sovereign (£1) in 1816, but still legal tender and still used as a unit of account in the 1840s, a cultural power symbol of the gentry.[6]

Coldridge may have been over-extended financially, as not only did he sell his Stock-in-Trade but also auctioned the contents of his house at number 4 Castle Terrace. The house auction-list suggests that Coldridge was a man of means and culture. For auction was a 'Spanish Mahogany Loo', paintings and drawings by Traies, Smith, and Morland, fishing rods and books, and a 'Bow and Arrows of an Ashante Warrier'.[7] The African connection is intriguing because an obituary claimed Charles Coldridge had died in 1845 at Graaf Reinett, Algoa Bay, Cape of Good Hope.[8] This seems to be confirmed by the 'Peremptory Auction Under Mortgage Trusts' selling the foundry and also the whole of Castle Terrace.[9]

Coldridge may have built Castle Terrace. As the owner he would have given permission for Mr Gill at number 3 to build Exeter's first daguerreotype studio on the roof during July 1842.[10] This rare example of an early photographic studio is still intact. These studios operated under licences from the Devonian entrepreneur Richard Beard during 1841-1853. Beard, once a national figure, is today little known despite his importance in the history of photography. A later occupant at number 3 Castle Terrace, John Jury, established what is today the Locomotive Inn, and was involved in a

remarkable trial.[11] At number 4 Castle Terrace a Mr Marker opened an Academy teaching Latin and Greek.[12] It is easy to see why Charles Coldridge had lived at number 4 during the 1840s as it was only a few paces from his foundry. Alongside Coldridge's foundry is a two storey structure known as the Rockfield building. It was, among other things, Exeter's first electricity generating station in 1889.[13]

Exeter is fortunate in having these buildings in a small area opposite Rougemont Castle, Northernhay Gardens, and the Central Railway Station. It is thought that if the Law Courts move elsewhere the Castle would become a major tourist attraction.

Despite plans[14] to develop the area around the foundry, the old buildings along New North Road could then assume an important supporting role, giving a range of attractions from all periods of Exeter's history.

Thanks are due to Mr Ian Maxted and staff at the Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter, for permission to use material from the library's newspapers.

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4. *Exeter Flying Post*. 21 May 1840.
5. *Exeter Flying Post*. 11 March 1841.
6. *Western Luminary*. 2 August 1842.
7. *Exeter Flying Post*. 29 February 1844.
8. *Exeter Flying Post*. 1 May 1845.
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14. The Exeter Local Plan. *Exeter Weekly News*. 1 February 1990.

A GENEROUS BENEFACTOR: FRANCIS GARRATT OF ELLACOMBE

John Pike

Francis Garratt lived for many years at Ellacombe House near the town centre of Torquay. The house was built some time before 1823; the earliest reference is when it appears in the Tormohun Rate Assessment of that year. Mr Garratt paid just 2/-d a year for what must have been a large house and estate lands nestling between the Castle and Stantaway Hills. The lodge to the property was near Lower Union Street and his drive extended up what is today called Market Street. The growing town of Torquay needed a larger market than the one near the Harbour and an Act was obtained to build a new one in the town. The new Market was opened in 1853 but Mr Garratt and the Gardiners, who lived with him, had by then moved to Marldon. His Will, drawn up on 15 November 1853 shows that he was then resident at Parkfield House there. The development of Ellacombe was rapid in the 1850s but Mr Garratt was not forgotten; in 1874 Mr Ginnett was allowed to erect his canvas circus 'on the site of Mr Garratt's house just above the new Police Station'.

Mr Garratt died on 15 July 1860 and the provisions of that 1853 Will took effect. This included a Schedule spread over four pages where he remembers relatives, friends and, perhaps of greater interest to Devon families, many of his retainees who had worked for him at Torquay and Marldon. Amounts of £100 and over were bequeathed to relatives and smaller sums of £50 and below to named staff. Those named included: John Morland, formerly his butler; Mrs Bussell of Kingskerswell, formerly his housekeeper at Ellacombe – her successor was possibly Sarah Crispin, who was also remembered. He was obviously satisfied with his domestic staff; two cooks, Susan Mugford (of Kenton, near Exeter) and Thomasin Gill, a widow still living in Torquay are named, so too was Mary Cawse, a former housemaid. When searching through the Census Enumerators' Returns for the Warberries and Lincombes, the number of domestic help the 'gentry' employed has been noted; this Will, however, offers a unique opportunity to see them remembered by their employer: Richard Ash, 'lately employed on my farm at Ellacombe'; Susan Peckins, a worker 'in the Gardens at Ellacombe' and four labourers, Richard Ayres, John Bunker, Thomas Taylor (of Pimlico, Torquay) and Robert Stentiford, all received £20 apiece: others, Stephen Vanstone, George Lawrence, James Simmons and Susan Widdicombe were left smaller sums. At Marldon specific mention is made of Samuel Neck Snr, shoemaker; Robert and William Adams, blacksmiths; Daniel Parnell, thatcher and the local sexton, John Low, Jnr and Robert Damerel.

