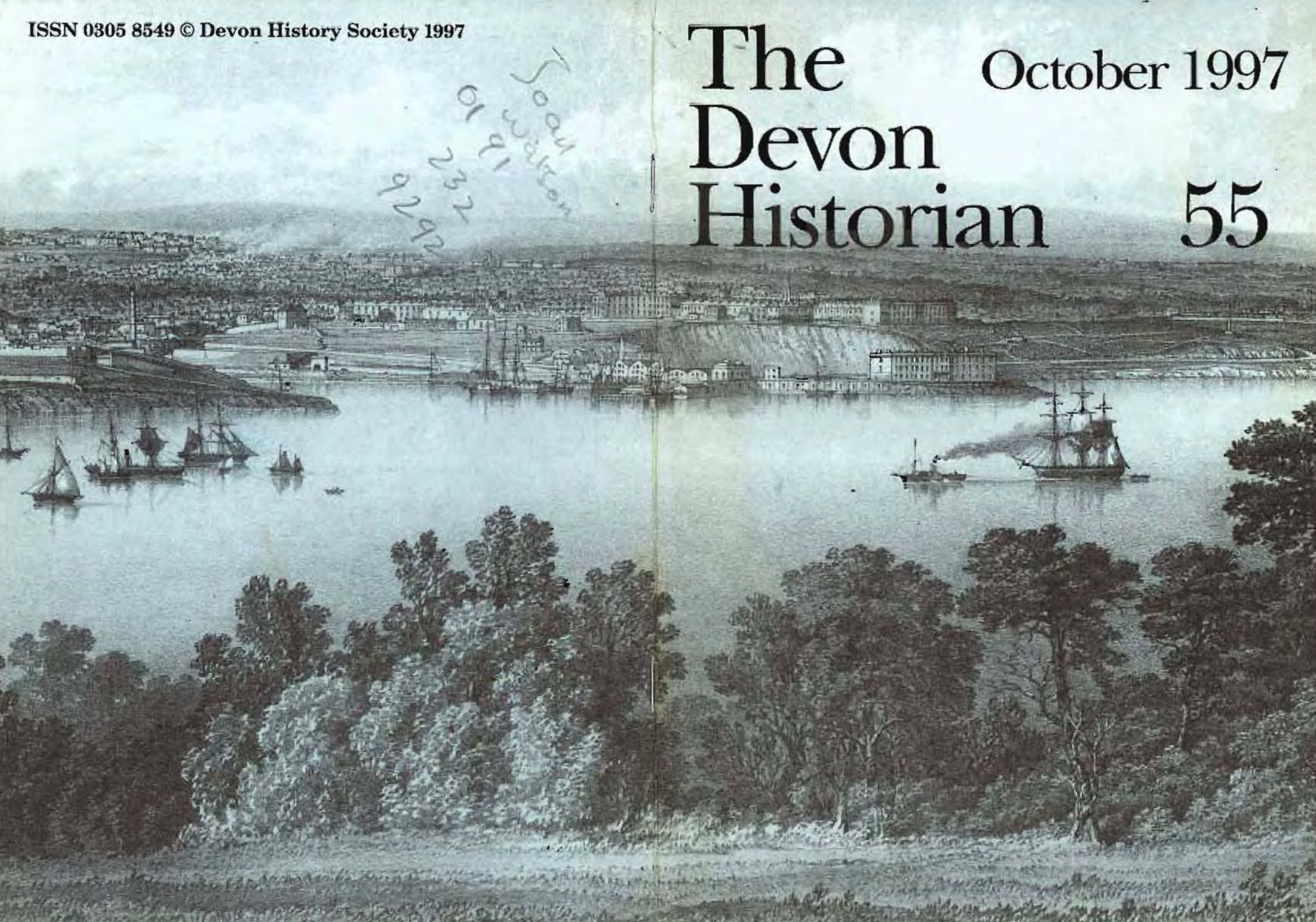


The Devon Historian

October 1997

55

*Joan Walton
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Correspondence relating to *The Devon Historian* and contributions for publication should be sent to Mrs Helen Harris, Hon. Editor, *The Devon Historian*, Hirondelles, 22 Churchill Road, Whitchurch, Tavistock PL19 9BU. The deadline for the next issue is 30 November 1997. Books for review should be sent to Mrs S. Stirling, c/o Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter. EX1 1EZ, who will invite the services of a reviewer. It is not the policy of the Society to receive unsolicited reviews.

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY AGM AND CONFERENCE

The AGM of the Society will take place at St Luke's College, Exeter, on Saturday 11 October from 10.30 a.m. to 3.45 p.m..

The print on the cover (reproduced by kind permission of the Chairman and Officers of the Devon & Exeter Institution) is *Plymouth from Mount Edgecumbe: New Docks, Millbay, West Hoe*. Lithograph by W. Spreat after I. Freeman. Published c.1845. (Somers-Cocks no. 2328)

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Current and back issues of *The Devon Historian* (except for numbers 7, 11, 15, 16 and 23) can be obtained from Mrs S. Stirling, Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter EX1 1EZ. (Number 22, which is available, was not a 'normal' issue, but was totally devoted to being our first Bibliography). Copies up to and including No 36 are priced at £2, post free, and from No 37 onwards £3. Also available post free are *Index to The Devon Historian* (for issues 1-15, 16-30 and 31-45), and *Devon Bibliography* (1980, 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984) all £1 each. Bibliographies for more recent years are available from Devon Library Services.

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NOTE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles are welcomed by the Hon. Editor to be considered for publication in *The Devon Historian*. Generally the length should not exceed 2,000 - 2,500 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 1997, etc.

PETROL, A PEER AND THE PADDINGTON SLEEPER: LORD ASTOR'S DIFFICULTIES IN TRAVELLING TO PLYMOUTH DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Mark Brayshay

When Waldorf Astor was adopted as the Conservative Party candidate for the constituency of Plymouth Sutton in 1908, he immediately took the highly unusual step of purchasing a house in the city. At that time few MPs visited their constituency any more often than was absolutely necessary; fewer still chose to reside amongst those whom they represented but, by purchasing No. 3 Elliott Terrace on Plymouth Hoe, Astor immediately signalled his personal intention of immersing himself totally in the city's affairs.¹ Indeed when at last he won the seat, at the second election of 1910, there began an intimate association between Plymouth and Waldorf Astor that lasted until his death in 1952. His father, the first Viscount Astor, died in October 1919 and Waldorf then succeeded to the peerage as second Viscount. Inevitably this meant resigning his Commons seat, a consequence which Waldorf Astor was at first unwilling to accept. Indeed he tried without success to win support for a Bill to allow peers to relinquish their titles. And so the new Lord Astor eventually took his place in the House of Lords with great reluctance; he had wanted instead to continue his career as a member of the Commons where he felt his influence upon national affairs would be more significant. However, the vacant Plymouth seat was now contested by his wife Nancy, who was returned as a Conservative MP in the by-election of November 1919. Her parliamentary career lasted until 1945.² Though still active in politics in his own right, Lord Astor thereafter chose to devote much energy and his considerable intellectual abilities to the political work of his wife and there is no doubt that together they were a formidable team working on Plymouth's behalf. Their biographers often note the frequency with which they visited Plymouth during these years, travelling tirelessly between the family estate at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, their London base in Babmaes Street near St James's Square, and their house in Plymouth.³ But no details are provided of their means of travel; it is not recorded whether journeys were made by road or rail, and in particular no insights are given into the problems surely encountered during the Second World War when fuel was in short supply, petrol was rationed, and the Westcountry's main arteries of communication were frequently damaged by enemy action.

The esteem in which Lord and Lady Astor were held by the people of Plymouth was considerably strengthened by the couple's frequent presence in Elliott Terrace. They were of course a 'society' couple, leaders of the famous 'Cliveden set', but they also became famous for the dinner parties held in their Plymouth home. Influential national figures were often invited and by providing hospitality, even before the war made Plymouth's problems acute, the Astors created opportunities to discuss with them the city's case for special government support. These events were invariably reported in the local press; the couple's reputation as effective advocates for the city was thus established well before 1939. The Astors were also deeply involved in local affairs and they promoted a range of projects which benefited both the environment and the ordinary people of the city. Their ability to relate to all levels of society endeared them to Plymouth's inhabitants.

In recognition of his enormous contribution to the city Lord Astor was made honorary freeman of Plymouth in 1936, and three years later, when war with Germany was virtually certain, he was invited to serve as Lord Mayor.⁴ His appointment was in fact quite unprecedented: he was officially elected with the unanimous backing of all parties in November 1939 and was thereafter re-appointed, unopposed, every year until 1944. The leadership of Viscount Astor as Lord Mayor, and Lady Astor as a Plymouth MP, certainly proved decisive in ensuring that in the aftermath of the terrible destruction wrought by the 1941 blitz the city's cause was championed at national and international level. Above all else, however, what mattered to the city during the worst days of the war was that Lord and Lady Astor were *in* Plymouth, sharing the misery, and offering comfort and assistance wherever they could. They toured areas which had been bombed, picking their way through the ruined buildings, boosting morale. They visited hospitals, public air-raid shelters and the emergency relief centres.⁵ The Lord Mayor's Social Relief Fund gave practical and financial help to victims of the blitz and amongst the family's papers, now held in the Archives Department of the University of Reading, poignant letters of gratitude are filed along with lists of the people who, bombed out of their homes, were provided with assistance. Astor personally financed the conversion of a Rolls Royce to a fully equipped mobile dental hospital: a curious hybrid vehicle which he donated to the service of the city. Dinner parties were still given at Elliott Terrace, even though the house was itself damaged in the air-raids. The Astors were obliged temporarily to rent a house belonging to the Maristow Estate while repairs were carried out, but they soon moved back to the Hoe; the house in fact sustained further damage towards the end of the war when ceilings came down in rooms on the top floor thereby destroying most of the Lord Mayor's papers: a major tragedy for historians. Throughout all this, as a way of maintaining the city's morale, dances on the Hoe, concerts and parties were regularly arranged. In addition, Lord Astor played perhaps his most significant role in shaping the life of the city when he initiated the process of planning a 'new' Plymouth to replace the city destroyed in the blitz. Indeed, the reconstruction of Plymouth became one of his main preoccupations during the last decade of his life. He began in 1941 by inviting his longstanding friend, Professor Patrick Abercrombie, who was the foremost town planner of the day, to develop the 'Plan for Plymouth'.

Such work in Plymouth, at Cliveden (which was taken over during the war by the Canadian Red Cross for use as a hospital) and Taplow Lodge on the Estate (which was run as a wartime orphanage), as well as at Westminster, inevitably required endless travel. As chairman of the *Observer* newspaper, Lord Astor was regularly in Fleet Street; he was also frequently in the chamber of the House of Lords.⁶ He was, moreover, chairman of the Royal Institute of International Affairs which was engaged in secret war work on behalf of a range of government departments. Much of this was being coordinated at a centre in Oxford and Astor was obliged to make regular visits for consultations regarding progress. Thus, like many other key figures during the war, Astor was constantly on the move.

