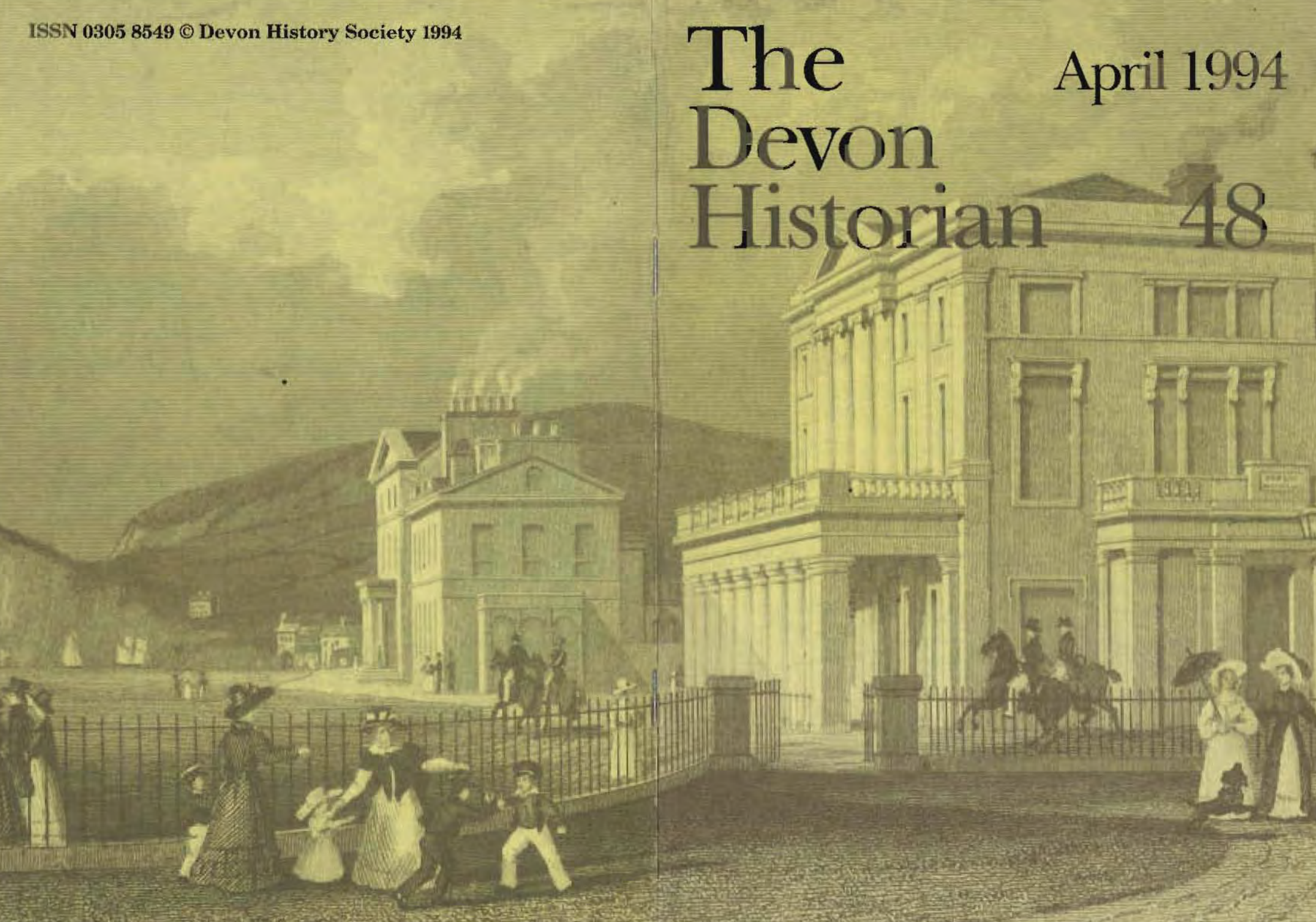


# The Devon Historian

April 1994

## 48



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These will be at Teignmouth on 19 March, and Bideford and Appledore on 2 July.

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Articles are welcomed by the Hon. Editor to be considered for publication in *The Devon Historian*. Generally the length should not exceed 2,000 - 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.: 30 November 1994, etc.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF FARMS IN WIDWORTHY CIRCA 1840

Edwin Haydon

Widworthy lies in east Devon where the Blackdown Hills slope down to Lyme Bay and its general layout is shown on the map. The parish originally extended to 1463 acres<sup>1</sup> over about two miles from the north-east to the south-west and about the same distance from the north-west to the south-east.

### The Tithe Surveys

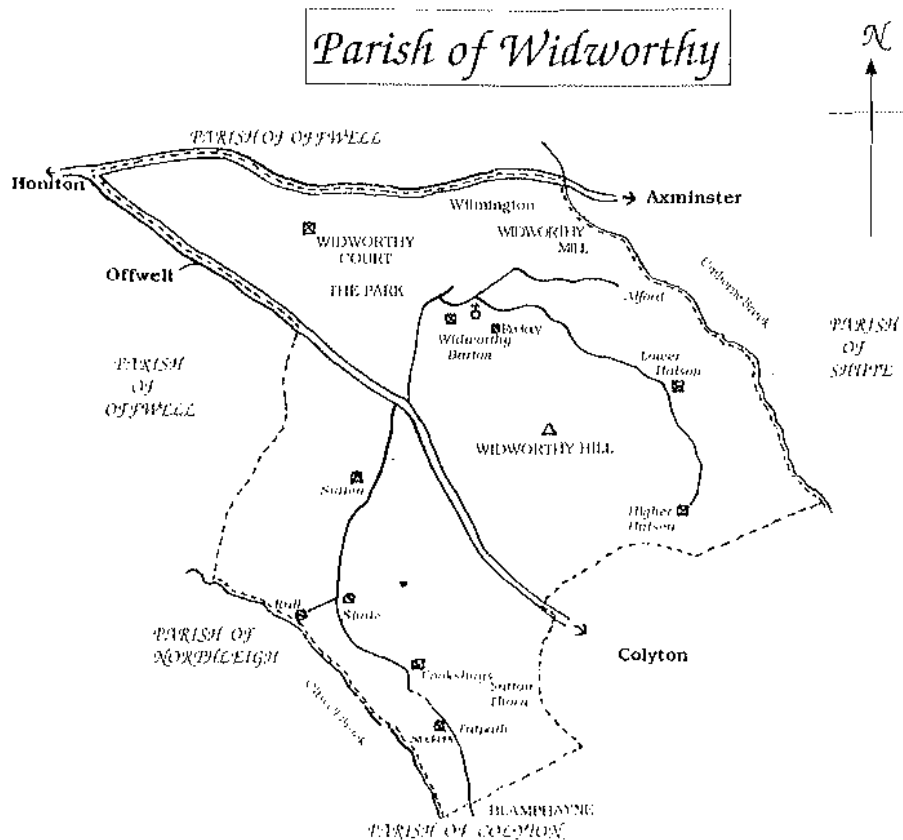
The Tithe Commutation Act, 1836, set in motion a survey of tithes throughout England and Wales. That survey provides an unrivalled source for the extent of farms, their owners and occupiers and the crops grown about the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> To people that agricultural landscape one can link the tithe survey to the Census Enumerators' Books of the 1841 Census and of the more accurate 1851 Census.<sup>3</sup> In the production of such a study in east Devon I endeavoured to emulate the work of Spencer Thomas on the coast of Cardiganshire.<sup>4</sup>

The history of the process at Widworthy under the Act commenced on 21 June 1838 when articles of agreement of commutation of tithes were drawn up at a meeting held in the Marwood Arms Inn in the parish. The inn, now sadly disappeared, was named after the squire of the parish. Indeed in 1838 the squire was Sir Edward Marwood Elton, Bart., and the rector of the parish was the Reverend William Marwood Tucker of Colchester in the County of Essex.

On 24 September 1838 the Assistant Commissioner of Tithe Surveys made his report.<sup>5</sup> That report was of the 'pastoral' type in view of the nature of farming in Devon and on 20 October 1838 the local agent gave the answers to the questionnaire. The agreement of commutation of tithes was confirmed on 24 October 1838. Mr William Summers of Ilminster had been appointed valuer. The following year Summers and Slate, Surveyors of Ilminster in the County of Somerset, produced a tithe map of the parish on the scale of 6 chains or 132 yards to the inch, or 13.333 inches to the mile. The map does not bear the Tithe Commissioner's seal and is, therefore, dubbed second class, but is perfectly adequate.<sup>6</sup>

### The Parish

The population of Widworthy according to the Commission was 274 persons, but in the 1841 census it was 257 persons. They lived in scattered farmsteads and on the south side of the main road through Wilmington village. According to the census returned in 1841 Widworthy contained 45 inhabited and no uninhabited houses. Excluding land containing merely house, garden and possibly a small orchard there were 28 parcels of land held by six landowners of whom the squire, Sir Edward Marwood Elton, owned by far the most, namely 19 properties extending to 968 acres. Of that acreage he kept 121 acres in hand which mainly consisted of the plantations surrounding the park of his seat at Widworthy Court and the plantations and woodland which encircled Widworthy Hill. The landowner with the second most extensive holding was John Inglett Fortescue Esquire of Buckland Filleigh, who owned 4 properties totalling 339 acres. Mr Fortescue appears to have been a colourful figure: a civil outlaw in debt to the tune of more than £50,000. Sir Edmund Prideaux ranked third



with 2 properties, Slade Farm and Rull Farm, comprising a mere 66 acres. He was to sell both to Sir Edward Marwood Elton in 1873.<sup>7</sup> The fourth landowner was the Church of England owning the 32 acres of glebe land. Finally the remaining two private owners owned respectively smallholdings of 26 and 8 acres, the second being the only owner/occupier other than the squire.

The 28 properties comprised:

- 21 farms and holdings of between 1 and 50 acres including Alford, Tutpath, Rull and Slade Farms, the Glebe and Widworthy Mill, a property of 6 acres;
- one farm, Stockers, of between 51 and 100 acres;
- three properties including two farms, Lower and Higher Halson, of between 101 and 150 acres;
- one farm, Cookshays, of between 151 and 200 acres;
- one farm, Sutton with Middle Down, of between 201 and 250 acres;
- and one farm, Widworthy Barton of between 301 and 350 acres.

Table 1. Acreage of Farms

Size in acres	Number of farms	Total acreage	% of Parish
1 – 50	4	183	13.01
51 – 100	1	52	3.70
101 – 150	2	255	18.12
151 – 200	1	162	11.51
201 – 250	1	210	14.93
301 – 350	1	332	23.60
Total	10	1194	64.87

### The Farming Pattern

The pattern of the ten farms was generally of consolidated blocks although four had parcels of off-land. The survey apportionment forms distinguished three principal uses of the land: meadow, pasture and arable. Meadowland was always more valuable than pasture as it provided hay for winter feed of cattle. Strangely the questionnaire does not differentiate meadow from pasture. Indeed meadow is not mentioned at all. The answers state that there were, in total, 684 acres of pasture, including seeds, which were valued at a fair average rent of 26 shillings an acre.

The local agents had to estimate the acreage of arable as land actually ploughed in the present or last season, excluding seeds.<sup>8</sup> The classification of arable on the one hand and pasture on the other is apparently ambiguous in southwestern England because of the practice of laying down long leys for three or more years.<sup>9</sup> Be that as it may, the answers to the questionnaire on Widworthy state that there were 444 acres of arable valued at a fair average rent of 18 shillings an acre.

The difficulties of classification are so revealed if one compares those two classes of land use with those set out in the final apportionment of rent-charge agreed on 24 October 1838: therein arable acreage exceeds meadow and pasture and is stated to be 598 acres, that is 149 acres more than the local agent's calculation. And not only is meadow (then at least mentioned) stated to be 536 acres, but also, this is some 148 acres less than the local agent's calculation and almost the identical difference in acreage just noted in the arable assessments. The ambiguity observed by Kain and Prince is clearly illustrated here. The local agent included 'seeds' with pasture when answering the questionnaire. The Commission must have counted the seeded leys as arable.

