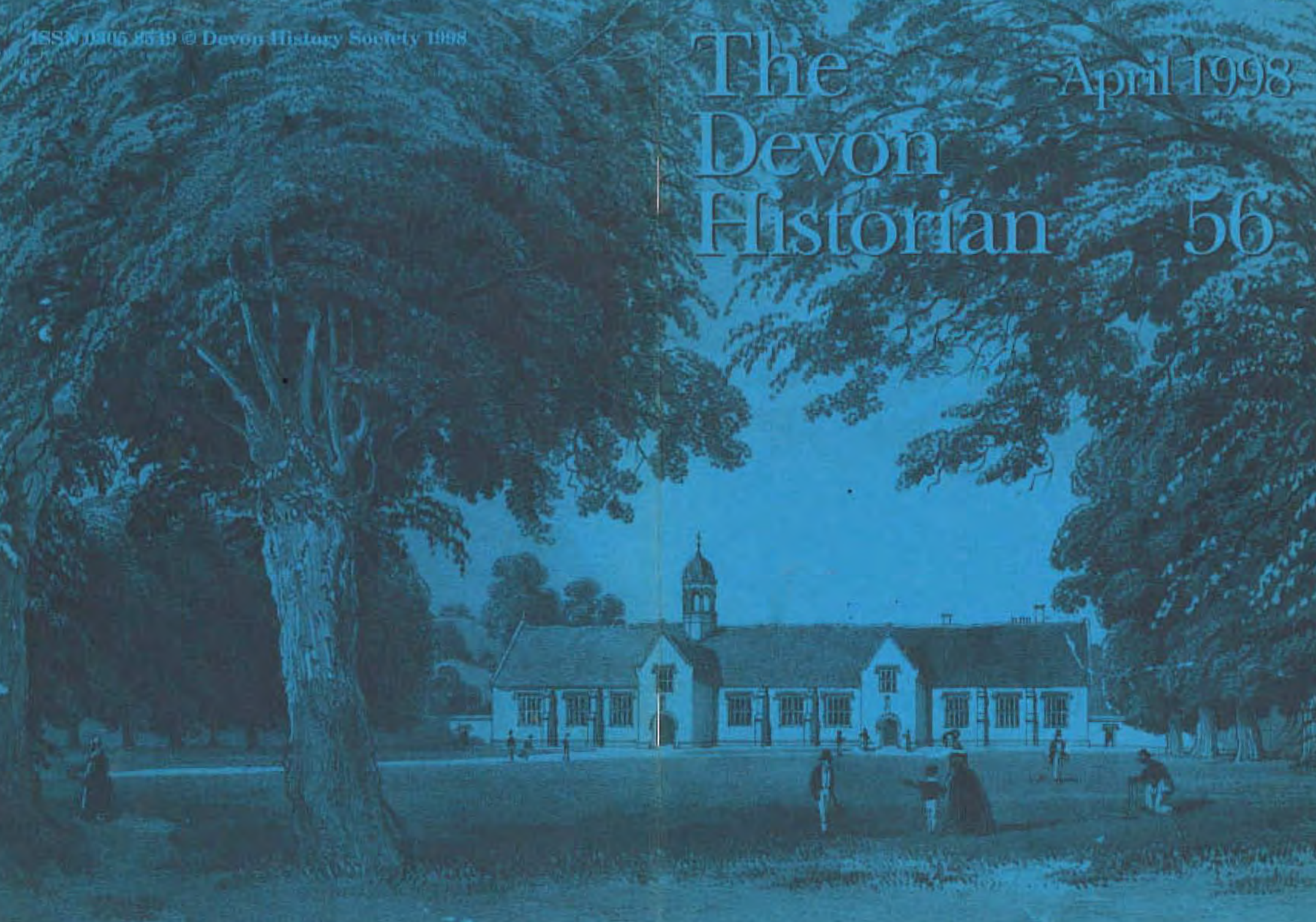


The
Devon
Historian April 1998
56



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The Society will meet at Uffculme on 4 April, and at Totnes on 4 July. The AGM will be at Exeter on 7 November.

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DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Current and back issues of *The Devon Historian* (except for numbers 7, 11, 15, 16 and 23) can be obtained from Mrs S. Stirling, Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter EX1 1EZ. (Number 22, which is available, was not a 'normal' issue, but was totally devoted to being our first Bibliography). Copies up to and including No 36 are priced at £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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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.: 1 July 1998, etc.

THE PEOPLE OF WOODBURY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Harold Fox

The practice of local history is exciting because there are so many diverse approaches to be followed. One approach is not to focus on a single place but to take a set of similar communities and to study them as a group. This has obvious advantages: additional insights come from the findings that social structure, or the look of a place (physical structure) or economic growth or decline are broadly similar within the chosen set of places; hypotheses are better tested in a large sample; if evidence on a particular facet of life is lacking for one place the gap may be filled, with caution, from the shared experiences of the others. In Devon one group which deserves detailed research includes those small roadside boroughs such as Colyton, South Zeal or Chillington which are so characteristic of the county, not only in their medieval heydays but also in their years of relative decline later on.¹ At present my own research is on fishing along the south Devon coast and the fishing-farmers and fisherfolk who operated from such places as Starcross, Dawlish Strand, Ringmore Strand, Hallsands and Oreston, a theme which I chose for my presidential address to the Devon History Society in 1996. The research will culminate in a monograph to be published in 1999 and, I hope, to be made widely available in Devon.² If condensed here the findings would be so thin as to be positively emaciated so instead I wish to *expand* just one section of the monograph which is a case-study of the parish of Woodbury in the Later Middle Ages. Woodbury, on the Exe, features prominently in my work because of the survival of medieval tithe accounts which give details of tithes on fishing and on a great range of other activities in which the people of the parish were engaged.³ Here I wish to bring all of these activities together as far as the documents allow.

The tithes of Woodbury were given to the Vicars Choral of Exeter Cathedral in 1205. The Vicars, rarely rich as Nicholas Orme has pointed out, were ferocious tithers.⁴ Very little escaped them. They took their tenth of almost everything, including honey, wax, apples, pears, dairy produce, fish, labour and trade (personal tithe) as well as grain, wool and livestock of all kinds. They administered their tithe collection very efficiently: in 1424, for example, there was a purge against several reluctant tithe-payers (especially John Scorché), involving excommunication and a case in the ecclesiastical Court of Arches in London. Moreover, they maintained and held on to the most detailed financial accounts relating to their management of the parish of Woodbury. The accounts are highly interesting from the point of view of the expenses of the Vicars, shedding light on celebration of saints' days, funerals and other aspects of spiritual life and pastoral care. Here we are more concerned with income for it is in the paragraphs concerning monies received that we find great lists of the names of the parishioners of Woodbury arranged according to the types of produce (or trade) on which they paid tithe. The only disappointment is the fact that no names are given to show the provenance of the grain and wool collected as tithe. The earliest account is dated 1401 and the latest medieval one is from 1507. The best run is in the 1420s and 1430s.

We can begin our exploration of the material lives of the people of Woodbury in

the fifteenth century by looking at those who made a living from the produce of the land. Given much time and patience all of the tithe-payers would be profiled and put on a scale according to the value and range of their payments. I have not made such an analysis but I hope that someone locally will do so in the future. Instead I shall select some sample names, beginning with Thomas Huntbear who was owner of one of the largest herds of cattle in the parish. We know this because in almost every year the Vicars Choral took a calf from him (i.e. he had at least ten cows producing at least ten calves), rather than levying a sum of money known as 'calf tithe' (paid by people with less than ten calves). If he was principally a beef producer his herd could have contained at least ten cows, ten calves, ten yearlings, ten two-year-olds and ten three-year-olds (say forty beasts in all, having deducted animals culled or died). Thomas also kept pigs, horses and geese. His farm was possibly at the place marked on the one-inch map as Houndbeare (formerly a detached part of Woodbury parish though now in Aylesbeare).⁵ His cows would have been kept in closes around the farmstead, the sheep and young beasts being allowed to roam on the hill-top commons.⁶ Also around the farmhouse, no doubt, were Thomas's trees of apples and pears and his hives producing honey and wax: he was tithed on all of these. We have no precise details about the tithes of sheaves of individual Woodbury farmers but we know from the break-down of crops given in some accounts that the most important crop was oats, followed by barley, wheat and legumes in that order.⁷ In a survey of the manor of Woodbury made in 1525 one of the largest farm holdings consisted of 76 acres divided into 21 enclosed fields, ideal for pastoral management, and had grazing rights for 20 great beasts and 40 sheep on the commons.⁸ Thomas Huntbear, one hundred years earlier, could well have occupied a holding of this type.

The sense of bucolic abundance which emerges from details of the tithe payments of Thomas Huntbear does not apply to all of the parishioners. In the profile of Richard Bond, the second farmer in my sample, and a smallholder, there is a contrast with Huntbear in the very number of entries, which are far fewer, and also in their range. Richard owned cows which in most years gave birth to calves but we know that his herd was not large because he always paid in calf tithe (see above). When he died in 1434 his final obligation to the hard-pressed Vicars Choral was his second-best beast as a mortuary payment and this was indeed a cow. He paid tithe on dairy produce and also on a mysterious substance which the accounts called *syropus* - some murderous concoction of cider and honey perhaps?⁹ Either because of his life-cycle stage or because of the adequacy of his holding he did not have to supplement his farm income by labouring. This distinguishes him from the third tithe-payer in our sample, Richard Oliver. In many ways his profile is that of a smallholder and similar to Richard Bond's but there is a significant difference because on one occasion he paid tithe on a craft. He was probably a part-time builder and hedger, for in 1432 we meet him again in the accounts this time as an employee of the Vicars Choral, engaged in building work around their indispensable tithe barn and in mending hedges. His cows were kept in a small close (presumably glebe) rented from the church; he does not seem to have bred pigs, for in one year he had to buy a piglet for fattening from the Vicars (this would have been a tithe animal taken from one parishioner then sold back to another).

The largest group of people without any agricultural land were Woodbury's farm workers: the medieval period was not one of simple family farming because some farms were large enough to need the labour of workers from outside the family while even a relatively small farm might require extra hands from time to time. One

individual who paid tithe on his labour fairly regularly from 1432 into the late 1440s was Robert Colier, his yearly sum declining steadily over this period perhaps because his wages were falling as he approached old age. Another, a little earlier, was Henry Jacob who was regularly tithed on his labour but who also occasionally paid on produce, as in 1434 when he contributed 4d. on his wool, a tenth of the value of the fleeces of perhaps about ten sheep which probably ran on the commons. These two men were long-term resident labourers in the parish and almost certainly occupied cottages with little or no agricultural land. Other labourers were sons living in their parents' homes but working elsewhere in the parish, such as John Hopping junior who paid tithe on his work in 1428. In contrast to the settled labourers was John Mape who paid tithe on labour in only one year (1432) and who bore a surname which was not associated with any of the farming families in the parish. These two small clues - his transience and his alien name - strongly suggest that he was a young immigrant servant in husbandry, arriving in the parish for a year's living-in service then leaving for a term elsewhere, as was common practice in the Middle Ages. Another of this type is recorded in the account for 1432 under the simple name of 'Phillipus': the accountant either did not know his surname or was not bothered to record it because Philip had no family in the parish. The sources for Woodbury do not permit an estimate of the relative importance of cottage and smallholding labourers on the one hand and living-in servants in husbandry on the other although studies of other manors in Devon suggest that the balance was tipped one way or the other by such factors as the size of farms, their degree of remoteness and the type of farming which was practised.¹⁰

The rich and complex social fabric of Woodbury included other types. Passers-by even more transient than Mape the servant are recorded in the accounts: the 'stranger woman' who died while passing through the parish in 1440 and from whom the Vicars took a pot as a mortuary payment and the occasional labourers who paid for a season's work only, probably harvest workers. When collecting personal tithes the accountant usually distinguishes between 'labour' (discussed above) and 'craft' (*ars*), but in the majority of cases he tantalizingly fails to note the nature of the craft. The veil is occasionally lifted, sometimes through the surname of an individual (although use of surnames to discover occupations is an uncertain procedure by the fifteenth century), so that John Smith and Thomas Heliner who paid for their craft in 1433 for example may have been respectively a smith and a roofer. A few people were tithed 'for commerce', although what was being sold, and on what basis, is unclear. The account for 1440 for once gives a good deal away: the people tithed on craft in that year have *scissor* (tailor) written after their surnames, suggesting that a good number of the unspecified craftsmen named in earlier accounts were also occupied in some branch of the cloth industry, as one would expect in east Devon. One other little indication of a textile industry is in the account for 1433 when four individuals (including two women) bought up the whole of the tithe of wool of the parish. The individuals concerned in this transaction were larger farmers (or their wives) with capital to spare. Might they have been engaged in putting out wool to the spinners and spinsters of the parish? A final occupation mentioned in the accounts is that of butcher. Grazier-butcher would be a better term, for these men owned herds pastured, in all probability, on the rich water-side pastures of the parish. Such men would have sold meats at the active meat-market of Exeter and also locally in their own parish, these last transactions being tithed by the Vicars. In sum, Woodbury was to a degree commercialized in the fifteenth century and this

'tells us something about the sophistication of the late medieval economy'.¹¹

I have left to the end the exceptional detail which the accounts provide about fishing. A variety of sources tell of the valuable medieval fisheries of the south Devon coast but rarely do we come face to face with the fishers themselves as we do in the documents for Woodbury. The information comes in the form of cash payments: for example, '6d. from John Lucas for tithe of fish' in 1428. This sum almost certainly represents one-tenth of the value of John's catch in that year, so we can say that he caught fish worth 60d., i.e. 5s. Some payments are made by a named individual 'and his associates' (*cum sociis suis*) indicating that people fished in teams, a team of six being mentioned in 1434; we read of family teams as in 1433 when Richard Mayster and his wife paid tithe on fish and also of teams in which there were people who were not closely related.