The Paddington Sleeper

To reach Plymouth, Lord and Lady Astor almost invariably travelled by the Great Western Railway (GWR), though Waldorf found the four or five-hour journey 'wearisome'.⁷ Moreover, he considered that my making the journey during daylight hours, valuable working time was wasted which might have been better spent on a variety of other vital tasks. The nearest station to Cliveden was at Taplow, but the lack of direct

connections to Plymouth often meant travelling from there by a local service into Paddington where the main service towards Devon departed (Figure 1). When returning late at night, or leaving early, the Astors disliked the need to go into London in order to join the Taplow train, and preferred instead the less-exhausting alternative which involved using their motor car to drive to and from Reading station where the Plymouth-Paddington trains invariably stopped. Moreover, as extremely busy people, they frequently travelled overnight on the sleeper service, thereby avoiding the need to sacrifice a day's work in order to make their journey. But when the war commenced, railway lines were inevitably key targets for enemy bombing and the GWR line west of Exeter proved particularly vulnerable. Running along the south coast and adjacent to the broad river estuaries of the Exe, the Teign and the Plym, the tracks were easily picked out by observers in German aircraft and, by the mid-1940s, the link was regularly being broken three or four times a month.⁸ On these occasions trains were re-routed on the rather more secure London and South Western Railway line which ran westwards from Exeter, on the northern side of Dartmoor, via Okehampton and Tavistock. Unfortunately, however, GWR sleeper carriages were too wide to negotiate the bends on the London and South Western track and, following several occasions when sleeper passengers had been woken in the middle of the night in Exeter and obliged to change to seats in the carriages of an ordinary train going via Okehampton, the night service was withdrawn.⁹

Lord Astor instantly mobilised all the influence in high places which his position bestowed in order to secure the restoration of the Paddington sleeper. Early in October

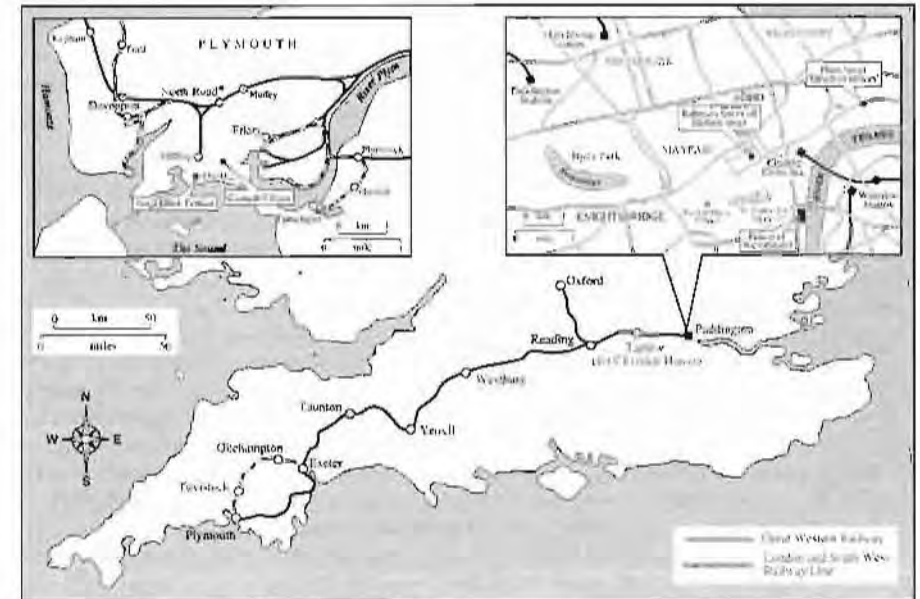


Figure 1. Lord Astor's work during the war involved frequent travel between London, Cliveden, Oxford and Plymouth. For his journeys from London or Cliveden to Plymouth, Astor preferred to travel by the Paddington sleeper train.

1940, he wrote to complain to Sir John Reith at the Ministry of Transport that his own work, as well as that of Lady Astor, had been 'seriously impeded' because, since the 'sleepers have been taken off' they now had to give up virtually an entire day for the journey to Plymouth.¹⁰ Indeed Astor spelled out his views even more sharply in a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon, who also served at the Ministry of Transport:

it really seems to me a scandal when time is so important, and people's physical and mental resources have to be considered, [that] naval officers, public persons, businessmen, etc., who travel between London and the West Country, should be subjected to the inconvenience now imposed upon them by the Great Western Railway.¹¹

When the reasons for discontinuing the service were politely pointed out, Astor was trenchant in his response:

... the fact that they [the GWR] may have to turn passengers out of the sleeper at Exeter once a fortnight because of the inability of the South Western to take the GWR [carriages] is surely an inadequate reason for inconveniencing passengers on the other thirteen days of the fortnight by not providing them with a sleeper at all.¹²

Though it is not possible to establish the extent to which Lord Astor's vigorous personal lobbying had proved decisive in influencing the decision of the management of the GWR to restore the Paddington sleeper service, within days their resolve appears to have cracked. Indeed, on 1 November, Moore-Brabazon informed Astor of their change of heart:

I am glad to say that since I last wrote to you, it has been found possible to restore a nightly sleeper service to the West of England. I hope that this will dispose of your difficulties.¹³

Astor expressed his satisfaction and, thereafter, made virtually all his trips to and from Plymouth by sleeper. But further wartime transport difficulties soon arose. This time, however, the problems he encountered involved travel by motor car.

Car tyres, Mumfords Garage and the purchase of a new Austin

During peacetime, in his role as Plymouth's Lord Mayor, Astor would normally have been conveyed to public engagements in a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce, but when war broke out he chose instead to drive himself in his own small Ford. The vehicle used less petrol than a Rolls and the practice not only saved the city a considerable sum of money, but the lack of ostentation conveyed an appropriate message to local people, especially to those whose property was damaged or destroyed as a result of air raids.¹⁴ As well as choosing this austere mode of personal transport, Astor also assumed responsibility for the maintenance of his modest 'mayoral car'. At the end of 1941 the tyres were worn out. Goods made of rubber inevitably depended on raw material imports which were severely disrupted because of the war. It therefore proved impossible to find replacement tyres in Plymouth and the viscount promptly wrote to the Ministry of Supply in London to see what might be done. He was informed that:

We have a standstill on orders for new rubber tyres until February 13th [1942] until a licensing scheme is devised. Until then I am afraid I can only suggest that you try and obtain re-treaded or second-hand tyres.¹⁵

Taking this advice, Mumfords Garage in Plymouth found a set of re-treads for the Lord Mayor's Ford, but he was also its seems encountering other difficulties. During visits to inspect the city's bomb damage, the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) services, and other formal public engagements in Plymouth, Lord Astor's car frequently broke down. Moreover, its back axle had been seriously weakened on the rough, rubble-strewn ground which by then formed a major part of Plymouth's central area. In fact, the vehicle had become dangerous and on 29 November 1941 Astor had asked Mumfords to place an order for a new Austin motor car as a replacement for the Ford. Although he had obtained the necessary certificate which confirmed his need for a vehicle as essential to the war effort, production of motor cars at the Austin factory had been severely cut so that more of their manufacturing effort could be devoted to military supplies. But the Lord Mayor of Plymouth could hardly manage with no transport at all. Once again Astor's influence in high places came to the rescue. Lord Portal at the Ministry of Supply was a personal friend and Astor asked him whether he could 'accelerate the delivery of the new car'. Portal contacted Lord Leathers and asked him to release a new Austin for Lord Astor as a priority, and delivery of the vehicle was taken shortly afterwards.¹⁶

Petrol Rations

Having secured the restoration of the sleeper service from Paddington, and the expeditious release of a new Austin car from Longbridge in Birmingham, Lord Astor might have thought his transport problems were over, but by July 1942 he began to suffer the constraints imposed by the rationing of petrol. He put his case in a letter to the MP, Geoffrey Lloyd, another personal friend at the Ministry of Fuel and Power. Almost certainly as a result of his extraordinary workload, Astor's health had by then sharply deteriorated and he had suffered a slight stroke.¹⁷ He therefore felt particularly justified in pointing out that 'I can only begin to get through my work if I have reasonable facilities for moving from place to place'.¹⁸ The Ministry had granted him a ration to last three months of just 10 gallons for the Morris-8 he used at Cliveden. He had asked for three times that allowance. In addition to the journey to Reading station, he also needed to drive frequently to Oxford and to other places around London. Employing the phrase in a rather 'antique' sense, Astor assured the Ministry that he would be doing no 'joy riding' and would not use a car at all within London, but he emphasised his need for petrol in order to undertake 'much other miscellaneous work including looking after the interests of three sons who are in the Forces'.

At first the response from the Ministry was cool. Astor had been granted the standard, basic ration for 8 horse-power cars. Though he had not claimed directly for the purpose, Astor was also informed somewhat sententiously that the 'Divisional Petroleum Officers do not make allowances for attendance at the House of Lords; applications for this purpose should be made to the Clerk to the Parliaments'. It is no surprise to discover that Astor's response to this rebuttal of his claim was to fire off a further battery of complaints to the Minister. He wrote to Geoffrey Lloyd again on 28 July spelling out in detail his work in Oxford as Chairman of the Royal Institute of International Affairs which, he noted, had been recently commended by the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden.

I cannot possibly find the time to go over there [Oxford] unless I can...run over at a week-end from Cliveden in a motor. I am pretty well fagged out at the end of the week anyway and simply could not face a cross-country train journey.¹⁹

His role as chairman of *The Observer* meant regular trips not only to the newspaper headquarters in central London, but also to other destinations.

Bringing out a good newspaper is a form of national service. But it involves having to meet all kinds of busy people from Cabinet Ministers and Ambassadors down, at their time - and sometimes it is too late to catch an evening train [home].²⁰

Astor ended his letter to Lloyd by noting that he was 'being pressed to be Lord Mayor of Plymouth once again because of the war', in other words he was being asked by the city to continue as mayor for yet another year. Having enough petrol to use his car to reach Reading station would make 'all the difference'. A little sheepish that he had earlier mentioned the need for petrol to use his car in looking after his own estate and properties, as well as his sons' interests, Astor said he had 'referred to this to emphasize that in an already full life (including the foregoing) I cannot do my national work without some (petrol) help'.²¹

Underlining the viscount's extraordinarily busy and itinerant life-style at this time, it may be noted that the series of letters exchanged between Astor and the multi-layered bureaucracy at the Ministry of Fuel and Power themselves disclose his frequent moves. Thus letters were written variously from Elliott Terrace in Plymouth, from Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, and from No. 9 Babmaes Street (off Jermyn Street) which was Astor's base in London. Finally, on 31 July 1942, he received the response which he sought. As an interim measure Geoffrey Lloyd agreed to more than treble Astor's petrol allowance from 10 to 35 gallons for the forthcoming three months, namely September - November 1942. Moreover, if that proved insufficient for his needs, 'perhaps your secretary would get in touch with mine and let her know the situation'.²² He was asked to complete the appropriate application form for the ration period in question and send it off to the Divisional Petroleum Officer at White Knights Park in Reading (Figure 2). Presumably to ensure that his request would not be queried in the White Knights office Lloyd also helpfully suggested that Astor should enter on the form an estimate of his mileage at 400-450 per month. By August the problem was therefore solved. The outcome was greeted by Lord Astor with considerable satisfaction.

Conclusion

In shedding light on the difficulties which Plymouth's wartime Lord Mayor encountered in undertaking journeys connected with this and his other duties, two clear points emerge. First the evidence provides an indication of Astor's punishing schedule of work in the early 1940s which required considerable travel; it also reinforces his image as a tireless worker on behalf of Plymouth during the war. Secondly, it is clear that Astor was able to exercise his considerable influence in order not only to secure changes of policy by national organisations, such as railway companies, but also to receive concessionary treatment regarding the issue of rationed goods. In solving his travel difficulties, Astor's actions provide a demonstration of the prevailing power of patronage and the importance of 'friends in high places'. The question of whether or not it was strictly ethical to exploit friendships and personal influences upon those who held positions of high responsibility seems never to have occurred to the viscount. He was clearly prepared to

FORM No. R(M.S.) 1:
MOTOR FUEL RATIONING ORDER, 1941.

In pursuance of paragraph 11 of the Motor Fuel Rationing Order, 1941, the Board of Trade has provided by Statute, dated the fifteenth day of July, 1941, that the information to be furnished by every person desiring to obtain coupons for the purposes of the above-mentioned Order authorising a supply of motor fuel additional to the basic ration for use for essential purposes for a private motor car shall be from the first day of August, 1941, to be entered on this form and that this form shall be used on which to furnish such information.

This Form is to be used where an additional quantity of Motor Fuel is required for ESSENTIAL PURPOSES. This form should only be submitted after the basic ration book has been obtained, subject to any announcement to the contrary that may be made.

Divisional Ref. No. _____

For Official Use Only.

Entered	Category	Quantity allowed extra	Serial numbers of coupons issued	Date of issue	Counting Officer
					REV.

Application for Coupons for the purposes of the Motor Fuel Rationing Order for the time being in force authorising a supply of Motor Fuel additional to the basic ration for use for essential purposes in a Private Motor Car.

An owner MUST be given to every question in this application and a SEPARATE FORM USED IN RESPECT OF EACH VEHICLE, otherwise the application will be subject to delay.
 This form must be filled in and signed by the registered owner and, when completed, must be forwarded, together with the registration book of the vehicle, to the DIVISIONAL PETROLEUM OFFICER for the Division in which the vehicle is ordinarily kept at the time of application.