However, greater and perhaps more inexplicable differences are revealed when one examines the apportionment forms for the individual holdings, the totals running as follows:

- Meadow – 213 acres 2 roods 34 perches
- Pasture – 460 acres 2 roods 35 perches
- Arable – 527 acres 1 rood 31 perches

There are, it is true, certain hybrid uses to be found in the apportionment forms, the total appearing as follows:

- Rough pasture including pasture and furze, and nursery and pasture – 65 acres 0 rood 14 perches
- Arable with coppice – 11 acres 3 roods 31 perches

Even those additions do not help the discrepancies. An even greater problem exists: both the local agent and the Commission state that in Widworthy there are 205 acres of common. The local agent valued the common at the fair average rental of 2 shillings and 6 pence. But nowhere in the apportionment nor on the tithe map is any common at all to be found. There had been no formal act of enclosure in the parish of Widworthy. There must have occurred a gradual enclosure of the waste and indeed the field-names support that process as having taken place in medieval times. The woodland and plantations which crown and encircle Widworthy Hill are all separately itemised as owned and occupied by the squire, Sir Edward Marwood Elton. In any case, as has been noted, the total acreage which he kept in hand was only 121 acres and those acres included considerable areas of pasture and arable.

Both the local agent and the Commission stated there were 15 acres of woodland and 58 acres of orchards. Kain and Prince state that usually only coppice and underwood were titheable.<sup>10</sup> The agent valued the woodland at 5 shillings rental per acre and the orchards at 60 shillings rental per acre. The apportionment forms, however, show the following areas of forestry:

Wood	- 13 acres 0 rood 39 perches
Plantation	- 4 acres 0 rood 23 perches
Coppice	- 50 acres 3 roods 30 perches (excluding the arable and coppice above)
Nursery	- 2 acres 3 roods 13 perches
Furze	- 2 acres 2 roods 31 perches
Alder beds	- 2 acres 3 roods 13 perches

Furze was used for fuel. The alders provided wood for clog-making and the trade directories reveal that patten-making was in vogue.

Turning to the orchards which, of course, were cropped for cider apples, the apportionment forms in fact give the following totals:

Orchards	- 64 acres 3 roods 36 perches
Young Orchards	- 3 acres 2 roods 23 perches

There were also orchards on the plots which also contained houses and gardens. Those plots totalled 12 acres 1 rood and 3 perches.

Finally the Commission, and presumably the local agent, estimated the total area of the parish as 1,407 acres. They reached that total estimation on the following figures:

Arable	593 acres
Meadow and Pasture	536 acres
Woodland	15 acres
Common Land	205 acres
Orchard	58 acres
-----	
Total	1,407 acres

If one tabulates that acreage of each holding from the apportionment forms, the total acreage is greater by 30 acres. Explanation of the discrepancy is not to be found in allocating the difference to roads and water bodies as the local agent measured the roads and streams to be 16 acres 1 rood and 20 perches. There are no water bodies other than the streams. The local agent's measurement of the roads and streams has been included on the apportionment forms. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century the Ordnance Survey standard figure of 1,463 statute acres was reached for the parish of

Widworthy and is so recorded in the census return of 1891. Yet another discrepancy arises: the Commission underestimated the agent's total subsequent measurement by 30 acres and the agent's total measurement was in all 26 acres less than the subsequent Ordnance Survey standard.

It is however, important to remember that some of the data, notably in the files, is the result of estimation, albeit by experienced men, while other statistics (e.g. the acreage of individual fields in the apportionments) are from whichever survey the landowners adapted.

### Crops and Stock

In answer to the second question on the questionnaire, the local agent stated that the course of crops was a four field rotation:

- (1) wheat
- (2) turnips
- (3) oats (two-thirds) and barley (one-third)
- (4) clover.

Kain and Prince advise that it is possible to derive estimates of the acreage of individual crops by dividing the acreage of arable by the number of courses (excluding the seeds courses) in the rotation.<sup>11</sup> Such was the ambiguity and variance in the total area of arable between the apportionment forms, the local agent's answers to the questionnaire, and the Commission's apportionment noted above, that such an exercise would be meaningless in regard to Widworthy. The Commission does, however, give the yields of each variety of cereal crop and its prevailing market price:

Cereal	Bushels and Decimal Parts	Price per bushel
Wheat	195.60831	7s. 0 <sup>h</sup> d.
Barley	346.94737	3s. 11 <sup>h</sup> d.
Oats	499.39394	2s. 9d.

The agent stated that not very much timber was grown in the hedgerows or otherwise: what there was consisted of ash and oak with some elm. That would appear to be an inaccurate statement as there is a record among the Marwood Elton papers of Colonel Fortescue selling timber to Mr Elton, (the later baronet), at Widworthy for £3,500 in April 1831.<sup>12</sup> If that sale related to timber from plantations on the estate, as it might well have done, one would have expected the agent to consider that source as one other than hedgerows. Later in the century timber on the estate was sufficient to keep a saw-mill working.

The agent stated the stock numbers to be as follows:

Cows	93
Bullocks	73
Horses	34
Sheep	377

Certainly that is a useful piece of information<sup>13</sup> but one wonders in the light of the other apparent inaccuracies in that local agent's answers how accurate it is.

## Notes

1. Census Return, 1891.
2. R. Kain and H. Prince. *The Tithe Surveys of England and Wales*. Cambridge (1985) p255.
3. Kain and Prince, *op. cit.*, p256.
4. *Land Occupation, Ownership, and Utilisation in the Parish of Llansantffraid, Ceredigion 3* (1957) pp124-55.
5. PRO files 1572 Widworthy, traced through Roger J.P. Kain, *An Atlas and Index of the Tithe Files of Mid-Nineteenth Century England and Wales*, Cambridge (1986) pp468, 482.
6. Copies of the map and the apportionment are held in the Devon Record Office.
7. Contract of sale dated 31 December 1873, DRO documents E905-943.
8. Kain and Prince, *op. cit.*, p106.
9. Kain and Prince, *op. cit.*, p193.
10. *op. cit.* p108.
11. *ibid.*
12. DRO document E558-596.
13. Kain and Prince, *op. cit.*, p108.

## Acknowledgements

To Dr Dennis Mills I owe the greatest debt for guiding me on the path of study of the nineteenth century and for reading this article in draft and making many helpful suggestions. I am also grateful to Professor Roger Kain for the inspiration I gleaned from his works and for his kindness in casting an eye over my amateur offering.

## Biographical note

Edwin Hayden retired from the Overseas Service to practice law and to farm. He is now the Devon History Society's Honorary Treasurer.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE HONITON BOROUGH SEAL

H.J. Yallop

## Introduction

Honiton became a borough around the beginning of the thirteenth century<sup>1</sup> but there is no evidence known of the existence of a borough seal until one was given by William Pole in 1640, when he was elected member of parliament for the newly re-enfranchised borough. This consisted of a device (discussed below) surrounded by the words: SIGILLUM: COMMUNE: DE: BVGO: DE: HONITON: DO: DEVOL. In 1846 the borough became municipal under a mayor, aldermen and councillors and the seal was modified in shape, although retaining the central device but with the surrounding words changed to: The common seal of the Borough of Honiton Devon 1846 (Figure 1). The 1640 seal was, unfortunately, stolen from a showcase in Allhallows Museum in 1975 and has not, so far, been recovered, although its box and a wax impression survive. The 1846 seal was no longer used after 1974, when Honiton ceased to be a borough, and it is now in Allhallows Museum.

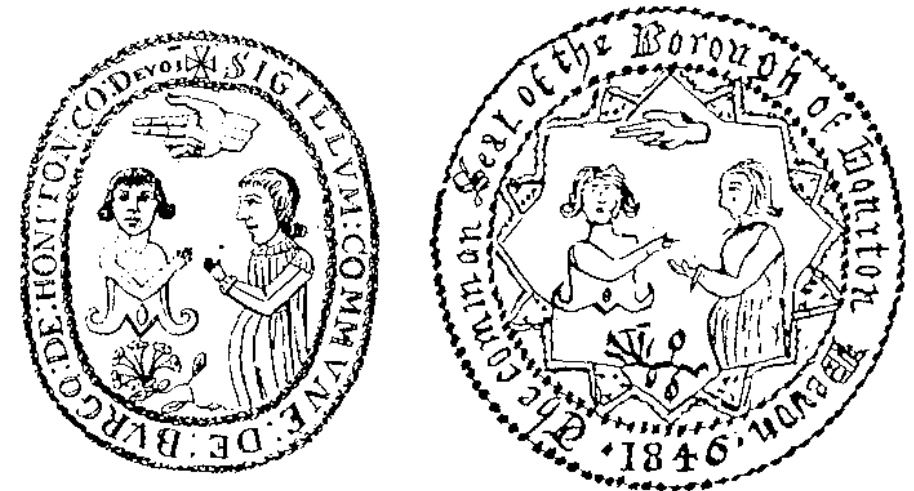


Figure 1. Drawings of Honiton seal. Left: 1640 from Reference 2. Right: 1846 from Reference 5.

## The device – previous interpretations

Both the 1640 and 1846 versions of the wording present no difficulty but a definitive identification of the central device is lacking. The result has been speculation, some of it of a bizarre nature. The earliest known was given in 1793 by Feltham,<sup>2</sup> was copied by later writers<sup>3</sup> and was as follows: 'It represents a pregnant female in devotion to an idol auspicious to parturient women, an obstetric hand above, beneath a honey-suckle, the whole surrounded by beads'. Feltham attempted to support this interpretation thus: 'The name of Honiton is of obscure etymology. Ton signifies a habitation, a town; honi, in the old Norman French, signified the same as honie does now, that is, shame or

disgrace. An old legend relates, that, at a certain time, almost all the women of the place were barren, and of course childless: that, to remedy this evil, they were enjoined by the priests to repair to *St Margaret's chapel*, and pass one whole day and night there in prayer when by means of a vision, they would become pregnant; and the saint never abused their confidence, the arms of the borough ... seem to allude to somewhat of this kind ... This interpretation has been frequently repeated to the present time, but none who have done so seem ever to have appreciated that a Norman French element would not have formed part of a town name of Saxon origin (*Honiton* is in *Domesday survey*) or that the barren women, if they existed, are described as praying to *St Margaret* to intercede with God and most certainly not to an idol. Furthermore *St Margaret's chapel* is a medieval foundation postdating the name *Honiton* by several centuries, and the hand gesture is quite unlike the obstetric position known as '*main d'accoucheur*'.

Another interpretation was given in 1840 by *Oliver*<sup>4</sup> as follows: 'It appears to represent a mermaid standing before a young female: above them an enormous human hand: below the Mermaid, a flower'. He adds that the design has no pretensions to taste. In view of the fact that *Oliver* was a Roman Catholic priest it seems strange that he did not recognise the gesture made by the hand, for it is the one traditionally used by priests when imparting God's blessing to a congregation. It is also difficult to accept his identification of a male demi-figure without a tail as a mermaid.

*Parquharson*, apart from quoting *Feltham*, states 'And another description says, "a priest instructing a demi infant erased" in the upper part of the shield, is a hand couped at the wrist, and in the base a plant, which is, without doubt, a honeysuckle in bloom'. Historians are, rightly, wary of any statement preceded by expressions such as 'without doubt'. There appears to be enough botanical similarity to suggest that the flower depicted could be meant to be honeysuckle but there are also features which are contrary to such an identification. It may be intended to represent honeysuckle or it may not.