Were the people who paid tithe on fish first and foremost fishers or were they primarily farmers who supplemented diet and income by fishing? Typical was John Martin who fished frequently and whose agricultural profile suggests that he was the type of farmer described as a smallholder earlier in this paper. In general the tithe payments on fishing were very small individually, which tells us that this was a supplementary employment even for smallholders. For example, in no year did John Martin pay more than 23d. as tithe on fish and the average yearly value of his payment was 17d. The average value of his catch was therefore 170d. or 14s. We know that in some years he had at least three cows, the dairy produce from which could have been sold for around 10s. If we say, for the sake of argument, that he had 4 acres under crops, and that these were sown largely with oats, with some wheat (as the accounts indicate), the total value of the crop would have been of the order of 50s. at the very least. These are necessarily crude calculations because they do not take the family's consumption into account. They do nevertheless indicate that John Martin's fishing was a relatively minor occupation, though no doubt a useful and necessary one. It is notable that the largest farmers, such as Thomas Huntbear or the rich grazier-butchers, never fished because they did not need the small extra income which, for this as for other by-employments generally, encouraged men such as John Martin to engage in fishing.

In the 1420s and 1430s fishing from Woodbury shores was in general a by-employment among smallholders living in the rural settlements scattered over the face of the parish. For example, John Scorebe, who fished, is said to have lived near Hogsbrook Farm, 3 miles from the Exe while fishing-farmer John Westcote lived either at Pilehayes or at Postlake, 2 and 1½ miles respectively from the shore.¹² An obscure reference in 1495 to a 'fish house' or 'fishing house' somewhere on Woodbury's shoreline probably related to a structure for the safe keeping of nets, salt, barrels and so on. From 1566 there is a reference to buildings on the shore near Nutwell in Woodbury. They are called 'cellars' - the usual Devonshire vernacular for a shoreside storage hut, a term which has given rise to place-names such as Coombe Cellars on the Teign, Slapton Cellars, and Cellar Beach in Newton Ferrers.¹³ Woodbury's tithe accounts do not give much more detail about the linkages between farming settlements inland and cellar settlements on the shore: in the monograph referred to in my introduction paragraph these gaps will be filled, with some confidence, from other places which have types of historical source materials lacking for Woodbury.

In the 1420s and 1430s the waters of the Exe were important for enriching the lives of the fishing-farmers in a small way. The size of individual catches was gener-

ally small but the total catch from Woodbury shores was significant, much of it going no doubt to Exeter which, as Maryanne Kowaleski has shown, was a notable redistributive centre in the fish trade, frequented by traders who then sold on this cheap and useful foodstuff inland within Devon and as far afield as eastern Somerset.¹⁴ Moreover, technical expertise was clearly already in place and sons were learning the craft by working alongside their fathers. The stage was set, as elsewhere along the south Devon coastline, for an even greater expansion in fishing towards the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth.

England is truly fortunate in having a great wealth and range of source materials telling of the social and economic life of the medieval countryside. Detailed manorial accounts allow reconstructions of the farming practised by lords, as done by Finberg for the estate of Tavistock Abbey.¹⁵ Manorial court rolls allow us to see, although usually rather fleetingly, a great range of rural people, down to the level of the medieval labourers and servants about whom I have written in another place in a study of Ashwater, Stokenham and Sidbury.¹⁶ The tithe accounts of Woodbury belong to a much rarer class of evidence and are remarkable not only for telling us something of the types of farming practised by ordinary farmers but also for giving us what seem to be fairly comprehensive profiles year by year of a range of occupations in a medieval parish.

1. Autton, A. 'The forgotten boroughs of Devon', M.A. dissertation, Dept. of English Local History, University of Leicester, 1988.
2. *Medieval Fishers and Fishing along the South Devon Coast: a Study in Social and Settlement History*, forthcoming.
3. Exeter Cathedral Library (E.C.L.), 3351-68, 22234, 22280-1. I have not referenced individual documents if the date is clear from my text. Profiles of individuals are based on all accounts from the 1420s and 1430s and are drawn from a data-base kindly made for me by Kenneth Smith of Leicester. Exeter Cathedral Library also has a fine series of tithe accounts made on behalf of the Dean and Chapter. For tithe accounts in general see P. Heath, *Medieval Clerical Accounts* (St Anthony's Hall Publications 26, 1964) and R.N. Swanson, 'Economic change and spiritual profits: receipts from the peculiar jurisdiction of the Peak District in the fourteenth century', in Rogers, N., ed. *England in the Fourteenth Century*, Stamford, 1993, pp.171-95.
4. Orme, N. 'The medieval clergy of Exeter Cathedral: I, the vicars and annuals', *Reports and Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 113 (1981), pp.80-91.
5. The supposition is based upon his name and I have some doubts about it.
6. See Fox, H.S.A. 'Farming practice and techniques: Devon and Cornwall', in Miller, E., ed. *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 3, 1318-1500*, Cambridge, 1991, pp.318-9.
7. E.C.L. 3356, 3361, 3366.
8. P.R.O. E. 315/385.
9. Perhaps this is an early reference to still liquor, a cider spirit like Calvados. See Stanes, R. *The Old Farm*, Exeter, 1990, pp.70-1.
10. See the paper referred to in note 16 below.
11. Dyer, C. *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society*, Cambridge, 1908, p.349. There had been a small borough at Woodbury; though in sore decay by the fif-

teenth century burgage plots (probably empty) continued to be mentioned in later surveys: Beresford, M. and Finberg, H.P.R. *English Medieval Boroughs: a Hand-list*, Newton Abbot, 1973, p.101; P.R.O. E. 315/385; Devon Record Office: 346M/M/264. Local historians living near Woodbury need to try to identify the borough on the ground, with the help of the last of these surveys; the tithe map gives some clues.

12. Brighthouse, V.W. *Woodbury: a View from the Beacon*, Woodbury, 1981, p.59. The accounts do not normally give the residences of the tithe payers; the John Westcotes are exceptions because there were two men of that name.
13. E.C.L. 3370; Devon Record Office, Dynham survey, 1566. I am very grateful to Bob Tulley of Wembury for telling me, after the lecture, about Cellar Beach in Newton Ferrers.
14. Kowaleski, M. *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter*, Cambridge, 1995, pp.307-21.
15. Finberg, H.P.R. *Tavistock Abbey*, Cambridge, 1951, pp.86-158.
16. Fox, H.S.A. 'Servants, cottagers and tied cottages during the later middle ages: towards a regional dimension', *Rural History* 6 (1995), pp.1-30.

THE PORTERS OF OLD BLUNDELL'S.

T.H.C. Noon

Peter Blundell set up one of the greatest schools in England and by far the greatest west of Winchester and Eton and for its first 280 years it survived and flourished thanks to the grand endowment he bequeathed it. He provided £2400 to build his school and the great wall surrounding it. He provided income from his estates at Prawle for the salaries of the Master and the Usher and for the endowment of four scholarships, two at Balliol and two at Sidney Sussex and he nominated 27 feoffees to oversee his great work. The feoffees did their work well and the income steadily increased and in 1695, at their annual meeting on or near St Peter's Day they felt able to come to an important decision: 'that three of our number doe henceforth direct and agree for ye building of a Porter Lodge att ye Schoole Greene gate, ye cost to be p'd by our treasurer by ye order of any two of them and such person to bee appointed porter there as they shall think fit'. This was in the same decade as the founding of the Bank of England and one may be forgiven for thinking the Porter of Blundell's the more sound institution.

The cost of building the lodge was duly entered in the Great Account Book which records every expense from 1610 to recent days. In 1697 was paid 'for building ye chimney in ye Lodge fifteen shillings, for 22 rope of stone work in ye lodge at 2s 6d a rope £3 15s 0d, for cleaning the foundation 5s 0d, for work about the other part of the Lodge £5 10s 0d'. All was prepared for the appointing of the first of the porters of Blundell's which must have happened at or about St Peter's Day 1698, for the Great Account Book records in January 1699 'pd the porter 3 years salary due last Christmas'. In 1700 we learn his name when the feoffees' Book of Orders records 'that Edward German the porter have 40 shillings yearly salary paid him until farther order and one porter's gowne and staffe to be made use of in public occasions only, but not yearly', (i.e. not a new gown every year). The salary was raised to £2 10s 0d in 1703. In 1701 the accounts reveal that the gown cost £2 8s 6d in cloth and trimmings and 10 shillings to make. Nothing but the best was good enough for the porter of Peter Blundell's Free Grammar School in Tiverton. He had a new gown in 1709 and then a new one every three years.

No mention is made about what he did to earn his glorious raiment. But in 1699 the feoffees ordered that £3 2s 0d be spent on 'boards for the porter', which presumably were boards to slot into the walls at the gate to keep out the water when the Lowman flooded its banks. No doubt Edward German wore his gown to grace feoffees' meetings and to head the processions to St Peter's Church, though we do not have exact details of these events until the time of William Pottingham.

After German died in 1722 the feoffees ordered 'that Daniell Vanstone be chosen porter in ye room of Edward Jerman deceased' and to have 'a Gowne and salary of the former porter'. 'For his gown £2 and ½ year's salary £1 5s 0d'. His reign lasted until 1750 and the accounts reveal a few details of his job. In 1725 he was paid a little extra for 'keeping lime and slates'. In 1729 we have the first clear connection between porters and clocks as he was paid 6s 3d for 'keeping the Clock for 15 months'. In 1734 he was given 6d to buy rope, 2s 6d for 'horsehire to Taunton to meet the Master' (Samuel Wesley the brother of John Wesley). In the same year he was given one shilling for

'cleaning the necessary house', 8d for sweeping the Green and 6d for cleaning a stable door. In his time there is reference to 'the Porter's garden' so he must have had a share of the land to the rear of the school.

Vanstone was succeeded by William Pottingham who reigned until his death in 1786. He was engaged on the same terms: 'to have a Cowne and salary of our former porter'. In 1756 there was a clear order by the feoffees about the care of the gate. 'At a Meeting of the Feoffees of Mr Peter Blundell's good uses in Tiverton on Monday the Twenty first day of June One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Six at the school there being present a majority of the Feoffees. We recommend it to Mr Daddo (the Master) and Mr Atherton (the Usher) and the Masters for the time being that they suffer none of the Scholars to go without the Gate of the School without the express permission of them or one of them'. In 1791 this order had to be reinforced and the feoffees 'Ordered that the general direction of the Gates shall be with the Upper Master who may order them to be opened and shutt when he think proper but that both the Upper and Under Master be separately at liberty to give leave to any boy who boards in their respective Houses to go out, on Application of their friends..'

Also in Pottingham's time the records of the St Peter's Day gatherings of former pupils begin. They record the order of the procession which formed up on the Green in front of the Old School, went up Bampton Street and turned left to St Peter's Church. First came the porter in his gown and staff tipped with silver, then marched the scholars, juniors first, seniors last. They were followed by the Master and the Usher, a band of music led the Old Boys and the feoffees. The preacher and the president of the feast came next and the whole was rounded off by the stewards of the feast with their wands of office. Pottingham died on 10 April 1876 and was succeeded temporarily by his wife Mary who portered until 29 June. They must have been a popular couple because the Old Boys voted her a weekly honorarium of a shilling every year until her death.