1. Name and Full Postal Address of Applicant in Block Capitals (State whether Mr., Mrs., or Miss)	Surname <u>ASTOR</u> Christian Name(s) <u>Waldorf</u> Address <u>Cliveden, Taplow, Bucks and 9, Babmaes St., Jermyn St., London, S.W.1.</u>
2. (a) National Registration Identity No. (b) Nationality. (c) Profession, Occupation, or nature of business.	(a) _____ (b) <u>British</u> (c) <u>Municipal and National</u>
3. Particulars of car for which the motor fuel is required.	Make and Year of Car. <u>Morris</u> Registration No. <u>EKT 202</u> V.P. <u>B</u>
4. Particulars of other Private Motor Vehicles owned in addition to that shown in 3 above.	DIVISIONAL REF. <u>S/E 6708</u> REGN NO(S) <u>EAD 868</u> H.F. (or C.C. if motor cycle) <u>30</u>
5. Serial Number of last Ration Book issued in respect of this car for which the motor fuel is required.	_____
6. Total additional quantity of Motor Fuel required per month for all purposes as set out in answer to Question 3 and for which application is now made.	<u>Thirteen</u> gallons per month.
7. Do you receive any fuel supplies from the Ministry of War Transport's organisation for goods or public service vehicles? (Yes or No)	<u>No.</u>
8. (a) Period for which this application is made. (b) Date of last application and Divisional Reference Number (see page 6 of your Registration Book). (c) To whom made. (d) Quantity, if any, allowed.	(a) Months of <u>Sept., Oct., and Nov.</u> (b) Date <u>23rd July, 1942</u> Div. Ref. No. <u>S/4092/17</u> (c) <u>Div. Petroleum Officer, Reading.</u> (d) <u>10</u> units.

contd.
 P.T.O.
 Ministry of Fuel & Power

Figure 2 One of Lord Astor's applications for motor fuel coupons for the period September - November 1942. He applied for 13 gallons per month for his Morris-8 motor car which he used for journeys to Oxford, central London, to and from Reading railway station where he caught the train to Plymouth (Source: Astor MS 1066/1/214).

use whatever means were at his disposal to achieve an objective.

This brief exploration of Lord Astor's transportation problems during his time as Plymouth's Lord Mayor provides a tantalising glimpse of the degree of disruption and difficulty to normal life which was suffered by all sections of the population at a time when the nation was obliged to adjust to the unusual conditions of war. In fact, the problems of civilian travel have not received much attention from authors who have studied the impact of the Second World War upon Devon.²³ It is therefore a somewhat neglected theme which perhaps requires further investigation. Moreover, in this paper, an exploration of the viscount's travel arrangements has offered a further opportunity to understand a little more of the activities and personal character of a man whose influence on the twentieth-century history of the city of Plymouth has been both far-reaching and profound.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Archives Department in the University of Reading for permission to use Lord Astor's papers. Thanks are due to Ian Stokes for drawing Figure 1. This research forms part of a larger study currently being undertaken by the author in collaboration with Dr Stephen Essex and Dr Brian Chalkley of the Department of Geographical Sciences at the University of Plymouth focused on the role of Lord Astor in the development of the 'Plan for Plymouth' and work undertaken in the early 1940s towards the reconstruction of the city in the aftermath of the wartime destruction.

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2. Wilson, D., *The Astors: The life and times of the Astor dynasty, 1763-1992*. London, 1993, p.160; *Western Morning News*, 13 October 1983 (son 'Jakey' won Plymouth seat in 1951).
3. Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p. 351; Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 327; Kavalier, L., *The Astors: The family chronicle*. London, 1996, p.184.
4. *Western Morning News*, 1 October 1952 (freedom of the city in 1936)
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7. Astor MS 1066/1/214 Lord Astor to Geoffrey Lloyd, Ministry of Fuel and Power, 28 July 1942.
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11. Astor MS 1066/1/1833 Lord Astor to Lieut. Col. J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon, M.C., M.P., Ministry of Transport, 4 October 1940.
12. Astor MS 1066/1/1833 Lord Astor to Lieut. Col., J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon, M.C., M.P., Ministry of Transport, 23 October 1940.
13. Astor MS 1066/1/1833 J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon, Ministry of Transport to Viscount Astor, 1 November 1940.

14. Astor MS 1066/1/214 Lord Astor to the Rt Hon. Lord Portal, D.S.O., M.V.O., Ministry of Supply, 28 January 1942.
15. Astor MS 1066/1/214 Lord Portal, Ministry of Supply, to the Viscount Astor, 26 January 1942
16. Astor MS 1066/1/214 Lord Portal, Ministry of Supply, to the Viscount Astor, 4 February 1942; Lord Astor to Lord Portal, 9 February 1942.
17. He recovered well from the stroke following convalescence at Rock in Cornwall, but his movements were a bit restricted thereafter. Despite this set-back, the flow of correspondence seems scarcely to have been interrupted. Astor frequently makes a rather understated reference to his illness in his letters 'I have been on the shelf due to overwork and am just getting back into the saddle'. See: Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
18. Astor MS 1066/1/214 Lord Astor to Geoffrey W. Lloyd Esq., M.P., Ministry of Fuel and Power, 14 July 1942.
19. Astor MS 1066/1/214 Lord Astor to Geoffrey W. Lloyd Esq., M.P., Ministry of Fuel and Power, 28 July 1942.
20. *ibid*
21. *ibid*
22. Astor MS 1066/1/214 Geoffrey W. Lloyd Esq., M.P., Ministry of Fuel and Power, to The Viscount Astor, 28 July 1942.
23. See, for example, Wasley, G. *Devon at War: 1939-1945*, Exeter, 1994. This relatively recent study scarcely mentions the road and railway network at all.

'WHEN LOVE BEGINS TO SICKEN AND DECAY': SOME DEVONSHIRE ALTERNATIVES TO DIVORCE

S. Bhanji

Although some psychologists view happiness as a pathological state of mind, most people see little unnatural in avoiding the converse providing it is not done too selfishly. Whatever else is thought of divorce, it can put an end to unnecessary misery. Although in theory now easier and no longer carrying with it the prospect of social ostracism, until the 1850s the legalised ending of a marriage was time-consuming, expensive and at times degrading for the affluent; and virtually impossible for the poor.¹

During the last century and earlier, many believed that it was lawful for a husband to sell his wife providing that both agreed. It was common opinion that the sale must be announced in advance, and that the wife should wear a halter until she entered the purchaser's home. It was then the responsibility of the buyer to maintain her. When Michael Henchard sold his wife in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, none of the bystanders expressed any reservations over the legality of the transaction. Such a view was not uncommon in Devon.² Whitfield mentioned a wife-selling during the seventeenth century,³ but the heyday of this practice was during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century.

In September 1833 various local newspapers reported the sale by auction at Okehampton of a Mrs Kinsman (or Kingsman). The bidding commenced at twopence-halfpenny, and reached 3s 6d. The successful bidder, named as Furse, was refunded 6d 'for luck'. The *Western Luminary* and the *Exeter Flying Post* added no comment, but the *Western Times*, *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* and *Devonshire Chronicle* stated that the authorities should have put a stop to the disgraceful and scandalous business. In the fullest report, that in the *Devonshire Chronicle*, censure was soon followed by mockery.⁴

The case to which the above communication refers was as follows: A man and his wife belonging to the parish of Brentor, discovered after some time spent in matrimonial jars that they could not agree; and so they agreed to separate. An agreement took place at Tavistock market, on Friday week, (Jan having got hold of a *spare rib* to whom he seemed to have some liking,) that the real rib should be disposed of at Okehampton market the following day, Saturday! The intended sale having been noised about, a very considerable number of spectators took their station on the Parade, at Okehampton, as early as twelve o'clock, when they remained several hours to witness this species of divorce. But, whether Jan and his *ribs* had some misgivings, or whether they preferred the union between themselves and all the ale at the London, we are not able to state: at all events, seven o'clock arrived when the *fair one* gave Jan the hint that if anything was to be done, it was high time; this only produced a reply, expressed in a determination to have another pint, first. Having now screwed up his courage; the party moved on to the cattle market, where the lot was put up at 6d., and knocked down at 3s. to another clod-pole who with his bargain, the seller, and the spare rib, all sojourning to have another lush at the house from which they started, amid the shouting of some hundreds of people, where they remained to enjoy themselves for the night; all being done, as they say, according to the "lah" (law). The halter was purchased by a

dealer in curiosities, and the money paid for the market toll has been marked by the receiver, and put away among his curious and family relics!!

Baring-Gould had personal knowledge of the case and named the buyer as Henry Frise, a village poet. Despite the objections of his squire and rector, Frise treated his purchase as his lawful wife. She became well-respected for her clean and careful house-keeping and her success in managing an ill-tempered partner. However, when she died in around 1843 the parson refused to enter her in the burial register as Anne Frise. Taking umbrage, Henry organised her interment elsewhere.⁵

Sometimes the arrangements were more private. Shortly before W. H. Thornton became rector of North Bovey in 1868 one of the townsmen walked to Chagford, where he agreed to sell his wife for a quart of beer. When he returned with the intending purchaser, the wife promptly took herself and her children to Exeter. Her only subsequent visit home was to attend her husband's funeral. The parties were not named and, judging from Thornton's other reminiscences, details of the story may have been altered to preserve anonymity. Thornton's view of wife-selling was more charitable than that of some of his peers. He suggested that in some cases it was the only way a husband could ensure that his wife was supported while undergoing the seven-year separation some believed would result in an automatic divorce.⁶

The North Bovey wife was not the only woman to be offered in exchange for alcohol. At around the same period as her sale was being negotiated, the following notice appeared elsewhere:

This here be to hinform the publick as how James Cole be dispozed to sell his wife by Auction. Her be a dacent, chesly woman, and be of age twenty-five years. The sale be to take place in the New Inn, Thursday next at seven o'clock.

The sale took place as announced, with the wife stood on a table and the husband, a stone-cutter, acting as auctioneer. Led to believe the procedure was illegal if money passed, the vendor accepted bids in kind. After turning down a coat because it was too small and a pick because he already owned one, the husband was pleased to accept a two-gallon jar of Plymouth gin from a local publican. Sadly, the buyer drank heavily and frequently beat his 'wife'.⁷ The young mid-Devon wife sold in 1870 by an elderly rat-catcher for 1s perhaps fared better, as the new couple lived together for many years.⁸

Some sales were at the wife's instigation. On 14 December 1822 the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* reported the sale of Mrs Brooks of Ivybridge at Plymouth pig-market. Spurning the halter, she arrived in style on horseback and confirmed her willingness to be auctioned. The newspaper hinted that a suitor had made her pregnant, but was refused parental permission to wed. The lady hastily married another, but her affections were soon directed elsewhere and the couple agreed to part. Described as a fine woman with beautiful black eyes, flowing locks and a fortune of £100; she was bought by the man responsible for her current pregnancy for a sum reported as between six and twenty guineas. Before the transaction could be finalised, however, Mrs Brooks and her purchaser were taken before the mayor and bound over to attend the next sessions.⁹ Other renderings were given in a contemporary broadside (see figure) and later by Whitfield. As well as being young and good-looking, the woman was depicted as having hopes of a £700 inheritance. When she presented herself for sale she was accompanied by an ostler of the Lord Exmouth Inn. The bidding began at 5s and

A true and singular Account of
Wife-Selling
EXTRAORDINARY!