*Worth*<sup>5</sup> in 1873 quoted the above ideas and offered his own interpretation, namely: 'Device, a pregnant female figure to knees – whether kneeling is not clear – before a demi-figure erased, with long hair, but apparently a male. Above, a huge hand, fingers as in benediction; beneath a spray of honeysuckle in bloom.' This appears to be the first recognition of the significance of the position of the fingers of the hand.

In 1889 the writer of the section on *Honiton* in *Kelly's Directory of Devon* stated that the device was 'a representation of the baptism of Our Lord', and this was repeated in each subsequent edition. Certainly the hand could be interpreted as the hand of God imparting his blessing and the left hand figure as *Jesus* in the water, but the right hand figure does not appear to be a plausible depiction of *John the Baptist* and the flower is not an element in the Biblical account of the event.

No new interpretations appear to have been attempted in the last 100 years, writers being content to repeat one or more of the above ideas or to say that the matter is a mystery.

### The device – a fresh appraisal

The device comprises four distinct elements.

1. At the top there is a human right hand placed horizontally, with the third and fourth fingers bent. This gesture is the one traditionally used by priests when imparting God's blessing to members of a congregation and in art it is sometimes

used at the top of a scene to denote God's blessing from on high. The facts that the hand is large in comparison with the figures below it and that it is placed horizontally at the top, suggest that it may be interpreted as the hand of God blessing those below.

2. To the left there is a figure with longish hair but apparently male, since the unclothed torso gives no indication of female breasts. The right arm is held across the body as though making a gesture to the right of the composition. The figure is cut off at the waist, where it is finished off in a formal pattern having no affinity to the human figure, thereby suggesting that the depiction is not intended to portray a straightforward human male.
3. To the right there is a figure with long hair clothed in a simple dress, which suggests that it is female. The shape of the front of the dress appears to indicate pregnancy, though with the relatively crude drawing this is not conclusively so. This figure is looking towards the left hand one in an attitude suggesting either speaking or listening.
4. At the bottom there is a plant which is too crudely portrayed to enable precise botanical identification. The flowers are of trumpet form in the configuration of an umbel.

This configuration of features suggests that the device represents a simplified depiction of the *Annunciation*<sup>6</sup> when the angel *Gabriel* was sent to *Mary of Nazareth* to inform her that she had been blessed by God and chosen to be the mother of the *Messiah*. This identification is supported by a study of a random selection of fifteen representations of this story by medieval and renaissance artists,<sup>7</sup> a period when it was a favourite subject. The study shows that there were certain standard conventions which were almost always followed by the artists, possibly by order of the church hierarchy. In fourteen cases *Gabriel* is shown on the left, usually making a gesture towards *Mary* on the right. In thirteen cases there is a clear depiction of a lily, the trumpet shaped flower associated in art with *Mary*. The blessing from on high is indicated in four cases by the hand of God in the gesture of blessing, in five cases by a descending dove, the traditional symbol of the *Holy Spirit*, and in three by both.

Examination of these pictures reveals a striking parallel between the elements and composition of them, both with each other and with the cruder device on the *Honiton* seal. More speculative aspects which are consistent with this interpretation are that the male figure is not fully human and may, therefore, be intended to portray the other-worldly nature of *Gabriel* and that the female is possibly intended to be pregnant, thereby suggesting the nature of *Gabriel's* announcement. It is difficult to assess how far the flower supports this interpretation. It is certainly not much like the *Madonna lily* which appears in most pictures studied, but it may be noted that the individual flowers are not unlike those in *Lippi's* painting and also that some lilies have flower heads in umbel form. Whilst the flower heads of honeysuckle also have umbel form the flowers are very different from those portrayed in the seal. The relative crudeness of the art work of the seal may be explained by the facts that the artist was unlikely to have been a painter in the master category and was, in any case, working in a different medium requiring its own technique.

The interpretation of the device as a depiction of the well-known story of the *Annunciation* is consistent with all the elements in the design and their arrangement and appears to be more plausible than any hitherto proposed.

### Why the Annunciation?

If the interpretation of this device as a depiction of the Annunciation is correct the question arises – why was this subject chosen? No connection has been found between it and William Pole or the Pole family, nor with the Courtenay family who were lords of the manor. There is no evidence of any church or chapel in the town being associated with St Mary, those known being dedicated to St Michael and all angels, Allhallows or All Saints, St Margaret and St Thomas.

Another possibility which can be considered is a connection between the device and the date of its gift. There is record of the return of two members to Parliament by the borough of Honiton in 1301 and 1311, but thereafter the representation was allowed to lapse.<sup>8</sup> The seats were revived in 1640 and William Pole was one of the members elected. The writs to summon the Parliament of 1640 were issued on 25 September for a Parliament to meet on 3 November.<sup>9</sup> On 26 November the Committee for Privileges reported that Honiton had sent burgesses to Parliament 21 Edw 1 and gave as its opinion that the seats should be restored. The House thereupon resolved that this be done and that the Speaker should issue a writ accordingly.<sup>10</sup> An election was duly held and William Pole and Walter Younge were returned but, unusually, the date of return is unknown.<sup>8</sup>

An estimate of the date can be made by considering the time interval between the issue of the writ and the date of return for the Devon boroughs which were already returning members.<sup>8</sup> This shows that the intervals had, in 1640, a mean value of 50 days with a range from 22 to 124. Since the Honiton constituency had not returned members for over 300 years it may be assumed that some time must have elapsed in setting up the procedure for an election and deciding what qualifications were needed to be an elector. This is the more probable in that the latter matter was a source of argument in succeeding years.<sup>11</sup> It may be supposed, therefore, that the time between the issue of the writ and the return of the members would be nearer the upper limit than the average for established seats. The writ for Honiton was issued on 26 November so a return up to 124 days later, i.e. 30 March is plausible. It may be noted that 25 March, Lady Day or the Feast of the Annunciation, falls within this period. Could it be that William Pole became Member for Honiton or took his seat on that day and, regarding this as a happy auspice, commissioned the seal, perhaps as a thank offering to St Mary? Strictly speaking Lady Day fell in 1641(OS) by a day but the writ was certainly issued in 1640 and it was from that year that the re-enfranchisement dates.

### Conclusions

No definitive contemporary explanation of the significance of the device portrayed on the Honiton borough seal appears to exist. Attempts to provide one were put forward between 1792 and 1889, but none since. None of these seems to be satisfactory for various reasons; some may be entirely discounted.

A fresh investigation of the problem leads to the hypothesis that what is depicted is the Annunciation. No definite evidence for the choice of this subject has been identified but it is suggested that it could be associated with the date of return on the restoration of the Parliamentary representation of the borough in 1640, the year from which the seal dates.

### References

1. Coxhead J.R.W. *Honiton*. 1984 p14.
2. Feltham J. 'A Topographical Description of Honiton'. *The Gentleman's Magazine*. 1793 p116.
3. Billings *Directory of Devonshire 1857* p128. Farquharson A. *History of Honiton*. 1868 p9. Harrods *Directory of Devonshire 1878* p327.
4. Oliver G. *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Devon*. 1840 Vol I p72.
5. Worth R.N. 'The Common Seals of Devon.' *Transactions of the Devonshire Association 1873* p93.
6. Luke 2 26-38.
7. Piero della Francesca, Domenico Veneziano, Fra Angelico, Window in Chartres Cathedral, Simone Martini, Verracchio, School of the Blessed Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, fresco in the pantheon in Rome, Duccio Botticelli, Bartolomeo della Gatta, Bartolomeo Caporali, Josse Lieferinxe, Gherardo Starnina.
8. PP 1878 (69) LXII Part 1, 1.
9. CSPD Charles I 1640-1641 pp89, 99/
10. Journal of the House of Commons, 26 November 1640.
11. See, for example: Journal of the House of Commons, XI p631, XXI pp411, 479, XVI p503, pp324, 356.

(With regret we record the death of John Yallop since this article went to press. He was a valued contributor to *The Devon Historian* over the years – Ed.)



## SIDETRACKED!

Alison Grant

Parish registers are not only invaluable for family and village history, population studies, and establishing social trends, but also provide interesting snippets of information, and unexpected insights into the lives of people of the past. This article is based on incidental material from Barnstaple Parish Registers, 1538-1914.

When registers were introduced in 1538, a few people had yet to acquire an official surname. Perhaps John Hatmaker, whose daughter was baptised in 1541, was still practising his nametrade, like John 'ye miller' as late as 1602. Most of those with no known surname, however, were the flotsam and jetsam of society, like 'Peter a pantyn-ker of Exeter' and 'Agnes, a poor walkyn woman'. Both died in 1546/7, when an outbreak of 'plague' caused burial figures to increase fourfold.

Burial registers not only show the incidence of epidemics, but also illustrate in human terms the meaning of phrases like 'child mortality'. In the space of one month in 1685, for instance, first Martha, then Hannah, Mary, and finally Thamasin, all daughters of Thamasin Short were buried. She, poor woman, followed them to the grave within a couple of weeks. Burials that year were double the average, but this single-parent household had probably been affected by poverty as well as infection. After bubonic plague died out, smallpox, typhus, and even 'infectious colds' caused misery and sudden death among the population over the next 200 years. In 1834 140 people including 50 children under five, were buried, probably due to 'flu. By contrast, when cholera came in 1849, fatalities were relatively few, unlike the larger, dirtier, industrial towns in other parts of the country, where burial registers make heart-rending reading.

Parish registers show that, contrary to earlier belief, many people did not stay put all their lives. In the sixteenth century, for instance, considerable numbers moved into Barnstaple from surrounding villages, and names like Jenkin Aprice and Tege Yrishman show the origin of some of the other 'incomers'. Local ships traded abroad, and James Rodrigo, who married a local girl in 1563 was not the only resident Portyngale'. There were also connections with places farther afield: trade with Guinea around 1600 accounted for the 'negor' servants recorded in the registers. Later a man from 'Nu England' was married in Barnstaple, and in 1765, Francis Smith and his wife Federata were listed as 'of the island of Jamaica'. Some foreign names were anglicised, particularly those of the Huguenot refugees who settled in Barnstaple. Thus the L'Oiseau family became plain English Birds!

Christian names changed as each generation gave the name-kaleidoscope a shake, and produced its own pattern. Sixteenth century girls' names like Mellorie and Welthien gave place to Temperance, Mercy, and Patience as Puritanism took hold; one woman, married in 1630, bore the name, The Lord's Neare. For boys, biblically-inspired names ranged from Creator and Methuselah to Emmanuel, Pentecost and all the apostles. Akilles and Hercules reflected other literary tastes, as did Tristram and Lancedulake. Among eighteenth century names were Cherubim, Diaphantus, and Marmiducke for boys, and Danscrex and Philadelphia for girls. A boy with a plainer name was Offspring Brown, baptised in 1721, but his more colourfully christened contemporaries included Abdolominos Coplestone, Epaphroditus Roode and Ferdinando Featherstone.

Alliterative names were found in all periods. Most mellifluous was Modelenn

Medallweeke's (1656), but Thoeg (or Tege or Tohege) Thoegg's was a regular tongue-twister, which the clerk spelt differently every time he registered his numerous children. These included twins baptised in 1560 and triplets in 1563. In this small community triplets were born only about once a century, and, like Thoeg's (John, Joan and Thamsyn), usually died soon after birth. Twins were more frequent, with one pair being christened Castor and Pollard (sic). Others were baptised John and John or Joan and Joan, probably because their chances of survival in the sixteenth century were slim, although at least one pair of Johns lived to cause confusion.

The names John and Joan topped their respective charts in the earliest registers, but Joan soon gave way to Mary and then Elizabeth, for the best of royal reasons. John, in spite of a strong challenge from William, was still at number one in 1700 and again in 1800. A century later, however, the honours were shared between Arthur, Frank and William, with Elizabeth only just holding her own against Emily, Annie and Gladys.