The first three porters had set a remarkable example of steadiness. The three of them had reigned in the lodge for over ninety years and the next two, Hezekiah Warren and George Folland continued the pattern. Hezekiah Warren had a new gown in 1808, but seems to have lost the privilege of cash in lieu every three years. The materials for the gown were purchased from Henry Dunsford and cost the great sum of £4 10s 3d, - about thirteen weeks' wages for an agricultural labourer and it was made up by Isaac Manley at the extra cost of 10s 0d. Otherwise he continued to receive £2 10s 0d annually. He got extra payments, especially for coping with flood and weather. In 1809 he got 15s 0d for 'cleaning ye school and for charcoal to dry ye same' and 5s 0d in 1810 'for charcoal for drying ye school after the water being in'. In 1812 he was paid 'for charcoal and labour for drying ye school ye snow having drifted through the roof'. Perhaps he was also paid for the care of the clock, but the accounts do not say so. Hezekiah Warren however caused the only blot in the majestic story of the porters of Peter Blundell's Free Grammar School: in 1817 he was summarily sacked after thirty-one years' service. The feoffees' minutes of June 1817 'ordered that the porter be immediately discharged from his office in consequence of complaints made against him for misconduct and that he quit the house by the first of August next'. Somewhat surprisingly their minutes of 1820 ordered 'that Hezekiah Warren be paid £10 for the expense he was at in erecting and improving the buildings at the Porter's Lodge'. If Warren had really spent £10 or more on improving the comfort and convenience of the lodge he surely must have had a higher income than £2 10s 0d a year. One wonders if there was a traditional fee for the Porter to operate the gates.

Warren was succeeded by the great George Folland, who took over in September

1817, with a new gown which cost £5 4s 3d, gorgeous raiment indeed when an agricultural labourer earned eight shillings a week. We know more about George Folland and his wife Mary than about any other porter. The Chancery case which ended in 1847 and which led to the expulsion of the boarders set off a wave of nostalgia for the 'good old days' so that it seems every moment of the 1830s and 1840s was treasured. We even know George's nickname: 'Old Cop'. The polite explanation for this sobriquet is that it refers to the copperlined boots he wore when there were floods, but the relevance of the name was reinforced because Old Cop liked a drop of ale or spirits. This predilection must have been behind the feoffees' minute of 1836 that the 'porter have notice given to him by our Clerk to give up any concern in the sale of spirituous liquors directly or indirectly on or before the 24th of June next as being incompatible with his present situation'. Folland needed more warning since in 1837 it was minuted 'that in case George Folland shall renew his licence to sell beer and spirituous liquors he cease to continue to hold the situation of porter from that day and that he immediately give up possession of the porter's lodge and that the Headmaster be requested to supply the place of the said porter pro tempore until the next meeting of the Trustees'. The question still rankled as after Folland died in February 1846 the feoffees declared 'no porter shall every hereafter directly or indirectly have any interest in any Inn or Alehouse or be concerned therein, and that the porter shall have a new gown'. Clearly either Folland got away with murder or the portership of Blundell's was more valuable than a liquor business.

After 1829 the job became fuller. In that year heating was installed for the first time in the school rooms. It is a sobering thought that for the school's first 225 years there had been no heating whatsoever in these rooms. Folland now had to light the stoves and was paid a separate sum to do so. At first he contracted to buy the coal and in 1829 was paid £11 1s 1d for obtaining the fuel, kindling wood and for lighting the stoves. In 1830 this rose to £14 9s 9d. By now he was also being paid £1 14s 2d for obtaining oil for the lamp at the gate and cleaning it on top of his traditional salary of £2 10s 0d, unchanged since 1703. From 1833 he was also regularly paid £2 2s 0d for winding the clock. In spite of the fuss about liquor his salary increased to £2 15s 0d in 1841. It seems too that he had developed a piggery in one of the outbuildings as after his death the feoffees declared that the building he had used as a piggery be handed over to the usher. In 1841 the accounts reveal a typical list of payments to him: salary £2 15s 0d, winding the clock £2 2s 0d, for lighting the stove and cleaning the lamp £4 19s 0d and for extra cleaning associated with the building of the new buttresses £1 1s 0d. In 1843 a new clock was installed but he was not given the job of looking after it, - a Samuel Dibble tended it and a new gas light was erected at the gate.

Mary Folland also contributed to the Folland coffers. In those days headmasters tended to starve their boarders in the interests of profit and there is plenty of evidence that Mary Folland ran a tuck-shop from the lodge. The boys bought bacon (from 'Old Cop?') and sent it to the lodge for cooking. Mrs Folland also fried potatoes and charged 1s 0d (Snell) for a dinner-plate of 'fries and bacon'. The Follands had also rented or bought a house in what was once called Copp's Court in Gold Street, now 'The Retreat', and put up scholars who attended Blundell's as day boys. We know this as one of her boys was Frederick Temple, the future Archbishop of Canterbury. R.D. Blackmore was also one of her boys and he recalled that Old Cop possessed an old curfew, made of bell-metal with a looped handle, an antique even in the 1840s.

One of 'Old Cop's' tasks was to prepare and keep the birches, or 'plum puddings' as they were called. In 1822 a father sued the usher, Thomas Ley, for allegedly causing his

THE 'ARMADA SERVICE'

Anthony Greenstreet

son to become a cripple due to the over severity of a flogging. Folland was called as a defence witness and appeared in the box with a rod of minute dimensions and swore that whenever he sent a larger one to the master he received a message enquiring whether he meant to send 'a broom instead of a rod'. His appearance caused one of the few laughs in a rather grim case.

Cop's successor, Thomas Rich, was a shrimp among the Leviathans, only supporting the dignity of office for a few months. He departed in 1847 when the Lord Chancellor decreed that no boarders should be taught at the school and he was succeeded by James Mills. In his reign a new job was added to the responsibilities of the porter. In the 1840s the privies, as the 'house of easement' demanded by Peter Blundell's will was now called, were improved and the porter was paid from 1855 for 'attendance to the new watercourse and flood hatch in the river Lowman conveying water to the boys' privies'. From 1858 he was paid 5s 0d annually for carrying chairs and tables for the meetings of the feoffees. When he was ill and dying in 1861 they gave him a gratuity of £5. The last of the porters of Old Blundell's was George Gibbons, who reigned from 1862-1882, deciding not to follow the school when it moved to new premises a mile away, at Horsden. In 1866 he got a substantial rise in salary to £10 as well as the traditional payments for lighting the stoves, cleaning the lamp, winding the clock and £1 1s 0d for 'attending the privies'. In 1869 he got £3 10s 0d for 'one year's attendance to the boys' bathing place' as well. But the vagaries of the old order were ended on the eve of the departure for Horsden when the porter received an inclusive salary of £7 10s 0d a quarter after 1878.

Since the move to Horsden there have been five porters, - James Casling 1882-98, Exelby, Blair, John Pilkington and Brian Hacon, making a total of thirteen, not counting Mary Pottingham, in an unfinished innings of 299 years. This comes to an average tenure of office of almost 25 years. If we remove from our calculations the troubled years from 1846-82 then the average period of office is over 26 years. Rarely can an institution have been served with such steadiness for so long. Let lesser mortals stand back in proud amazement as the porters of Blundell's approach their third century, a brotherhood of service, stretching back from Brian Hacon, through Pilkington, Blair, Exelby, Casling, Gibbons, Mills, Rich, Folland, Warren, Mary and William Pottingham, and Vanstone to Edward German way back in 1698.

Sources

Evidence of the appointments and duties of the porters comes from 'The Book of Orders', a leather bound set of three books which record in beautiful script the decisions of the feoffees at their meetings since 1663.

Evidence for actual cash payments to the porters has come from the Books Of Accounts, two ledgers which date from 1610. The Accounts and the Books of Order are kept in the Blundell's Archives.

Details of the festivities connected with Old Boys Days in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are preserved in the Blundell's Archives.

Evidence of the activities of 'Old Cop' has been taken from Snell's *Early Associations of Archbishop Temple*.

The prosecution of the usher, Thomas Ley, was reported in the contemporary press.

Charles Noon, M.A. (Cantab) is Head of History at Blundell's School.

This article has been written with the kind permission and assistance of Mrs Dora Thornton, a curator in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum. Its material is drawn from a paper 'The "Armada Service": A Set of Late Tudor Dining Silver' by Dora Thornton and Michael Cowell, FSA, published in *The Antiquaries Journal*, being the *Journal of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 1996 Volume 76 pp.153-80. This substantial paper is fully annotated, including acknowledgement of the assistance of the staff of the West Devon Record Office and the West Country Studies Library, well-illustrated, contains technical detail on the silver and provides much historical background. See also the short note by Dora Thornton in *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, XXXVII, iii, 1993, pp.81-2, with its excellent photograph.

Here, cased in the British Museum's Room 46, is displayed one of the greatest treasures to have come from Devon - 26 deep parcel-gilt Elizabethan dining dishes, of plain but elegant design, in eight different sizes. They were acquired in 1992 by the Museum from an anonymous vendor for an undisclosed sum - which, however, included a grant of £900,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, as well as tax concessions available on private sales to museums.

Known as the 'Armada Service' - an inaccurate title which it acquired only in 1911 - it is unique of its kind and one of the most important groups of English silver to have been found in Britain; and the circumstances of its concealment and recovery are as remarkable as its quality. On 17 December 1827 *The Sherborne Mercury* reported without complete accuracy:

'A few days since, upwards of thirty large dishes were discovered, buried in a cave, in an outhouse attached to the premises of— Splatt, Esq.; of Brixton, about six miles from Plymouth, by three labourers in the service of that gentleman, who were employed in enlarging the cave for the purpose of depositing potatoes. The dishes are said to be of several hundred pounds value, and from the fashion and description of the workmanship, are supposed to have been made about the reign of Queen Anne. This circumstance has occasioned a considerable sensation in the neighbourhood. We understand a question has arisen, to whom the property legally belongs - the owner of the soil, Mr Splatt, or the Lord of the Manor, Mr Bastard.'

Thomas Splatt was then owner of Brixton House and other properties in Brixton, but it is no longer possible to identify the outhouse which contained the 'cave' (a winter store for vegetables) where the silver was found. Knowledge of this probably died with an old manservant of Thomas Splatt, still living in 1886, who, according to a statement then made by Henry Collins-Splatt (who had inherited Brixton House), 'perfectly remembers the discovery of the plate'. A letter from Thomas Splatt contemporary with the discovery shows the stir which it made in the district:

'with respect to keeping the matter a secret, that was impossible, as the whole of the People in the House knew of the finding it so soon or before I did and though I charged them to say nothing about it, it was all over the village and Neighbourhood by next morning.'

Contrary to the report in *The Sherborne Mercury* the Lord of the Manor was not Mr Bastard but the Revd Richard Lane (curate of Brixton 1802-58) who evidently pressed a claim to the service. Thus, the Coroner, Allan Belfield Bone, intervened with a letter to Splatt:

'Information has just been conveyed to me that a number of silver dishes and salvers of considerable value and apparently of some antiquity have been found hidden in a Cave on an estate belonging to you in the Parish of Brixton and of which you are at present in the possession. From the circumstances connected with this matter, I feel it my duty as Coroner of the county of Devon to hold an inquisition on the Property.'

However, the question of entitlement was determined by the fact of each dish being engraved on the upper rim with the arms of Sir Christopher Harris of Radford (c1553-1625) and of his second wife Mary Sydenham, whom he married probably in 1599-1600. Since the original owner had been identified, and his heir John Harris of Radford (1760-1837) traced, the find could not be declared treasure trove. Accordingly, as *The Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1828 reported, ownership of the plate was recovered by John Harris:

'A quantity of ancient family plate has been found in sinking the floor of a potato cave in the grounds of Thomas Splatt, esq. of Brixton, Devon: the plate has been exhibited at the Herald's College to identify the arms, which are very perfect in all the pieces (30 in number), and prove to be those of Sir Christopher Harris, an ancestor of the Harris family of Radford, quartered with those of his wives, of whom he had three. This gentleman, according to Prince's Worthies of Devon, lives at Radford, which has been the seat of this family uninterruptedly for nearly 400 years, and he represented Plymouth in Parliament in the 26th of Elizabeth. The inquest in behalf of the Crown has been suspended by orders from the Treasury, and Mr Splatt has handsomely ceded his claim to the property as owner of the land. The plate is richly chased in the old style, gilded at the edges: it was, no doubt, buried nearly 200 years since, during the disturbed period of the Civil War; Major-Gen. Harris, great nephew of Sir Christopher Harris above alluded to, having had a command in the royal army at the siege of Plymouth'.