ABOUT half twelve, on Thursday the 12th of December 1822, the public were attracted to Plymouth-cattle-market, in consequence of notice which had been previously given, that a man, at that time and place, was to dispose of his wife by public sale! The report which accompanied the notice stated that the lady was not only young and handsome, but that she had rode to town in the morning on her own horse, of her own free will and accord, and with consent of her husband, who was to act the part of an auctioneer on the occasion; and that she would moreover, in the course of a few days, succeed to £600 which her husband could not touch. The concourse of spectators was immense, and they were not kept waiting long, the husband and wife having appeared in the market-place exactly at the appointed time, the latter accompanied by the waiter of the Lord Falmouth Inn, Old Town.—The husband put the article up at once, and asked for bidders.—Five shillings was the first offer—then the next—fifteen the third, and so on, until the ostler aforesaid made three pounds; when to the evident disappointment of the auctioneer, as well as of the lady, two competitors took possession of the goods, and with them the auctioneer, and carried them off directly to the Guildhall, where the civil magistrate was then sitting. The parties were ordered before the mayor. The husband named Brooks, and who resides at Ivy Lodge, on being asked why he had committed so illegal an act as to attempt the sale of his wife in the way he had been doing? very innocently said—“They were both willing, and he did not think there was any harm in it—they had not lived together for a considerable time—they had been married about two years and a half, and she brought him a child about three weeks after marriage! which until after it was born, he never knew any thing about; that she died soon after that; that he got a coffin for it, paid the expences of the funeral, and put it respectfully out of the way, without ever revealing his wife with her standing, but

all would not do. She soon after deserted him, notwithstanding his kindness, and went to live with another man, by whom she had one child since; and he was informed she was again pregnant with another. On being asked who had advised or told him that he could sell his wife, he said “many people in the country told him he could do it; and that in consequence of her coming to him, and saying that a person would give him twenty pounds, and take her altogether clean off his hands, (three pounds in hand, and seven more upon Christmas,) he had had her advertised for sale in Madsbury, on three separate market-days, and had come to Plymouth that morning by her appointment to see the business finished.” The lady, a good-looking young woman, stated, that she and her husband could not agree, and that in consequence, as she knew of a person that would take her, and give twenty pounds for the bargain, she wished to get separated from him, and she had been told by different persons that the thing could be done by sale in the market-place on a market-day.” On being asked the name of the person who was to buy her, she said “it was Kane, and that he lived near Plystock; she further said he had disappointed her in not coming forward to bid as he had promised her, and that in consequence of his having deceived her, she engaged with the ostler of the Lord Falmouth Inn, where she was in the habit of putting up her horse when she came to town, to bid for her, if the price did not exceed twenty pounds.” She said she had left her own horse by the way, on account of not being a city-bred and borrowed one in stead of it of a person near Ivy Lodge, with whom she stated herself to be in the habit of inferring.

After a good deal of deliberation it was determined upon, that the matter should be heard over to-morrow the 13th of the ensuing session; but she then requesting delay was taken, judgment on this subject was to have directed.

W. Stephenson, Printer, Gateshead.

A contemporary broadside commemorating the attempted sale of Mrs Brookes in December 1822. Reproduced by kind permission of the British Library - shelf no. LR 38c18(21)

advanced rapidly until the ostler offered £3. The watch then stepped in and escorted husband and wife to the Guildhall. There, they protested that they did no wrong. The wife had left her husband and was unfaithful on a number of occasions. She arranged to be bought by her lover, but he was not present. Determined to achieve her freedom, Mrs Brooks instructed the ostler to bid and undertook to reimburse him. Taking into account the couple's ignorance of the law, the justices merely bound them over to be of good behaviour. The broadside gave more information on Mrs Brooks. Three weeks after her marriage, she gave birth to a child who soon died. Despite her unsuspecting husband taking the matter well, she soon left him. The hoped-for buyer was a Mr Kane of Plystock (*sic*), by whom she had a child and was again pregnant.¹⁰ Another unsuccessful attempt at collusion between purchased and purchaser took place at the Barnstaple Friday market in 1834. When a brutal husband, Christopher Lock of Braunton, and his errant wife drank together for what both intended to be the last time, they were joined by the latter's lover. Whatever bargain was struck came to nothing as the authorities intervened and prevented the intended public sale.¹¹ A final example of a wife pleased to be sold is provided by the woman bought at Totnes for £50 by an infatuated admirer. Despite an undertaking not to do so, she soon rejoined her husband. The couple then spent the proceeds on a second honeymoon.¹² The wife of a Devonport sailor was probably less agreeable. On his return from sea in the summer of 1856 he discovered that his brood was larger than he expected. After reaching the obvious conclusion, he decided to auction off his wife at the local market. There, she was sold for 1s to a dock-worker.¹³

The sale of a husband took place only rarely, but may lie behind an unusual entry in the Mary Tavy parish register. Dated 12 September 1756, it concerns the baptism of Robert Elford.

Robert Elford, child of Susannah Elford (by her Sister's Husband to whom she was married with the Consent of her Sister, the wife who was at the Wedding,) was bap.¹⁴

The episcopal transcript was more succinct.

Robert Elford base child of Susannah Elford by her Sister's Husband cap: Sep 12th 15

During the latter years of the nineteenth century, a number of writers drew attention to the parish register entry, one describing it as reflecting ‘an odd tale of civilisation and morals in a moor parish little over a century ago.’¹⁶ Later, Baring-Gould provided a more elaborate interpretation. Although admitting that there was no evidence, he was of the opinion that the wife sold her husband to her sister. He suggested also that she then consented to and attended a form of marriage between the pair.¹⁷

According to the parish register, of the five male Elfords raising families in Mary Tavy between 1700 and 1750 only one had a daughter baptised Susannah. The youngest child of John and Mercy Elford, she was christened on 30 October 1723 and had two sisters, Katherine and Mary. The writer has been unable to trace any record of Katherine marrying and she was possibly the Catherine Elford who was buried at Mary Tavy in 1744.¹⁸ A Mary Elford married Thomas Gist of Okehampton at Mary Tavy in January 1738/39. He was the son of a labourer William Gest and was baptised in 1692. Ten years later he was apprenticed, as Thomas Gist, to a local husbandman. In view of his age, it is perhaps likely that his Mary was the 47-year old daughter of Lewes and Katherine Elford, rather than Susannah's sister or the 15-year-old daughter of Thomas and

Christian Elford. A Thomas Guest was buried in Okehampton in 1751.¹⁹ The writer has failed to find any record of Mary Gist remarrying in any of the west Devon parishes. Attempts to discern the fate of Robert have proved similarly inconclusive. There is no record of him receiving poor relief at Mary Tavy, although Susannah's mother probably did in 1767. A Robert Elford was buried at Mary Tavy in 1797, but his age was 29 years making him the son of William and Grace Elford. As to Susannah Elford, a woman so-named and a William Creedy had banns called at Mary Tavy in 1760. Both were described as of the parish, but there is no record of them marrying there or elsewhere in west Devon.²⁰ So far, the events behind Robert Elford's birth can only be guessed at. Susannah would not by any means be the only woman to seduce or be seduced by a brother-in-law, but a more intriguing explanation is that she provided a long-desired child for her sister and was an early example of a surrogate parent.

A more clear-cut example of husband-selling in Devon was commemorated by a broadside of around 1824. In August of that year Jane Todd led her spouse, a 30-year-old cobbler, to Totnes market, by a handkerchief around his neck and announced that the highest bidder would be entitled also to a house worth £200. This offer notwithstanding, to the amusement of the bystanders the man was knocked-down to a sixty-year-old woman for only two shillings. When Thomas Todd came to claim his property, all he received was a torrent of abuse, his awls and lasts, and a stool.²¹

Wife auctions generally attracted large crowds. In most cases this was out of curiosity, but sometimes anger supervened. In July 1828 Henry Broom of Buckerell had to fend off an outraged mob after auctioning off Mrs Broom to Thomas Tremlett of Awliscombe for £1 at Honiton market.²² By and large, the authorities reacted with indifference. On the other hand, the above-mentioned Christopher Lock spent a night in gaol,²³ and in 1823 William Andrews received a short prison sentence for purchasing the wife of William Hodge in Plymouth.²⁴

In the same month as the sale of Mrs Kinsman was reported, the *Western Times* published an account of a woman who asked the Mayor of Exeter to divorce her and her husband. When the parties appeared before the Mayor's Court the husband was asked why he beat his wife. In reply he stated that his barber told him that every hair of this head was loose in its 'socket' and that his wife was responsible. The mayor reacted with incredulity, the wife with astonishment and most with unrestrained laughter. The husband, however, stuck to his story and offered to swear to it on oath and produce the barber as a witness. Although the mayor could not comply with the wife's entreaty for a divorce, the couple agreed to a separation and to the husband giving his wife 2s 6d out of his weekly wage of 12s. As they left well-satisfied with the proceedings, the mayor recalled the man and asked for the fee of 1s for the summons. According to the newspaper, the 'loose-haired hero' threw down the shilling with the greatest alacrity, clapping his thigh, and swearing he would pay fifty-shillings any day for such a capital bargain.²⁵ This incident does not appear to be reported elsewhere, and the Mayor's Court Book for the period does not contain details of cases heard, other than those involving chimney fires.²⁶

Often presented as humorous examples of the quaint activities of the under-privileged, the above cases reveal much unhappiness and discontent. Although at times the arrangements to relieve this worked well, in some instances the women were to endure further suffering and distress. However, in one respect they were fortunate. They were not among those abandoned to face a lifetime of vagrancy or the horrors of the workhouse. Nor did they fall victim to murder.²⁷

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DEVON COUNTY PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUM, EXMINSTER: THE EARLY YEARS

Jeanette Lee

It may be assumed that nineteenth century parliamentary reform concerning the care of lunatics in Britain (not including Scotland) was well planned and that clear guidelines were given to those responsible for their treatment and maintenance. Closer investigation reveals that this was not the case. Sanction for the establishment of lunatic asylums to cater for the pauper insane was authorised by the House of Commons in 1808.¹ It was suggested by those in Parliament that each county erect its own institution to house or contain insane paupers. This concept reflected the provision for other paupers in the community who were housed in parish workhouses. Local objections concerning the cost, and public opposition to the permissive proposal, led to statutory legislation in 1845.²

Concern regarding the treatment of lunatics may well seem disproportionate at a time when public community care was minimal. For example, hospital provision was virtually non-existent and organised educational provision for those who could not pay for it was generally provided, if at all, by local church organisations in the form of Sunday Schools. However, interest or fear of lunacy was stimulated by the revelation of gross abuses that had occurred in an asylum in York during the early 1800s, and prior to this the sad events of King George III's mental illness at the end of the eighteenth century. Certainly the idea that lunacy was on the increase caused a great deal of fear.

Directives from Parliament concerning provision for the insane were few. Those that were given reflected those recommended for prisons by the prison reformer John Howard. He suggested that places of confinement should be built on high ground to provide maximum ventilation, that there should be an ample water supply and that male and female inmates should be completely separated.³ Other than that no specific guidelines were given. There was no direction about what category of inmate should be housed in county asylums, although legislation was clear about the legal procedure for committal. Neither were directives given concerning the type of buildings⁴ that were to be constructed, their size, the amount of land required, or whether such establishments were to provide their own produce, although it was suggested, as with prisons, that they should be as self-sufficient as possible. Surprisingly there were no guidelines given concerning standards for staff or of forms of medical supervision and care to be provided in such establishments. However, it was suggested that the appointment of a medically qualified superintendent would be preferable to one with no medical training.

It is not surprising that the establishment of the Devon County Pauper Lunatic Asylum at Exminster which opened in July 1844, was a somewhat haphazard affair. Local magistrates who had been responsible for the choice of site, the building, the asylum's financial management, and the appointment of its first superintendent knew little about the confinement and care of lunatics. John Charles Bucknill (1817-1897), its first superintendent, was a young, newly qualified doctor⁵ with little experience of working with the insane. Few medical guidelines existed and those that did were generally recognised to be outdated. The task of filling the asylum that was erected to hold four hundred inmates was allocated to Bucknill: he was left to his own devices to gather in from the surrounding area those he deemed in need of confine-

Market-place, by a handkerchief round his neck, and put him up for sale to the highest bidder, stating that the purchaser would be entitled to a good dwelling-house worth two hundred pounds. He was bought by an old woman of 60 years of age. Being the most laughable circumstance that has occurred for a century back, Gateshead, undated (National Library of Scotland Crawford MB 1631).

22. *Exeter Flying Post* 10 July 1828; *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* 12 July 1828.
23. *North Devon Journal* 3 April 1834.
24. Whitfield, *op. cit.*, p. 297. Hodge was a wife-beater, whose wife left to live with Andrews. Hodge failed to appear at his trial, but Andrews was given a term in prison by way of warning.
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ment. He began by demanding that all those who were considered lunatic and who were being cared for in workhouses be taken to the asylum and he sent letters to each county parish asking them to declare their lunatics so that they could also be sent to the county asylum at Exminster. It proved difficult in the initial years to fill the county asylum but this changed as the function of the asylum expanded and the category of inmate broadened.