National figures and events influenced some parents' choice of names, or inspired new ones. During the Crimean War one couple named their children Ellen Alma and Charles Inkerman, and half a century later little Hildyard Redvers Buller Osborn was comprehensively named after the famous Boer War general. Three centuries earlier, in the same church, and no doubt at the same font, a couple had had their daughter christened Armeda.

The use of multiple Christian names, uncommon before the eighteenth century, was often a mark of gentle birth – a kind of baptismal heraldry that incorporated all branches of the family tree, as with Carew Sawle Vivyan Graves in 1788. At the other end of the social scale, 'base' children, like Elias de la Roche Blake, baptised in 1744, were sometimes given their alleged fathers' full names by mothers determined to show who was whose!

Attitudes to such children varied from period to period. Sixteenth-century registers record some 'base' children born in the street, which would no doubt have shocked the townsfolk in Victorian times when unmarried pauper mothers were consigned to the workhouse and their children entered in the baptisms register as 'illeg.' – although how much progress this represented is debatable. Numbers of such births shot up when soldiers were quartered in the town – Barnstaple was one of the embarkation points for campaigns in Ireland; in 1797, for example, in the wake of the Surrey Cavalry and the Glamorgan militia, ten illegitimate children were baptised compared with the usual two or three in a year. By contrast, after the Civil War of the previous century, only one birth out of wedlock was recorded over 12 years. Whether or not others were somehow concealed and not registered, this simple statistic gives a real insight into the grip of Puritanism on people's lives in Oliver Cromwell's time.

The fall in the bastardy rate must have gratified the 'preachers of God's worde' recorded in seventeenth-century registers. Occupations were only occasionally noted, but from those that were, a picture of a busy community emerges. There were cloth, leather, and metal workers, and a wide range of other craftsmen – potters and pipemakers, shipwrights and scribes, to name only a few. The better-off included merchants and goldsmiths, and among the educated was the 'cholemaster of the Higecole' an establishment which it appears the parish clerk had not attended! The medical profession was represented by a 'fesysyon' and a 'Worshipful Doctor off'Pisick', among others. A player, a harper and a 'fidler' were mentioned in Elizabeth's reign, but few such entertainers were found thereafter, for the Puritan authorities paid them to go away.

In the nineteenth century all occupations had to be listed, so the register provides a valuable directory of the town's trades. One hundred years ago, occupations, like the hymns sung in the parish church, were both ancient and modern; a miller, tanner, and fisherman were among those who brought children to be baptised; so were a newspaper reporter, railway clerk, police constable, and sodawater bottler. The sodawater factory was in a disused workhouse, which had at one time included a 'House of Correction' and a prison. The names of paupers and criminals – often considered synonymous by their 'betters' – who died there are found in the burial registers. So also are those of nine people sentenced to death in 1591, when assizes were held in the town because of plague in Exeter. Among those hanged on the Castle Green were Ulalya Page of Plymouth, and George Strangwich, the lover with whom she had conspired to kill her husband – a case which achieved great notoriety at the time.

Burial registers offer an occasional insight into crimes of violence in the past, recording a man 'killed by fight', and another 'stabbed with a knife', for instance. They also show a few suicides, sometimes by way of the river, whose treacherous tides took a toll of other lives when boats capsized or low-lying parts of the town were inundated. The worst such event occurred in 1607 when 'there was suche a mightie storme and tempeste from the river ... with the comminge of the tyde, that it caused much lose of goods and howses to the vallow of towe thousand pounds, besyde the death of one James Froste a tooker, and towe of his children, the which his howse fell downe upon them and killed them.'

Thus the parish clerk noted a sad little chapter in the town's history. More severe weather followed, but fortunately without loss of life, when 'the very same moneth the floud was' the river was 'so frozen that manye hundred people did walke over hand ...'

Later in that century, addenda were to be inspired by more momentous happenings: 'The first day of July 1644 this towne was most wonderfully preserved from the Irish and French which came against them for to destroye this towne, which is a day to be remembered of us of this towne for ever.' Needless to say the event is now completely forgotten!

Clerks sometimes openly showed their own opinions, for instance in such baptismal entries as 'Als, daughter of innocent woman with Robert Harrys (1554)' and 'George, son of Amos Hearson, 13 days after his father and mother was married' (1685). John Sloy, 'register' for almost 30 years, received a legacy of 20 shillings from a parishioner, which he recorded in the burial register for 1677, adding, '... and I would wish that all good Christians that are to be buried ... that they would doe the like to me as this woman did if they be able.' A few months later another woman left him £5.00.

Parish registers, as well as listing names, illuminate some of 'the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind'. They also contain evidence of kindness, happiness and laughter; Barnstaple had a comedian as well as a coffin-maker a hundred years ago.

## DOIDGE'S PORTRAITS IN PLYMOUTH

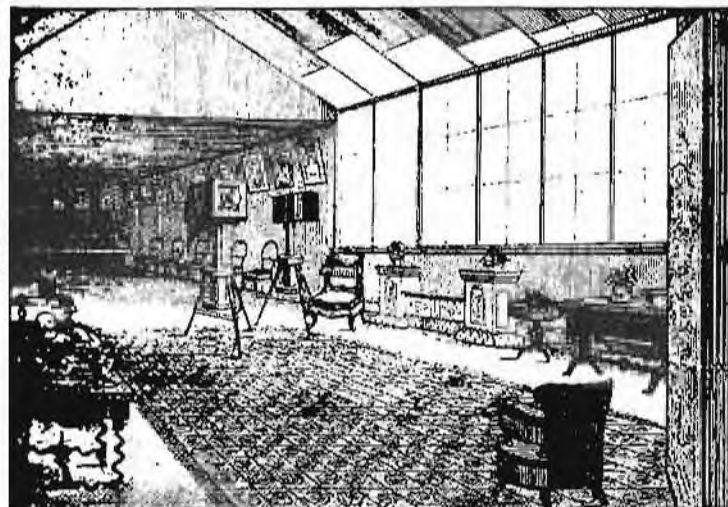
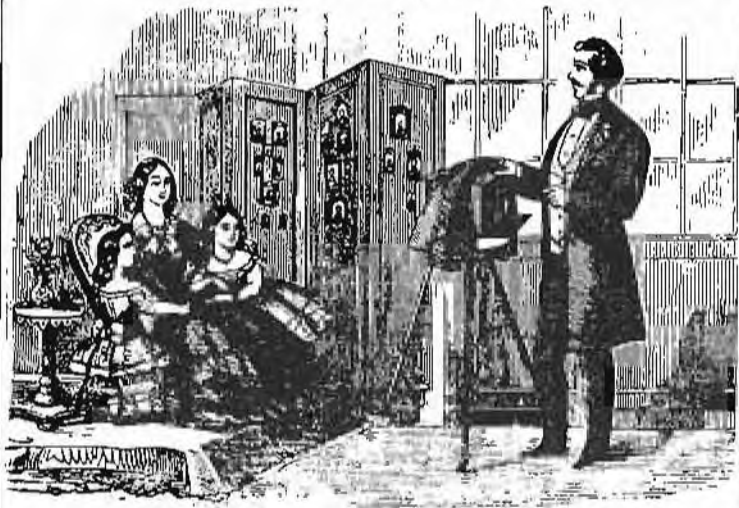
C.G. Scott

Thomas Sweet Doidge was a Plymouth bookseller and publisher who founded his *Western Counties Illustrated Annual* around 1868. Doidge used his *Annual* to advertise his businesses including 'Doidge & Co.'s Photographic Art Studio, 169 Union Street, adjoining and opening into Doidge's Great Book and Stationary Mart' (1880 *Annual* page 301). Doidge's advertisements in his *Annual* provide information on a nineteenth century photographic studio.

Of interest is Doidge's advertisement of 'Suggestions to those about to sit for their Portraits' (1880 *Annual* page 301). Doidge gave six suggestions so that 'both the artist and the sitter will be greatly aided in procuring life-like and artistic pictures by carrying out the following rules':

- 1st – As to Dress. The ordinary dark-coloured dress of gentlemen may be worn ... dark shades throw the face into greater relief ... As to ladies' dress ... be perfectly natural and do not add unnecessary appendages which you are not in the habit of wearing at home. As to colour: Pink and light blue should be avoided, or very sparingly used, for the reason that they come out light. Yellow, brown, red, and green take the darkest. Stripes, spots and checks do not take well or look well. Heavy black silks photograph excellently, and glossy materials are not so suitable as those of a dull surface. A little lace work is a relief and is strongly recommended.
- 2nd – As to the Hair. The present prevailing fashion of dressing ladies' hair is far from being adapted to every form of face, and it would be well to dress the hair in the most suitable style to suit the features, regardless of fashion, especially as ladies' fashions so rapidly alter. Should this not be deemed advisable, we suggest the wearing of a tasteful hat or bonnet as being more likely to produce good results ... Pomenades should be sparingly used, both by ladies and gentlemen, only just sufficient to prevent actual roughness. If the hair is too glossy it photographs white, and thus gives an unnatural appearance.
- 3rd – As to Time. ... As a rule the best times of day to visit the studio in the summer months are from nine in the morning to six o'clock in the evening, and in the winter months from ten to three. The best time for children is from ten to three in the summer, and from eleven to two in the winter.
- 4th – How to Sit. ... Do not visit the studio when you are in a hurry, or worried, or 'out of sorts'; and after you are placed in position by the operator, do not strain the eyes to an unnatural extent ... allow them to wink in the ordinary manner ...
- 5th – How to Dress Children. For young children a light dress is preferable and more artistic owing to the short time required for sitting. Do not bring any toys with them if possible, but simply leave it to the operator to secure the necessary attention. Not more than one person should be with the child at the time of sitting, the nurse or mother being usually considered the best.
- 6th – As to a Family Group. Some time previous to visiting the studio, train your children to sit steadily, and embrace every favourable opportunity of pointing out to them the need of sitting or standing perfectly still. In other words 'drill them' for the operation, and by this means you may secure an excellent picture, and save much of your own and the artist's time.

**DOIDGE & Co.'s PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIO,  
169, UNION STREET, PLYMOUTH.**



*Interior of the New Studio.*

*Fig. 1. Doidge's Studio: top, 1880; bottom, 1885, (Annual p194; p11).*

Doidge's Union Street premises seem to have been single-storey adjacent shops (1883 *Annual*, page 5). At number 170 Union Street was the bookshop, boasting 30,000 volumes new and secondhand. At number 169 was the 'fancy goods warehouse' that led to the studio. Doidge and Company advertised they had built an 'entirely new photographic studio', but it may well have been an enlarging of the old (1885 *Annual* page 11). It seems to have been the recognition that the growth of the city and its organizations gave a demand for group photographs which a firm of limited resources could best meet by bringing such groups to an enlarged studio, so circumventing the weather conditions. That studio could handle:

'... large groups of from 50 to 60 persons ... gatherings of the Clergy, Municipal or Political Parties, Sunday School Teachers, Schools, Bible Classes, Church and Chapel Choirs, Naval and Military Groups, Committees, Football, Cricket, and other Clubs, Wedding and Christening Parties, Family Gatherings, &c.'

A sample of the price list for group portraits gives an idea of costs: 'Above 5 and under 10 in a group, 4/6 per copy, for not less than 10 copies ... Above 20 and under 30 in a group, 3/- per copy, for not less than 30 copies'.