The Major-General Harris referred to by *The Gentleman's Magazine* was John Harris of Lanreast in Cornwall and Radford (1597-1648) who, as sole descendant and great-nephew of Sir Christopher, inherited Radford on the latter's death in 1625. He was MP for Liskeard in 1628, in the Short Parliament of 1640 and in the Long Parliament from 1640-43, when he was 'disabled' by Parliament for being with the King's army in Oxford. Harris had supported the King from the start of the Civil War, having in July 1642 acted as a Royalist Commissioner of Array in Devon. During Sir Richard Grenville's second siege of Plymouth the fighting came close to Radford. A Parliamentary tract of Spring 1645 reported that on 25 February

'Grenville's forces attempted to rebuild the demolished Fort of Mount Stamford which the valiant garrison of Plymouth not enduring, because it might block the harbour, did sally forth, and having the help of some of Captain Swanley's Mariners, who opportunely did come thither they did beate from their works,

slew twenty of them up on the place, and took about one hundred and fourteen prisoners.'

In the short fight the Royalists were driven from Mount Stamford, and in the following month the Parliamentarians gradually extended their grip over the surrounding country. In early May Parliament frigates forced the Royalists to abandon Oreston and to burn down a house they had used as a garrison, which may have been Radford House itself.

It is likely that it was at this time of active fighting on the eastern outskirts of Plymouth that the plate was hidden some two miles east of Radford. But it is also possible that it may have been hidden to reduce John Harris's visible wealth at the ending of the First Civil War in 1646 when his sequestration fine was fixed at £600, having first been assessed at £1000 by Parliament's commissioners. After retiring to Radford he wrote his will shortly before death in 1648. The furnishings of the house, including a brief list of 'plate about the house', was left to his wife. There is no mention of the 'Armada Service', but the will contained a request that 'my plate not given nor hereby bequeathed shall be speedily disposed of for the payment of a debt of two hundred pounds unto one Mr John Brigham of London...'. If the plate had not been hidden at the time of John Harris's death, it would presumably have been melted down in payment of this debt. In any event, it seems probable that the service was hidden at Brixton between February 1645 and Spring 1648 - with the secret of the hiding-place then being lost.

Five of the original hoard of 31 dishes discovered in 1827 have since disappeared. The Harris family kept the service until 1885 when they sold 23 of the dishes for £1255. The eventual purchaser's wife was a distant relation of the Harris family of Radford, and she sold the service to a dealer in 1911 for the record sum of £11,500. Thereafter it passed into private hands until bought by the British Museum in 1992. The 1911 sale catalogue described the plate as 'originally the property of Sir Christopher Harris, and is supposed to have been made out of silver taken from the Spanish Armada, and presented to him for services rendered'. As a result of this assertion the inaccurate description of 'Armada Service' has since firmly adhered to the plate.

Sir Christopher's family had been at Radford since the reign of Henry V. Before his death in 1625 he had accumulated land, public offices and influence in Devon and Cornwall. In September 1580, when Drake returned from his circumnavigation, Harris acted as attorney for him in mortgaging Buckland Abbey as security for a three-year loan to Sir Richard Grenville; and in November he conducted to the Tower the silver bullion, coarse silver and gold which Drake had brought back from that voyage. In 1584 Harris represented Plymouth as burgess in Parliament and by the late 1580s he was one of the most prominent among local gentry. Grenville's contemporary Plymouth defence map marks Harris's seat at Radford and notes him as 'a sufficient gentillman to take charge to defend this quarter wth thinhabitants of Plimpton hundred'. During the Anglo-Spanish war (1585-1604) Harris was mainly concerned with the administration of prizes and prize goods at Plymouth, and so would have had close dealings with Drake and Raleigh as the two most successful Devon privateers. From 1584 Harris acted for Raleigh in local Devon affairs, succeeding Sir John Gilbert as deputy to Raleigh in 1596. As Vice-Admiral, Raleigh had the right to half the pirate booty that came his way, and he - or his deputy Harris - collected the Lord Admiral's tenths of prizes taken by privateers. There seems no evidence to support the Harris family tradition that the service was made from New

World silver captured from Spanish treasure ships during or shortly after the Armada in 1588; and it is much more likely that the plate represents the spoils of office, in cash or metal, accumulated by Harris as an Admiralty official under Raleigh.

The 26 dishes in the service were hall-marked for London in four different years between 1581 and 1602, the great majority dating from 1600 onwards. Of the four makers whose marks appear on the dishes only one, John Bottamley, can be identified. The gold content of the metal, which particularly gives the rim of the dishes a faint gilded sheen rules out the use of pure Potosi silver from Bolivia in their manufacture, and this also argues against their being made directly from captured Spanish bullion.

The fact that the 'Armada' appellation can almost certainly not properly be attached to the service does not detract from the glamour of these splendid dishes. Their preservation as a likely direct result of Civil War disaster is sufficiently remarkable. Perhaps it is too much to imagine that Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher dined off some of them - for they were all dead by 1596; but the Lord High-Admiral Howard of Effingham (d 1624) may well have, and one can feel reasonably certain that Raleigh did so. Returning to Plymouth on 21 June 1618 from his disastrous last voyage to Guiana in search of gold, Raleigh was briefly held prisoner at Radford by his former deputy, Sir Christopher Harris, who had been Vice-Admiral of Devon since 1596. It seems impossible that so distinguished a prisoner-guest as Raleigh would not then have dined off the service, and he may well have reflected with legitimate bitterness that it probably originated indirectly from the Spanish prizes that he had himself brought into Plymouth.

SPECULATIONS ON AN UNDUTIFUL DAUGHTER

S. Bhanji

George Morris of Topsham was a man of some substance. When he wrote his last will on 30 January 1743/4 his bequests included domestic and commercial properties, the writing off of a £300 debt to one of his sons, and cash totalling some £275. However, one of his daughters, Susanna Passmore, was left only a shilling. That this was intended as a deliberate snub is clear from the description of her in the will as 'my undutiful daughter'. The enmity did not extend to Susanna's family, as her two children, Sarah and Mary, received legacies comparable to those granted to the other grandchildren. How Susanna earned her father's disfavour was not stated. Nor was this commented on in a paper published some years ago concerning the will.¹

Captain George Morris, a son of Captain Simon Morris, was baptised in Topsham on 9 May 1678, and in 1701 married Sarah, the daughter of Captain Samuel Paul. The couple had eleven children; but four, three of whom were named Simon, died during infancy.² George Morris followed his father's calling as a mariner,³ but for unknown reasons abandoned this and entered business as a sailmaker and ropemaker with his brother-in-law, Gilbert Moggridge.⁴ In addition, he derived income from land in the parish of St Leonard, Exeter.⁵ Morris was one of the trustees of a major Topsham charity,⁶ and served the town as churchwarden and chairman of the board of guardians of the poor.⁷ In St Leonard's parish he was a governor of the Bounty of Queen Anne.⁸ Morris died only a few weeks after writing his will and was buried at Topsham on 4 May 1744, at a cost of 10s to his family.⁹ The future Susanna Passmore, Morris's second daughter, was baptised on 6 November 1709 at Topsham.¹⁰ She did not marry in her home church, nor were the daughters mentioned in her father's will christened there.¹¹ So far, the writer has failed to find any record of where, when or to whom Susanna was married, or of the baptisms of her children.¹² A John and Susanna Passmore had children baptised in Chulmleigh between 1727 and 1740, but their names do not tally with those in Morris's will.¹³ A Sarah Passmore was baptised at Thomas's Church, Exeter in July 1724. Her mother was not named, but if she was the former Susanna Morris, she would have been only 14 years old.¹⁴

Caution is essential in extrapolating from today's family values to those of a small, but commercially important, eighteenth century Westcountry port. Nevertheless, certain tentative suggestions can be made regarding the antipathy George Morris held towards Susanna. His determination to have a son named Simon suggests a dynastic frame of mind. Consistent with this, by and large the Morris family married well. George's mother, the former Susanna Hodder, came from one of Topsham's leading families.¹⁵ His younger brother, Simon, was married in Exeter Cathedral to Mary Venn, the daughter of George Venn of Woodbury.¹⁶ Venn was in turn linked, through his sister's marriage, with the Lee family of merchants and landowners.¹⁷ Matthew Lee was apparently a friend of George Morris.¹⁸ George himself married a woman from a Topsham family with maritime interests. The husband of his eldest daughter, Sarah, was an Exeter physician, John Starr, whose father was an alderman of the city and whose family owned property in Exeter as well as land in nearby Sowton.¹⁹ Of greater interest, however, are the marriages of his youngest daughter, Mary, to William Palmer

on 2 August 1744, and his son, Hodder, to Elizabeth Clogg on 25 January, 1744/5.²⁰ Both took place within a relatively short time of their father's death, and could have been steps that Mary and Hodder feared to take in his lifetime. It is possible that Morris had strong views on the partners for his children, and that Susanna earned his displeasure through her marriage. Albeit at the risk of carrying speculation too far, there are various possible reasons for George Morris's dislike of his Passmore son-in-law. Religion is not an uncommon source of contention, but it is likely that George Morris would have been of tolerant disposition. His maternal grandfather built Topsham's Independent Chapel, and a brother-in-law, William Bond, left money for a weekly sermon or lecture to be given there. Morris's son-in-law John Starr may have been related to one of the town's early non-conformist ministers.²¹ The commercial or social position of a prospective son-in-law would probably have counted for more than his religion. Susanna may have failed in her filial duty by marrying a man with little or no local standing. It is said that the William and Joseph Passmore (sic) who were signatories to the Exeter Bond of Association of 1745 were of Topsham,²² but the parish register suggests that the family were not well-settled in the town until the 1750s.²³

Although the available information is sparse, it does permit alternatives to Susanna's marriage being at the heart of the matter. At around the time of her mother's death, in August 1728 when 49 years old,²⁴ Susanna was a young adult on the threshold of a relatively independent life. As such she may not have welcomed any wish from her father that she assist her ailing mother or tend the family after her death. A final tantalising clue relates to Susanna's children. If they were named after her mother and sister (or her two sisters), this suggests that the falling-out with her father may have occurred sometime after her marriage. On the other hand, Susanna's apparent respect for her family roots may have persisted despite paternal disapproval, or may have been an attempt at a reconciliation.

Perhaps others can throw more light on the matter.

Notes and references

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2. Devon Record Office) Topsham PR3, PR4, PR5.
3. A term in Morris's time more redolent of a sea-going shipowner than a common sailor.
4. Morris, *op.cit.*, 1928-9. Morris's ropewalk formed much of what is now Victoria Road, Topsham, and was near to his home in Fore Street.
5. DRO 1926B/B/E3/2/2-3.
6. DRO 352M/PP9.
7. Morris, *op.cit.*, 1928-9.
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9. DRO Topsham PR6; DRO 1417A add PW1.
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RED CROSS HOSPITALS IN TORBAY, 1914-18

John Pike

As in many parts of Britain, the Red Cross set up hospitals for wounded soldiers. At Torquay the Town Hall was used for 'Other Ranks' whilst officers were accommodated in large mansions of the gentry who had offered them voluntarily and, at Stoodley Knowle for example, the owner, the Hon. Mrs Burn, acted as superintendent as well. In all, 154 hospital trains arrived and over 10,000 servicemen were sent to them over the four year period.¹ It must have been a common practice for some regular visitor to give the occupants the opportunity to write a message or draw a sketch in a book. One put together in Exeter has been described recently.²

At Stoodley Knowle, Mr Russell Swabey, who represented the Red Cross there, kept a scrapbook³ which has autographs and poems by patients resident there. Photographs show how magnificent the exterior of the house was; even in wartime there were beds of flowers everywhere. Those of its patients show the 'aftermath of war' graphically. An anonymous verse reads:

At Stoodley Knowle, from over sea
They lie a battered company,
Finding a haven of rest,
The shelter of a Mother's breast,
And truest Love that well can be.

