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The Devon Historian

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59

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The Devon Historian is available free to all members of The Devon History Society. Membership subscriptions run annually from 1 May to 30 April and for the coming year will be as follows: Individual: £10.00; Family (that is two or more individuals in one family): £15.00; Corporate (libraries, institutions): £15.00; Affiliated societies: £10; Life Membership (open to individuals only): £100.00. Please send subscriptions to the Treasurer, Dr Sadru Bhanji, 13 Elm Grove Road, Topsham, Devon EX3 0EQ.

THE DEVON HISTORIAN

Correspondence relating to *The Devon Historian* and contributions for publication should be sent to Mrs Helen Harris, Hon. Editor, *The Devon Historian*, Hirnodelles, 22 Churchill Road, Whitchurch, Tavistock PL19 9BU. The deadline for the next issue is 30 November 1999. Books for review should be sent to Mrs S. Stirling, c/o Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter, EX1 1EZ, who will invite the services of a reviewer. It is not the policy of the Society to receive unsolicited reviews.

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCES

The AGM of the Society will take place on Saturday 23 October at St Lukes College, Exeter.

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CONTENTS No. 59 — October 1999

Notices		2
The north Devon coal and culm trades, 1780-1830	MICHAEL NIX	3
The short-lived school of domestic science at Powderham Castle	ANDREW J.H. JACKSON	10
Cadhay Bridge in Ottery St Mary	D.L.B. THOMAS	15
Parson Froude – villain or victim?	S. BHANJI	19
Plymouth in *The Gentleman's Magazine*	ANTHONY GREENSTREET	26

Reviews:

John Graves Simcoe, by Mary Beacock Fryer and Christopher Draycott (Adrian Reed) 29
A history of Axminster to 1910, by Geoffrey Chapman (Robin Stanes) 30
The life and times of William Veale, Master Mariner, by Linda King (Adrian Reed) 32
The old Devon farmhouse, by Peter Brears (Robin Stanes) 33
One thousand years of Sherford, by John R. Goodman (John Pike) 34
The history of Lloyd Maunder, by Henry Clarke and Hilary Binding (Brian Clist) 35
Clearbrook: the story of a Dartmoor hamlet, by Pauline Hemery (Tony Collings) 36
The history of the Castle Hotel, Dartmouth, by Ray Freeman (Tony Collings) 36

Other publications received 37

News from local societies 38

Notices 39

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). With the exception of those listed as unobtainable, issues above number 10, up to 55, are currently available free from Mrs Stirling who, if she is contacted in advance, will bring those required to the AGM on 23 October. Issues later than number 55 are priced at £3, post free. 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.

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

NOTE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles are welcomed by the Hon. Editor to be considered for publication in *The Devon Historian*. Generally the length should not exceed 2,000 - 2,500 words (plus notes and possible illustrations), although much shorter pieces of suitable substance may also be acceptable, as are items of information concerning museums, local societies and particular projects being undertaken.

To assist the work of the Editor and the printers please ensure that contributions are clearly typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with **double spacing** and adequate margins, and also, as far as possible, that the journal's style is followed on such matters as the restrained use of capital letters, initial single rather than double inverted commas, the writing of the date thus e.g. 30 November 1999, etc.

KENNETH STONEMAN

With sadness we report the death, in early July, of Kenneth Stoneman. He rarely missed a meeting of the Society, and was a regular attender of meetings of Council, of which he was a member from 1985-98 and where his friendly and knowledgeable presence was much valued. Kenneth's work in organising the Crediton meeting in 1996, and his authoritative talk on Crediton charities on that occasion, were particularly appreciated.

We offer our sincere condolences to his family.

H.H.

THE NORTH DEVON COAL AND CULM TRADES, 1780-1830

Michael Nix

The dearth of references to the export of timber in the late seventeenth century north Devon port books may be associated with serious shortages experienced in the county since just before the reign of Elizabeth I. At times, the scarcity reached crisis proportions. An anonymous Elizabethan petitioner observed that '....all country villages within twenty miles of the sea are mostly driven to...[sea] coals for most of the woods are consumed, and the ground converted to corn or pasture'.[1] This shortage of wood-fuel was frequently mentioned in the Exeter city records. In December 1609, for example, ten tons of coal were purchased at Topsham, since 'the price of woode doth increase to the great burden of the poor'. Yet only the impoverished of the city burned 'the filthy fuel' from necessity. The rich bought coal only occasionally when wood shortages were extremely acute; they could afford inflated prices.[2]

The increasing demand for coal was stimulated during the seventeenth century by the depletion of timber resources. The processes of the woollen industry, potteries, brick- and pipe- makers, maltsters, bakers, soap-boilers, limeburners, shipbuilders, glass-makers and brewers all required the burning of wood. The household demands of warming and cooking also added to the burden of demand outstripping supply. Resulting timber shortages forced a more general acceptance of coal as a substitute for wood.[3] By 1750 it was as exceptional to see, in Devon, a wood fire as it was to see a fire of sea coal in 1650. Exeter alone experienced a ten-fold increase in its coal requirements during the second half of the seventeenth century.[4]

	Bideford	Barnstaple	Ilfracombe
1682	2678.5	1832	586
1686	3515	2131	651.5
1694	3009	2270	553
1700	2140	2090	395

Table 1. Chaldrons of coal imported into north Devon recorded in four sample years between 1682 and 1700 (GJO Dunstan, 'The Sea-borne Trade of Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe, 1680-1700', unpublished BA thesis, Cambridge University, 1972, p.38).