Familiar names among the other Torquay beneficiaries are: Dr James Tetley, perhaps his physician, and William Luscombe, 'builder', who received £100 and £50 respectively. Annuities, from £2 upwards a year, were bequeathed to widows, most of them, it appears, of his former employees: Elizabeth Sutton, Mary Foot, Hannah Cross, Hannah Earls, Mary Moore, Alice Partridge, Mary Bowens, Elizabeth Hayman (of Tor); Elizabeth or Betty White, also of Tor, is named. Thomas Pridham of Cockington appears towards the end of the annuitants – at that time, of course, the village was not part of Torquay. There are some 25 names listed of labourers and others at Marldon; only one, Richard Matthews, has the description 'gardener', the remainder are all 'labourers'. The Will concludes with three pages of properties, the tenants of which he granted life-tenancies; this is something of a disappointment as only one is designated by name, 'being one of four called Alms Houses'.

Mrs Elizabeth Cooper and Mrs Elizabeth Rathbone, descendents of the Greaves and Gardiners who lived at Ellacombe House and later were beneficiaries, have agreed that a copy of the Will may be placed in the Area Library at Torquay for use by researchers. My thanks to them for making the material available.

REVIEWS

(Readers are advised that opinions expressed by reviewers are their own, and not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Devon History Society as a whole.)

Exeter Architecture by Hugh Meller, Phillimore. 138pp, £11.95.

It is a curious fact that, despite the widespread public interest in Exeter's buildings and the controversies which have surrounded them, no modern book dealing solely with the city's architecture has appeared. Portman's *Exeter Houses 1400-1700*, a pioneering effort when it was published in 1966, is now seriously out-of-date, and coverage of the city's later buildings has always been patchy. Hugh Meller's *Exeter Architecture* does much to fill the gap with a book which is lively, well illustrated and on the whole well informed.

Almost the entire book consists of a series of entries describing some 100 selected buildings and offering some appreciation of their aesthetic qualities. There is only the briefest of introductions, a glossary and select bibliography. A much fuller introductory essay could have had the merit of looking at the entire building stock, providing a context for the individual entries, and drawing out more clearly the particular riches and absentees in the group. For example, it is not apparent from this account that the city still retains a large number of houses of the years c. 1600-1720 (albeit many are now much altered) and comparatively few of the two succeeding generations, reflecting fluctuations in the city's prosperity. In judging the aesthetic qualities of buildings there is much scope for personal opinion. Mr Meller's views are clear and often fair, occasionally withering (Harlequins – 'this vulgar shopping centre') but occasionally unnecessarily harsh (e.g. Holy Trinity, South Street; the re-ordering of St Stephen's, High Street).

The structures selected range widely both in date (Roman to 1989) and in type (institutional, domestic and ecclesiastical, with examples of monumental sculpture and cemeteries). Most are chosen for their architectural merit or interest; a few modern monsters such as Renslade House are added for their undeniable visual impact. Very few commentators can write authoritatively about the entire range. Meller is at his strongest in his descriptions of the architects and contexts of major 19th-century and early 20th-century buildings, and here his enthusiasm and knowledge will foster appreciation of such works. Novel to the reviewer were, for example, the pioneering significance of the Sidwell Street Methodist Church in the history of ferro-concrete in Britain, the exotic materials used in the Roman Catholic church in Heavitree, and the period charm of the operating theatre of the Eye Hospital. The book touches on some interesting projects which never materialised, such as the intended suspension bridge dismissed in the 1830s as an alternative to the present Iron Bridge, and Robert Adam's projected Exeter Assembly Rooms.

In dealing with earlier periods it is sometimes evident that Mr Meller is on less familiar ground. For example it can no longer be believed that there was a 'British village' in the city which the Roman army captured (?shades of Geoffrey of Monmouth), that the four principal streets are Roman in origin, or that much Roman masonry can be seen in the city wall. The cathedral south tower's turrets are 12th-century, not 15th; the upper tier of west front figures late 15th-century, not late 14th; Lechlade was murdered in 1283, not 1275; the so-called 'Roman bath' in the Well House cellar is really a garderobe pit; the idea that an Augustinian nunnery preceded the Deanery has long been known to be false; there is no reason to believe that St Pancras might qualify as one of the oldest Christian sites in England; the crypt of St Stephen's was 12th-century, not Anglo-Saxon; the turret on the west range of the Bishop's Palace is Victorian, not medieval; the statue in the Close is of Richard, not John, Hooker; the 'Tudor House', Exe Island is not 'probably Tudor' but dates to c. 1660; there is no reason to suggest that the plaster ceilings at 2-4 The Close or at Bellair have any connection with the Abbott family of Frithelstock. It is a shame that these mistakes (there are others), many on matters peripheral to the main theme of the book, mar the final product.