2nd Lieut. C.R. Taylor of the Liverpool Scottish wrote:

We often speak of him in silence
His name we will often call
But there is nothing left to answer
But his photo on the wall
He sleeps not in his native land
But 'neath a foreign sky
Far from those who loved him best.

At Paignton Paris Singer handed over 'Oldway' to the American Women's War Relief Fund (which financed and ran it).⁴ It had 255 beds available when the Somme offensive began. A Mrs Mitchell was a voluntary helper at Oldway in 1915. She invited soldiers recuperating there to write about their experiences in her autograph book. This has survived⁵.

C.M. Butcher of the 2nd Hampshires (29th Division) wrote: 'I left Devonport for the Gallipoli Peninsula on May 15th and arrived there safely after a monotonous voyage of three weeks'. He was soon under fire; even on the beaches they were subject to Turkish shell fire and while in the 'firing line' he suffered a heart attack. After a spell in Malta, he was returned to the United Kingdom in the hospital ship *Asturias*. Butcher had been in South Africa seven years earlier but had been in hospital for nine months. Subsequently invalided out, he had re-joined his old regiment on the outbreak of war.

Rifleman A. Edwards of the 2nd Battalion Kings Royal Rifle Corps took part in the first battle of Ypres and later was sent to Armentiers and was in the trenches with the Indian troops. At Givenchy he was in an advance and then, after a retreat, was back to the old position 'when a shell burst in the transverse where five of us were, four of

them were killed and I was the only one to come out alive'. He was sent to Paignton with a large shrapnel wound and a bullet in the side.

1455 Pte Arthur Jackson, machine-gunner in the 1st Laues. Regiment wrote to Mrs Mitchell: 'I along with my battalion forced a landing at the Dardanelles on a day that will be ever remembered, the 25th April 1915... I thank God for being one of the few left who were not killed or wounded that day so I fought on and on until the 22nd June when I got wounded in the back by Rifle Fire about 5 o'clock in the morning'. The bullet was extracted on board the hospital ship *Somali*. He too returned from Malta on the *Asturias*.

Two members of the 5th North Staffs (Joseph Barlow and Pte Badrock) wounded in the charge on the Hohenzollern redoubt on 13th October 1915 (this was a bloody action during the battle of Loos) recuperated at Paignton in the Paget ward. Also in this ward was Albert Warden of the Grenadier Guards who was recovering after a second wound. First wounded in October 1914 he spent two months in hospital at Versailles before being transferred back to Oxford. He returned to France early in 1915 with the 3rd Battalion and took part in the attack on Loos, took Hill 70 but was wounded at Hulloch in October.

Trooper J L Mosley, Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars, sailed from Avonmouth on the horse Boat *Eloby*. He was sent from Alexandria to the Dardanelles as Infantry, arriving there, we stayed near Sulva Bay landing for a few days. On August 21st we crossed over Salt Lake to "Chocolate Hill" under heavy shell fire. My regiment was very lucky only losing about 12 men but the other regiments lost rather heavily. We made "Chocolate Hill" our rest Camp there but on the 28th August we were shelled very heavily... As I was standing in my dug-out, a piece of shrapnel went through my thigh and two of my fingers were badly hurt. After passing through first aid I was sent to the dressing station then on to the Hospital Ship "Rewa". He went straight to Oldway from Devonport.

Pte R Downing of the 5th Northampton Pioneers was in the same part of the Front. He wrote: 'For a fortnight the shelling on both sides was terrific but on Oct. 13th our artillery for two hours, 12 noon till 2 p.m. simply poured shells on the german position. It seems that nothing could [survive] in such a fire. On the stroke of 2p.m. the bombardment ceased and we climbed over the parapet with bayonets fixed and made for the german trenches. A shrapnel shell bursting overhead put me out of mess and I was lucky to reach our trench in safety. I made my way down to the dressing station, was dressed, put on the train...'

Trooper M A Duggan of the NZEF (8th South Canterbury Mounted Rifles) left New Zealand in October 1914 with the main body which sailed to Australia where the Australian contingent was also assembled; they sailed in 45 transports accompanied by four cruisers. The troops landed at Alexandria and from Cairo embarked for the Dardanelles where he was 'trench digging bullet dodging' until he was wounded in the knee.

References

1. Pike, J.R. *Torquay: the place and the people*, 1992 p64
2. Gray, Todd, ed. *Devon documents*, 1996 pp141-5
3. In private hands at present.
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5. Also in private hands at present.

A PACKET OF OLD DEEDS

Elizabeth Hammett

One of the advantages of working in a solicitor's office is that sometimes a packet of old and interesting deeds appears which sheds light on the former owners and occupiers of our old towns and villages, although, unfortunately, compulsory registration of title at the Land Registry makes this an increasingly rare event.

Recently I have been investigating a packet of deeds which cover an unusually long period of time - from 1611 to 1859 and which relate to land near the centre of Barnstaple, described as just outside the North gate, which, although long gone, used to occupy a position at the end of the High Street.¹

Part of the description of the lease in 1611 is, '...all those two messuages or tenements situate lying and being adjoining together without the North gate of the town of Barnstaple aforesaid and within the parish of Barnstaple and do abut on a lane there called the green lane....'. Green Lane still exists, although somewhat altered to accommodate the Green Lanes shopping centre. Still it is good to know the name has survived nearly four hundred years of urban development.

The lessor of this lease date 19 June 1611 was Sir William Howard, knight, Lord Howard of Effingham. He is described as being the 'son and heir apparent of Charles, Earl of Nottingham' and I discovered that a few years after the Armada the then Lord Howard of Effingham, who had been, nominally at least, in charge of the Armada fleet, was created Earl of Nottingham, so this Lord Howard was his son. I had come across mention of Lord Howard granting leases about this time in other deeds, although none actually included the original lease. This puzzled me, because I was not aware of the Howards having any connections in north Devon. However I discovered that a Lord William Howard and Lady Margaret his wife had been granted the land of the priory of St. Mary Magdalene in Barnstaple by Henry VIII and presume this was the land the seventeenth century Lord Howard was selling - it rather looks as though he was in need of some cash around 1611 as all the deeds I have seen to which he is a party are dated about then.²

In any event Lord Howard granted the said messuages or tenements, with some additional land, to one Thomas Tanton or Tawton, tanner. (The handwriting makes it difficult to decipher whether his name was Tawton or Tanton. Presumably because of his trade the lessee was also granted 'twelve foot in length and the whole River in breadth of that River of Water called the North Yeo...to hang and wash skins and other cloths in or for any other use...'. Spelling has been modernised in the quotations - in the original it says 'skymnes' which had me puzzling for a while until I remembered Thomas was a tanner.

Although it is a lease in fact it was clearly in effect a sale - the price was £40 and the rent was one red rose payable on the feast of the Nativity of St John Baptist (which is what we now call the Midsummer Quarter Day, 24 June) 'if the same shall be lawfully demanded'. It would be interesting to know if it was ever so demanded.

So in 1611 the property was owned by a tanner, who presumably carried on his trade there. The remaining deeds show how it changed hands over the centuries until, when it was sold in 1859, it had for some time been a public house called the Green Dragon, having been divided and altered over the years. Numerous names

occur in the deeds and much research could be done to find out more about the people mentioned. For long periods the property seems to have been tenanted rather than lived in by its owners, who naturally enough came from the wealthier ranks of Barumites, at least a couple being mayors of Barnstaple.

The property passed both by inheritance and by sale. The next deed after the original lease is an assignment of 1664 by William Morgan and his wife Margaret to John Seldon. There is a John Seldon listed as Mayor of Barnstaple at that time and it seems reasonable to suppose it is the same man. The recitals in the deed make it clear that the property had passed to Margaret Morgan by inheritance but by a rather roundabout route. The original Thomas Tanton/Tawton bequeathed the property to Sebastian Tawton/Tanton son of Nathaniel. Sebastian bequeathed it to his son Thomas and Thomas to his mother Margaret. Presumably Thomas died young, as Margaret had obviously inherited the property before 1664 and it is tempting to wonder if this has anything to do with the Civil War which had occurred in the interval between 1611 and 1664. I have not been able to find any reference to Tawtons or Tantons, but hope one day I might learn more about them.

The next deed is an assignment by John Seldon's widow, Cicely Seldon, together with the other executors of her husband's will, Richard Salisbury and Edward Rosier. The purchaser is Giles Rendle, presumably the Giles Rendle who was Mayor of Barnstaple in 1713. In 1677 Richard Salisbury was Mayor of Barnstaple, so it looks as though these were all members of the 'ruling class' of the town at that date. Inheritance once again plays its part in the subsequent change of ownership, only this time it also involves a marriage. Among the deeds is the marriage settlement of Giles Rendle's daughter, Margaret, made in 1729 prior to her marriage to George Wickey, mariner, of Barnstaple. This arranged for the property to be left to their heirs, which is how it came into the possession of the Revd George Wickey of Torrington who in 1787 sold the property to Samuel Bremridge of Barnstaple, gentleman. Margaret Rendle had inherited the property from her father, Giles. A copy of his will, dated 1724, is with the deeds. His property included another house and garden in Barnstaple, as well as land at Pottington. It was bequeathed to his wife and two daughters, Margaret and Joan.

By the time Margaret's son, the Revd. George Wickey sold the property it was known as The Green Dragon and the purchase price was £160. There was excepted from the property assigned to Mr. Bremridge such part as was previously granted to a widow Elizabeth Bartlett of Barnstaple. The property soon changed hands again when it was sold by Samuel Bremridge in 1801 to John Bremridge. There were numerous Bremridges in Barnstaple in the nineteenth century. In 1830 Richard Bremridge was Mayor whilst Samuel and Philip Bremridge were both members of the Corporation.³

The deed of 1801 also refers to a dwelling house 'lately belonging to Elizabeth Bartlett but now to Henry Whimple' and also refers to the 'necessary house now standing and being in the Court of the said premises and now used by John Sloye as tenant of the said Henry Whimple together with free liberty to take and fetch water at all times from the pump in the said Court'. So it appears that by that time there was some form of sanitation and a water supply. Probably in earlier times water was taken directly from the Yeo.

Some time between 1801 and 1808 John Bremridge must have died, as in that year his widow, Ann Bremridge, sold the property to Thomas Scott of Barnstaple, maltster. At that time the property is described as in the occupation of Richard Rendell.

so it seems that it was being treated as an investment property and being let to others to occupy.

The last deed is dated 28 April 1859, when Thomas Scott, then of Uplands in the parish of Heavitree, Devon, Esquire, sold the property to Susan Pyke of Barnstaple, widow. The price then was £400. In an 1857 directory the occupant of the Green Dragon is listed as Philip Pyke, victualler and stonemason.⁴ Presumably Susan Pyke was his widow. In an 1890 directory she is still listed as victualler of the Green Dragon.⁵

And there the packet of deeds ends. No doubt much more could be discovered about these people by further research and the deeds themselves contain much more information. But in some cases, especially for the earlier years, these deeds may contain the only record we now have of the lives of those earlier inhabitants of the town.

References

1. The deeds have now been deposited at the North Devon Record Office.
2. There is a copy of the Grant in Gribble, J.B., *Memorials of Barnstaple. 1830*, reprinted 1994.
3. Edgeler, Audrey, High St. Barnstaple 1800 - 1870, 1994.
4. M. Billing's 1857 Directory.
5. White's Directory 1890.

REVIEWS

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

In Pursuit of Devon's History: A Guide for Local Historians in Devon

Compiled by Ian Maxted. Devon Books and the Devon History Society, 1997. 119pp £7.95 but each DUS member entitled to a free copy ISBN 0861149173

Local history is alive and flourishing in Devon; the symptoms are there for all to see. The move of the ambitious Devonshire Association to Bowhill House; the formation of the flourishing Devon Gardens Trust; the success of Devon Heritage Week; and now the publication of *In Pursuit of Devon's History* by Devon Books and the Devon History Society.

So far I have not mentioned a single person's name, but the compiler of the book under review, Ian Maxted (County Local Studies Librarian) is one of the leaders, a facilitator, if you like, of the local history movement. He followed another librarian, the late and much lamented Geoffrey Paley, and of course we all bow to the revered memory of Professor W.G. Hoskins, who began and ended his life in Devon, and was largely responsible at a national level for making local history a respectable academic discipline which amateurs feel able to indulge in. And it is perhaps at the local amateur that this book is directed.

As one scans its pages, crammed with professional wisdom, you realise how little you know about the craft. There are so many resources to tap, at so many levels - national and local, religious and secular, published and archival. Ian Maxted lists them all. He acknowledges help from others, and Adrian Reed (chairman of the Devon History Society), largely wrote the chapter on local history societies.