In north Devon the port books indicate a growing demand for coal in the region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Shipments into the port of Barnstaple (which then incorporated Bideford) between 1 April 1572 and 31 March 1573 accounted for no more than twelve weys or 48 tons. For the period 2 April to 12 October 1651 this had increased to 3,191 chalders - substantially more than 5,000 tons. Table 1 sets out the annual coal imports into the three north Devon ports for four sample years between 1682 and 1700. Only five other ports, inclusive of London, had larger imposts on coal than Bideford and Barnstaple combined.[5] Amongst the chief importers of coal in the south-west peninsula, the north Devon ports benefited from the close proximity of south Wales, and relatively low freight rates over short distances encouraged a wider distribution overland. In 1794, when travelling in the neighbourhood of Barnstaple, William Marshall reported that 'coals may be had at a

reasonable rate'.[6] By 1829 Devon as a whole imported 273,000 tons of coal from south Wales, while Cornwall received 163,000 tons. The combined figures represent over one-tenth of all coal imports into English coastal counties.[7]

Coal imports into the South West were sold at competitive prices up to, and sometimes over, 20 to 30 miles inland. An aged seventeenth century husbandman described how he had been employed several times to drive coal-bearing pack-horses from Ham Mills, Bridgwater, to the neighbouring market towns of Taunton, North Curry, Langport and Wellington, places 'ordinarily supplied' with fuel in this manner. He even entered Devonshire, reaching Holcombe Rogus and Tiverton.[8] In 1818 the canal engineer James Green reported that Okehampton consumed:

> Large quantities of coal, which they now get by land carriage from Tavistock, Exeter, or Bideford: Besides Okehampton, there are several populace towns in its immediate neighbourhood, alike circumstanced, such as Hatherleigh, Jacobstow, North Tawton, Bow, South Tawton, and others.[9]

In addition to coal transported overland from the county's northern ports, Exeter also imported directly from south Wales and north-eastern England. However, short sea communications and improvements in roads during the eighteenth century still gave north Devon a competitive edge.

Table 2 compares total numbers of cargoes of coal shipped into Barnstaple between July 1791 and June 1793 and into Bideford for three sample periods between 1791 and 1812. The figures were extracted from the arrivals and departures lists in *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* where similar data for Ilfracombe could not be found, and a Bideford port book. There is evidence of under-recording for the Bideford entries in the early 1790s. However, this should not detract from the larger Barnstaple trade. During this period over 90 per cent of Barnstaple's coal shipments and more than 85 per cent of Bideford's arrived from Swansea, a similar situation pertaining for Bideford in the period 1805-7. This may also apply to Ilfracombe which traded in coal almost exclusively with this Welsh port in the late seventeenth century.[10] The bituminous coals then exported from the Glamorgan mines were suitable for domestic household use, unlike the hard, anthracitic culms from Pembrokeshire.

Port	Barnstaple	Bideford		
Sample period	1791-3*	1791-3	1805-7	1810-12
Cargoes	210/5+	73/0	122/6	145/7

* from July to June
\+ number of cargoes/consignments
cargo = single commodity carried in a vessel
consignment = two or more different types of commodity carried as a single cargo

Table 2. The number of cargoes and consignments of coal imported in to Barnstaple and Bideford in three sample periods between 1791 and 1812 (TEFP, NDRO R2379A/Z8).

By the period 1810-12 Bideford coal merchants (and by inference, North Devon's) began using other sources of supply, decreasing Swansea's share in numbers of cargoes by about ten per cent. By 1812, Neath, Newport and Cardiff were all connected to their

hinterlands by canals, and with this advantage made inroads into Swansea's share of the market. Other occasional shipments arrived from the coal-fields of Lancashire, Cumberland and Ayrshire. It is probable, however, that ships' masters, conscious of a relatively long haul coastal voyage homewards and the need to maximise profits, purchased coal rather than return in ballast.

The shipments already discussed do not include coal deliveries to the creeks and coves of the region. In 1790 Paul Orchard, of Hartland Abbey, paid between 1s 3½d and 1s 4½d per bushel of coal shipped in through Hartland Quay. In one month - January 1790 - he purchased 256 bushels of coal or just over 5 weys (20 tons).[11] In May 1800 Captain Sharp arrived at Clovelly quay with 38 chaldrons of coal for Sir James Hamlyn Williams' estate at Clovelly Court. The cargo cost £17 6s 0d in south Wales. Freightage, at £4 per wey (6 chaldrons to the wey), added a further £26 to the bill. Customs dues (£10 8s 6d) and an 'entrance' charge of one shilling, brought the cost to £54 5s 6d. Duties, incidentally, amounted to about one-fifth of the total.[12] In 1788 duties on coals (both bituminous and anthracitic) brought coastwise into Bideford amounted to £786 3s 7¾d; Barnstaple's was substantially larger at £1,248 3s 6d.[13] Later, in 1839, Gribble recorded the duty on Barnstaple's coal deliveries over the previous few years at about £3,000 per annum.[14]

Evidence for seasonality suggests that the coal supplies into north Devon were closely related to domestic requirements rather than the demands made by anthracite-burning, small-scale industries of the region. The monthly coal imports received by Bideford during 1806 were found to be at their greatest in the winter and early spring. The peak months were October, November, February and March. The low number of arrivals in December and January probably relate to weather conditions. Between June and September there was a summer trough. During this seasonal slump, the anthracite-burning lime-kilns and potteries were at their busiest.