In choosing and describing, Mr Meller has sensibly used the local government Lists; these, however, are in need of revision, put to shame by the excellent new listings now available for rural Devon, and some of their faults are reflected in the present book. One case in point is Franklin House, St Thomas, dated in the List to 1757 on the strength of a rainwater head but surely a late 17th-century house, as the staircase with sturdy balusters (now concealed) and plasterwork very similar to that at Pynes, Upton Pyne, show. Another is the grand facade of 223 High Street, dated in the List to the late 16th century but more probably mid 17th-century in date.

A theme running through the book is a concern for the quality of care offered to the city's buildings. Some of the recent losses are justly pilloried (e.g. the destruction of the Guildhall parlour ceiling and its replacement with a modern replica) but a few escape criticism (e.g. the heavy-handed conversion of 41-2 High Street for Laura Ashley, in which many original features were removed). The neglect of some important early survivors is rightly emphasised (e.g. the sorry state of St Loyes Chapel, Rifford Road), as is the poor quality of some recent 'conservation' work, such as the 1982 conversion of Polsloe Priory. The compromising effects of insensitive modern insertions are pointed out in many buildings, reminding us that much could be done to present our buildings to better effect.

Of course there remains scope for a much more substantial book on Exeter's houses, with a detailed inventory, plans and sections of individual buildings and analysis of the structural complexities of many of the older houses. The evidence about demolished structures, recorded in topographical drawings and early photographs, needs to be collected systematically and there is a need for further work on the documentary evidence relating to many properties. A considerable amount of the work needed for such a survey has been carried out by the Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit, but it is a huge task. Meanwhile, Mr Meller's volume will serve as a spirited introduction to the subject.

John Allen

The Bloody Eleventh: History of the Devonshire Regiment, Vol. I: 1685-1815, by Col. R.E.R. Robinson, pub. the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, Exeter, 1988. 719 pp, numerous maps and plates. £20.

Regimental histories are often works of piety by professional soldiers, who are more than somewhat amateur as historians, and have little appeal outside the ranks of past and present members. This is certainly not true of this volume. A very handsome work at a remarkably low price and written with great skill and enthusiasm by Colonel Robinson – pleasantly, with some assistance by his wife – it is the first fruit of a project

set off by tercentenary celebrations in 1985. A task of this magnitude cannot have been easy even for a soldier with a lifetime of service in and dedication to the unit. Little material with detail directly on the first century of the regiment has survived, but this seeming disadvantage has had the happy effect of driving the author, obviously not unwillingly, to the Public Record Office, the War Office and a range of other archives where papers which can be made relevant with historical sense and imagination have been ferreted out and exploited. This has allowed him to tell the long, complex and fascinating regimental story within a context of the social and political history of the British Army and of the nation which it has served.

The tale begins with Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, to meet which the Duke of Beaufort was authorised to raise within Devon, Dorset and Somerset a body of 'men of distinguished loyalty'. It was an emergency that led on to the maintenance of a standing army – which had been and would be for some time to come a political bone of contention – to keep internal order as well as to defend the realm against foreign enemies. The regiment, which in the fullness of time this ad hoc force became, found itself coming and going throughout the British Isles. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 dismissed the monarch who had called it into being, it served William III with credit under the colonelcy of Sir John Hanmer, an experienced professional, at the relief of Londonderry – its first action – and then at the Boyne – its baptismal pitched battle. It stayed on in Ireland until 1702, surviving the general disbandment which followed the Peace of Ryswick. There was now an air of permanence about it. Col. Robinson then follows in detail throughout the eighteenth century the movements and engagements of the regiment under the various names of its successive commanders – Stanhope's, Hill's, Montague's, Cornwallis's and so on, each making an individual contribution – from the war of the Spanish Succession to the end of the Peninsular War, sometimes at home, sometimes in Europe, sometimes in the West Indies. Sent to Ireland shortly after the battle of Toulouse (April 1814) they missed Waterloo. At this point the narrative breaks off. Col. Robinson concludes: 'These officers and men . . . had sewn the seed of the connection with the county of Devonshire: though the roots were there, the plant had scarcely yet surfaced. They had also spun the thread of that tradition peculiar to them and them alone: an unbreakable thread that would comprise the fabric of their later story . . .' It is to be hoped that Col. Robinson, though he certainly deserves a furlough after his gallant campaign, is already well advanced on Vol. II.

Col. Robinson has filled this volume with the minutiae of regimental history – including not least a remarkable chronological table of all but 100 pages – but he has not forgotten that in the last resort the history of a regiment like that of any other human institution is made up of the record of what was done by and done to the men and the women – there are umpteen references to the latter 'with the army' – who worked within it. Personalities in all ranks abound. Col. James Grant it noted in 1806 as 'great in size as well as age and content with having led the good life'. But again and again it is made clear that soldiering was not all honey. General Winter and Col. Rain stalk these pages. A comment in the 1720s by a Lt. Col. John Blackadder – not of the Devons – will strike a chord with television aficionados: the army, he said, was made up of 'a parcel of mercenary, fawning, lewd, dissipated creatures, the dregs and scum of mankind . . .' But, as in the last flicker of Blackadder Goes Forth, at the moment of truth this unpromising lot could transcend their origins and find themselves.