Maxted acknowledges in the first paragraph that his book cannot cover everything, and if it were to list all the constantly-changing societies' addresses his book would soon be out of date, so he sensibly mentions *Local Studies in Devon: A Guide to Resources* as being a directory which is regularly updated by Devon Library Services, and it is an essential supplement or appendix to his own book.

Reading his Introduction I groaned when I found a word omitted. Not another carelessly proof-read book, I thought! However, there are few other mistakes and misprints - a good example to those he is advising. But I was surprised when I kept finding published works spelt with fewer capital letters than were justified. For example, the *Western morning news* should be *Western Morning News*, *Devon life* should be *Devon Life*, and there are other titles similarly expressed.

It is surely presumptuous of me to suggest an omission, but I do think it would be helpful to point out in the section about sources of photographs that the historic collection of glass negatives of Chapman & Son (of Dawlish) were deposited in the Devon Record Office, where the taking off of prints can be arranged for a small charge.

The book is well laid out and cross-indexed, helpfully illustrated with reproductions of sample documents, and provided with an ample index. Anyone thinking of dabbling in local history should get this book. It could save them a good deal of time and anguish.

Brian Le Messurier

Uffculme a Peculiar Parish: A Devon Town from Tudor Times. Written and Published by The Uffculme Archives Group. Editors: Peter Wyatt and Robin Stanes £2.50

Uffculme earned the sobriquet in the title of this book from the fact that between c.1545 and 1846 its ecclesiastical affairs were controlled by the prebendary of Uffculme and ultimately the Dean of Salisbury, and was thus peculiar, i.e. exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Salisbury. But for the infamous Baedeker air raids on Exeter during the Second World War this arrangement would have caused only a minor frustration to those interested in Uffculme's history, who faced a far longer journey to Salisbury and, from 1979, to Trowbridge, than their colleagues from adjoining parishes who had only to go as far as Exeter to consult the relevant diocesan archives. The destruction of virtually all the probate records of the local church courts for Devon and Somerset in 1942 means that Uffculme is peculiar in Devon for having a complete archive of probate records. This fact encouraged the Uffculme Archive Group to form in order to publish those records, and on the evidence of this volume, soon to be joined by full edition of the records for the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, this is a challenge which the group has met with considerable adeptness and skill.

Uffculme's unusual administrative status has not blinded the group to the need for its work to be set in the wider context of the social and economic history of Devon from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and the reader is made aware that this rare Devon source is used to illustrate in particular the agricultural and cloth industry of the region, thus widening its value beyond those interested only in the parish itself. Although to an archivist it is a rather painful metaphor, the probate records have been wrung dry for every significant jot of information. Another significant achievement of the book is that, although a team effort, it maintains a constant high standard of scholarship with no lightweights at all.

The book concentrates on the wills and inventories, a selection of which are published here, and chapters are devoted to analyses of the evidence gleaned from them relating to the woollen industry, farming, houses and their furnishings, and clothes. A chapter deals with the subject of debt and investment for which the records provide much important evidence, and there is a fascinating analysis of names and relationships which draws some interesting conclusions about social connections as evidenced by the distribution of surnames in east Devon. However, the group has looked further afield to cover population totals, land owners, vicars and non-conformity as well as publishing muster rolls, subsidies, poor rates and a land tax assessment from the sixteenth to eighteenth century and this makes available in print a substantial body of material for local and family historians of Uffculme.

Not only has the group produced a significant resource, it took the brave decision to publish itself and is to be congratulated on producing an attractive and well indexed book. The illustrations - photographs, line drawings and prints - are well chosen and add much to the work. Of particular note is the bird's eye view of the village centre complete with a key to the buildings. Publication is often a tense and stressful business and the group's decision to bring forward the publication date in view of the terminal illness of Peter Newton, author of the sections on the cloth industry and building of Uffculme, has not affected the presentation of the book at all, which is in itself a fitting tribute to a much valued member of the group.

The role of the reviewer in offering constructive criticism is made difficult in this case by the overall excellence of the book. However, two minor errors appear in the

opening two sentences. The parish remained technically under the Dean until 1846 when, by an Order in Council, peculiar jurisdictions were abolished, not 1833 as stated which was the year in which the last vicar was instituted by the Dean. The statement that the great tithes were of corn and wool is only half right. They were due on crops produced directly from the soil: so corn is correct but wool was a lesser tithe. The title of the book raised Uffculme to a status of a town yet nothing is offered to suggest that it was anything other than a large village. Although such distinctions are difficult to draw precisely, some discussion of this knotty problem would have been helpful.

The book does not deal in any detail with the nineteenth century and it is to be hoped that the group is keeping its powder dry for further research, perhaps hoping to attract others to join. The introduction includes a list of the archives of the Prebend of Uffculme but makes no mention of the quantity of material about the parish amongst the Dean's archives, most notably the churchwardens' presentments, all of which are at Trowbridge. Perhaps the group may take up these further challenges but even if this does not come to pass its members can take justifiable pride and satisfaction in putting Uffculme firmly on the map on Devon historical studies with this excellent book.

Steven Hobbs

Medieval Features of the Churches of South West Cornwall and South East Devon No 4 St Andrew's Church, Plymouth, by Nicholas Casley. The Plymouth Press. No price given.

This series of studies is very promising. As the author acknowledges, the study of St Andrew's is a greater challenge than its counterparts. Both in scale and local significance the great church of Plymouth is without peer locally. It was always closely linked with the Borough of Plymouth and its administration and, since 1942, stands also as an icon of the destruction and reconstruction of the city. Nicholas Casley performs a valuable task in pulling together a wide range of sources and has, in best fashion, evaluated the sources, with closest possible reference to the site and the fabric of the church. When new research is published as frequently as it is today, it is essential to produce new syntheses. Nicholas Casley is bang up to date with his, with references as recent as 1996 to show for his wide reading. The greatest difficulty, apart from the changes to the building itself, appears to be the scarcity of references whose provenance is certain. Nevertheless it is valuable to have an historian prepared to reassess even the most commonly accepted view, as the author does for the date of the building of the tower.

Some minor criticisms may be made. As a recognised authority on medieval Plymouth the author's range of reference in the nineteenth century is less certain. Robert Webb Stone Baron (not Bacon), to whom he alludes in a footnote, was the putative poet laureate of Plymouth and possibly a descendant of the sixteenth century mayor, George Barons. The appendices are extremely useful but the existence of early nineteenth century plans relating to Foulston's 'restorations' of the church is not noted.

Nicholas Casley deserves praise for his commitment to Plymouth's history, particularly at a time when almost no one else is producing thorough and original work. This book is a valuable addition to the bibliography of church studies.

Paul Brough

Mortehoe & Woolacombe On The Record, by Margaret Reed. Published by The Friends of Mortehoe Cart Linhay Heritage Centre, Mortehoe, Woolacombe, EX34 7DT. 1997. 196 pp, illustrated. Hardback £12.95. ISBN 0 9506029 2 2.

Margaret Reed is a 'Devon Historian' of some standing, having already written the story of Pitton, where she lives; such work is perhaps addictive, for her publishers note that, when asked to undertake the present study, 'she willingly embarked on a concentrated three-year period of research, writing, and gathering illustrations'.

The parish of Mortehoe consists of 'over 4,000 acres of wildly differing countryside' but the book deals with more than this; it 'tells the story of the area rather than the parish, no apology is made for including references to adjacent manors, which but for a quirk of ownership dating back over a thousand years, could well have been part of Mortehoe parish'. The manors and estates, both within and adjacent to the parish are not only numerous, but unusually well documented. The author has responded well to this challenge, and her research has been commendably thorough.

A great wealth of material presents considerable problems in organising and balancing a parish - or area - history. A strictly chronological account means revisiting many of the same themes in chapter after chapter; a strongly thematic one means going back to the beginning just as frequently. Mrs Reed opts for the latter approach, but helps the reader with a brief chronological history before introducing her first main theme, that of land ownership. There are useful maps in these introductory chapters, and throughout the book.

The area studied includes six Domesday manors and numerous other estates or small settlements. Each of these is presented with an abundance of detail on the 'descent of the manor', with families like Chichesters and Fortescues to the fore, as well as the de Traceys, whose most notorious member was one of Thomas Becket's assassins. Tenants as well as lords are discussed, so these chapters should delight local residents, and help them discover a great deal about their homes, land and predecessors. They also provide a mine of information for scholars and local historians, who will find many transcriptions of complete documents from which to quarry their own gems. General readers, or the visitors whom the publishers also have in their sights, may, however, be daunted by the amount of detail in this first section: the Domesday entries, having been competently tabulated earlier are repeated in full for each manor. Elsewhere, after a point has been made with one or two good examples, extra ones add little except length.

The second section of the book concerns the church and matters ecclesiastical, and the first two chapters, by dealing with the church before and after the Reformation achieve a useful compromise with the chronological approach. The last section concerns social history, for which the thematic approach is well suited. Here, chapters on trade and industry, education, law and order, maritime history, military history, roads and footpaths, and leisure and the arts contribute to what many readers may find the most interesting part of the book. For this section too, some good photographs have been chosen, showing the emergence of the holiday resort after the railway opened in 1874.

A few niggles: those using the book for reference must search the text for notes in parentheses, rather than finding them listed either at the end of a page, a chapter, or the whole book. The index too, has errors and omissions here and there, and some of the photographs lack a date. The book is well and attractively produced, however, with an evocative cover picture reproduced from a painting by Hugh Gurney.

It is a pity that the last chapter - on leisure - breaks off after a detail about a local hostelry, leaving the reader 'up in the air'. It would have been interesting to have had a

few concluding thoughts gathered into a final chapter - perhaps more on the connection between past and present, brought out by perceptive comments like the following, which ends the chapter on roads and footpaths.

The modern route to Mortehoe and Woolacombe from the rest of England is via the North Devon Link Road to Aller Cross, and then to Blackmoor Gate. From this point the tourists follow fairly precisely in the footsteps of the Bronze Age traders of three to four thousand years ago who trod the ridgeway in search of the necessities of life.

Mrs Reed's publishers have good reason to be grateful to her; for she has not only put Mortehoe and Woolacombe 'on the record', but has also donated the proceeds of the book to the funds of their new heritage centre. Both ventures deserve to succeed.

Alison Grant

Circuit Ghosts. A Western Circuit Miscellany by Anthony Harwood. Second impression (revised). The Western Circuit. 296 pp. Paperback £12.00 post free by cheque payable to the Western Circuit at 31 Southgate Street, Winchester SO23 9EE. ISBN 0 9530897 0 3.

While this is a book primarily for barristers and in particular for those practising on the Western Circuit it can be read with pleasure and with little difficulty by lay persons. (I only once had recourse to Maitland). It has the general purpose of providing a history of the Western Circuit and its traditions and more particularly of those who belonged to it.

Originally the circuit was made up of the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. The judges travelled armed until Tudor times but with the Stuarts, apart from civil wars, getting around the country was the main problem. This was less difficult when turnpike roads were built in the next century and certain conventions could be established; The judge would ride in his own carriage, as might the Leader of the Bar, but members were not permitted to use public transport. They either rode or shared a postchaise. With the coming of the railways they were expected to travel first class and for some years the judge would robe in the train to be greeted by the High Sheriff and his escort on the down platform.

The author describes the development of the Circuit Mess and its officers. Of these the Wine Treasurer was the most important. He was responsible for the general comfort of members, arranging Grand Nights and generally safeguarding their professional interests. Until the end of the last century there was also a Baggage Master responsible for loading up the circuit van in London with members' book boxes and robes as well as with the wine. It is interesting to see that in the seven years after 1814 wine consumption was highest in Exeter! After the railways came the telephone as a factor altering circuit life followed by the motor car and by the admission of women which seems to have been achieved with little friction; on Mess Nights the first elected tactfully withdrawing with the port. Changes in the national system of courts later in the present century again led to changes in circuit life.