Anthracite, also called 'culm', 'stone coal' and 'sea coal', contained a higher percentage of carbon than other mineral fuels and was harder than other coals. Found in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Glamorgan, culm burned with less smoke and dirt than its bituminous counterpart, coal. Defoe wrote of culm as being:

> very useful in drying malt, and is the cheapest and best Firing in the World for hot-houses and garden stores, burning long with a bright red colour, and very little Flame or smoak; affording at the same time a strong and equal heat.[15]

To these enterprises Defoe could have added lime and pottery kilns. Suitable for industrial purposes - limestone decomposed at temperatures of about 550°C and pottery was fired at about 900°C - culm, either powdery or in small lumps, was unfitted for domestic fireplaces.

The costs and method of shipping culm may be gleaned from the 'Culm Voyages' made between Cresswell, near Milford in south Wales, and Dartmouth in south Devon, in the Bideford-owned brigantine *Albion*.[16] Between 1785 and 1799 the purchase price of one 'hundred' of culm rose from £2 10s 0d to £3 10s 0d. The steepest increases occurred in 1793, at the beginning of the French Revolutionary War, and in 1797, a year of deep economic and national gloom. Freight rates doubled from almost £2 10s 0d per hundred to over £5. Profits also rose markedly. During 1785 the gains made from five culm voyages ranged between £22 and £34. By 1794 this had risen to between £58 and £70. During the period 1796-1799 the *Albion*'s profits on 16 voyages fluctuated between

£11 14s 0d and £90. The lower figure takes into account unusually high disbursements which included a new foresail coasting £14 7s 11d. The *Albion* made about four culm voyages a year, returning an average annual profit of approximately £226.

The *Albion*'s second voyage in 1796 is fairly typical. The cargo, loaded at Cresswell, cost £81, with further payments for carters' and boatmans' ale, pilotage and assistance, etc., totalling £8 0s 6d. Another charge of £12 16s 2d was made for ballast, quay dues, postage, letters and stamps. At Dartmouth, horse and culm boat time, ballast, pilotage etc., along with customs dues, took a further £32 11s 1d. The total cost of cargo and freight was thus £124 7s 9d, onto which was added £43 19s 5d for wages and £27 10s 3d for provisions (including beef, bread, milk, fish, potatoes, eggs, veal, and sugar) and disbursements (e.g. joiners' and carpenters' bills). The cargo was sold for £256 6s 0d, the vessel yielding a healthy profit of £60 18s 7d, or about £1 2s 6d per wey.

Culm purchased at source from south Wales and north Devon mines was similarly priced. To buy one wey (at four tons, Barnstaple measure) at Cresswell cost the *Albion*'s master, Robert Wren, between £1 10s 0d and £1 15s 0d. In 1793, limeburners buying at the Tawstock mine near Barnstaple paid £1 15s 0d per wey if the account was settled within one month, or £1 18s 0d 'if paid at the ensuing Christmas'.[17] For others buying less than a wey an extra 9 pence was added to each bushel and payments had to be made on delivery. The price of the Welsh culm delivered to the Torridge-side kilns cost £3 5s 0d per wey of 48 double Winchester bushels.[18] Although north Devon and Welsh culm were similar in price at source, the latter was obviously more expensive because of higher transportation charges. North Devon's output was, however, less prolific.

Table 3 shows that the number of culm cargoes shipped into Barnstaple in the early 1790s were in excess of those carried into Bideford, although the latter's total is probably an under-recording.

Port	Barnstaple	Bideford		
Sample period	1791-3*	1791-3	1805-7	1810-12
Cargoes	104/3+	80/0	169/1	192/3

* from July to June
\+ number of cargoes/consignments
cargo = single commodity carried in a vessel
consignment = two or more different types of commodity carried as a single cargo

Table 3. The number of cargoes and consignments of culm imported in to Barnstaple and Bideford in three sample periods between 1791 and 1812 (TEFP; NDRO R2379A/Z8).

The growing demand for culm during the wars against France, exemplified in Bideford's increased imports in the first decade of the nineteenth century, is explained by an expansion in the limeburning, pottery and shipbuilding industries. Improvements in agricultural production, an enlarged earthenware market in the burgeoning industrialised areas of south Wales and the need for more shipping (in part to carry more coal) inflated demand.

In 1818 James Green reported Bideford merchants sending imported culm to the neighbourhoods of Okehampton, South Tawton, Bridestow and Combebow which abound 'with limestone of an excellent quality, [and] which is already worked to a considerable extent'. He believed that by constructing the Bude Canal the cost of culm to

those places, including carriage, could be reduced from £2 12s 0d per ton to £1 8s 0d.[19] At Weare Giffard quay, up-river from Bideford, William Blake wrote in February 1819 to Richard Balment at Barnstaple quay and described the state of his trade. He referred to there being 'generally plenty of Lime Stones and Culm at Weare Dock and the Boats be most Times their'.[20] The Rolle Canal, built between Weare Giffard and Great Torrington and opened in 1825, was cut specifically to facilitate the cheap movement of culm, limestone and coal. Its effect was to increase the number of limekilns in its vicinity and to extend the size of the port of Bideford's rural hinterland.