Doidge and Company's price list for individual portraits were:

'Cartes-de-Visite, ordinary finish, 5/- per dozen. Highly finished, two positions to select from, 7/6 per dozen ... Cabinets, ordinary finish, 12/6 per dozen. Highly finished, two positions to select from, 15/- per dozen ... Miniatures, for locket, 2/6 each, or highly tinted in water colours or oils, from 5/- to 21/- Enlargements (from ordinary Cartes-de-Visite or Cabinet Pictures) 12 by 10 inches £1 1s. (framed £1 11s 6d), 44 by 34 inches £8 8s .. can be finished in oils or water-colours (1885 *Annual* page 416)

Doidge and Company also sold photographic items such as Frith's views of the locality which included views of the Promenade Pier, Drake's Statue, and Smeaton Lighthouse, unmounted, mounted, or as medallions in brass rims (1886 *Annual* page 276). Albums for portraits ranged in price from 1s. to 4 guineas, holding from 25 to 200 photographs (1889 *Annual* page 39). By 1890 Doidge and Company had advertised that they had: 'disposed of their photographic business to Mr H. Yeo, who having completed a long term with Messrs. Heath and Bullingham, will take possession in February' (1890 *Annual* page 27).

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



*Fig. 2. Former Doidge Studio, under H. Yeo in 1893 (Annual p.28).*

## A LASTING REPUTATION

Adrian Reed

The South African War excited strong patriotic emotions in Devon where the campaigns were followed with close interest. The County Regiment earned great distinction while two of the leading figures in the first year of the conflict were members of well known local families. Colonel Kekewich from Peamore near Exeter was shut up in Kimberley with Cecil Rhodes, a position, as one historian put it, like that of a Lilliputian forced to sit on the head of pinioned Gulliver. His ordeal was a much shorter one than that of the garrison of Ladysmith who had to wait until the end of February 1900 before the other Devon Commander, Sir Redvers Buller from Downes outside Crediton, finally relieved them. The way he handled his forces provoked much criticism and his name became synonymous with uninspired generalship. His own career ended in disgrace after he stated publicly that at one point in the campaign he had given the general commanding in Ladysmith discretion to surrender. But he was a Devon hero and his fellow Devonians paid for an equestrian statue of him opposite Bury Meadow in Exeter inscribed with the words: 'He saved Natal'.

While Buller campaigned in comfort he was also concerned for the welfare of his men with whom he seems to have been very popular. Long after the Boer War had ended, the much bloodier Great War passed into history and when the even more terrible War of 1939 was only a few months away Buller's memory was still held in high regard in some Devon farms and villages. One day two ladies on an afternoon's drive stopped at a farm house and on being assured by the farmer's wife that she 'did teas' were shown into her parlour. Over the mantelpiece hung a portrait of Sir Redvers. One of the ladies noticed it and made some uncomplimentary remarks which were heard by the farmer's wife as she brought in the tea. She banged the tray down on the table and with a 'Nobody speaks ill of the General in this house' showed them the door. There may have been a touch of feudal loyalty here but it would be surprising if any commander to-day, however successful, would get such a tribute thirty years after his death.

PRINCETOWN HISTORY CLUB forthcoming meetings include:

3 May 7.30pm Princetown Primary School, Jenny Sanders on Dartmoor longhouses; 7 June 7pm, meet Postbridge car park, Postbridge history walk with Rob Stenson; 5 July 7pm meet Princetown car park, Crownhill Water Treatment works; and 2 August 7pm, meet Princetown car park, Buckfastleigh caves with Wilf Joint. Non-members welcome, 50p.

## AN EARLY CRICKETING CONTEST: EXETER V SIDMOUTH

Ian Maxted

On Saturday 7 August 1824 the Exeter Cricket Club travelled to Sidmouth. The coastal town was clearly enthusiastic about the game, having its own cricket field which had formed the subject of a lithograph by Henry Haseler, published by John Wallis, the owner of the local circulating library, in *Four views of Sidmouth, Devonshire* in 1822. On this occasion however the match took place on the Salcombe Race Course. Exeter went into bat first and made 39 runs, Sidmouth responding with a first innings total of 43. Exeter did better in the second innings, scoring a total of 55 and an away win looked in sight. However they reckoned without a splendid final innings by Sidmouth of 56 with seven wickets still to fall.

*The Exeter Flying Post* of 12 August reported that 'There was an elegant cold collation prepared by the Sidmouth Gentlemen, and the day was passed with spirit and conviviality'. To what extent Exeter shared in the conviviality is uncertain. Clearly they were all out for revenge in the return match and met at three o'clock precisely on the following Thursday to practise.

The return match took place on Monday 16 August 1824 at Quicke's Cricket Ground on Haven Banks, close to the site of today's Exeter Maritime Museum. The wickets were pitched at half past ten and play commenced at eleven. Sidmouth went into bat first and started well, scoring 76 runs. Exeter managed to exceed even this total with a magnificent first innings of 88 runs. Sidmouth's second innings of 75 brought their total to 151, well within reach of Exeter. But the afternoon witnessed a shameful collapse on the part of Exeter, and the home side were dismissed for a mere 55 runs, losing the match by eight runs and the series by two matches to nil.

According to Robert Newton in *Eighteenth century Exeter* (p.111), cricket had been played in the city for some years. In 1808 'an elegant entertainment with dancing to the band of the Light Dragoons' accompanied a match near St David's Church. Exeter had little cause to dance in 1824, the historic city having been trounced by a small upstart coastal resort.

OLD PLYMOUTH SOCIETY meetings include, on Friday 17 June, 7.30pm, at the Athenaeum, Derry's Cross, Plymouth; '300 years devotion to duty at Devonport Dockyard' by Mr Andy Endacott (Naval author). Non-members welcome £1.

## 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)

**Manorial Records**, by Denis Stuart. Phillimore, 1992. £12.95. ISBN 0 85033 821 2.

Local and family historians are of course eager to investigate all possible local sources of records likely to yield material for their researches, and the records of the manorial system of administration – court records, rentals, extents, accounts and customals – survive in profusion (even if not in continuous sequence or universal distribution) over a long period going back in a few cases to the late thirteenth century. But unfortunately these classes of record are not user-friendly: written in high abbreviated Latin even up to the early eighteenth century (with the exception of the Commonwealth period) using highly technical vocabulary with specialized set forms of terminology, by clerks who were not writing with any intention of providing historical data for later generations but for their own purposes, so they are difficult to interpret. Thus guidance is much needed, and has until now been gained only with difficulty and from a range of reference books and glossaries.

However, help is at hand. Denis Stuart, from a deep and long experience of the Keele University Latin and Palaeography Summer School, which he founded and directed, has produced a do-it-yourself manual to meet exactly these needs, with facsimiles for practice. To be able to read a manuscript document it is necessary to recognise the characteristics, conventions and abbreviations of its script and its context, content and purpose. So it is essential first to stress an important preliminary warning before making a start: the author assumes that the student has a basic, even if imperfect, knowledge of Latin, and some ability to read the older forms of handwriting in English (and in practice, it may be added, even a little experience of reading handwritings in Latin as well). So, prepared by the study of one of the palaeography primers recommended in the Introduction, and further armed by access to Eileen Gooder's *Latin for Local History*, the procedure to be recommended is for the user to open this handbook at Chapter I – the Manor Court Procedure – and, following Humpty Dumpty's advice, go on (with dogged patience and perseverance) 'until you come to the end and then stop'. If anything is skipped, something of significance will have been missed. If patience and concentration hold out, a splendid guide to the understanding of these documents will have been absorbed.

The scheme of this handbook is to make a graduated combination of explanations of the nature of the different types of manorial record (which are described in very adequate though condensed simple outline) with extremely valuable discussions of their vocabulary, standard formulae and conventions, applied to exercises in recognising, translating and interpreting them; all of which leads up to transcription and translation of facsimile specimens, about thirty plates of which are provided. Most of these plates are supplied with brief palaeographical, grammatical or other explanatory notes, and there is additional help with palaeographical difficulties in an appendix. Great stress is laid upon Latin Grammar (one note with the command 'don't fail to extend *tenen'* as the nominative complement of a copulative verb' is a trifle unnerving, but never fear, it is not typical!) There is an appendix of tables of declensions and conjuga-

tions for ready reference as required. Full 'Answers' are provided for all the exercises translations and transcriptions, there is a handy select dictionary, and even a short index. All is presented with meticulous care; although some printers' errors have been noted, they are for the most part of negligible significance and not seriously misleading.

The range of facsimiles provided for practice is on the whole well chosen. These plates appear with one exception to have been photographed from photocopies, and the stark black/white contrast which results tends in some cases to produce a dazzling effect which makes a barrier to reading, and by obliterating gradations of ink density and indications of pen movement restricts palaeographical judgments. For this reason, example 10 is the least satisfactory, on account of the way in which the very harsh contrast of tiny script exasperates the eye in a passage which is fundamentally too closely abbreviated to be read satisfactorily in facsimile.

This manual provides an authoritative guide to the study of manorial records and various kinds and from various periods in a clear and positive manner, and fills a felt want with distinction. Denis Stuart heads his keys to the exercises and his transcripts and translations with the confident title of Answers, and so wide is his knowledge and experience that this can in general be accepted wholeheartedly. But without any undermining of this confidence, it can be suggested that 'Answers' is too unassailable a word. 'Solutions' might be better, since there is sometimes room for alternative suggestions. The transcriptions of names provide occasional examples – to quote just one, may not perhaps 'Johannes le Glover' be a more likely reading than 'Johannes le Clericus' (Example 2c, p.1)? The inherent problems of interpretation are illustrated by Example 30, a thirteenth century customal described as being 'as hard as you are likely to meet'. This is a difficult passage, and while not necessarily disputing the readings provided in the transcript, it is yet possible to suggest extensions for a few of the abbreviations which make as much or better sense; to identify one of these is irresistible, since it is the subject of a special note: *ubicumque* can be offered as a better solution than *quacumque* in both sense and letter form. But this is of course a small point though an important principle, and does nothing to detract from the high praise due to this most valuable aid to study.

Audrey Erskine

**The Jews of South-West England**, by Bernard Susser. University of Exeter Press, 1993. xxi + 361 pp. £30 ISBN 85989 366 9.

Derived from a University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, this substantial study records and celebrates the presence of Jews in the southwest 'from ancient times', when some may have accompanied Phoenician voyages for tin. Trading links under the Romans with eastern Mediterranean towns with Jews in their populations are also suggested. Maybe. But certainly there was a thriving Jewish community in Exeter during the early Middle Ages, taking part in and enhancing the economic life of the city. It was dispersed in 1290 with the general expulsion of Jews by an ungrateful English crown, which had benefitted from their skills as suppliers of capital. Confiscation, stiffened with religious and racial animosities, had become too strong a temptation. Centuries passed. Odd individuals came and went. Then in 1656 under Oliver Cromwell Jews were quietly allowed back in what turned out to be one of the few obvious permanent

consequences of the Interregnum. By the middle of the following century there was an established congregation again in Exeter, worshipping in a bijou synagogue tucked away behind Mary Arches. Before long there were three more – in Plymouth, Penzance and Falmouth. What has happened to them since is traced with loving care and detail of persons, places and things by Dr Susser. Overall the story is one of a rise and decline effected by changing economic circumstances, immigration and emigration, and the cultural and religious attitudes and prejudices of Jews themselves and of the gentiles they lived among. In the early nineteenth century there were probably nearly a thousand 'Jewish souls' in the southwest, but by the 1980s less than a third of that number, with only intermittent religious services observed in Exeter and Torquay and even fewer in Plymouth.