Ivan Roots

The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation, by Robert Whiting. (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History). Cambridge University Press, 1989. xii and 302 pp. £30.00.

The subtitle of this stimulating monograph hides the fact that it is really a detailed case-study examining the progress of religious change between the 1520s and the 1560s in the southwest (Devon and Cornwall), put ultimately into the perspective of what may have been the response to Reformation (by act of state) on the part of English lay people generally below the level of gentry. It is a version of a distinguished doctoral thesis pursued in the University of Exeter under the supervision of our Chairman, Professor Joyce Youings, who has herself done – and is still doing – so much to illuminate the history of this period both locally and nationally. Dr Whiting begins by demonstrating that, if in the 1520s governmental attitudes towards the 'activities and institutions of traditional Catholicism were still essentially supportive', from then on, apart from a temporary reversal in the 1550s under Mary, 'official enmity' prevailed. About that general proposition there is little dispute. But what, he goes on to ask, was the impact of such a process at the top upon 'the average man' – he includes women – and what were reactions to it down at the grass roots? Such questions are easier to formulate than to answer. Clearly if there is an answer it will come only when we have the results of a succession of specific studies as thoughtful and inquisitive as this one undoubtedly is. Meanwhile the southwest has been well-chosen for investigation. A large region, it comprised a single diocese of some 600 parishes diverse in area, population, economic activity and cultural life. A comparative wealth of primary material fortunately survives. Dr Whiting has been most enterprising in drawing upon artefacts such as pier-niches and screen paintings along with documentary evidence, official and informal, descriptive and analytical, all of which he handles with technical skill and – essential where there is so much variety – historical imagination, to recreate what went on on the eve of the Henrician Reformation and during the hectic years that ensued.

The picture which emerges is somewhat unexpected. Remote from royal court and capital, the region has conventionally been considered naturally conservative and as such ought to have shewn itself emphatically resistant to the assault upon its age-old religious values and practices. Patchily and sporadically there certainly was opposition, even violent opposition. But already by the accession of Edward VI the grip of tradition was waning. The Marian Counter-Reformation did not awaken a blithe enthusiasm and by the 1570s only a minority of the inhabitants of these parts could confidently be described as 'verbally, financially or actively supportive' of traditional Catholicism, and of these fewer lived in the east and in the towns. Even in the countryside what Dr Whiting calls a 'devastating erosion' was well in train. He devotes the second half of his study to a search for explanations for this situation and to enquiring if there was – there did not, of course, have to be – any upsurge of popular zeal for 'an alternative brand of Christianity', militant Protestantism, for instance. Here we fall into deep waters. Certainly there were spiritual motivations among some, whose external acceptance of the changes betokened a genuine internal conversion, fed by the Bible and the prayer book in the vernacular and, less commonly, from some acquaintance with the writings of reformers. That the rural communities lagged behind in these respects is not surprising, but what is interesting is that by the 1560s even some signs of a positive appeal by the new religion were beginning to appear, as at South Molton where by 1562 there was 'an organised group of committed Protestants', 'a

faithful congregation'. At Rockbeare and Ilsington in the same decade parishioners accused their vicar of failing to administer services according to 'the order of the Book of Common Prayer'. (Accusations like this could, of course, conceal other, more mundane, reasons for the falling-out of pastors and flocks). Dr Whiting sees in most places 'conformism, passivity and even indifference'. Non-spiritual motivations prevailed, among which he includes 'the hope of material gain and the fear of material loss' alongside persistent dread of punishment by the authorities. In short, the behaviour of men and women going about their daily lives covered 'a remarkably wide range'. 'Twas ever thus. In times of stress, calling for difficult decisions, everyone has each a long and shifting list of priorities. To become a cavalier or a roundhead, to pay or not to pay the poll tax demands the attention of both heart and mind. Not everybody shares the same recognition of what is possible. As Dr Whiting sagely puts it: 'The influences to which an individual was exposed did not automatically predetermine his religious choices, but they unavoidably established the parameters within which these choices would have to be made'. He himself has had a pretty good stab at identifying what scope there was.