Prior to the French Revolutionary War, over four-fifths of the culm shipped into Bideford and Barnstaple was dispatched from Tenby, with most of the remainder carried from Pembroke and Carmarthen. A similar trading pattern pertained at the end of the seventeenth century, with nearly all the imports arriving from Pembroke and Tenby.[21] Within twenty years of the outbreak of the war a radical change occurred in this direction of trade. Bideford culm traders were drawn eastwards towards Swansea and the culm found in Glamorgan. In the sample period 1791-3, Swansea had supplied neither Bideford nor Barnstaple with culm. By 1805-7 this Welsh port was providing Bideford with 40 per cent of its shipments. By 1810-12 this had increased to 80 per cent. The principal factor facilitating Swansea's rapid growth was the construction of its canal between 1794 and 1798 along the Tawe Valley. In 1780 1,399 chaldrons of culm were shipped through the port; by 1799 this had increased to 19,253 chaldrons and 20 bushels.[22] Tenby's culm trade with Bideford correspondingly declined between 1791 and 1812, from 84 per cent to 55 to 9 per cent. Hassall, in 1794, cited the continuing use of carts drawn by horses or oxen, to move culm and coal from the mines to waiting ships, as inhibiting the advancement of the region's trade.[23] Canal carriage, he calculated, would reduce transport costs by about one-fifth.[24] In 1792 total culm and coal exports from Pembrokeshire slightly exceeded those of Swansea; by 1816 coastwise shipments were less than one-twentieth.[25]

By the end of the Napoleonic Wars Bideford (and almost certainly Barnstaple and Ilfracombe) was thus experiencing a change of direction in the culm trade. During the period under review, Pembrokeshire's pre-eminence in the trade was losing ground to the port of Swansea. In turn the coal trade of Swansea was beginning to diminish as a result of competition from Welsh ports further to the east. The construction of canals on both sides of the Bristol Channel accelerated the growth in the trade by decreasing transport costs. Increased agricultural production called for more lime, and the culm and limestone hinterlands of north-west Devon, supplied through Bideford and Bude and their associated canals, were greatly enlarged.

The price of lime, according to Fraser, was dependent on the price of culm.[26] The greatest quantity of both came from south Wales. In studying the seasonality patterns for both trades in 1806, it became apparent that they were almost identical, the limeburning season beginning in February or March and ending in October or November. The peak of production and of imports was between June and September, during which wheat fields were prepared for winter sowing. During 1806 a total of 88 cargoes of culm and 104 of limestone were entered in the Bideford port book. George states that lined 'draw-kilns' used four to seven hundred-weight of culm per ton of lime and small, unlined 'pot-kilns' seven to ten hundredweight.[27] This gives an approximate ratio of one culm to two of limestone. Vancouver recorded that Barnstaple lime-kilns averaged a weekly output of 800 double Winchesters or 16.6 weys, using the Barnstaple wey of 48 Winchester bushels.[28] At four tons the wey, output equalled about 66 tons per week. Seven weys or 28 tons were burned to produce this quality of lime. Maltsters, soap-boil-

ers, blacksmiths and others would have also needed their own supplies to meet their own production requirements.

Finally, reference should be made to north Devon vessels engaged in the south Wales coal and culm trades. In 1773 of the 236 vessels loading culm at the seaward end of the Kidwelly Canal, 56 were from the port of Bideford and 31 from the port of Barnstaple.[29] In 1792 John Watkins of Bideford wrote that the greatest number of the port's vessels trade:

> from Wales with coals and culm, to different ports on the south coast of Devonshire, and others get freights from one port or another, as they can.[30]

Ilfracombe vessels also had a niche in the cross-channel trade. John Swete, in 1789, had described the port's shipping activities as consisting mostly of coasting voyages with Wales and:

> transporting coals from Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan to Cornwall and bringing back copper and tin, which rendered a marketable commodity at the smelting houses of Neath, Swansea and other places where coals abound.[31]

As a result of this trade, especially the supply of Cornish steam engines, the number of uni-directional voyages in the Bristol Channel declined. With fewer ballasted passages and higher freight rates as a result of the war, profits were higher. North Devon vessels were increasingly deployed in this bi-directional trade. Between 1805 and 1809 the Governor and Company of Copper Miners of England bought shares in five Bideford vessels - the *Beaver*, *Underhill*, *Mary's*, *Cotton* and the appropriately named *Miners*.

The ownership structure of the *Cotton* is instructive. In March 1803 the owners numbered seventeen. There were six from Gwithian, Cornwall, including a certain John Davey, a miner. A further four resided in Phillack nearby. Two more lived in St Clement near Truro. All three of these places were close to the copper exporting port of Hayle, or close to the metalliferous mining areas of west Cornwall. Three owners were from Swansea and the adjacent parishes of Baglan and Margam. The north Devon connections were John Bishop, a Bideford butcher, the shipbuilder George Crocker, who probably built the vessel, and William Hockin, a Clovelly mariner.[32] Here in one vessel there is evidence of the connections between south Wales and north Devon and the latter's links into the two way trade between south Wales and Cornwall.