This could have been a totally depressing story, but as told here it has become a heartening one of human endeavour, initiative, talent, resilience and achievement, and, as so often with Jews, beyond what might be expected of their actual numbers. They are shown in all sorts of activity – as shopkeepers, watchmakers, opticians, silversmiths, language teachers, pedlars, financiers, glaziers, lacemakers. Among those with a wider impact was Sydney Mendelssohn (b. 1860), who produced the first substantial bibliography of Africana, and Alexander Alexander (1805-87), inventor of 'a ventilated eyeshade' for the earl of Caermarvon. The 1851 census reports a Jewish policeman. Generally these incomers earned a reputation for honesty and industry, if for some of them not much else. A few grew wealthy while most remained poor and obscure, leaving few records and material legacies. Evidence of the better-off caring for their indigent and distressed Jewish neighbours is abundant and, along with the burial grounds in Exeter and Plymouth and elsewhere, testifies to the persistence of a genuine community spirit and indeed, the development of an organisation. Dr Susser shows the somewhat oligarchic nature of the constitutions of the congregations, remarking appositely that they were not unlike the closed municipal corporations of nineteenth-century England. The authority of the chief rabbi in London was recognised, but Jewish life was (and still is) lived in the home as much as in the synagogue and in the last resort it was the choice of individuals whether they maintained 'the ancient Jewish way' within the broader regional community.

The final and most absorbing chapter considers the acculturation and assimilation of the Jews in the southwest. Two centuries of attenuating distinctiveness in dress, speech and manners generally, of conversion and intermarriage, and of a widening of economic and social horizons, have meant that Jews here have become, though by no means all of them, indistinguishable from their fellow-citizens. Where they are not, it is in ways which are worn genuinely as a badge of honour. The dwindling of congregations in both counties sounds a plaintive elegaic note. But Jewishness remains a thread in the tapestry of life in this region and Dr Susser is to be congratulated on reminding those of us who are not Jews, and those who are, of that very acceptable fact.

*Ivan Roots*

**No epilogue to the saga;** rev. ed. A.B. Rowland, 1992. Available from A.B. Rowland, 35 Elm Grove, Dawlish, Devon EX7 0DD. Price £3.95 + 50p postage.

The author of this booklet is well qualified to write on the subject of the hospitals of Starcross and Langdon, being himself a trained nurse and tutor and having specialised in the care of those with learning disability. His work should be of interest to both the general and the specialist reader. Mr Rowland outlines the growth of care for those with mental handicaps, starting at the end of the eighteenth century in France and later in America. We learn of the growth of 'asylums' in England from the mid-nineteenth century and of the eventual foundation of Starcross as the West Country Idiots Asylum in 1864. Housed in two cottages it was at that time supported by voluntary contributions and was intended for the reception of those mentally handicapped who 'appear likely by careful treatment to be capable of mental improvement'. Early problems in the institution included both staffing and finance – this has a familiar ring.

Mr Rowland gives much factual detail, supplemented by illustrations and by figures taken from the records of the growth of the work at Starcross, including the expansion of the buildings and the programme of practical worktraining for the inmates, many of them children from Devon and other south west counties, and the opening in the 1930s of the Langdon Colony. He elucidates the changing relationships between the institutions and both central and local government and continues the story until the final closure of Starcross in 1986 and the partial closure of Langdon.

To the general reader the main point of interest will probably be the changes in attitude to those with mental handicap: thus sometimes education and training were regarded as priorities, sometimes general care and asylum and the medical aspects of learning disability. It is in fact heartening to read of the devoted care given in changing circumstances over more than a century on such a large scale – in 1948, when the Institution was incorporated into the National Health Service, 2300 patients were in its care. This booklet is of particular relevance in these days of pressure on the National Health Service and on the Social Services. Mr Rowland has given a clear summary of the past, which as he says should be remembered with 'dignity not sadness', and he looks forward optimistically to the progress of the care of those with learning disability into the next century, using some of the experiences of the past with newer insights.

*Margaret Webster*

**A is for Appledore.** by Alison Grant. Published by North Devon Museum Trust, 1993, 66pp line illustrations, paperback. £2.50. ISBN 0 9504018 5 4

Historics of former elementary schools are quite thin on the ground, often rely over-much on extracts from nineteenth century logbooks written by teachers on their best behaviour, and rarely set them in a context of local or national events. The schools tend to be treated as something apart from the towns or villages they served, while the adults and children remain in the shadows.

This is not true of Alison Grant's *A is for Appledore*. The first chapter neatly sketches the history of Appledore and the occupation of its inhabitants and provides maps for strangers to grasp the essential features of its geography. Surviving snippets about educational provision in the past by philanthropists and fee-charging pedagogues are

brought together before attention is focused on the foundation of the Church of England National School in 1836 and of the Wesleyan Methodist School in 1861. The latter becomes a Council school in 1905, has new buildings in 1909, and goes from strength to strength. All the children over the age of eleven are sent there in 1933 and when their successors start going to Bideford for secondary schooling in 1949, the one-time Wesleyan school becomes the Appledore County Primary School. Meanwhile the church school has shrunk to a simple infant school and is finally closed for ever in 1969.

What sets this apart from other accounts is the use of sources other than the log-books, such as the 1851 census of Appledore and contemporary newspaper reports of later events, plenty of straight information about what the children did, and enough details – perhaps from family sources? – to breathe fresh life into teachers such as Miss Fanny Parkhouse and S.V. Ford, the St Luke's College man who became head of the Church and Council schools in turn, or H.M.F. Henry Codd. Description of people and events are lively throughout.

Additional enlivenment is provided by the illustrations, drawn by modern pupils at Appledore County Primary, who one suspects have learned a lot through their involvement in the production of the book. Whether it was wise to see them as its typical readers, too, is doubtful. The glossary of 'difficult' Victorian, or current, words seems inappropriate, especially when a 'sic' or a concept like *'the maritime hub of North Devon'* is treated as self-explanatory. Nor, I am convinced, do children, any more than adults, need an abundance of nudging exclamation marks to hold their attention when the story itself is a good one. A single introductory explanation of the value of pre-decimal currency and pre-metric measurements is also surely preferable to jarring 'translations' in brackets each time they occur. But such things will not lessen the enjoyment and interest of those who know Appledore, nor of many others with a more general curiosity about schooling and the setting in which it has taken place.

All proceeds are to go towards the North Devon Museum Trust's Victorian Schoolroom Project. Dr Grant's book will clearly play an important part in drawing attention to the Project and generating financial support.

*Ian Stoyte*

**The Story of Thurlestone, Bantam and West Buckland** by Kendall McDonald. (told with the help of old photographs). [Priv. pr.] 1993. £8.95. Available from Mr Kendall McDonald, Cradles Cottage, Thurlestone, Kingsbridge TQ7 3NE.

This book, a well-produced short history, is clearly a 'labour of love' put together by a small community of neighbours. The publisher is Neil Girling, the landlord of the 'Sloop' public-house; the pictures were searched for and found by Peter Hurrell, a local builder and the text is the work of Mr Kendall McDonald, a retired journalist and long-time member of the Society. A chronology at the beginning (and end) shows that the district has a recorded history dating back nearly a thousand years. The text, which accompanies each of the many pictures amplifies the 'one-line' information. The photographs cover all aspects of village life in this part of the South Hams. Clearly some Thurlestone-born people have opened family albums; one of a 'dancing bear' is a rarely-recorded sight anywhere and perhaps is unique when it has been 'snapped' in a Devon

village street. Others show activities long-since gone. Particularly entertaining is one of John Thomas Jeffery, the local hairdresser at West Buckland trimming his customer's hair with sheep shears. Payment was in both cash and kind, twopence and two pints of rough cider. It is hoped that the last line on the last page is not a true 'sign of the times' in the county; it reads: '1992. Poll tax shows population as 930. Parish has 610 properties of which 141 are second homes'. A few of the illustrations are not of the standard usually found in books of this nature. This is obviously not the fault of either printer or compiler; it must have been felt that the subject matter made them worthy of inclusion. Any profits from the publication will be passed to Thurlestone Parish.

*John Pike*

**The Stanley E. Thomas Collection of Pewter in the Museum of North Devon, Barnstaple with an account of the Pewterers of Barnstaple** by Ronald F. Homer, The Pewter Society 1993. 40pp/36 illustrations.

Stanley Thomas died in 1974 and bequeathed his pewter collection to the North Devon Athenaeum. It now forms one of the centre-piece displays in the Museum of North Devon. Dr Homer's latest publication will ensure that Stanley Thomas' legacy is more widely known and appreciated as not all of the collection of 108 pieces is on public display.

For many years members of the Pewter Society have been active in ensuring that important collections like this receive the recognition and publicity they deserve. Devon is also blessed with two even larger pewter collections at Arlington Court and Torre Abbey Museum, although neither is so closely focussed on pewter made in a specific region.

The Stanley Thomas Collection shows the single-minded determination and passion of a proud Devonian. This unique reference collection of Devon and westcountry made pewter includes forty pieces known to come from Devon: all dating from the eighteenth century or earlier. Particular attention is given to Barnstaple's pewterers with eighteen examples of their products including pieces made by the first four (out of five) pewterers who became mayors of Barnstaple.

Ronald Homer is a past president of The Pewter Society, its journal editor, and archivist to the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of London of whom he is a liveryman. He has updated the original inventory of the collection and research carried out by Stanley Thomas into Barnstaple pewterers. This publication will inform both those with a casual interest and those who study pewter, of its makers and regional variations in its forms and design. It is especially pleasing that by careful planning it has been possible for seventy of the pieces to be illustrated together with a number of makers' marks. There is a brief background to 'the poor man's silver' and the history of the development of the pewterer's craft in the westcountry. A list with dates of Barnstaple pewterers expands existing information on this important centre in the westcountry and brings together illustrations of all the known marks used by them. A guide to further reading will help those who wish to gain greater knowledge about pewter, its makers and marks.

Each piece in the collection is adequately described by an inventory which groups the westcountry pieces according to their town of manufacture. Unattributed pieces and

other British pewter are dealt with last. The Devon pieces include examples of the work of twenty different pewterers: one from Ashburton, eight from Barnstaple, two from Bideford, four from Exeter and five from Tavistock. There are thirty-five seventeenth century pieces in the collection amongst the oldest of which are an exceptional group of flagons with three attributable to Barnstaple. These are of the type known as 'beefeater' flagons so named for the resemblance of their lids to beekeepers' hats and date from c 1670-75. One is by John Webber senior and a matching pair are probably by his father, Jeffrey Webber. A Charles I period bun-lid flagon by an unidentified maker 'CS' may also be of Barnstaple origin. Another 'beefeater' (No 83) of c 1675 has not yet been attributed but may be by a Somerset pewterer: Augustine Jefferies of Wells. The largest pieces in the collection are a pair of 22 1/2 in diameter chargers by Robert Clothyer of Chard which date from c 1680-1700.

Twenty-nine pieces date from the first half of the eighteenth century including the only known example of a tankard which can be definitely attributed to a maker from further west than Bristol. This is a quart capacity dome-lid by Humphrey Evans of Exeter dating from c 1730. Fifteen pieces date from the second half of the eighteenth century including two plates by Nicholas Shephard who was the last but one pewterer mayor of Barnstaple in 1773. An unusual baluster shaped lidded wine measure (No 64) has not been attributed to the westcountry although it is almost certainly by Edmund Mills of Exeter who was mentioned in 1772 and dead by 1794.

Of the remaining twenty-nine pieces of nineteenth century origin none can be attributed to the westcountry although there is a good matching set of five cider measures which are commonly described as 'West Country' and more usually found made of copper.

This publication sponsored by The Pewter Society has been well written and produced and it is hoped that in due course Dr Homer will turn his attention to writing equally informative catalogues of other westcountry pewter collections.

Carl Ricketts

**Old Witheridge, bygone days in a Devon village**, compiled by John Usmar, and Peter and Freda Tout. Devon Books, 1988. 96pp. Many photographs. ISBN 0 86114 821 5. – 6.95.

Although published over five years ago this fascinating book has only now come for review. The delay is, however, of little consequence, since the material it contains will be of timeless value. The fine collection of old photographs form the predominating feature of the book, with the text occupying a minority of space but providing ample background information and identification. Witheridge is a somewhat remotely-situated village, lying between Tiverton and South Molton, and many people – even Devonians – may not know it, except perhaps as a place to pass through in the days before the North Devon Link Road. It does, however, have a history and, we are told, by 1550 had become a Borough, with market, fair and Court of the Duchy of Lancaster. Over the past century and a half Witheridge's population has declined, with the scene remaining predominantly agricultural and residential.