Bucknill was determined to maintain full numbers in the asylum in spite of considerable opposition from those managing the Exeter workhouse and some local magistrates who felt that the insane could be adequately and more cheaply cared for there. Bucknill's concept of asylum care grew to include those who were by no means insane. He admitted that some patients were simply desperately in need of medical care during the final stages of terminal illness. Their mental disquiet was no more than that of anyone else in such a situation, but desperate relatives, having nowhere else to turn, brought them to the asylum and to a doctor who, they had heard, would not turn them away.⁶ In 1854 Bucknill wrote: "The number of patients has not been small who, from time to time, have been admitted into the Devon Asylum with serious disease of the several organs of the body, and with no greater amount of mental disturbance than is the frequent result of such disease."⁷ Bucknill was severely criticised for this misuse of asylum resources and was reprimanded for it by the magistrates. He admitted the fault and promised to rectify the situation.⁸

Close analysis of patient records reveals that many men and women, but above all women found themselves in the asylum as a result of grief. In many cases women had lost numerous children and were temporarily unable to carry on with their every-day lives. The admission documents for numerous inmates reveal no evidence of mental abnormality and most of these people returned to their families and normal lives after a period of about twelve months. Some made temporary use of the asylum to provide respite care for adult children or spouses who were suffering from mental disability but who were generally cared for at home; these patients were returned home after a short period under the heading 'relieved', or 'temporarily relieved'. Others, Bucknill recognised, resided in the asylum to gain some relief from unhappy family life and violent, often drunken, husbands, or were in despair because of sudden financial misfortune.⁹

It is evident, therefore, that the Devon Pauper Lunatic Asylum became an institution of social, medical and welfare provision at a time when there was little alternative available. Far from being the conception of a Victorian lunatic asylum as a high-walled prison from which inmates never emerged, Devon County Pauper Lunatic Asylum was a place of respite for many, whether for caring relatives whose loved ones were housed for a short time, or those facing temporary mental disquiet as a result of loss, or for people who were dying and needed some medical attention in their final hours.

It can be seen that during the early years, county pauper lunatic asylums, not least in Devon, developed in their own particular ways. The ethos, care and treatment reflected, almost exclusively, the individual ideas of the incumbent superintendent. In fact their development can be seen as an ad-hoc series of experiments as institutions struggled to cater for larger and larger numbers and to adapt to modern forms of medicine, drugs and surgical procedures.

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'YOU HAVE DONE VALIANT SERVICE'

Anthony Greenstreet

What a pity it is that one of the most enthralling diaries of the Second World War lies unpublished in the archives of the Imperial War Museum!

Mrs Anne Lee Michell (1908-88) was born into a literary family. When war came in 1939 she was married to a solicitor in Wellington, Somerset. Although caring for a large house and garden and two small daughters, she flung herself into war-work - manning the local dust-cart; running a communal goat, chicken and pig farm; working part-time in a factory; and helping run mobile canteens of the Women's Voluntary Service for Civil Defence. Some of the diary's most vivid passages describe how the Wellington WVS helped after the great air-raids on Plymouth and Exeter.

On 3 May 1941 they were called to Plymouth where for four days they were based at Tavistock. 'Sunny morning, the kids and I went up hill on bikes to pick primroses. Getting back at 12.45 Babs rushed out and caught me - says she and I had to go to Plymouth to cook for and drive the Queen's Messenger convoy for food. Rushed home to pack and then drove to Plymouth with Babs, Mrs Langford and a Mrs Walker. Found lovely blue and fawn vans on car park in blitzed suburb of Plymouth and drove one to Tavistock where they're based for night. Muddled gears and held up the whole convoy!! Dinner at pub in Tavistock, then long moonlit drive over Dartmoor to Ivybridge where a relative of Mrs L's put us up. Whole day completely unreal'

Sunday 4 May

'Got up at cock-crow an hour earlier owing to double summer-time. Lovely early drive to Tavistock, found the right way and so did it quicker. Drove my van to Plymouth and did day's work stewing soup, cutting bread and butter etc. Whole affair rather a muddle, no one to organise work, masses of helpers doing nothing etc. Convoy - 2 kitchens, 2 stoves, 2 water carts, 3 canteens. Canteens go out distributing food around Plymouth, but we were not sent. Drove back to Tavistock, vans nice to drive now I am used to 'em.'

Monday 5 May

'Drive over Dartmoor so lovely in early morn, frost in meadows and moors all misty. Such a hard day's work today, never sat down at all. Got sent out with canteen amid frightful rubbish, ruined homes. Soldiers doing demolition very glad of tea - dust so awful. Could never have imagined such scenes - nothing left of whole streets but twisted girders and rubble. People so pathetic especially the kids. Terribly tired by evening but drove back somehow.'

Tuesday 6 May

'Our last day in Plymouth, glad as am dirty from the smoke and our dixies. A stray incendiary from raid last night lit a sulky dixie very nicely! Was sent out again and soon sold out of soup and food, so drove home thro' Plymouth and saw most of it. Shall never forget these three days. Hoped to be relieved from Bristol but no one came, so had to drive convoy back to Tavistock as usual and came home from there. Got in 9.30 dead tired...'

A year later the call came to help at Exeter, where the WVS were based at a large house near Chudleigh - apparently Ugbrooke.

Wednesday 6 May 1942

'Early start to Exeter, and chattering mob of women waiting for the train - 26 of us! Long pause outside Exeter, and watched men mending the line- bomb craters everywhere. Queen's Messengers were parked on Bury Meadows, and we took over from the Taunton team, but to our disgust Mrs Mills remained in charge, bellowing and roaring like a mad bull. Mrs Walker (our OC) got quieter and calmer by contrast, she's a joy to work for. In no time we were at it, cutting sandwiches, and serving teas in a van down by the gate, where an endless queue of people waited for it. It was fearfully hot and I was in charge of a squad there for an hour or more. We worked flat out, just serving teas, dripping with sweat. Then I was sent out with a team in van, and drove around Exeter. It all seemed like a dream - ruins everywhere, the High Street just a goat's track between shattered walls and heaps of debris, choking white dust under a hot sun and sweating soldiers everywhere clearing a broader path. Impossible to believe it was Exeter - I kept thinking I was back in Plymouth a year ago, and so in a way it was all ludicrously familiar. In one way things were better - our organisation. We had a good sit down lunch at a hotel, and didn't have to look after fires and dixies - soldiers and ARP men did all that, and carried away the heavy urns for us. About 8 o'clock we loaded up and drove out to Chudleigh - heavenly drive up, up through beech woods sheeted with primroses to an immense Georgian mansion set in a wonderful park. Two girl-guides whom I remembered from Plymouth, had a lovely hot supper ready for us, and then all we asked was a BED!'

Thursday 7 May

'Alas! I've had the worst night of my life, tossing on an iron like mattress on the floor, with six other women in the room and shutters barring any air. Couldn't sleep till after 4 am, and breakfast was at six. We're all fuming at the woman of the house - there are about 60 bedrooms and she'll only let us use about 5, and rest of us tossed on sitting-room floors. We had to use the backstairs, tin mugs and plates and altogether be treated as if we were lousy! So I started the long day completely wan and weary, and Mrs Mills' shouting and ranting and bossiness were very trying. Fell foul of her over the milk - it all went sour yesterday and I asked if we could boil it as soon as it arrived, she was furious, especially when Milner came along and had it scalded without asking her! Toiled all day and went out into the town, much amusement when a soldier said "You ain't stopped in a very good place, Miss" and I looked up and saw a tottering wall slanting far above us! Babs was asked by a Bobby to feed some men digging up an unexploded bomb: she asked them when it would go off and they said cheerfully "Due about now, Miss" at which Mrs Hill called out from the back "Now then boys, drink up, we must be off"! The drive this morning was so lovely that it quite refreshed me - early sun gilding the tops of the trees, and we looked down on a sea of mist all up the Exe valley, blue hills rising in the distance exactly like a Jap print. Shared a bedroom with three others at the top of the mansion - had a lilo on the floor and slept till 4. Everyone amazed at "filthy-dirty" pictures adorning bathrooms and lavatories of this abode!'

Friday 8 May

'Last day in Exeter, was sent out with three others and parked by the cathedral where we served tea and soup. What a contrast to last time I parked there with Mrs

Zorab! Now the old Deanery is in ruins, and the S. transept of the cathedral (e. end) shattered; the Close covered with broken glass and long snakes of hose-pipes. The cathedral looked incredibly lovely with the sun streaming through the broken side. The Bridgewater posse arrived at one and immediately took charge, so we were off duty and strolled about the town. Everywhere among the ruins flags had appeared, as the King and Queen were expected at any moment. We waited in a shattered shop window for ages, much interested in the crowd also waiting, and in watching soldiers pulling out huge steel girders with a tractor. Then it was time for our train so we had to leave, but the royal train was leaving at the same time, and their Majesties got to the station soon after us and came over the bridge and down the steps past us, to stand and chat on the platform. We (all filthy and incredibly tired) got a kindly smile and how we longed to travel on that fast train! Ours crawled along, packed with refugees, and was very late at Wellington.'

Anne Lee Michell closed her diary on 15 August 1945 with the entry, 'Well, here ends the war and my diary...'. But in it is pasted a letter sent her when she retired from the WVS in 1955. It says '...you have done valiant service - and were always present when really needed - full of life, and making us all light-hearted, even if the work was heavy'. How true this was is plain from the diary entries of her seven days in war-time Devon.

The co-operation of The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum for allowing access to the Papers of Mrs A. Lee Michell, and that of the copyright holder, Mrs Caroline White, daughter of the diarist, in agreeing to the publication of these extracts, are gratefully acknowledged.

Anthony Greenstreet was born in Saltash and educated in Plymouth, Tavistock and Sherborne. After leaving Cambridge University he worked for employers' organisations in Britain and abroad, latterly 29 years with the Engineering Employers' Federation. His main retirement hobby is writing, particularly on Westcountry historical topics.

EXPLORING DEVON'S PAST - WHO DO WE DO IT?

Simon Timms

Devon History Society members gathering in Exeter for the Society's twenty-sixth Annual General Meeting on 19 October last year knew that they were set for an enjoyable and stimulating day. Their pleasure at witnessing the installation of Harold Fox as the Society's new President was to be followed by his address on the coastal fishing communities in the South West. Over the past twenty-five years, Harold Fox's penetrating research into the agrarian history of Devon has taken us from East Devon across Dartmoor to Hartland in the north, stopping at many points in between.¹ In choosing a piscatory theme for his inaugural address in 1996, our new President was able, with his absorbing blend of scholarship and personal insight, to focus our attention on another aspect of Devon's history which has enormous research potential.

The 1996 Annual General Meeting programme started however with a lecture of more general application to the study of local history in Devon. The programme announced that Philip Morgan would be speaking on the intriguing title: 'In defence of bad local history'. This lecture addressed a series of issues that went to the very heart of what local history is about and why we, as members of the Devon History Society, take an interest in the subject. Among many aspects, he analysed changing attitudes towards what the term 'local history' is taken to embrace and investigated the effect that the trend towards academic professionalisation of the discipline has had over the years. The lively discussion that ensued showed that Philip Morgan had touched on a very pertinent topic for members' consideration.²

One of the key questions in this area of discussion is just why local history has grown to be such a popular topic both for individual study and also for people joining together as members of local history groups and societies. For, despite a recent drop in membership of the Devon History Society (from past levels of 500-600 to 354 in 1996), local history in the county appears to be booming as both an academic and a leisure activity. You only have to visit your local library or bookshop to find a wide range of titles on display, with a growing number of them being produced through local desk-top publishing ventures.³ Devon has more local museums than any county in England and 'heritage' events are advertised in the local newspapers every week. The lists of meetings and activities which appear regularly as an insert to *The Devon Historian* give just a glimpse of the events organised by local history societies in parishes all over Devon, while informal talks, guided walks and exhibitions with a historical theme form a regular part of the annual programmes of branches of the Women's Institute and other community groups. Archaeology and local history feature among the most popular topics for extra-mural courses put on by Exeter University with a welcome number of participants pursuing their research through the university's certificate courses.