So close were the trade associations between north Devon and south Wales that the mayor and corporation of Barnstaple entered the controversy surrounding the construction of the Swansea Canal. In March 1794, they petitioned parliament in its favour.[33]

Notes

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20. DRO, 1262M/E2/21
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22. 'Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the State of the Coal Trade of this Kingdom', in *The House of Commons Sessional Papers of the Eighteenth Century*, 1975 rep, Vol 32, (5071), p.188
23. see the costs and methods associated with the *Albion* above
24. Hassall, C., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Pembroke with Observations on the Means of its Improvements*, 1794, pp 59 *sq*
25. *Ibid*, p.60, 'State of the Coal Trade', *loc cit*, p.629,; Flinn, *op cit*, p.214
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31. DRO, 564 M/F
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33. *Journals of the House of Commons, from January the 21st, 1794 to November the 25th, 1794*, 1803, pp310 *sqq*.

THE SHORT-LIVED SCHOOL OF DOMESTIC SCIENCE AT POWDERHAM CASTLE

Andrew J.H. Jackson

Solutions for country houses

In the mid-1970s concern for the future of country houses reached its peak. An important contribution to the debate was John Cornforth's 1974 report: 'Country houses in Britain: how can they survive?'.[1] A section of his report referred specifically to those country houses that had changed function from that of private family home to institutional, business or commercial use. They had become, for example, hotels, schools, hospitals, or corporate headquarters. Cornforth observed that such conversion could not guarantee a long term, secure, or appropriate future for buildings of high architectural value. Some two decades on, in 1997, David Littlejohn's *The fate of the English country house* reflected upon the degree to which the 'recycling' of country houses had become a principal characteristic of their recent history. Littlejohn's work, in parallel with David Mandler's *The fall and rise of the stately home*, illustrate how changes of use and other types of 'fate' are related to the complex and shifting political, economic, and social context of the twentieth century.[2] This paper examines one experiment in change of function, and demonstrates how the effectiveness of such conversions has rested upon the ability of country house owners to comprehend the prevailing context.

'Debutantes learn domestic tricks in ancient castle'[3]

In the early 1940s long-standing economic and financial difficulties required that the Courtenay family take far-reaching steps to ensure the survival of their estate.[4] An essential preoccupation was the search for a viable future for their family home, Powderham Castle. The first attempt was a short-lived School of Domestic Science. The story of the school's establishment and its subsequent failure reflects how the Courtenays judged, or, in certain ways, misjudged, what the role for the castle should be within the social context of the 1940s and early 1950s.[5] The driving force behind the scheme was the then Countess of Devon, who had assumed responsibility for overseeing the running of the castle during the war. In 1944, the countess presented her ideas about domestic training in an article published in *The Times* (10 December). She questioned the view that the heightened shortage in the supply of service staff for private houses was solely a practical problem for employers. Taking an altruistic standpoint, the countess emphasised wider concerns:

> To my way of thinking, the real gravity of the situation lies in the fact that many hundreds of girls are missing what used to be the finest training to be obtained anywhere in the domestic arts - that provided in the country houses - and they are getting nothing in its place....The results are already very noticeable in the country districts. In my childhood nearly every housewife in the villages had been in domestic service, and the standard of comfort and cleanliness was very high, in spite of their poverty...I would like to see small home schools of practical domestic training started in all the big houses, now half or wholly closed, for girls of every class when they leave the Services; to teach them the art of home-making, either prior to marriage or as a career.

In the same article, the countess offered a range of views for the readership of *The Times* to consider. Essentially, she perceived the country house to be an important resource. Such houses could no longer attract regular junior staff for a career in service, but there remained a skeleton of senior domestic staff who still had great expertise to impart: 'unless these one-time head servants are given the opportunity to come back from retirement or from other jobs, and to train the many girls who really want to make a home, theirs will be a lost art'. Also, the establishment of domestic training schools would revive for many large country houses their viability as family homes, as well as offering an appropriate learning environment: 'pupils may have the benefit of individual tuition from the start in houses which are an ongoing concern. There can be no doubt that, as a training in home-making, this would have infinitely more value than anything a training college could have'. Furthermore, it would be important for that training to be examined and certified by a recognised authority, so that it held some respectability and parity with other services and professions. In addition, the country house environment could provide modes for social improvement above and beyond those forms of instruction that were solely practical in nature:

> Pupils are to derive the fullest pleasure from the beautiful surroundings in which they find themselves. One of the things I enjoy most in anticipation is the delight I feel these girls would take in good books, music, games, and other recreations which would be available to some of them for the first time.

A series of replies to Lady Devon's article were printed in *The Times* (24 December 1944), whilst others were sent directly and in some number to Powderham Castle. The correspondents were varied, for example: titled ladies, domestic servants, local government inspectors, midwives and teachers. Their letters express the variety of ways in which such an initiative was viewed at that time, that is, against the background of the closing years of the war, and in the light of popular aspirations for its aftermath. Those who offered a positive response reinforced or supplemented the views of the countess. The establishment of such schools would address a range of social and economic needs: preserving the relationship of benevolence and deference between mistress and maid; conserving the fine domestic craft tradition fostered by the country house; providing a function for the small as well as the large country house; setting up high quality training schemes to justify the inflated wage levels being demanded by domestic employees; raising employment conditions and the professional status of those in domestic service, and, thereby, eroding the ingrained stigma associated with such work; providing for the lack of adequately trained staff in the catering and hotel trades; soaking up a portion of the female workforce that would be released with demobilisation; addressing the slide in the standards of domestic discipline and housewifery in lower class homes; and making domestic science a compulsory part of the state education system.