Concentrating mainly on the period from 1880-1950, the photographs and memories have been lent by, and gathered from very many local people, and cover a whole range

of activities, from church and village layout, to shops, trades, transport, quarrying, farming, school and sport. People, of course, feature on virtually each page. As with almost every town and village pictorial history there are delightful pictures of 'chara' parties about to set off on annual outings, showing how quick professional photographers of the time were to realise the splendid opportunity such groupings afforded, due to advantageous placing of the seated rows of passengers which allowed to clear well lit viewing of every face – and, undoubtedly, the large number of orders for individual copies of the picture which would follow, to serve as a reminder of a happy day. One of the later groups is of the Witheridge Platoon of the Home Guard taken in 1943, which comprises 34 smartly turned-out officers and men.

Helen Harris

**Honiton an old Devon market town** by M. Edmunds, with illustrations by Marianne Barton. Westcountry Books, 1993, 76pp, softback £4.95. ISBN 1 898 386 01 3.

Every market town should have its history readily available in book form. More particularly should that precept be followed in Devon where we lack the authoritative foundation of the Victoria County History save in a single preliminary out of date volume. This little book does not claim to be a definitive history but rather a guide for visitors and residents alike to link the present with the past. On that basis it is welcome and timely as it is forty-five years since Captain JRW Coxhead's *Honiton and the Vale of the Otter* was published and ten years since the publication posthumously of his *Honiton - A History of the Manor and the Borough*. Both are now out of print.

Local historians may lament the absence of any notes of bibliography even on the meagre scale of A. Farquharson's *The History of Honiton*, 1868, or of an index as appeared in both of Coxhead's books or a list of authorities which graced his posthumous book. They will nevertheless find the writing refreshing, as one would expect from a journalist of the calibre of Marjorie Edmunds, and maybe an idea or two for their own personal line of research.

Edwin Haydon

**Dartmoor Atlas of Antiquities: Vol 4 – The South East** by Jeremy Butler. Devon Books, 1993. 252 pp, numerous figures and plates. £12.95. ISBN 0 86114 881 9.

The fourth volume of Jeremy Butler's ambitious Dartmoor work succeeds volumes 1, The East (1991) and 2, The North (1991), but has overtaken Volume 3, yet to appear. Mr Butler publishes in these volumes plans of the moor based largely on transcriptions of archaeological features from his own aerial photographs, a selection of which are also published, accompanied by a commentary describing the archaeological features. This volume covers the area between Princetown, Shipley Bridge and Ivybridge, including such pleasures as Riders' Rings and Whiteworks Mine.

Not only is the view from the air an attractive way to observe the archaeology of an area such as Dartmoor, but it can also help the visitor to make sense of its archaeological wealth, whose sheer profusion can bewilder the terrestrial observer. This very welcome publication renders information derived from aerial photographs of Dartmoor far more available and understandable to the visitor than has yet been the case, as the



transcription by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments in 1984-5 has not yet achieved publication. The absence of an account of the methodology of transcription and of the dates of photography are, however, to be regretted. The small size of the books, (17 x 24cm) makes for high portability in the field, but reduces the available plan size. The user is not helped by the variable published scales: eleven maps use no fewer than ten different scales, which may confuse the unwary.

The maps themselves are augmented by numerous large scale site plans, also said to be plotted from APs (although Volume 1 indicates that this was supplemented with ground survey, which certainly seems advisable). Perhaps inevitably some detail is overlooked, as comparison of Butler's Fig 56.8 – Corringdon stone rows – with the plans published by Robinson et al (1990) will illustrate.\* Nevertheless, these plans are again far more detailed than any that have been readily available to the general reader or walker in the past, and Butler's book provides an extremely convenient starting point for the independent visitor's explorations. His evident commitment to all periods of Dartmoor's archaeology is a particularly attractive feature of the series. The photographs are in general excellent illustrations of their subjects, and are admirably clear, though some have printed rather dark. It is a pity that more are not published here. They will certainly serve to invite the reader to get out to explore the further reaches of Dartmoor.

The specialist Dartmoor scholar may have reservations about some of the commentary, which refers to but does not always appear to appreciate the significance of recent archaeological work – most notably perhaps the implications for the 2nd millennium BC settlement pattern of the excavated timber predecessors of stone structure. However, overall these books represent a most attractive introduction to entice and guide the Dartmoor visitor, and they will certainly serve to stimulate further and closer examination of these landscapes. And all this is at a very reasonable price. Mr Butler has put a tremendous amount of work into these books, and his enthusiasm for Dartmoor's archaeology shines through throughout.

*F.M. Griffith*

\*Robinson, R., Griffiths, D. & Cosford, J.: 'The Corringdon Multiple Stone Rows: A Re-survey' *Proc Devon Archaeol Soc* 48, (1990), 179-5.

**Tavistock's Yesterdays, Episodes from her history, 9**, by G. Woodcock. Published by the author, 1993. 88pp. Numerous illustrations. £3.95.

The ninth book in Gerry Woodcock's established and much appreciated series, in which he recounts aspects of Tavistock's history, has duly appeared, and as usual provides both enlightening and entertaining reading. Although documentary references are not given, the extent and depth of the author's research is evident from the wide range of subjects covered. These include – in sixteen chapters – matters associated with Tavistock's bygone Benedictine Abbey (one being that of the first printing press in the west of England, which it contained), an account of the development of local government in the town, prisoners of war, a savage farmhouse murder of 1815, establishment of the town's gas supply from 1831, paternity cases in early Victorian Tavistock, and many other studies relevant to the town and its people. The book is reasonably priced for its quality and size, although it must be said that, of its numbered pages, five are

totally blank and eleven more than half so.

In view of the wealth of information now contained over the volumes of the series perhaps Mr Woodcock would celebrate next year's hoped-for tenth issue by providing a comprehensive index of subjects covered, as an aid to quick convenient recourse.

*Heleen Harris*

**Tin Mines and Miners of Dartmoor: a photographic record**, by Tom Greeves. Devon Books. Revised edition 1993. 86pp. ISBN 0 86114 766 9. £6.95.

This new issue of Tom Greeves' book is little changed from the earlier (1986) edition, except for minor amendments and updating and some alteration to the Introduction, and the fact that the colour of the cover is now green instead of brown and its cost £2 more than previously. For its price, however, the book is extremely good value. The many assiduously-collected old photographs are the same as before, fully supported by informative captions and text. Combined together these enable the reader to grasp, in a most enjoyable read, the systems employed in Dartmoor tin mining during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also specifically revealed is Dr Greeves' deep interest in, and affinity with the people who were involved in the past industry, many of whom – or their descendants – have co-operated in providing facts and accounts of experiences. For some years Dartmoor National Park archaeologist, after working for a time in London Tom Greeves has returned to his home county to live at Tavistock. He is currently chairman of the Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group, formed in 1991.

*Heleen Harris*

**Drake, a poetic Biography**, by Anne Born, illustrated by Diane Taylor. Westwords Publications, 24pp. £3.95.

The author has taken some of the important incidents in Drake's career and described them in differing verse forms. Since the historical poem has found few practitioners in recent years this volume represents an encouraging revival of this genre. Devon's past offers a wide scope for both dramatic and reflective interpretations and it is to be hoped that other poets will follow Anne Born's example.

*Adrian Reed*

**The Dartmoor Newsletter 16**, ed. Paul Rendell, The Old Dartmoor Company, 1993. 28pp.

Now produced in A5 print with useful card cover, this latest in Paul Rendell's series demonstrates the steady progress to improved quality that this production has achieved. Pleasant to handle and to read, the booklet is filled with informative and sometimes humorous items of news concerning Dartmoor, from historical to current matters, interspersed with lively illustrations. Reading it will enable one to keep up to date on a variety of events concerning the moor. *The Dartmoor Newsletter*, published

bi-monthly, is obtainable by subscription of £6 per year (payable to Paul Rendell, 20 Rolston Close, Southway, Plymouth). The editor also welcomes news items and short articles for inclusion.

*Helen Harris*

**Yelverton & District Local History Society Newsletter 11, 1993-4**, hon. ed. Paul Rendell. Free to members, £1 to non-members, obtainable from P. Rendell, 20 Rolston Close, Southway, Plymouth. 26pp. A5.

Under its new editor, in succession to Peter Hamilton-Leggett, this edition of the *Newsletter* includes many items of local news and events relating to local history activities, and numerous articles on such subjects as: 1873 Army manoeuvres, Sortridge mines, Walkhampton Vicarage, Maristow Estate, W. Devon roads and landscape, and the Atwill family of Willtown. This now well-established annual publication reflects the enterprise and liveliness of its local society. (See also p.36).

*Helen Harris*

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### A want supplied

Professor Roots' enthusiastic review (*DH 47*) of *Tudor and Stuart Devon: essays presented to Joyce Youings* had one regret: the lack of an index to a work of such varied content. Mike Dickinson, formerly of the Devon Record Office and now living in Cheshire, has produced a detailed manuscript index of persons, places and sources (with subjects to follow). The index can be consulted and photocopies provided at the Devon & Exeter Institution Library, 7 The Close, Exeter.

## AN EXETER SCRAPBOOK

Mrs Stirling of the Devon & Exeter Institution has been displaying a scrapbook that is thought to have belonged to the Shapter family of Exeter. The scrapbook contains sketches, watercolours, prints, and photographs, of Devon.

The photographs are of interest. One is a panoramic view of Okehampton Viaduct by Frith; another is an anonymous waterside scene with a ship; and there are some of Exeter.

Some of the Exeter photographs, all by an anonymous photographer, seem to have been taken from the first floor windows, or balcony, of one of a group of three houses at the upper part of Southernhay. Some of the photographs (e.g. Fig 1) probably show a military band around a fountain on Southernhay. Perhaps it is no coincidence that in the scrapbook is a broadsheet detailing the arrival of the 9th Queens Royal Lancers in Oct. 1859. Perhaps the Exeter photographs are late 1850s to early 1860s.

One of the Exeter photographs (Fig. 2) is a view across the rooftops showing St Sidwell's Church spire, with glimpses of Southcott's Bude Haven Hotel (probably the horse stables), and French's the corn & flour merchant of Paris St. All such photographs of Exeter buildings are of interest to architectural historians.

The Exeter photographs are on plain paper (perhaps 'salted' prints), possibly the work of an amateur photographer, perhaps a member of the Devon & Exeter Photographic Society founded 1857. Mr Mears of that Society was an enthusiast for the



*Fig. 1 A band plays on Southernhay, Exeter.*



Fig. 2 View across the rooftops towards St Sidwell's Church, Exeter.

waxed paper negative as the simplest process in photography (*Woolmer's Gazette*, 6 June 1857 p.5), and some of the Exeter photographs may have used that method. Such photographs are a reminder that many early amateur photographs must have been destroyed when old scrapbooks were thrown away.

[N.B. The photographs of Southernhay and rooftops of Exeter require expert examination, as a mixture of techniques/processes was possible. Also, comparison of the photographs with contemporary maps suggests the possibility of pinpointing the locations and persons involved].

Reported on by Christopher G. Scott

## NEWS FROM LOCAL SOCIETIES

### NORTH DEVON MARITIME MUSEUM (all enquiries to 0237 474852)

The Museum's archive was significantly extended last year by the acquisition of a large collection of notes, cuttings, sketches, reports of interviews, and other material amassed by V.C. Boyle (1885-1954). As well as maritime matters the collection contains much of general interest to local historians.