The Devon History Society can only trace its roots back to 1969, when W.G. Hoskins, who surely did more than anyone to establish the status and popularity of local history in its own right, became its first President. But the rise in public interest in local history can be seen in the growth of national organisations and local groups stretching back over fifty years. Nationally, the Standing Conference for Local History was set up in 1948 with the first issue of the *Amateur Historian* (to become *The Local Historian*) appearing in 1952. A sample survey of 222 local history societies in exist-

tonce in 1979 found that less than thirty had existed prior to 1946.⁴ At one stage in the 1970s it was estimated that a new museum was opening somewhere in England every week. The popularity of local societies and groups raises the question of why people seek to join them as members. Various reasons have been put forward. Kate Tiller, who spoke at our 1995 AGM, has cited the role that local history groups have in the serious purpose of furthering historical understanding, but has also identified other motivating factors as nostalgia, a wish to resist modern development and a sort of theme-park escapism. Alan Rogers has put much of the popularity down to such factors as the search for roots, identification with the community, a sense of exploration, and a concern to slow down the pace of change. He also includes a desire to contribute to scholarship and the chance to make contact with real evidence.⁵

Clearly a range of motivating factors are at play. Recent research into adult education in Devon has explored two avenues in an attempt to shed more light on people's involvement in local history and archaeology.⁶ Firstly, a 'Devon Heritage Questionnaire' was drawn up to seek responses on a series of questions ranging from membership of a local history society to naming a favourite book on local history or archaeology. This questionnaire (reproduced in the Appendix) elicited a total of 261 replies from active participants in archaeology and local history in Devon. Their responses are presented here to indicate the trends identified by the questionnaire and also as an invitation for similar questionnaires to be circulated among other groups in the county.

Given the nature of the audience to which the questionnaires were issued, it came as no surprise to find that the great majority of responses claimed membership of a local society in Devon. 50% also indicated membership of the National Trust but only 15% of those responding were members of English Heritage. The questionnaire showed that only about 15% of those replying owned an archaeological site or historic building, but, in response to question four, 80-85% of people were able to name a favourite archaeological site, historic building and museum. In contrast only just over 50% could give the title of their favourite book on archaeology or local history (the fact that nearly 30% of those naming a title gave a book by W.G. Hoskins indicates the lasting influence his work still maintains). *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *The Times* and *The Guardian* were given as the most popular national newspapers (with just a single vote for *The Sun*) although readership of local newspapers such as the *Western Morning News* was also strong.

Over 50% of people responding had spoken to a site or building owner (question five) whilst less than 40% could correctly name the then Heritage Minister (the total would probably be much higher today now that the National Lottery and Millennium has given greater public exposure to this government ministry). An encouraging number (over 50%) of people had attended evening classes (question seven) whilst sites visited ranged from Stonehenge (95%) to prehistoric sites at Merrivale and on Exmoor (50% each), to Plymouth Museum, Exeter's Underground Passages and Bratton Clovelly parish church (32% each).

While this questionnaire (which was issued in 1993 and which Devon History Society members are welcome to use with local groups) gives an indication of both formal and informal involvement in local history and archaeology, it does not help in identifying individual motives for this interest. To investigate motive a second approach was employed by asking people the simple question: 'What first aroused your interest in the study of local history/archaeology?' Thirty-two people in Devon responded to this question by interview or in writing and their answers reveal a wide range of personal motives. A selection of replies may be summarised as follows:

- fascinated by castles as a child
- went on a National Trust guided walk which happened to start outside the front door:
- became interested in archaeology through astronomy
- grew up on a Welsh farm surrounded by historic sites and later went to evening classes
- grew up in St Albans and visited the Roman excavations and museum there
- wanted to join a voluntary society and happened to choose a local history one.
- became involved with a local history group through the workplace
- as a child dreamt of being an Assistant Keeper at the British Museum
- took an early liking to Egyptology
- as a child given the *Children's Newspaper* which had history articles in it.
- put off history by schoolteacher but came back to it in adult life
- became interested through visits to the local museum
- father had a strong interest in local history
- given a copy of Aileen Fox's *South West England* as a fourteenth birthday present
- bought a copy of W.G. Hoskins' *Making of the English Landscape* when it was first published
- taken by father for walks to see historic sites
- employed in the office of Hansford Worth, the great Dartmoor historian
- watched Sir Mortimer Wheeler on television
- visited the castles of Wales on holiday
- taken by mother on walks around Exeter
- found prehistoric flints on the farm as a child
- heard a lecture on Dartmoor as part of army training course
- saw Roman sites in North Africa whilst serving in the forces in World War II
- as a child, saw an historic building being knocked down
- just happened to call in at the library on the way home from work one day

This selection shows not just the diversity of experiences that can first arouse an interest. It also indicated that this interest can be commonly traced back to childhood experience, even if it is not until later in life (sometimes only with the leisure hours of retirement) that people can begin to pursue this interest actively. In the light of these responses to the question 'what first aroused your interest in the study of local history/archaeology?', it would be of interest to receive feedback from members of the Devon History Society on how they first 'caught the bug'. If readers of this article wished to write to the editor of this journal describing their own first experience of local history, she would be pleased to summarise them (anonymously) in the next issue of *The Devon Historian*. Letters should be sent to Hon. Editor, The Devon History Society, c/o 7 Cathedral Close, Exeter EX1 1EZ.

Appendix

Devon Heritage Questionnaire (distributed in 1993)

The questionnaire included the following questions:

1. Where do you come from?
2. Do you own an historic building or archaeological site? Yes/No

3. Are you a member of
 - (i) The National Trust? Yes/No
 - (ii) English Heritage? Yes/No
 - (iii) the Devon Archaeological Society? Yes/No
 - (iv) a local history society? Yes/No
4. Please name:
 - (i) Your favourite archaeological site.....
 - (ii) Your favourite historic building.....
 - (iii) Your favourite museum.....
 - (iv) Your favourite book on archaeology or local history.....
 - (v) Your favourite newspaper.....
5. Have you ever told the owner of an archaeological site how interesting it is? Yes/No
6. Who is currently the government's Heritage Minister?
7. Have you ever attended a course of evening classes on local history or archaeology? Yes/No
8. Have you ever visited:
 - (i) Stonehenge? Yes/No
 - (ii) Prehistoric sites at Merrivale on Dartmoor? Yes/No
 - (iii) Plymouth Museum? Yes/No
 - (iv) Exeter's Underground Passages? Yes/No
 - (v) Any prehistoric site on Exmoor? Yes/No
 - (vi) Bratton Clovelly parish church? Yes/No

Notes

1. H.S.A. Fox 'The Field Systems of East and South Devon. Part One: East Devon', *Transactions and Reports of the Devonshire Association* 104(1972), 81-135; Harold Fox 'Peasant farmers, patterns of settlement and *pays*: transformations in the landscapes of Devon and Cornwall during the later Middle Ages' in Robert Higham (ed.) *Landscape and Townscape in the South West* (1989), 50-52; H.S.A. Fox 'Medieval Dartmoor as seen through its Account Rolls', *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* 52(1994), 149-71.
2. The changing identity of local history has been discussed at other recent Society AGMs. Charles Phythian-Adams published a resume of his address to the 1992 AGM under the title: 'Some Futures for Our Local Past', *The Devon Historian*, 47(1993), 4-5. Kate Tiller spoke on the theme of local history at the 1995 AGM.
3. Ian Maxted's *Abbot's Bickington to Zeal Monachorum: a handlist of Devon parish histories* (1994) indicates the current coverage of parish histories in the county - and also the number of parishes which still await study.
4. Committee to Review Local History 'Summary of Report' *The Local Historian* 13.8(1979), 451-56.
5. Kate Tiller *English Local History* (1993), 53; Alan Rogers 'Introduction on Groups' in Alan Rogers (ed.) *Group Projects in Local History* (1977), 10-17.
6. Aspects of this research was undertaken by the author with support from the Devonshire Association's small grants scheme, which is gratefully acknowledged.

(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)

Topographical Writers in South-West England, edited by Mark Brayshay. University of Exeter Press. 1996. pp.xiv + 200. £12.95 paperback. ISBN 00 85989 424 X.

This new offering in the proliferating 'Exeter Studies of History' series is the outcome of the 1993 symposium of the University's Centre for South-Western Historical Studies. Five articles are revised versions of papers delivered there. One (by John Chandler on John Leland's peregrinations) derives from a Royal Albert Museum lecture. The editor himself traces and comments upon developments in the region generally, with some sidelong glances beyond and the volume is rounded off by an admirable bibliographical 'aid to research', compiled by Ian Maxted of the South-Western Studies Library and, again, the editor. Encouragingly locations are indicated.

Since the sixteenth century there has certainly been a wealth of writing about the region's very diverse topography. Mark Brayshay, a historical geographer, emphasises 'the spatial focus' of so many of the authors. After Leland and Camden that has been largely a county one, deploying a workable historically and administratively based unit, culminating in the *Victoria County Histories* initiated a century ago and still going (more or less) strong. Richard Carew's *Survey of Cornwall* (1602) emanated from Antony in a Cornwall where the old tongue was still in use, though Carew celebrated 'the excellencies of the English tongue' in which he was himself adept. His book is offered by Joyce Youings as exemplary of keen eyes contemplating their own loved place and time. But, Devonian born, bred and sustained she shows perhaps a keener appreciation of John Hooker, whose unsystematic but copious 'Synopsis Chorographically' she would like to see fully transcribed, edited and printed. A big job, but somewhere there may be an academic avid enough to survive by publishing to take it on. Professor Youings also yearns for Thomas Westcote's 'Survey' of 1630 to be published in its flavoursome original spelling, a move which would run quite counter to the current educational urge to an orthodox orthography.

Robert Dunning starts a run through Somerset writing from about 1600 with the 'Particular Description' (1631) - of which only the southern half survives - of Thomas Gerard, who had 'an eye for land and its produce...as keen as... for genealogy and blazon', those perennial pre-occupations of Tudor-Stuart gentry, whether rising, declining or stagnating. Much about Somerset as elsewhere comes *en passant* in more general, or, conversely, more specific, works, such as Andrew Paschall's history of Monmouth's rebellion. Dunning completes his survey with a plug (why not?) for the Somerset VCH of which he is general editor. Gerard turns up again in Joseph Bettey's essay on Dorset. From Trent, near Sherborne, he compiled a 'particular description' of Dorset, too, in which he sagely notes the significance of the county's contrasting soils. Bettey elaborates somewhat on John Hulchin's 'massive' history (1774), pointing out that like so many other works of the period it was written about and for the county gentry by a cleric with 'a laborious cure'. Ask a busy person... Under the title 'From Romanticism to Archaeology' Malcolm Todd contributes a critical commentary on late eighteenth and early nineteenth century antiquarians, notably Richard Colt Hoare (Wiltshire) and the

Lysons brothers, Samuel and Daniel (*Magna Britannia*). He sees them transforming the study of archaeology and related topography. His own attempt to set developments within the intellectual, social and economic climate of the times is commendable, with its stress on, for instance, the impact of parliamentary enclosures which 'struck a heavy blow at what still survived [not much perhaps] of the peasant culture of southern England' and which, working in conjunction with increasing industrialisation, changed landscape and topography by both destruction and innovation. The environment which we are all so eager to preserve has, of course, always been in flux.

Moves towards seeing things with 'a scientific gaze,' provide the main thrust of Sarah Wilmot's impressive consideration of 'Agricultural Improvers and the Topography of South-west England' during the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Conspicuous here is William Marshall working from the Drake estate at Buckland Abbey, observing, experiencing and going on to analyse and experiment, one among many fired with the ideal of increasing agricultural productivity, which, thinking of Devon, John Grant remarked smugly in 1844 was something clearly 'the Almighty intended'. Enclosure, consolidating strictly private estates was taking England, it was claimed, out of 'that barbarous state of society where men were strangers....to the advantages to be reaped from the cultivation of the earth'. Not for the first time, nor for the last, 'true self-love and social' were deemed the same. Improvers like Arthur Young, contemplating the South-West were 'grieved' at the sight of 'improveable but unimproved land'. Equally, they deplored the number of small enclosures with high hedgerows unhelpfully providing habitats for birds and 'vermin', 'nurseries for weeds' and anyway very expensive to keep in trim. Some there were to speak up for the beauty of a hedged landscape, but in 1835 J. C. Loudon remarked to approval that 'there can be no permanent beauty that is inconsistent with utility'. The priorities are patent.