Other correspondents, meanwhile, were quite critical. Some maintained that the problem of domestic service and the training and supply of an appropriate workforce was an anachronistic one, and a problem that would be better addressed by hastening the slow process of modernising the characteristically outmoded English home. Also, the country house environment and the instruction that could be offered by old servants now belonged to a social order that was passing away; they were of questionable utility as training resources for those who would run life in a council house or home that was more average in character. More challenging still, domestic training would be

wholly appropriate for daughters from country house families, not only because the pool of domestic staff was likely to shrink further and the work would increasingly have to be carried out by the home owners themselves, but because such women would come to comprehend the ingrained stigma associated with domestic service, as well as with the irksomeness of carrying out domestic work – especially someone else's - that had accelerated the trend towards the obsolescence of professional domestic help.

Three years after the publication of the countess's original letter, the School of Domestic Science opened for its first intake of pupils. However, some of the early ideas and ideals had been much altered, so much so that the content of the school's prospectus appears to express an ambiguity and lingering uncertainty as to the aims of the enterprise. On the one hand, a passage of the opening text suggests that the school might live up to some of the original utilitarian and egalitarian intentions aspired to in 1944:

> The training is essentially practical and aims at equipping students to run their homes properly; to organise efficiently any domestic help that they might have; or to undertake posts as assistant Matrons or Housekeepers in schools or other establishments, if so desired; there being a big demand for such people.

Elsewhere in the prospectus, the text makes it clear that the establishment aimed to provide useful practical instruction, in accordance with the examination requirements of the National Council of Domestic Science. However, the school was to be far from egalitarian or purely utilitarian in terms of its anticipated pupil intake and the nature of the studies. It was being marketed at parents from the upper and upper middle classes, and from overseas, and had taken on the character of an international finishing school. The curriculum was composed primarily of lessons in cooking, cleaning, laundering and sewing; but was supplemented by a range of other forms of optional instruction and leisure opportunities: painting and drawing, various foreign languages, riding and stable management, tennis and squash, ballroom dancing, an invitation to join the hunt on Saturdays, and further finishing in Versailles. A significant proportion of the correspondence requesting prospectuses came from aristocratic addresses, or from the then Dominions. Indeed, many of the pupils in the first intake came through personal acquaintance, although, in later years, the pupils comprised a broader social mix. Furthermore, the prospectus accepted that the fees were high, but appropriate, commencing at 75 guineas for the first term of opening, and rising soon afterwards to 125 guineas. The prospectus explained that: 'to those parents who may feel that the fees are high, it is pointed out that the figure is only what a good hotel charges for board and lodging alone'.

Some explanation for this shift in the school's guiding principles is offered in an unpublished letter to *The Sunday Times* (dated 19 February 1947), and in an article published in the *Western Morning News* (13 March 1947). The draft letter presents a short account of the fate of the countess's scheme as envisaged in 1944:

> The plan that I visualised then, of training working class girls, had failed to materialise; first because of the impossibility of getting a financial grant to carry it through, and secondly because the old servants whose great knowledge I wanted to pass on, were not very co-operative!

The countess does not elaborate much further on these issues in either the draft letter or the newspaper article. She states only that the intention of both the earl and her-

self was to press on with the education authorities' approval, if not with their financial backing, and with the recruitment of professional staff. The countess, as the principal of the school, was to take overall charge of the establishment, whilst the earl was to take specific responsibility for finance and administration.

Although a large amount of documentation describes the origin and establishment of the school, few papers recording its demise survive. However, a number of balance sheets and a fees book do point to its failure as an economic enterprise.[6] In the opening two years of the school's life, 1948 and 1949, the running costs exceeded the income from fees by £1,448 and £1,067 respectively. As a result of this, the venture was not able to make any inroads into the large capital sums that were spent on equipment and supplies in those years: £5,276 and £7,105. Moreover, 1948 and 1949 were good years in terms of pupil numbers and fees received. The prospectus set the anticipated intake at between 16 and 25 students. In the five years from 1948, pupil numbers at the beginning of September term fell from 23, to 17 in both 1949 and 1950, 9 in 1951, to 4 in 1952. On 28 October 1952, the countess wrote a standard letter to the parents of the four remaining students. Her explanation of the critical situation that had been reached was brief:

> I am sorry to tell you that with so few girls in the school and with the ever increasing cost of food, labour and such overheads as lighting and heating, I am unable to continue the course for the agreed two terms without incurring a heavy loss.

Lady Paulina Hadley, a contemporary, recalls that the small number of pupils did not justify financially the size and high standard of the staff that had been recruited. In addition, the scale and design of the castle prevented the school from opening as a far larger and more profitable establishment. Moreover, by the late 1940s and early 1950s, those requiring the finishing of their daughters could send them once again to more traditional locations on the continent. Alternatively, there were now greater opportunities available for young women to take up university places.[7]

Conclusion

The failure of the School of Domestic Science did not long discourage the Courtenay family from experimenting with other uses for the castle. The school's curriculum had provided for riding lessons. Three years later facilities at the castle had been developed considerably, and there opened a riding school which ran for fifteen years. Although it lasted longer than the School of Domestic Science, it too closed with its failure to reach the economic potential hoped for. Like the school, this enterprise was an unfortunate misjudgement of prevailing opportunities, for it was established too early to capitalise on the later boom in outdoor leisure activities. Far more successful was the decision to follow the lead of other country houses in Britain, and open to the public. Between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s the castle received large numbers of visitors. However, by the late 1970s, the proliferation of heritage attractions brought a failing market share, and inflation in running costs reduced castle revenues further. Since then, survival has required new solutions, and this has come with the Courtenays following the trend towards the use of country houses for commercial events and private functions, notably, trade shows and weddings.