Summing up, he suggests that in the southwest (as opposed to the southeast where there were signs of a partial weakening) traditional devotion had remained strong to the brink of Reformation, but that from then on, during the 1530s to the 1570s, there was a comparatively rapid collapse. He argues, plausibly in view of his own evidence and much of that gathered elsewhere, that 'the Reformation may have been less a transition from Catholicism to a new commitment' than a decline into mere conformism or indifference, outside some minority groups of committed Protestants to be found more often in Devon than in Cornwall. Such conclusions are very acceptable. But they do raise the question: how deep did the devotion of the people under traditional Catholicism – described by Hooker under Elizabeth I as 'blind' – really run? The good folk of the southwest might give the impression of dedication in the early sixteenth century. They were heirs to rites, ceremonies, practices and institutions that had worked seemingly well for centuries past and which, complacent and comfortable themselves, they could see no particular reason to question. Studies similar to this one but concentrating on the four or five decades before the King's Great Matter of the 1530s are requisite for a fuller understanding of the making of the Church of England under the Tudors. No doubt they will not tell such a dramatic story of transition as Dr Whiting's. Continuity would seem to be the most likely theme. But continuity is not per se stagnation. Even so, it is not beyond possibility that in the large and complex diocese of Exeter in those closing days of the old order the strength of faith may have been exaggerated by the sheer routine of practice, and that what the sixteenth century saw was not a shift away from devotion but a drift from one conformism to another.

Ivan Roots

The Magic Tree – Devon Garden Plants History and Conservation, compiled by the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, Devon Group. Devon Books, 1989. £14.95. ISBN 086114-845-2

In the time of the first Elizabeth John Hooker remarked that Devon had "become fertile and fruitfull and do yelde greate varieties and plenties of herbes frutes and corne." The Magic Tree serves to remind us that, ever since, the county has played host to a remarkable number of unique garden plants, gardens and gardeners.

The book has been written by members of the Devon Group of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens. The cliche has it that a designer camel is the inevitable product of a committee. In this case the outcome is much more positive and considerably more attractive. Colin Roger's essay examining the historical background is perhaps the most illuminating part of the volume. Although he (rightly) does not minimize the role of the smaller nurseries and amateur plantsmen in adding to the list of Devon garden plants, he pays considerable attention to the rise of the great Exeter nurseries. Lucombe and Son, founded in 1720, are renowned for having raised the eponymous oak, but in the 19th century (as Lucombe, Pince and Co.) they capitalized on the expanding interest in new plant introductions from abroad. It was the rival firm of Veitch, however, who benefitted most from the foreign plant boom, and throughout the 1800s their plant collectors and hybridizers guaranteed them a pre-eminent place in English horticulture. Plants introduced into Britain from the wild through a Devon garden or nursery are included in the Hortus Devoniensis. Likewise those raised or selected in the county and those plants named after a Devonian or Devon gardener. But only plants actually found wild in Devon and brought into cultivation can be regarded as truly native – and there are a surprising number ranging from the Plymouth Strawberry discovered in 1627 to Primula Vulgaris "Pridhamsleigh" found near Buckfastleigh in 1967. The Magic Tree provides both a catalogue and more extended descriptions drawn from all four categories. These are tolerably well illustrated in colour, but the majority of the photographs are eye-strainingly small: half the number at twice the size would have been preferable. In other respects, however, the simplicity and clarity of the books design allow the polychromatic variety of the plants to speak admirably for itself and in relation to the value of the work as a whole even miniscule illustrations can be overlooked as a minor blemish.

Confronted by such an array of garden plants, one wonders what it is about Devon that provides them with such a congenial home. Part of the answer, according to the opening essay by Kevin Croucher, lies in the diversity of soils and climate. From acid to lime-loving, tender to hardy, even the most awkward can so often be accommodated somewhere in the county.

Much the same, I am glad to say, is also true of historians.

Steven Pugsley

The Old Farm: A History of Farming Life in the West Country by Robin Stanes. Devon Books, Exeter 1990 £12.95. ISBN 0 86114 858 4.

The subsidiary title of this book, a history of farming life in the west country, is rather misleading. What Robin Stanes has given us is a great deal of factual information about the 'folklife' of farming communities in Devon and Cornwall, concentrating particularly on the material culture of a traditional, hand- and horse-husbandry which could still be observed on many farms in the southwest until the late 1930s and, until quite recently, was abundantly fresh in the memories of farm folk. As a one-time farmer, history teacher and lecturer in rural and local history, the author is well able to record, with some authority and no little enthusiasm, the day to day routine of those who lived off the land. The result is a rather breathless tour through the farmstead and

over the fields at the end of which some readers may well feel in want of an overview of the subject to suggest more clearly what really distinguished farming in the southwest from that farther east. Something of that difference is curiously well shown by the thirty-three old photographs reproduced in the centre section of the book. They could not have been taken in any other part of England. For anyone exploring their local farming past, The Old Farm will be an invaluable handbook.

Andrew Jewell

Out of the World and into Combe Martin by Combe Martin Local History Group, Combe Martin, 1989, 175 pp. Paperback £6.50. ISBN 0 9509917-2-4.

This book lives up to the expectation aroused by its title, that something other than the usual run of parish histories will be found between its colourful covers. One difference immediately apparent is that it has been written not by one author, but by a research group, which grew out of Exeter University evening classes ably taught and obviously inspired by Robin Stanes. The contributors, who include some who have broken into print for the first time, are to be commended on their detailed research, and putting pen to paper in an interesting and lively way.