Mark Brayshay, his team and his publishers are to be congratulated on an attractive volume, well-presented with pertinent illustrations, and as stimulating as it is informative.

Ivan Roots

English Church Dedications with a Survey of Cornwall and Devon, edited by Nicholas Orme. University of Exeter Press, 1996. xv + 248pp. Paperback £9.95p. ISBN 0 85989 5165.

Despite the specialist nature of its subject this is a book by and for local historians.

Following an examination of the rites of dedication, Dr. Orme traces the history of the English Church in Celtic, Saxon and Mediaeval times. This is a seminal introduction, applicable to England in general. He adds some salutary caveats for those who would dabble in Celtic history or ill-founded archaeological deductions. After the Reformation he, perhaps, fails to stress enough the perception of one's church as the parish church, a distinction lost in turn, as more churches were built during the nineteenth century.

In a search for historical truth then, Dr. Orme soon shows us that behind the authoritative facade of such works as Crockford's List of Benefices and Churches, all is not as it seems. Turning to Dr. Orme's index of dedications to St James in Devon, only seven out of twenty churches - all of old foundation - were originally so dedicated. In mediaeval times a statue of the church's patron was expected to be put up, but several generations of iconoclasm caused dedications to be lost along with the statues. Only bishops

can properly dedicate and consecrate a church; but many dedications are now based on the guesses of antiquaries. These guesses were often grounded on the date of the parish feast - not the same thing as the appropriate saint's day.

Oliver, the Catholic local historian, began the trend towards a more critical appraisal of the available sources in the nineteenth century, but before the present study only Carlisle diocese has had a reliable data base. Dr. Orme correctly uses the old, pre-1877, diocese of Exeter as his unit, and the county Surveys apply in detail the principles laid down in the Introduction. The Cornish sections owe a considerable - and fully acknowledged - debt, for example, to Dr. O.J. Padel and Dr. L. Olson, who have broken new ground in Cornish place name studies.

For Devon, Dr. Orme's book is both the definitive study of its subject matter and a model for future work.

Michael Dickinson

Tawstock and the Lords of Barnstaple by James Coulter. Published by Edward Gaskell, 6 Grenville Street, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2EA. 1996. 144pp, illustrated. ISBN 1 898545 15 0. Hardback £12.95.

The author's declared intention is to set the history of Tawstock in the national context, noting how it was affected by such events as the Spanish threat, the Civil War and the spread of non-conformity. He has made good use of the material available although most of the earlier manorial records were lost in the fire which destroyed Tawstock Court in 1784. Parochial boundary revisions in this and the last century have deprived the parish of its parts across the River Taw adjoining Barnstaple while the A39 has separated Lake in the north from the remainder. These changes have helped to preserve its historic character as a large but purely agricultural area. Unlike most Devon parishes it has no main settlement but eight separate communities, two of which are said to rank as villages and the remainder as hamlets. Over the past century or two several of these have had their own chapels, meeting houses and schools. The central point has always been the Court with the church standing at its gates.

The author traces the Lords of Tawstock from the Conquest, moving with a sure hand from Judhel and the Traceys to the Fitzwarrens and the inheritance by marriage of the Bouchiers and their elevation to be Earls of Bath. After the death of the fifth earl another marriage brought Tawstock to the Wreys whose present head still lives in the parish. Tawstock Court, rebuilt after the great fire, is now a preparatory school and most of the estate was sold in 1919. The church with its monuments to the families who ruled the manor is considered in some detail as are the various charities noted there. Other chapters consider aspects of contemporary life, mainly eighteenth and nineteenth century, the dissenters and their meeting places, schools, road and bridge building and maintenance, and the coming of the railway, the latter delayed by a dispute with the Turnpike Trust about the maintenance of the road to the station at Chapleton. The illustrations include a number of group photographs taken on various occasions earlier in this century. Many of those depicted in them must still be alive.

Recent commemoration of the events of the Civil War in Devon have focused attention on the fifth and last Earl of Bath and his widow, Rachel, who after an unsatisfactory second marriage in 1655 returned to live at Tawstock, where she was very much the lady bountiful, until her death in 1680. Dr Todd Grey's edition of the domestic accounts of the Baths (1637 - 55) appeared after the present book but forms a most useful com-

panion to it. It suggests, for example, that the Court, at least, made extensive use of the Taw for local travel and for movement of goods.

Parish histories always have to satisfy two audiences - the present inhabitants of a place who are interested in what happened in their parents' and grandparents' times and the outsiders who are more concerned with the broad picture. This work most certainly should satisfy the former, although the period after 1948 when the then parish magazine died with the rector who had been editing it for 40 years, might have been described in more detail. A note of population changes and their significance would also have been of help as would a map. The 1/50,000 folds across the top of the parish and its use means the book has to be studied rather than read. I would urge that every parish history should include a map.

Adrian Reed

Thomas Glass MD Physician of Georgian Exeter: by Alick Cameron 184pp, illustrated, Devon Books. £14.95. ISBN 0 86114 906 8.

The practise of medicine in Devon in the eighteenth century is a subject that undeservedly has attracted little attention from historians in recent years, the more regretably because several of its practitioners attained national reputations. One reason for this may be that lay people do not feel competent to write on so technical a subject while medical men may hesitate at having to pull away the cloak cast over so much of contemporary thinking by the Latin language in which it is expressed. Dr Cameron's study of Dr Glass and his colleagues is therefore especially welcome.

The son of a wealthy Tiverton dyer and a member of a Baptist family Thomas Glass was as a dissenter barred from the English universities and so studied at Leyden where he took his MD in 1731. Ten years later he became one of the first physicians appointed to the new Devon and Exeter Hospital, holding his post until retirement in 1775, dying eleven years later. He was fluent in Latin, the language of instruction at Leyden, and the one in which he wrote his principal published work, the *Twelve Commentaries on Fevers with Treatments based on the Principles of Hippocrates*. A later study of the *De Re Medica of Celsus* in four volumes exists but was never published. An advocate of smallpox vaccination he gained a high reputation for his successes and convincingly defended his methods in two published lengthy letters to Dr Baker, the royal physician. His main interest lay in the study of fevers and he was credited by his contemporaries with having made much progress in their treatment, notably the military fever and Devonshire colic.

The author regrets that although the facts of Thomas Glass's life are well established there is little information about the man himself. Much of it comes from a published memorial lecture given by his successor at the hospital, Dr Parr, some years after his death. Parr was clearly prejudiced. Others spoke well of him, but briefly. However Dr Cameron has discovered a great deal of interesting material about the Glass family, including Thomas's brother Samuel, a surgeon apothecary at Oxford, who marketed successfully a preparation devised by Thomas of magnesium carbonate, a remedy for dyspepsia, a not surprisingly constant complaint in eighteenth century England. The arguments between interested parties after Samuel's death make entertaining reading. Among Thomas's descendants were the Misses Parminter who built *A La Ronde*.

Other chapters describe Thomas Glass's medical contemporaries, epidemics in Exeter and the growth of the Devon and Exeter Hospital including its introduction of

hot and cold baths for medical treatment. There is a modern touch in a public statement by its physicians that any poor person could have the assistance of an apothecary on demand. Central to the book, though, are the precis of Glass's *Twelve Commentaries on Fevers*, extracts from his unpublished commentaries on Celsus and the complete text of his Leyden MD thesis. In the former he interprets and provides a gloss on Hippocrates from his own clinical experience. But as the author points out, Glass is more interested in treatment than in amassing broad clinical evidence. Traditional methods would be applied where thought useful but the impression given, not only by Glass, is that to depart from rather than to interpret the authorities was out of the question. But where something is completely new, as with inoculation against smallpox, he accepts it wholeheartedly, once convinced of its value. Again, if he did not pioneer it, he certainly appreciated the value of the bedside manner, stressing in one of his *Commentaries on Celsus*, that the physician should meet his patient with a 'cheerful Countenance' and 'encourage him with proper Discourse' before taking his pulse. The curious reader can find for himself other fascinating aspects of contemporary medical practises in this delightful volume.

Adrian Reed

Atlantic Adventurer: John Delbridge of Barnstaple, 1564-1639, by Alison Grant, published by the author, Instow, 1995. 76pp £4.95. ISBN 0 9527885 0 0

In various papers published during the last decade Dr Grant has alerted English readers to the achievements of this north Devon merchant, colonial entrepreneur and man of affairs who, had he been of their generation, might have been as well-known in the national annals as Drake, Raleigh or Grenville. Here, in a short book, Delbridge's career is spelled out for a wider readership, now, for the first time, made all the more meaningful by being placed against a remarkably skilfully condensed municipal, commercial and political background. Dr Grant has made her point: Barnstaple must now surely make amends to its forgotten son.

Growing up during the reign of Elizabeth, the young Delbridge was simply one of north Devon's most successful exporters of local cloth and importers of miscellaneous merchandize. As such, and following a fairly-typical advantageous marriage, he duly became the town's Mayor and Member of Parliament. Where he breaks out of the mould is in his close contacts with Robert Cecil, the most powerful of both the ageing Queen and King James I's ministers. He was to proceed to be the voice in the House of Commons of the provincial merchant, impatient with the ongoing predominance of the Londoners. But in terms of what he achieved, and here he could have taught Raleigh a thing or two, Delbridge's reputation must surely rest, not even on his transatlantic trading operations, but on the settlements which complemented them. His ships carried, not only to the north American mainland but also to the island of Bermuda, where many of their descendants still live, not the feckless and unemployable London eastenders whom Raleigh soon 'lost' but solid and self-reliant north Devonians, brought up to farming and other skilled occupations, including seamanship.

The author contrives to find space for a considerable number of very relevant illustrations, mostly drawn by Peter Fergusson, and for a wealth of well-chosen quotations from local and national archives. But why so few footnote references to what is obviously an enormous range of printed and manuscript sources? She can't blame her publisher and there is room for a modest increase in price, even to include the cost of a stiffer

cover. It is to be hoped that such will be rectified in future editions in order that the story of John Delbridge of Barnstaple will be read, as it deserves to be, beyond the confines of his place of birth.

Joyce Youings

Devon Household Accounts, 1627-59, Part II: Henry, fifth Earl of Bath and Rachel, Countess of Bath, 1637-1655, edited with an introduction by Todd Gray. Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series 39, 1996. iv + 341 pp. Copies available at £15 from Assistant Secretary, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 7 The Close, Exeter, EX1 1EZ. ISBN 0 901853 39 9.

Part I of this two-part series (reviewed April 1997 edition) dealt with the accounts of three Devon gentry households in the early years of seventeenth century. As a most fitting companion volume but also by way of contrast, Part II deals with the accounts of the leading aristocratic household in the county from the years immediately preceding the Civil War, through the turbulent times of that great upheaval and the ensuing Commonwealth.

In keeping with their social status, the Bourchiers maintained principal residences in both London and Tavistock in north Devon, and the greater part of the volume comprises household receipts and expenses for the 50 together with Lady Bath's personal accounts. Their retention for more than three centuries in private hands has ensured their survival but meant that they remained virtually obscured from the attention of historians until spotted by the eagle eye of the author who is to be congratulated for transcribing and bringing them into the public domain in such a clear and readable form.

The actual accounts occupy 295 pages and such a volume of household minutiae could be tedious were it not for the way in which it reflects so much of the social life of the period with an intimacy rarely found in more conventional histories. Revealed also are many intimate details of the principal *personae*, Henry and Rachel Bourchier, the Earl and Countess of Bath. Although dismissed by Clarendon as a morose personality having 'no excellent or graceful pronunciation', Lord Henry emerges as a man of some considerable cultivation and learning for the accounts reveal frequent purchases and binding of books including works by Plutarch, Hooker and Spencer's *Faerie Queene*. 'Mathematical instruments' also appear as acquisitions and these together with tortoiseshell-framed spectacles, pipes and pipe tobacco complete the picture of a savant in his library in earnest pursuit of his studies.