Although Devon was only one county in the circuit it produces more 'Ghosts' than most of the others. Many of them are given short biographies. In Tudor times there was, for example, John Whiddon of Chagford said to have been the first to ride to court on a horse instead of a mule. Another, Sir John Hele, was denounced by the Lord Keeper, who owed him money, as 'a grypinge and excessive usurer' and who conse-

quently blocked his advancement. Under the Stuarts occur the names of Maynard, Prideaux, Glanville and Chief Justice Rolle but it is in the following century that the stars really shine. Lords King (Exeter), Camden (Cullompton), Ashburton and Gifford (Exeter) all achieved peerages and high office while Sir Willim Follett would have gone much further had he lived. The Victorian era was particularly rich in prominent Devonian lawyers. There were the Coleridges: Sir John who refused a peerage, his son, the Lord Chief Justice, who took one and his grandson a distinguished judge as well as other less well-known family members. Then came R.P. Collier who became Lord Monkswell, H.C. Lopes (Lord Ludlow) and J.A. Poole, a renowned wit, who wrote anonymously an earlier book about life on the circuit. Probably the last of the well known Devon lawyers was H.E. Duke, later Lord Merrivale. In the present century the great names have come mostly from outside the County - Viscounts Simon and Caldecote, Lord Goddard and more recently Lord Devlin and Lord Denning. The latter's speech at a banquet given in his honour is printed as an appendix and includes a succinct history of the circuit.

Much of the charm of this book lies in its anecdotes and in its descriptions of the foibles of individual members, some known to the author and others to those who were seniors when he was first called. He is never unkind, even about the distinguished member who persisted in performing lengthy and complicated conjuring tricks on Grand Nights long after he had lost the skill to do so. When truth forces him to be critical he does so dispassionately and without malice. While there is much in it for the legal historian there is also a great deal to inform and indeed to divert the more general reader.

Adrian Reed

Hannah Cowley Tiverton's Playwright and Pioneer Feminist 1743 - 1809, by Mary de la Mahotiere. Devon Books, 96 pp. Illustrated. paperback £6.95. ISBN 086114 916 5.

Hannah Cowley was the daughter of a Tiverton bookseller who became one of the town's twelve Corporators or governing councillors who elected the member for the borough. During Hannah's time he was a representative of the Ryder (Harrowby) family who helpfully obtained a post for Mr Cowley in the East India Company in Bengal where he died after fourteen years service. Hannah's profession as a playwright is said to have begun when she saw a dull play in London and decided that she could do better herself. The result was the successful *The Runaway* put on by Garrick at the beginning of 1776. Three years later came *Who's the Dupe?* But in between there were difficulties with Sheridan, who had taken over from Garrick in Drury Lane, with Garrick himself, and over plagiarism with another female dramatist, Hannah More. Later she had more trouble with the theatrical world where her successes did not make her automatically welcome. She continued to produce plays, her comedies being the most popular, until 1794, when she retired to Tiverton, expressing her distaste for contemporary theatrical trends. She had also engaged in unmemorable poetic exchanges under the name of Anna Matilda with another poet in the columns of *The World* which earned her Gifford's scorn in his *Baviad*, censures which a late nineteenth century Devon anthologist thought merited. She wrote several long poems but her reputation stands on her plays and primarily on her comedies.

In her day Hannah Cowley's plays were published separately and in collected editions and as late as the end of the last century were said to be still on the acting list.

Evidence of their durability is that both Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were to take part in a revival of *The Belle's Stratagem* (1780) well into the following century. An American reprint of about twenty years ago is no longer available and so the author gives a precis of the plot of each. Most are comedies with all the surprises, subplots, disguises and revelations so popular at the time. The themes include brides who successfully marry for choice contrary to the intentions of their guardians or parents and girls who avoid arranged matches with men far older than themselves. These heroines in general show independence of mind. It is on these plots and attitudes that the author gives Hannah her description of pioneer feminist although she is careful to stress her attitude as a good wife and mother.

Hannah Cowley was friendly with Cosway, the painter, another successful Tivertonian, and is said to have been patronised by Queen Charlotte and to have moved in the best London circles. Little, though, seems known about her life in the capital or indeed about her husband, himself said to be well known in literary circles. He was sent off to India to mend the family fortunes, suggesting that even a run of successful plays was not enough to keep a wife and three children. He married off, suitably, in Calcutta one of the two daughters and no doubt would have done the same for the other had she not died before sailing. Our interest in him is sharpened by the fact of his having criticised, anonymously, in the press the production of one of *The Belle's Stratagem*. Nevertheless she is said to have been devoted to him. Mrs de la Mahotiere has put us in her debt by reviving interest in Hannah's work. We must now hope for a sight of some of her plays.

Adrian Reed

A Dittisham Boy's Story by Ewart Hutchings. Dartmouth History Research Group. Paper 22. Dartmouth Museum, Dartmouth TQ6 9PZ. 40 pp. Paperback. Illustrated. No price given

This booklet was written originally by the late author for his grandchildren. Much of it is therefore concerned with his service in the First World War in Gallipoli and France and in his subsequent successful career in education. Like so many Devonians he left the county to earn his living but returned to it on retirement.

Ewart Hutchings was the youngest of seven children. His father's eldest brother, William had struck gold in Australia and sent for Ewart's father and his twin brother to join him. On their returning home via New Zealand William bought property in Dittisham but the others do not seem to have done so well. Ewart's father lived by buying dairy produce and poultry from neighbouring farms and a Dartmouth market which he sold to hotels in Torbay. In the summer the whole family picked plums in their orchards, packing them in hundreds for onward sale. These plums were of a particular variety called Ploughman and most cottages grew them. His childhood seems to have been a happy one with swimming and boating in the summer and football and Guy Fawkes night to look forward to in the winter. The Dittisham guys were always made to look like someone who had become unpopular in the preceding year. The local school was perhaps not very good so he was sent as a dayboy to a school in Torquay. Later he went to Plymouth Grammar School, lodging with his elder brother and going on to a teacher training college in London in the year before the war. Thereafter the events of his life ceased to take place in Devonshire.

Adrian Reed

'WHAT FIRST AROUSED YOUR INTEREST IN THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY/ARCHAEOLOGY?'

In his article 'Exploring Devon's past' in DH 55 Simon Timms suggested that readers might care to write in and give their answers to the above question. We are delighted to have received the following replies.

From Noel Parry, Lapford, Crediton:

I've been a member of the Devon History Society now for a number of years, and have always enjoyed reading *The Devon Historian*. I'm sure most people who have a real interest in local history catch the bug as youngsters from the surroundings in which they are brought up.

In my own case, I was born and lived the first 22 years of my life in Abergavenny, South Wales - very much on the borders of Norman and Medieval England and Wales. So within a few miles were the ruins of a number of castles - Abergavenny itself, Usk, Crickhowell, White Castle, Grosmont, Skenfrith, Monmouth, and the greatest of them - Raglan and Chepstow. I heard often the story of how the wicked Norman lord William de Braose invited the local Welsh petty chiefs to a feast at Abergavenny Castle in 1175, only to have them all murdered. I explored the old ruins as a boy and tried to imagine and picture life in those castles 900 years ago.

And not far away was the splendid Roman fort at Caerleon and the magnificent city walls of Caerwent - Abergavenny itself had once begun as the Roman Gobannium. So I know my interest started there. Then I lived in Cheltenham for 10 years, and that has its own intriguing history, from the Neolithic tombs on the edge of the Cotswolds to the great days of Regency Cheltenham with its splendid spas and fine buildings.

From there to Devon in 1961, to Torrington for 14 years, surrounded by Saxon, Norman, and Civil War reminders. Then to Lapford in 1975 - with its medieval church, many fifteenth century farms, manors and mills; the remains (partly excavated by Prof. Malcolm Todd) of a large Roman fort and Celtic homestead; its eccentric prize-fighting Parson Jack Radford; the highly humorous and entertaining Log Books of the school going back to 1865; and so much to learn from the church registers, Parish Council and Chapel Minute Books. I never cease learning new and fascinating details of our local history. Long may it continue for all of us who are interested, and have a love of what roots us into this glorious county of Devon.

From Lorna Smith, of Shiphay, Torquay:

My mother attended the Corporation Grammar School, Plymouth during the headship of Charles Bracken and was steeped in the history of Plymouth. My father as a Sanitary Inspector for the Borough of Torquay took a keen interest in the evolution of the town and between both parents I was brought up with a lively sense of the past. Coupled with this our next door neighbour was keen on local history and one of my earliest recollections is of being shown the Haylor Granite Railway track at the back of Bovey Tracey and having it explained to me.

When I started in work at the age of sixteen in the Torquay Public Library I came under the influence of John Pike who, finding I had an interest in local history, fostered that interest and I have been able to apply librarianship disciplines to local history. It was through the Devon History Society that I became interested in industrial

archaeology which led indirectly to my becoming Railway Studies Librarian for the Devon County Library Service.

From Anthony Greenstreet, Camberley, Surrey:

My own interest in local history was stimulated around 1935 (at the age of 6-7) by:

1. Visits to Plymouth Museum. (I remember particularly bone models made by Napoleonic prisoners of war of a guillotine and a warship, and flint arrowheads from Dartmoor).

2. Connections with the Navy at Devonport, e.g. ships' figureheads; my mother making flags for the model of Golden Hind in the chapel of the RN barracks; children's parties aboard old man-of-war *Defiance*.

3. Staying in a friend's haunted house - (The Old Vicarage, Anthony)!

NOTICE BY THE CHAIRMAN

This year a number of members had to be reminded by the Hon. Treasurer that they had not paid their subscriptions due on 1 May. This wasted the Treasurer's time and the Society's money. Your Council has decided therefore that in future no reminders will be sent and that notices of meetings and the *Devon Historian* will cease to be posted to anyone whose subscription is in arrears.

Adrian Reed

OTHER LETTERS AND NOTICES

From Dr Mark Brayshaw:

Please note that the map which appeared as figure 1 (*Devon Historian* No 55, page 5) in my paper on Lord Astor's difficulties in travelling to wartime Plymouth shows the Great Western Railway line running from Westbury to Taunton via Yeovil whereas, of course, it ran directly between Westbury and Taunton. The Westbury to Yeovil line was actually part of the branch towards Weymouth. Moreover, by 1941, the 'London and South West' line, running via Okehampton and Tavistock, was part of Southern Railways, though Astor himself still used its older name. MB

NEWS OF DARTMOUTH HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP, from Mrs Ray Freeman, Chairman.

We started seven years ago, as an offshoot from Dartmouth Museum, specialising in publishing short booklets about the history of Dartmouth and the surrounding area, encouraging anyone with knowledge to write them. We have now published 22 booklets, and have another ready for the printer. We are non-profit making, and any proceeds from the sale of the booklets is used to produce later ones. We have also paid for copies on microfiche of all the Parish Registers to be placed in the local library, and of the Census Returns of 1861 and 1891. We have transcribed the 1861 Census and put it on to a data-base, a printed copy of which is also in the Library, and are currently working to do the same for the 1891 census. Our object is to build up records about the area in a convenient place for locals and visitors who may be researching their family trees. As the Museum does not have space for research activities by the public, we have placed these in the Library.

Photographic sources of Devon views: George Washington Wilson (1823-93)

Mr C. G. Scott (Exeter) has deposited typescript lists at the Westcountry Studies Library, and the Devon & Exeter Institution, Exeter, of Devon views by the commercial photographic firm of G. W. Wilson of Aberdeen held at the Aberdeen University Library. (Typescript lists of Devon Views can be obtained from: Aberdeen University Library, George Washington Wilson Collection, Special Collections Dept., King's College, Aberdeen AB9 2UB.)

Source: *The Local Historian*, vol.19 no.3, Aug.1989, pp124-6 'Local Photographers and their work. 6. George Washington Wilson of Aberdeen'. [Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter].

TRELAWNY BOOK

Some months ago Sir John Trelawny kindly wrote from his home in Kent explaining that he had recently sent a disk of the transcription of an old family book to the Devon Record Office, where it was suggested that it might be of interest to Devon History Society members because of the many references to

Tiverton and the area.

Sir John wrote:

The typescript is copied from the manuscript copy made by Mr Peter Hull, County Archivist of Cornwall, of a hard covered (worm eaten with one brass fastening) parchment book which was presented in 1981 to Sir John Trelawny in Puyvert, Vaucluse, by MM Aguitton who had saved it from the belongings left by Sir John William Trelawny after his death in the village in February 1944.

The contents are summarised in notes made by Mr Hull in his manuscript transcription:

"Trelawny book

Shows descent of the manor of Trelawne from the 13th century viz, Sir Henry de Bodrugan, via the Champernowne family, and the Bouvilles, and the Greys (marquesses of Dorset) to Henry Grey, marquis of Dorset (father of Lady Jane Grey), and duke of Suffolk who was executed 23rd February 1554 when the manor of Trelawne reverted to the Crown.