The book is arranged by topics and a vigorous balance has been achieved, with a good airing for subjects on which information is plentiful, and a few informative or entertaining pages on others. The book brings out the importance of agriculture to this Devon village, a subject on which Robin Stanes presents several brief and readable chapters with well-selected details. From him we learn not only about medieval Combe Martin, its unusual field pattern, and one of its finest farmhouses, but also of the cultivation of hemp, a crop so rare elsewhere in Devon that Combe Martin supplied most of the county with shoemakers' thread in the seventeenth century. Strawberries, which succeeded hemp in the sheltered valley, provide a subject for Jenny Cox and Daphne Challacombe, who give some fascinating details of the schooners that could reach South Wales in a day with the fresh fruit. As well as researching the Challacombe family, which included many farmers, Daphne Challacombe, this time with Gerald Waters, also writes on lime-burning, once an essential adjunct to agriculture. In the mid-nineteenth century, Combe Martin had its own limestone quarries, 18 kilns, and a December 'lime-feast' or beano for wealthy customers! The late Norah Gregory's *Devon Historian* article reproduced here by permission, gives an insight into grazing rights on Haugman Hill in the sixteenth century, while Michael Beaumont takes an informed look at the later enclosure of commons, and interprets the tithe map of 1842.

The extract from the tithe map itself is very clear, which is unfortunately not true of many of the others, which are difficult to read, due to small or indistinct print. A clearly-drawn and well printed map at the beginning would have helped readers unfamiliar with the village to get their bearings. Some of the photographs have not reproduced very well, but others are clear and all are well-chosen and interesting. Some contributors have listed their sources, providing a useful aid to further research.

Combe Martin's economy in the past was not dependent solely on agriculture. Keith Taylor studies the history of local water mills, and also the water itself, which, bottled early this century, allowed one farm to 'diversify' for thirty years before the closing of the branch line by which it was sent up-country from Blackmoor Gate. No railway ever got as far as Combe Martin, but two Turnpike Trusts, have been ably researched by Michael Beaumont, and Joyce and George Payne bring nautical as well as historical understanding to their study of the harbour and sheltered bay. The famous Combe Martin silver and other mines are given detailed treatment by Peter Claughton and Michael Warburton, both experts on this subject.

As well as the 'mainstream' topics reviewed above, some fascinating details are revealed in a study of parish records by Michael Beaumont, Celia Dexter's description of the changing appearance of the village street, and Tom Brown's account of the strange ritual of the Hunting of the Earl of Rone, an annual folk festival recently revived after being banned 'for licentiousness and drunken behaviour' in 1837! John Sharp's contribution on the founder of the free school in the early eighteenth century includes details of a unique building erected by the same man. With its 52 windows, and 13 doors on each of its four floors, it was – and is – known as the Pack of Cards. Such oddities help to bring visitors to Combe Martin, for it is, as Robin Stanes points out in the first chapter, 'a remarkable place'. The book itself underlines this judgement, for their village has inspired such affection and pride in the writers that they have completed a remarkable project on its history.

Alison Grant

Whitchurch Down: A Study by Members of Tavistock Local History Society, edited by Helen Harris, Tavistock 1990, A4, 31 pp., £1.50 from Tavistock Museum, or by post (£1.70) from Helen Harris, 22 Churchill Road, Whitchurch, Tavistock, PL19 9BU.

Whitchurch Down, is, like *Out of the World and into Combe Martin*, a combined effort by members of a local history group, and again demonstrates the high standard that can be reached by such groups when ably led. Helen Harris, as editor and co-ordinator has given us a well-arranged, well-researched, well-referenced, and interesting study.

It is difficult to find the resources to publish a limited local study, and the Tavistock group has had to make some compromises. Unfortunately the method of production has not done justice to the interesting old postcards chosen as illustrations, and although its design gives some impression of the broad sweep of the down, the cover is rather a poor advertisement for the work within. With thin card instead of paper, and a printed (even letraset) title, it could have been much more attractive. The maps, however, are clear enough, and well-placed, and their printed or typed names are easy to read. They provide valuable local information for the reader unfamiliar with the area.

The scene is set both geographically and historically by two brief but businesslike contributions from Jean Wans and Joy Beer, who demonstrate the importance of soil and subsoil, watercourses, boundaries, and road systems to a study of this kind. John Weston follows this with a study of the grazing and other rights of the Commoners, who 'very jealous of their largely unwritten rights on the moor', often closed ranks against outsiders. This is followed by the editor's own chapter on Industrial Archaeology, which shows the importance of mud on the boots for historians seeking evidence of activities such as mining, quarrying, and tanning in the past.