Returning to Littlejohn and Mandler, they diverge in their discussions on the future

of country houses. Littlejohn points to a better targeting of more adequate levels of state funding; Mandler focuses upon the issue of shifting ownership from private individuals and families to the state. At present, there is no indication of a major change in the degree to which the state will or ought to intervene. Thus, it will remain an imperative for owners of major country houses, like Powderham Castle, to innovate as fresh opportunities arise and as financial demands dictate.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. Cornforth, J., 'Country houses; can they survive?' *Country Life*, London, 1974. See also Strong, R., ed., *The destruction of the country house*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1974.
2. Littlejohn, D., *The fate of the English country house*, OUP, Oxford, 1997; Mandler, D., *The fall and rise of the stately home*, Yale, New Haven, 1997.
3. Unidentified U.S. newspaper, 1947.
4. The Powderham experience mirrored that of most landed estates and their owners from 1870, comprising, notably: falling rental revenues, the financial inroads brought by successive tax measures; and a general air of hostility towards aristocratic privileges. The result, for Powderham, was extensive sales of landed property, and a debt burden carried forward into the post-war period. See Jackson, A.J.H., 'Managing decline: the Powderham estate economy, 1870-1939', *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*. 138,(1996), pp.197-215.
5. Powderham Castle Archives (PCA), C13/Castle/School of Domestic Science.
6. PCA, A12A/Accounts/School of Domestic Science.
7. Lady Paulina is the daughter of the Countess of Devon by her first marriage.

Andrew Jackson currently lectures in Heritage Studies and in Local History for the Department of Continuing and Adult Education, University of Exeter. This paper is drawn from recent research into historic landed estates and contemporary rural change undertaken whilst a postgraduate student in the Department of Geography, University College London.

Notice Powderham Castle Study Days are being held again this autumn, covering architecture, social history, and ecclesiastical monuments. For details contact Dorothy Presswell, Powderham Castle, Kenton, Devon EX6 8JQ before 1 October.

CADHAY BRIDGE IN OTTERY ST MARY

D L B Thomas

During the early part of the sixteenth century Richard Haydon of Bowood, Ebford, Lympstone and Woodbury was Steward to Bishop Veysey of Exeter. He was married three times, his first wife being Joan Trent by whom he had four children, Thomas, John, George and Joan. Richard's second son John married Joan, daughter of Robert Glanville who owned the small estate of Cadehay to the north west of Ottery St Mary. Under the terms of the marriage agreement the estate passed to the Haydon family and, around 1550, John and Joan built a new house for themselves on the estate. They incorporated some of an earlier house, particularly the great hall, in their new mansion of Cadhay and probably made good use of the surplus dressed stone available from demolished religious properties following the Reformation.[1]

John was a lawyer and, apparently, a very successful one. He was a bencher of Lincoln's Inn and was much involved in obtaining Letters Patent from Henry VIII granting 'The King's New Grammar School of Ottery St Mary'. He was a man of great generosity and in 1590 donated to the poor of Exeter Alms Houses the annual sum of forty six shillings and eight pence (£2.33) to provide the residents with bread at Christmas and Easter. Another good work was the erection of the south porch of Ottery Church.

Although Cadhay House must have been set in beautiful surroundings John and Joan probably soon found that its situation did present them with a bit of a problem.

They were very devout Christians and, although they would have been able to see Ottery Church from their house, getting there involved one of two circuitous journeys, either eastward to cross the Otter at Gosford Bridge or, a little shorter, southward to cross at St Saviour's Bridge. John chose the obvious solution to this problem and, probably quite soon after completing his new house, built a new bridge over the Otter giving a more or less direct route to the town and the church. This was the latest of Ottery's major bridges and would have been referred to locally as 'the new bridge'. Officially it became 'New Bridge' and continued to be so called at least until the Michaelmas Sessions of 1708 when the present name appeared for the first time in the Order Book.[2]

Being a public spirited man, John would have wished the locals to share in the convenience of his new bridge. But he was also an experienced lawyer and would have been no stranger to the 1530 Statute of Bridges which enacted that a bridge should be maintained at public expense only if there was no proof that some other body or person should maintain it.[3] He would have been quite prepared to pay for building the bridge and to let the public share in its use but he wanted to avoid burdening his descendants with the responsibility of maintaining the bridge in perpetuity. No doubt he did what we would do today in similar circumstances, that is, agree with the public authority to dedicate the bridge for public use and record the agreement in a document. But John went one better and set out the position in writing on the bridge itself in the form of a tablet inscribed with the words:

JOHN AND JOAN BUILT ME

PRAY, GOOD PEOPLE, REPAIR ME

Polwhele described John's bridge as having three arches and recorded that the tablet was 'very ungraciously destroyed on the repairing of the bridge'.[4]