Sir Jonathan Trelawny, Knight, bought the manor of Trelawne from the Crown on 9th August 1600.

There follows a description of the manor and its customs in 1600. After this a rental of the manor of Trelawne in 1619 showing free, customary, and conventional (?) tenants.

Then there is a list of the muniments, numbered and lettered, from the 13th century to 1600. **After the Cornish lands come the 'evidences' from a moiety of the manor, borough and hundred of Tiverton in Devon: the Trelawnys inherited this from the Courtenays (John Trelawny of Menheniot married Florence daughter of Sir Hugh Courtenay of Bocconoc - Florence was one of the four Courtenay co-beiresses). John Trelawny, Esq. 'recovered' the Tiverton properties in 1618."**

Finally, my daughter's father-in-law Alex Startin, who lives in Willand, located many of the Tiverton references on the Ordnance Survey of the area and has expressed an interest in any ongoing research.

GUILD OF ST LAWRENCE

Ashburton's Guild of St Lawrence, a local charity, was formed in 1985 to look after the future and day to day running of St Lawrence Chapel. This important grade I listed building was given to the town of Ashburton in 1314 by the Bishop of Exeter, Bishop Stapledon with the original Guild of St Lawrence, headed by the Portreeve and Burgesses given the task of looking after the Chapel and its Charity School. Since this time it has also been the seat of the Courts Leet and Baron Jury who still meet in the building. After over 600 years of history as a school, Ashburton Grammar School closed in 1938 with the building being used firstly as the county school and latterly as part of the Primary School with part of the premises being used as the town's library (1940 - 1980) and the town's museum. Since major renovation carried out in 1986 by Dartmoor National Park with funding from English Heritage, the Guild has been responsible for the day

to day running of this building and opening it from May to September each year to the public. The Guild has collected together an archive of items mainly donated by past pupils of the Grammar School and also a section on the history of the Portreeve and the Court Leet and Baron Jury who meet annually in the Chapel in late November to choose the new Portreeve and Bailiff.

The Guild together with Dartmoor National Park, Devon County Council and in partnership with the St Lawrence Trust is about to obtain the freehold of the Chapel from the Old Grammar School Foundation. This will ensure the future of this ancient building while handing it back to the community.

Contact:- Mrs R. Westall (Secretary), 13a St Lawrence Lane, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7DD.

WHICH PORTLEMOUTH?

It would be interesting to know if any of our members can offer answers or suggestions to the questions posed in this contribution from **Tony Collings**:

Volume II of the *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, published in 1906, records on page 225 the grant on 25 May 1280 to Simon son of Guy and his heirs of a weekly market on Mondays at his manor of Portlemuth, along with two fairs. This entry appears in the index as 'Portlemouth, Portemuth [in Malborough]'. In other words, the editor has taken it to refer to West Portlemouth, once a Domesday manor but today scarcely more than a farm, 750 metres south of the village of Malborough, in what was Stanborough Hundred. In so doing the editor appears to be in a minority of one, with modern authorities such as Professor W.G. Hoskins and Maryanne Kowaleski assuming the grant to refer to the ancient parish of East Portlemouth on the opposite side of Salcombe Harbour, in what was Coleridge Hundred.¹

Did the editor have access to a source which later commentators have overlooked? No doubt prominent among his sources would have been the volume of *Feudal Aids*, produced by his office seven years previously. The entries are arranged by Hundreds, and the index clearly distinguishes the two Portlemouths. Included is a survey of 1303, which records under Stanborough Hundred that the heirs of Simon son of Guy held one fee on Portlemue; while under Coleridge Hundred, Henry son of Alan held Dodbrook and Portlemouth.²

Certainly there is a precedent for second thoughts being best in this part of the county. When the Reverend Oswald Reichel edited the Devon and Cornwall Record Society's volume of *Devon Feet of Fines* in 1912 he assumed a life grant by Guy, son of Guy, in 1262 of the Manor of Portlemouth to Martin de Portlemouth and Margaret his wife referred to East Portlemouth (No.626), but he had realised his error the following year when he wrote his paper on the Hundred of Stanborough in the time of the *Testa*

de Nevil,³ with that document referring under Stanborough Hundred to Guy de Bretthevil holding one fee in Portlemue.⁴

Among the sources which can give an indication of the presence of commercial activity are the Lay Subsidies. In 1332 at East Portlemouth there were ten tax-payers, eight of whom contributed the minimum 8d, one 10d and one 12d totalling 7s 2d; this is suggestive of little more than subsistence agriculture. Across the water the communities were wealthier; although Malborough was not mentioned as such, of its constituent manors, at Sewer and West Portlemouth seventeen tax-payers (among them a Martin Clouere) paid a total of 19s 4d, and at Batson and Bolberry another seventeen paid a total of 24s 10d.⁵ The average payment on the west side of the harbour was higher than the maximum paid on the east side, and this is indicative of wealth being created, associated with the market having been established within Malborough parish. Conceivably one of the fairs was held at Salcombe and survived into the nineteenth century, albeit with a change of date, to become that referred to by the Lysons brothers as being held 'at Whitsuntide for trinkets, sweetmeats, &c. &c.'⁶ There seems to be no documentary support for those who have taken the medieval references to shipping at Portlemouth to refer to East Portlemouth, and have inferred that it subsequently declined with activity shifting to Salcombe.

Such decline as East Portlemouth experienced was not until the later nineteenth century, when the Duchess of Cleveland instigated a policy of evicting the more humble tenantry and demolishing their cottages in order to raise the social tone of the parish.⁷ This is attested to by the census figures, which record a decline in the number of houses between 1871 and 1881 from 82 to 61, and of population from 387 to 302.

References

1. Hoskins, W.G. & Finberg, H.P.R. 1952 *Devonshire Studies*, map opposite p.224; Kowaleski, M. 1995 *Local markets and regional trade in medieval Exeter*, 365.
2. *Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids*, Volume I, 1899, 351, 349.
3. Reichel, O.J. 1913 'The Hundred of Stanborough or Dippeforde in the time of the *Testa de Nevil*. AD 1243'. *Rep. Trans. Devonshire Assoc.* XLV, 192;
4. Republished in 1923 as *The Book of Fees*, Part II, 1242-1293, 766.
5. Erskine, A.M. (ed.) 1969 *The Devonshire Lay Subsidy of 1322*, Devon & Cornwall Record Society New Series 14, 94, 6, 7.
6. Lysons, D & Lysons, S. 1823 *Magna Britannia: 6 Devonshire Part II*, 331.
7. *The Western Times*, 2.9.1879 2c.

**Minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting held in
the School of Education, University of Exeter, 11
October 1997.**

Present: the President, Dr Harold Fox in the Chair; 41 members of the Society (names listed in attendance register).

1. Apologies: Mr R. Bass, Miss M. Bird, Mrs M. Freeman, Col. G. Grimshaw, Mr B. Le Messurier, Prof. N. Orme, Miss P. Salter, Mrs J. Sanders, Mr S. Timms.

2. Minutes of the 26th AGM 1996, printed in DH 54, were confirmed and signed. There were no matters arising.

3. Hon. Secretary's report. Mrs S. Stirling reported on two successful conferences: at Woodbury in the Spring, organised by members of Woodbury History Society and in July the first joint conference with the Cornwall Association of Local Historians at Millbrook and Mount Edgecombe.

During the year a new category of corporate membership had been introduced: affiliation, whereby all members of the affiliated society were given free entry to the Devon Record Office. This had proved extremely popular and to date 27 societies had opted for affiliation. It was hoped that not only would the societies concerned benefit, but also that by providing incentives to pursue serious research, the scheme would further local history studies in the county.

The Society's most recent innovation was the handbook *In pursuit of Devon's history*, available at the meeting as a free gift for members. The Chairman, Mr Reed, had conceived the idea for the book, which had been brought to fruition by Mr Ian Maxted with some collaboration from other specialists. The Handbook had been launched to general acclaim earlier in the month during Devon Heritage Week.

The Society had played its part in Heritage Week with talks on the handbook by the President, the Treasurer's (and Mr Stanes's) manning of the bookstall and the provision of display screens describing the Society's activities.

The recently distributed letter from the President, Dr Fox, inviting each member to recruit a friend or colleague had been well received. A recent Devon planning document *Planning for the future* had contained virtually no mention of libraries and archives. A letter from the Society urging the importance of maintaining and improving these services had received a reply which gave little encouragement that the financial cuts of recent years would be reversed. The meeting was reminded that local historians needed to bring much pressure to bear if they wished to continue to enjoy the excellent services provided in the past.

4. Hon. Membership Secretary's report. Mr Pike explained that to avoid paying an annual fee to the Data Protection Agency, he no longer recorded members' research interests. The Hon. Treasurer confirmed that current membership stood at 330, with new applications expected.

The President thanked the Secretaries for their reports and added his congratulations for the Society's booklet, in particular praising Ian Maxted for his hard

work and skill in producing such an excellent and user-friendly guide. He exhorted members to increase the society's membership by circulating his recruiting letter.

5. Hon. Treasurer's report. Mr Haydon stressed that this was a good year to join the Society, since members would receive for their £10 not only Ian Maxted's book (retailing at £7.95), but two issues of *The Devon Historian*, each costing around £4 with postage. Reviewing the income and expenditure account, he drew attention to the fall in income of over £500 from subscriptions, but stated that the overall excess of expenditure over income of some £50 was not significant set against the Society's purchase of £4000's worth of shares. The accounts were approved and the Treasurer congratulated. Mr A.W.F. Gore, the independent examiner, was thanked for his services. Mr Haydon's proposal that he should be appointed to undertake the work again in the coming year was approved by the meeting.

6. Hon. Editor's report. Mrs Harris reported that issues 54 and 55 of *The Devon Historian* had been published. The printer had used the same colour for both covers, contrary to instructions. Contributions had been received on varied topics with a welcome concentration on 'aspects of modern history' (the first half of the twentieth century), recording details from recent and living memories. Contributions on a wide spectrum of subjects and dates were still needed, the deadline for issue 56 being 30 November 1997. Items on local history societies and museums or special local events would be welcomed. Those submitting copy were referred to the notes on 'house style' on p.2 of the journal. Mrs Harris thanked all contributors and reviewers. Mrs Stirling was thanked for providing the cover art-work and for mailing copies twice a year.

The President congratulated Mrs Harris on two excellent issues and thanked her for her efforts.

7. Election of Officers and Council for 1997/98:

All the current Officers being willing to stand again, their re-election en bloc was proposed by Mrs P. Costella, seconded by Mrs Y. Cleave and carried.

Of the three Council members retiring under the 3-year rule, Mr I. Maxted and Mr R. Stanes had intimated that they were willing to stand again. Their re-election was proposed by Mr J. Stirling, seconded by Mr J. Pike and carried.

Prof. I. Roots wishing to stand down from the Council, Mr A. Collings was proposed for the vacancy by Dr S. Bhanji, seconded by Dr T. Gray and duly elected.

The President expressed the Society's thanks to Prof. Roots, a past President, for his services over many years.

Mrs A. Langridge, one of two co-opted members, having gone to live abroad, Prof. Root was nominated by the Officers to replace her.

Mr A. Sayers, seconded by Mr J. Dilley, proposed a vote of thanks to the Officers and Council.

8. Future programme: the following meetings were provisionally announced:

Spring 1998: Uffculme 4 April (joint meeting with Somerset A&NS).

Summer 1998: Totnes 4 July

AGM 1998: Exeter Univ. 7 November. Joint meeting with Devon Gardens Trust

Spring 1999: to be decided

Summer 1999: Dartmouth. Including river-trip. Newcomen Society invited

The Lymstone Society was thanked for its offer to host a meeting.

The problem of dates clashing with meetings of other societies was raised.

A real problem existed as this Society, like others, was restricted to dates on which speakers were available. It was suggested that the Centre for South West Historical Studies might be able to act as a clearing-house.

9. Any other business. No matters were raised and the meeting was declared closed.

HAVE YOU OBTAINED YOUR MEMBER'S FREE COPY?

IN PURSUIT OF DEVON'S HISTORY

A guide for local historians in Devon

Compiled by Ian Maxted

The purchase price of this Handbook, which is sponsored by the Devon History Society, is £7.95. But every DHS member whose subscription is paid is entitled to a free copy, obtainable at the Society's meetings, or on payment of £1 for postage and packing on application to Mrs Sheila Stirling, Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter EX1 1EZ.

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