Moving closer to the present day, Joyce Metcalf traces the history of the intriguingly-named and Lutyens-designed 'Pimple' (to find out more, read the book!) against the background of the changing ownership of the down, and Alan Rowe follows this up with a 'racy' account of sporting activities over the years. Not surprisingly the large

open space has also been the site of celebrations and bonfires, carefully listed by Thelma Wood. Ken Cook's account of the down in the two World Wars reveals, among other things, that certain round, shallow depressions 12 feet in diameter reveal not the remains of prehistoric circles of some sort, but the positions of bell tents set up by the U.S. Army in 1942! Finally Kit Cook's study of the development of Middlemoor shows what can be achieved by careful observation in an historical context.

These members of the Tavistock Local History Society have recorded some useful information about an interesting part of their area, and provided a good model for those who would like to do the same.

Alison Grant

South West Coast Path: Falmouth to Exmouth, by Brian Le Messurier. National Trail Guide Series pub. in association with the Ordnance Survey and the Countryside Commission. 1990. 168 pp. Many maps and colour photographs. £7.95. ISBN 1-85410-096-3.

This very handy and attractive guide book offers valuable companionship to walkers on a southern section of the South West Coastal Path. Although partly in Cornwall, the greater length of this section is in Devon, and thus appropriately considered here.

Having so meticulous and experienced an author as Brian Le Messurier is recommendation in itself, and in reading through one is not disappointed. Pleasantly free of the cliches and 'storyfication' (often inaccurate) that beset so much tourist literature, the text of this book is authoritatively informative, with background matter on local history, geology, industry, land use and wildlife, as well as helpful practical details concerning public transport, villages with facilities for walkers, accommodation and useful organisations. With the route split into sections the book is equally useful for those who wish to cover just a small portion at a time as for long-distance walkers intending to follow the entire length in successive days. Clarity is enhanced throughout the pages by illustrations comprising a plentiful provision of maps (from the 1:25000 OS) and by colour photography of high standard by Mike Williams. In its reading, this book passes what must surely be a test for any such work – one feels impatient to take off and actually experience on foot the delights described.

Helen Harris

North Devon Heritage No. 2, 1990. Journal of North Devon Museum Trust. 24 pp. £1. Obtainable at North Devon Maritime Museum, Odun Road, Appledore, and local bookshops. (By post £1.30 from the Museum). ISBN 0 9504018 2 X.

This attractively-produced booklet – second in the series – contains a pleasing variety of short articles, together with appropriate illustrations, on matters of local historical interest. Under Elizabeth Waters' editing no piece is too long or laborious to hold the reader's attention through to the end, and the atmosphere of North Devon – its coastal breezes and undulating hinterland – bounces off the pages. The subject of 'Devon Coal' is summarised by Peter Christie (perhaps it was as well for that fair countryside that 'the optimism expressed by some people' did not materialise). In 'John Andrew, Merchant' Susan Scrutton investigates the history of her house in Monkleigh parish,

an exercise that brought her some fruitful discoveries – and a new personal outlook on history itself, while Louise Rose's 'Taile from the Archdeacon's Court, 1572' provides a revealing transcript of the report of an incident at Pilton four centuries ago. Interesting archaeological discoveries, of a Bideford well and medieval and post-medieval pottery, and of a fifteenth century coin at Barnstaple, are described respectively by Linda Blanchard and Edmund Lee, while 'Tall Tales' by Sue Milne and 'Kingdom of Heaven' by Pat Slade are more light-hearted contributions. Essentially for such an area, maritime history is well featured: Michael Nix writes on 'Ship Registration in North Devon 1786-7', Judith M.L. Godfrey on 'The Schooner *Richard Hill* of Appledore', Peter Ferguson on 'James Harris Junior and the *Lieutenant Maury*, and Alison Grant on 'The Barnstaple Connection' which explores the wide-ranging background of Maury, the man.

Undoubtedly this is a series well worth watching for future publications.

Helen Harris

OTHER PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Poverty, migration and settlement in the Industrial Revolution: sojourners' narratives, by J.S. Taylor. Palo Alto, California, Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1989. 209 pp. No price stated. ISBN 0930664094.

Based on settlement documents from London, Devon and Westmorland. Considerable and well-indexed Devon content.

The History of Georgeham & Croyde by H. Stevenson Balfour, pub. by author, Crowberry Cottage, Georgeham, Braunton, Devon. 73 pp A4.

This is a second edition of a work previously published in 1965. It is in larger format, has more maps and new appendices, but no longer an index.

Discovering Devon's Past, Issue 4. Compiled by Simon Timms, with contributions from Deborah Griffiths, Ian Maxted and Margery Rowe. Devon Books, 1990. A4 size magazine format, 22 pages of articles with many illustrations.

Highlights the importance, in environmental terms, of conserving not only wildlife and natural beauty of Devon, but also its archaeology and history of towns and countryside. Packed with information.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Kelley, great-great-great-grandson of Samuel Rowe, lives in Eastwood, a suburb of Sydney, Australia. He is a free-lance writer actively engaged in family history (not only the Rowes). He is a member of the Society of Australian Genealogists.