While the Burton Art Gallery was closed for a major extension, its curator, John Butler, an accomplished woodcarver, worked at the Museum, transforming a piece of tree-trunk into a delightful figurehead, helped (or hindered) by 'hands on' assistance from visitors. Named the *Lady Mary* by popular vote, she will welcome this year's visitors from the Museum balcony.

The Museum now has a Victorian Schoolroom, a 'school base' with genuine Victorian school furniture, where children can experience lessons of the period. Costumes (made by Museum volunteers) are provided, together with slates, copy books, recitation sheets and other teaching aids including items from a local Victorian school museum cupboard. A video, *Early Schools*, and a book, *A is for Appledore*, published by the Museum, illustrate the same theme. Children thoroughly enjoy their visits, and enquiries from teachers are welcome.

Over the winter the World War II exhibition has been refurbished ready for the 50th anniversary of D-Day in 1994. The models and 'top-secret' photographs of amphibious training in North Devon have been brought together in one room, and the documentary video, *North Devon's Most Secret War*, seen by DHS members at a past AGM, has been revised by Vic Thompson, who has also added new material.

North Devon Museum Trust looks forward to welcoming the Devon History Society to the Museum at the summer conference on 2 July.

### LIFTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Just three years after its inception this group now has a lively membership of forty and has established a varied programme of events, comprising a mix of purely local topics and others farther afield. In common, perhaps, with the experience of some other societies, controversy occasionally ensues as to the application of the word 'local' in the title – does this imply an interest in purely local history, or is it to embrace members of a *local community* who like looking together at a wider range of historical perspective? The Honorary Secretary (Mrs M. Kneebone, Lower Carley, Lifton, Tel. 0566 784238) says it is curious that requests for 'more about Lifton' are prevalent, but that events planned in response – such as a conducted tour of the church, and of the village and its history – have been poorly attended compared with others covering less close aspects.

The past year, which saw Lifton by-passed by the new A30 dual-carriageway road, has been one of much activity by the Local History Group. Removal of the through traffic was marked in April by a week-long festival and a 5-day exhibition in the Church Hall. For the exhibition various members undertook different displays: the railway, the main road, tithe maps, and old farm implements, all of which stimulated considerable interest.

The group is planning to establish a collection of archives, including books relevant to the area. It is also seeking the co-operation of elderly people who have a knowledge of the parish in the past. In this connection Mrs Kneebone would be delighted to hear from any reader of *The Devon Historian* who may have early memories of Lifton but is now living elsewhere.

#### **IVYBRIDGE & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY**

The society's Honorary Secretary, Mrs D. Gibbs (5 Plover Rise, Ivybridge, PL21 9DA, Tel. 0752 893989) says that although there are over forty members, attendances at meetings are generally at lower level. This is probably due to the many competing interests in the locality, which has grown from an industrial village (with a long-established and still active paper mill) to being a dormitory town for Plymouth. But the society is by no means inactive. Plans are afoot for an exhibition this year to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the D-Day landings, and the society also has a library of local photographs.

A very useful function, in line with the National Curriculum emphasis on local history, is provided by two of the society's members who go into the school and assist in the subject. Matters covered so far have related to the Victorian period and World War 2. They have also been invited to the local Community College, to help with after-school extended history studies, in conjunction with Plymouth Museum. This has included an imaginative project in portraying Victorian costume. These kinds of activities are undoubtedly of much value in promoting knowledge of and a hoped-for interest in local history in the future.

#### **YELVERTON & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Members of the society are pressing on with recording memorial inscriptions on tombstones in churchyards of the parishes within its area. Those at Sheepstor, Walkhampton and Buckland Monachorum have already been covered, work at Sampford Spiney and Meavy is in progress. The lists, which are being stored on computer, will provide a useful resource for family researchers. Also, when complete, they are to be published as a further edition to add to the society's established series of works.

#### **THE DARTMOOR TINWORKING RESEARCH GROUP**

A third season of excavation was successfully carried out at Upper Merrivale tin mill in September by a team of volunteers under the direction of Dr Tom Greeves. Work was concentrated on the lower stamping mill. A late phase of activity was demonstrated in which large boulders had apparently been moved by the tanners to refurbish earlier structures.

Further work was done on the interior of the upper mill, and also on the dressing floor (where crushed tin was concentrated), and on an artificial gully which may have been a source of ore for the site.

A further season of work is being planned for 1994.

**To all local societies:** Please send news of your activities, interests, projects, lines of study, information being sought, etc., to the Hon. Editor, Helen Harris, for inclusion in *The Devon Historian*.

## **THE DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY**

### **Proceedings at the Annual General Meeting, 1993**

At its Annual General Meeting on 16 October Dr Basil Greenhill, the former Director of the National Maritime Museum, was elected President in succession to Professor Ivan Roots. In his inaugural address Dr Greenhill referred to the centres for the study of maritime history now established at the Universities of Exeter and Bristol and offering post-graduate academic qualifications in the subject. While welcoming them he stressed that it was unrealistic to separate the maritime side of a nation's history from its political and economic. Nevertheless many aspects of British maritime history required further exploration and evaluation. The social position of the merchant seamen down to early in the present century, for example, was unclear. Was he someone limited by his employment to living in one part of a port town, as seemed to have been the case at Appledore, or was he a readily accepted member of his local community?

The morning speaker, Dr Michael Duffy of Exeter University, traced the history of Devonport Dockyard from its foundation in 1693. A few decades later it had become the most technically advanced and largest industrial undertaking in Europe and so in the world. It was built to meet the needs of the sailing fleet for a base as far west as possible to enable it to cover the homeward trade and to watch the Atlantic bases of the French Fleet. The combination of 'Plymouth Dock' for repairs and Torbay as a fleet anchorage allowed for a blockade of the French ports which would not otherwise have been possible. The coming of steam and the construction of the breakwater made it easier for ships to reach the dockyard while the invasion scares of the 1860s led to the base being protected from attack by sea or by land by a girdle of forts and batteries. In both World Wars Devonport played a vital role in the protection of sea-borne trade.

*Contributed by Adrian Reed*

## Minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting

held at the School of Education, University of Exeter, 16 October 1993

**Present:** In the Chair, Prof. Roots; c. 35 members of the Society

1 **Apologies:** Miss L. Smith, Lt. Col. G. Grimshaw, Prof. N. Orme, Mr and Mrs A. Sedgwick, and Messrs. J. Bosanko, C. Gill, I. Maxted and H. Pascoe.

### 2 Minutes

The minutes of the last AGM (printed in *The Devon Historian* 46, April 1993), were approved, and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

### 3 Secretaries' Reports

Mrs Sheila Stirling reported that well-attended conferences had been held at Instow, where Dr Alison Grant gave a talk on the history of the village, and Dr John Travis spoke on Devon Seaside Resorts; and Dunkeswell, where Mr Peter Weddell spoke on Monastic Remains in Devon, and Mr Robin Staines gave an interesting talk about whetstones.

Prof. Joyce Youings had represented the Society at the public enquiry concerning Braunton Great Field, and it is understood that the Inspector has accepted the submission made by the Society and similar organisations, that the historic Great Field be excluded from development plans.

Letters expressing opposition to the possible fragmentation of archives in the process of local government re-organisation had been sent to M.P.s. There would be another opportunity to press this point before January 1994.

Mrs Stirling expressed gratitude to Miss Lorna Smith for compiling the Index to *The Devon Historian* Nos. 31-45, which had been circulated to all members. Copies were available to non-members at £1.50. She pointed out an unfortunate misprint on the cover, where the date 1978 should read 1985; if requested, stickers could be printed to correct this.

Mrs Stirling reported that the Society's Council had suggested that next year's AGM might involve local history societies, as in 1992. The meeting expressed approval of this idea.

Mrs Stirling thanked her fellow secretaries for their help over the year.

Mr J. Pike, membership secretary reported that details of new members, including eight or nine local history societies, had been printed and circulated on a supplementary list.

### 4 Acting Hon. Treasurer's Report

Before this was read, the Chairman paid tribute to Mr David Edmund, whose death in May had been a sad loss to the Society, which he had served as a competent Treasurer, and in many other ways over the years. He asked members to stand in memory of a good friend and a fine man. The meeting welcomed Professor Youings's suggestion that the Society should consider some lasting tribute to David Edmund's memory.

Mrs Stirling then presented the accounts, and reported that the financial situation remained stable, and there was no need to increase subscriptions this year. She asked anyone paying by Standing Order who had not already made out a new mandate to the Reserve Account to do so, as this account carries no charges.

In answer to a question, Mrs Stirling informed the meeting that *The Devon Historian* had a print run of 520. The President expressed the Society's gratitude to Mrs Stirling for undertaking this extra work at short notice.

### 5 Editor's Report

Mrs Helen Harris thanked contributors to Nos. 46 and 47 of *The Devon Historian*, adding that she was totally dependent on people sending in enough copy. There was plenty of scope for articles, with every chance of publication provided they were mainly concerned with Devon, and were not too long. Mrs Harris also appealed for short items of interest and reports from local societies. She reminded contributors to refer to the notes on house style, printed on page 2 of all recent issues. The deadline for contributions to *The Devon Historian* 48 was 30 November 1993.

Mrs Harris thanked Mrs Stirling for acting as reviews secretary, finding illustrations, and taking charge of posting.

The President thanked the editor for her work in producing two more excellent issues of the Society's Journal, and echoed her appeal for contributions.

### 6 Election of President 1994-96

The Council nominated Dr Basil Greenhill, former Director of the National Maritime Museum, Chairman of the *Great Britain* Trust, and co-editor of *The New Maritime History of Devon*. There were no other nominations, and Dr Greenhill was unanimously elected. Dr Greenhill responded, expressing appreciation of the honour, and his commitment to the Society's aims and work.

Professor Youings then thanked the outgoing President, Professor Ivan Roots, for his four years of able and tactful tenure of office. In reply Professor Roots said he had enjoyed his term of office and hoped to remain active in the Society.

### 7 Election of Council 1993-94

Mr E. Haydon, proposed by Mrs Stirling and seconded by Professor Youings, was unanimously elected as Honorary Treasurer.

Other officers (see list inside front cover of *The Devon Historian*) were re-elected, as was Mr G. Tatham, after retiring under the three-year rule.

### 8 Programme

It was announced that day conferences would be held at Teignmouth on 12 or 19 March 1993, and at Bideford on 2 or 9 July. The final dates would depend on availability of speakers and local venues, and would be circulated to members as usual.

Professor Youings asked members, particularly local history societies, for suggestions for future conferences.

### 9 Any Other Business

Professor Youings drew members' attention to the books on sale, including copies of *The New Maritime History of Devon*.

## LOOKING AHEAD

### DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY: TORRIDGESIDE CONFERENCE, 2 JULY 1994

Details will be sent out beforehand as usual, but the Society's Council thought members might like to know the general plan for the day.

*Morning session* at the Burton Art Gallery and Museum, Bideford, newly re-opened after extension. A member of staff will speak about the exciting new museum provision for the town, then members may browse, or join a guided tour.

*Lunch* – choose from hostelrys in Bideford or Appledore.

*Afternoon session* at the Methodist Church Hall, Richmond Road, Appledore (originally the Wesleyan School opened in 1862). The theme is Victorian education, and the talk, 'Patterns of Illiteracy in Early Victorian England', will be given by Dr W.B. Stephens, author of *Education, Literacy and Society* (Manchester, 1987), and also, among other publications, *Seventeenth-Century Exeter* (Exeter, 1958) and *Sources for English Local History* (Cambridge, more than one edition).

After the talk members will be shown the Victorian Schoolroom at the nearby North Devon Maritime Museum (see Reports from Local Societies on p.35), and may view the short video, *Early Schools*, and/or tour the Museum, as they wish.

Cream teas (for which there will be a modest charge) will then be served at the Methodist Hall.

Altogether a day not to be missed!

A.G.

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## NEW TITLES

### THE JEWS OF SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND:

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