Presumably because they were very much part of her personal domain, the accounts tell us rather more about Lady Rachel who was noted for her great charity towards the displaced clergy and their families during the Commonwealth. They contain many references to payments for clothing, shoes and schooling for the children under her care and many items are noted simply as 'payment to a poor minister'. Many expenses also reveal her great love of gambling at cards, dice or 'at table'. Losses are faithfully recorded but winnings, if any, are not. Usually meticulous in recording receipts and expenses large and small, she nevertheless had trouble with one receipt amounting to £1 10s accompanied as it is by the very human comment, 'I have yet forgot what I did with it'.

The extensive introduction, arranged under main subject headings is an invaluable guide towards our understanding of the accounts and the background to them as is the glossary of obsolete words. Fifteen appendices provide a wide range of supplementary details including names of servants, inventories of furnishings, livestock and hus-

bandry items and medicines. This is a work which will amply reward its perusal by students of the period and history enthusiasts generally for many years to come.

Jim Coulter

The Archive Photographs Series: **Tavistock**, compiled by Gerry Woodcock, Chulford, 1997. 128 pp, over 220 photographs. £9.99 paperback. ISBN 0-7524-0760-0.

Professional historian and retired teacher Gerry Woodcock, who is now Tavistock's leading 'consultant' on matters concerning the town's history, has used his wide knowledge in selecting and captioning this fine collection of photographs. With representative examples of every decade from the 1850s up to recent years, the collection is divided into twelve chapters, focusing on: the setting; working; playing; worshipping; caring; sharing; learning; governing; trading, travelling; confronting; celebrating. Each picture is aptly explained with reference to the date, the subject or occasion, and identification of many of the individual people portrayed. Every page brings fresh scenes to provide immense interest and pleasure, with glimpses of Tavistock life over last 140 years.

The book has been well produced and photographic reproduction is excellent. As the compiler explains, many of the pictures are from the photographic archive of Tavistock Local History Society, housed in the town museum. Despite the list of acknowledgements, which includes many individual names, a fuller service to future historians would have been given if particular identification of sources had been provided, where appropriate. Mr Woodcock is generously donating his royalties from the work to the Tavistock Local History Society.

Helen Harris

Yelverton & District Local History Society's Newsletter No 14 (1997) is well up to usual standard and good value at £1 for members and £1.50 for non-members. Produced in A5 format with card cover and 36 pages, the current issue, edited by Paul Rendell and Jenny Sanders, includes articles on Elford Town (alias Yelverton); Walkhampton Church; eighteenth century care of the poor in Buckland Monachorum; and on the parishes of Sampford Spiney and Horrabridge from material left by the late Joy Beer, who was a council member of the Devon History Society. Copies available by post (+ 30p p+p) from Paul Rendell, 20 Rolston Close, Southway, Plymouth, PL6 6PE.

DEVON GREEN LANES GROUP

Devon Green Lanes Group is made up of volunteer representatives of various user groups who are interested in keeping public rights of way open for future generations. Through the group notes are compared on issues relating to public rights of way, lane clearance and other points of interest.

The help of various organisations, including the Devon History Society is sought in connection with the first of the above points. The Definitive Map, held by Devon County Council, is taken as the basis for determining the existence of a public right of way. The Map is currently being reviewed as part of a nationwide initiative. It is known that there are many historical public rights of way which are not recorded on the Definitive Map. This means that they are not available for public use and enjoyment and that their historical significance and physical presence can be lost.

One of the activities of the Devon Green Lanes Group is to undertake research to see if any historical routes, whether footpaths, bridleways or byways, can be found to submit to DCC for inclusion on the Definitive Map in the review. Old Tithe Maps, old parish minute books, waywardens' records, records of public expenditure, old railway proposal maps, and other similar sources are all being examined, and a basic methodology is written out. Most of the research is carried out at the West Country Studies Library and the Devon Record Office, but also farther afield. The work is painstaking but very interesting. Assistance would be gratefully received from any of our members willing to help.

Contact: Miss D. Croysdale, Devon Green Lanes Group Central Registry, Busland, Cadeleigh, Tiverton, Devon. EX16 8UU.

Re: D.R.O. SERVICE POINT : TIVERTON MUSEUM

Tiverton Museum has a Service Point of the Devon Record Office open on Monday afternoons and on Wednesdays. It is staffed by volunteers who are knowledgeable in genealogy and local history, and, on the second Monday of the month, an archivist from the Record Office. It provides a very useful service to both local people and visitors all over the world.

The Museum holds some 10,000 archival items and photographs, and the original newspapers relating to Mid Devon. Supporting these are micro-fiche copies of census, parish and tithe records and also the International Genealogical Index. This is a public service open on the above days or otherwise by appointment. The cost is included in the museum entrance fee of one pound with concessions. Enquiries can be made to the Museum on 01884-256295.

TIVERTON MUSEUM holds the following source material for the use by researchers.

1. PARISH REGISTERS: showing Baptisms, Marriages & Burials which are held on a microfiche/film for parishes of: Bampton; Bickleigh; Blackborough; Burlescombe; Butterleigh; Cadbury; Cadeleigh; Cheriton Fitzpaine; Clayhanger; Clayhidon; Cruwys Morchard; Cullompton; Culmstock; Halberton; Hemyock; Holcombe Rogus; Huntsham; Kentisbeare; Loxbeare; Morebath; Oakford; Payhembury; Petton; Poughill; Puddington; Ruckonford; Sampford Peverell; Silverton; Stockleigh English; Stockleigh Pomeroy; Stoodleigh; Templeton; Thelbridge; TIVERTON; Chevithorne; Cove Chapel; St Andrew; St George; St Paul; St Peter; Uffculme; Uplowman; Washfield; Washford Pync; Willand; Witheridge and Woolfardisworthy East together with Dulverton, Somerset.
2. NON-CONFORMIST RECORDS: Baptism Registers (Microfiche) for Tiverton Wesleyan Circuit and the Tiverton & Bampton Bible Christian/United Methodist Circuit. Burial Register (photocopy), Wesleyan Chapel, St Peter St., Tiverton. Tiverton Supt. Registrar's Marriage Notice Books 1837-1974 re marriages in Non-Conformist Churches/Chapels, in the Tiverton Registration District and in Tiverton Registry Office.
3. INTERNATIONAL GENEALOGICAL INDEX (I.G.I): 1992 Edition for Cornwall, Devon, Dorset & Somerset and the 1989 edition for Devon only. An index of Baptisms/Christenings and Marriages up to 1837.
4. CENSUS RETURNS: 1851: Calverleigh; Cruwys Morchard; Highleigh; Loxbeare; Oakford; Templeton; Tiverton; Washfield. 1881: Survey Index [microfiche] for Cornwall, Devon, Dorset & Somerset. 1891 [microfiche] places in [1 above] plus: DEVON; Bishop's Nympton; Chitterleigh; Creacombe; East Anstey; East Worlington; Highley St Mary; Knowstone; Mariansleigh; Molland; Newton St Cyres; North Molton; Rose Ash; Sandford; Shobrooke; Thorverton; Twitchen; Upton Hellions; West Worlington. SOMERSET: Brompton Regis; Brushford; Dulverton; Exford; Exton; Hawkridge; Huish Champflower; Skilgate; Upton; Winsford; Withypool.

5. **NEWSPAPERS:** Bridgwater Gazette [1871-84]; Crediton & North Devon Chronicle/Crediton Gazette [1885-1939]; Devon & Somerset News [1890-1983]; East Devon County Press [1934-39]; South Molton Gazette [1872-1939]; Tiverton Gazette & East Devon Herald [1858-1939]; Western Counties Advertiser/Western Observer [1875-1930].
6. **JOHN HEATHCOAT & COMPANY** Lace Manufacturers: Books, documents, records etc., relating to this firm's activities and employees from 1816-1995.
7. **EMIPHERA, BOOKS, DOCUMENTS ETC.:** Numerous items re businesses, churches, shops, personalities, towns & villages etc. in Tiverton & District. Local Directories/Year Books held for various years 1898-1947.
8. **MAPS:** Maps dated from 1777 to 1950 including 1889 issue 10ft 6" = 1 mile scale OS map of Tiverton town centre and OS 25" = 1 mile scale maps of Tiverton & certain surrounding villages.
9. **FAMILY HISTORY:** Published histories of BOYCE; COADE; PUDDINGTON/PURRINGTON; ROSSITER; SLEE & VENNER families together with Information Files on many other local families.
10. **PHOTOGRAPHS:** Large collection of photographs of people, buildings, events & locations 1870 to date.

FURTHER NOTICES

'BEFORE THE COASTGUARD'

We apologise for any confusion caused to readers of Robert Perkins' article in DH 54, due to an editorial error of transposition in the table of Extent of Guard of Preventive Boat Stations 1817-1819. On page 8 in the line below 'Padstow (part)' the second 'Tintagel Head', in the third column should be in the fourth, and 'Bude Haven' in the fifth column should be in the sixth.

THE OLD PLYMOUTH SOCIETY

Members of the OPS will be aware of their winter programme of meetings from their interesting newsletter 'Old Plymouth Today' (Issue 6, March 1997). But non-members may like to know that they are welcome to attend the Athenaeum meetings on payment of £1. Forthcoming subjects include: The Tamar Sailing Barge Shamrock (3 October); Stonehouse archaeological studies and early port (7 November); and 'Where did the Pilgrims come from?' (19 December).

THE VALIANT SOLDIER MUSEUM & HERITAGE PROJECT, BUCKFASTLEIGH

The Valiant Soldier was a pub for 150 years until it closed in 1965, since when its decor and contents have remained completely intact. A group of committed local people is currently working to turn the building into a museum, a heritage centre and a focus for the community. The project has the backing of the town council, the local authority, Dartmoor National Park, and the Area Museum Council, with this rare example of a mid twentieth century public house reckoned as of considerable significance, and its contents of immense interest. At a recent open day to see inside the former pub 200 visitors were hoped for, in the event 700 came. Archivists and other volunteers are currently assessing the material, and fund raising events are being held. The property was recently purchased by Teignbridge District Council, which is allowing the newly formed Buckfastleigh Trust two years to raise the money to buy the property, for which a Heritage Lottery Bid is being sought. Of the total estimated sum required, over £200,000, it is hoped 80% would be covered by the Bid, leaving 20% to be raised locally. Offers of practical assistance, or of donations, would be gratefully received. The chairman of the project is: Mr Brian Cross, Shyrehill, Grange Road, Buckfast, Devon TQ11 0EH. Tel: 01364 642819.

WALTER MINCHINTON

1921-1996

Walter was chairman of this society from its inception in 1970 until 1986 and had been a member of the working party that set it up. There was before that date no county-wide history society in Devon and we owe much to Walter's energy and enthusiasm at the beginning. He had a large number of friends and colleagues in the academic world and persuaded many of them to come down to Devon to entertain and instruct us and this established the early pattern of meetings of the society, whereby visiting academics combined happily with 'local' local historians. So we sat the the feet of Professors Finberg, Hoskins, Simmons, Greenhill, Dyos, Everett and other distinguished academics at different times, most of them persuaded by Walter. Such a link between the university world and the 'general public' was to Walter's taste, he believed that the 'amateur' historian had something, often a lot, to contribute to the study of history at all sorts of levels and was keen to encourage them. As the first editor of *The Devon Historian*, and in other ways, I benefited greatly from his advice and encouragement. It was his ideas, I think, that produced the 'Finding List for Devon Newspapers' compiled by Lorna Smith, and the regular Bibliography of Devon books that Geoffrey Paley compiled for this society and which Ian Maxted has continued for the Library.

He also started a series of weekend conferences at Dartington Hall. They were immensely enjoyable, a series of stimulating speakers with an interested audience, drawn from all parts of the country and with different backgrounds, sharing Dartington's many delights. Out of those weekends came the seventeen volumes of *Exeter Papers in Economic History* and the regular maritime conference finally grew into the South West Maritime History Society.

Sadly Walter was not apparently an easy colleague and rumours and tales of episodes of mutual 'odium academicum' were never far away. Some of his immense energy was thus denied what would have been useful outlets. It may be that he found the Dartington weekends and the many local societies with which he was involved - the Exeter Industrial Archaeology Group, the Devon Historic Buildings Trust for instance - and other 'extra mural' activities easy and congenial for that reason. He was occasionally a fairly autocratic chairman and liked to have his own way and there was always the suspicion that he might suddenly explode if he met opposition. But to friends and to those whom he saw as no threat to him and to those with real problems he was always helpful, kind and considerate.

R.S.

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