Dr Murray Laver is an electrical engineer specialising in the use of computers. Lately a Pro-Chancellor of Exeter University, he is President of the Devonshire Association for 1990-91.

James Bellchambers, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., is a furniture conservator.

Christopher Scott is a part time free-lance photographer.

DARTMOOR BIBLIOGRAPHY

A new Bibliography of Dartmoor is being compiled by PETER R. HAMILTON-LEGGETT for publication in October 1991, to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the Dartmoor National Park.

The bibliography, which is being published by the DNP, will only deal with non-fiction material but, nevertheless, will cover very wide fields of interest.

It is hoped to include all known editions of:-

BOOKS PAMPHLETS LEAFLETS

ARTICLES IN LEARNED JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES

THESES HELD IN UNIVERSITIES & LIBRARIES

THE WHEREABOUTS OF MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL

The layout will include:-

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST OF BOOK AUTHORS

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST OF AUTHORS OF ARTICLES

A THEMATIC LIST UNDER VARIOUS HEADINGS INCLUDING:- agriculture, archaeology, buildings, churches, communications, geology, legends, local history, mining, natural history, planning, recreation, sport, water-supply, walks, weather.

PLACES WILL INCLUDE:- Ashburton, Belstone, Bickleigh, Bittaford, Bovey Tracey, Brentor, Bridestow, Bridford, Buckfast Abbey, Buckfastleigh, Buckland Monochorum, Buckland-in-the-Moor, Burrator, Chagford, Christow, Cornwood, Crapstone, Crowndale, Dean Prior, Dousland, Drewsteignton, Dunsford, Foggintor, Gidleigh, Harford, Harrowbeer, Haytor Vale, Hennock, Holne, Horrabridge, Ilsington, Ivybridge, Lee Moor, Lustleigh, Lydford, Manaton, Mary Tavy, Meavy, Merrivale, Milton Combe, Moretonhampstead, North Bovey, Okehampton, Peter Tavy, Postbridge, Poundsgate, Princetown, Roborough, Sampford Spiney, Scorriton, Shaugh Prior, Sheepstor, Sourton, South Brent, South Tawton, South Zeal, Sticklepath, Tavistock, Throwleigh, Two Bridges, Ugborough, Walkhampton, Whiddon Down, Whitchurch, Widecombe-in-the-Moor, Wotter, Yelverton.

CAN YOU HELP?

It will be appreciated that in such a mammoth undertaking as this, things will slip through the net. Do you know of any articles in obscure journals and magazines or rare editions of books and pamphlets, manuscript sources that can be used by the general public, theses hidden away in University Libraries?

IF YOU CAN HELP THEN PLEASE CONTACT:- Peter R. Hamilton-Leggett. BSc., Mount House School, Mount Tavy, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 9JL. Telephone 0822 853760 (evenings if possible).

* IT IS ALSO HOPED TO COLLECT MUCH OF THIS MATERIAL WITH THE EVENTUAL AIM OF DONATING IT TO THE DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK ARCHIVES, SO THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS CAN BENEFIT, SO BEFORE DISPOSING OF YOUR BOOKS, MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS –

Please contact Peter R. Hamilton-Leggett at the above address.

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER PRESS

NEW TITLES

The *Mary Fletcher*

Seven Days in the Life of a Westcountry Coasting Ketch
by Edmund Eglinton
edited and introduced by Basil Greenhill, with notes and charts by Peter Allington.

Edmund Eglinton, for fifteen years boy, seaman and mate in coasting sailing vessels, based this detailed account of one week in the life of a Devon coasting ketch on his own extensive experience between 1915 and 1930. The *Mary Fletcher* is fictitious, but the detailed descriptions of ship-handling, the social relationships between members of her crew and the life on board generally are drawn directly from life and especially from his experience when mate of the ketch *Garlandstone*, built in Devon in 1908 and now preserved and under restoration at Morwellham Quay, near Tavistock. The text is illustrated by a wide selection of original photographs.

Exeter Maritime Studies no. 5
November 1990, 128 pages, illustrated.
0 85989 326 X HB. Provisional price £16.50.

Music and Musicians in Early Nineteenth Century Cornwall

The World of Joseph Emidy – Slave, Violinist and Composer.
by Richard McGrady

Taken from Africa into slavery by the Portuguese, kidnapped by the British Navy and held captive aboard ship during the French wars of the 1790s before being abandoned in Falmouth, the stranger-than-fiction story of Joseph Emidy deserves telling in its own right. What makes it more remarkable is that Emidy – a violinist and composer – became a prominent figure in the musical scene in Cornwall for the remaining thirty years of his life. This account sets his life against the musical activities of the assemblies, harmonic societies, theatre, church and chapel in a provincial society at a time of great and hitherto unsuspected activity and change.

December 1990. 140 pages, illustrated
0 85989 359 6 PB. Provisional price £8.50