The first mention of the bridge in the Quarter Sessions Order Books was in 1630 when six justices, 'or any foure or more of them' were asked to inspect 'the decaies of New Bridge and Tipton Bridge lyinge wthin the parish of Otery St Marye'.[5] In 1674, Thomas Osmond and Nicholas Seaward repaired the bridge and were £5. 13s. 4d (£5.66) out of pocket as a result. The court ordered that they should be reimbursed out of £12 left over from repairs to Axebridge. Matters became rather confused in later entries until Michaelmas 1675 when it was ordered that Osmond should be paid £11. 9s. 8½d. (£11.48) out of money left over from the rebuilding of Thorverton Bridge.[6] In 1708 'Caddy Bridge' was badly damaged by flooding of the Otter and at the Michaelmas Sessions the court ordered that the Constables of the Hundred of Ottery St Mary should take down the remains of a damaged pier and two damaged arches, lay out the resulting stones in a field adjoining the bridge and 'gett the liberty of the owner of the said ffield to putt a lock on the Gate'.[7] Severe flooding occurred in the winter of 1754 and, at the Christmas Sessions, it was reported that Gosford Bridge was completely destroyed and two arches of Cadhay Bridge were down. At the following Midsummer Sessions a contract was let to Richard Tuckett and Edward Knight to rebuild the bridge for £330 and to keep it in repair for seven years at a cost of £5 per annum. It seems that, although the magistrates considered that the contractors had rebuilt the bridge in a 'Workmanlike manner', they failed to maintain it for, at Christmas Sessions 1758, their annual fee was paid to Samuel Bampfield. At the Easter Sessions 1758, it was ordered that their fee 'should henceforth be paid no more'.[8]

In 1809 the newly appointed Surveyor of County Bridges, James Green, inspected the bridge and reported on 10 January of that year that it was a three span structure with two arches of 14 feet (4.26m) and one of 20 feet (6.09m). He noted that there were diagonal cracks on two of the arches and considered the bridge to be 'very old and bad'. The width between parapets was only 8 feet 6 inches (2.59m) meaning that the parapets were frequently knocked down by carriages.[9] He reported again, on 11 July 1809, that the bridge was in a dangerous state, partly due to the angle at which the river impinged on structure. He thought it would cost £300 to straighten out the river and build new weirs, work that would be of benefit if the county decided later to rebuild the bridge. The cost of rebuilding, he reported, would be about £2,000.[10]

The magistrates decided to grasp the nettle and Green was instructed to prepare a design for a new bridge. Although the magistrates later decided that the practice was improper, they did at this early stage in his employment allow Green to contract as a private individual for the rebuilding. A contract signed, sealed and delivered on 29 September 1809 between Green and the Clerk of the Peace, Richard Eales, required Green to complete the work by 25 March 1810, the contract sum being £1,249. Much of the cause of the deterioration of the 1755 bridge was poor foundations and the foundations of the Green's bridge were carefully specified, including that they should be 4 feet (1.22m) below river bed level.[11] The total cost of the work turned out to be £1,268. 4s. 0d. (£1,268.20).

Green's Cadhay Bridge stands today and is a three span arch structure built of ashlar limestone and brick with side spans of 17 feet 6 inches (5.33m) and a centre span of 22 feet 3 inches (6.78m). The abutments and piers are quite high above the river bed, recognition of the ferocity of the Otter in flood, and the ends of the piers are formed into cutwaters rounded on plan, a favourite feature of Green's masonry designs. There are trapezoidal pilasters above the cutwaters that are carried up to parapet level to form refuges 2 feet 4 inches (710mm) deep. Refuges are a medieval feature unusual in nineteenth century bridges and were probably incorporated in this case because the width between parapets is only 12 feet 4 inches (3.75m).

Until recently there was a stone tablet built into the downstream parapet, obviously rescued from the preceding bridge, and inscribed with two dates, '1760' and 'R1901', and two initials, 'S.I.' and 'W.L.'. The first date is rather puzzling. Knight and Tuckett's bridge was physically completed in 1754 with a completion date of the associated seven year maintenance period of 1761. Their maintenance contract was terminated by the magistrates in 1758 and possibly a different continuation contract, with a completion date of 1760, was made. It is possible that Knight and Tuckett's bridge was not built in such a workmanlike manner as the magistrates thought and that it had to be rebuilt in 1760. There is nothing in the order books to indicate that this might have happened but, although obvious gaps in the clerks' recordings over the centuries are rare, they are not unknown. The twentieth century date refers to repairs carried out then and the initials are possibly those of the mason and his mate.

Unfortunately this interesting tablet suffered the same fate as John and Joan's when repairs were carried out to the fabric of the bridge during the 1980s.

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5. DRO ref 1/6
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9. Green's Report of 10 January 1809 at DRO
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PARSON FROUDE - VILLAIN OR VICTIM?

S. Bhanji

In 1804, John Froude (1777-1852) succeeded his late father as vicar of Knowstone and Molland.[1] Despite an incumbency of almost half a century, he is best remembered for his prowess in the hunting field and for his misanthropy. It is generally accepted that Froude was the model for Blackmore's fearsome parson, Richard Stoyle Chowne, in *The Maid of Sker*.[2]

Froude, a cousin of the archdeacon of Totnes,[3] was educated at Blundell's School and Exeter College, Oxford.[4] However, Ditchfield's statement that he had the promise to become a bishop appears to have no source other than Blackmore's account of Chowne.[5] The same may apply to the often repeated remark that Froude's ill humour stemmed from being crossed in love.[6] Regrettably, this and much other comment on Froude comes from those without first hand knowledge. Snell wrote that Froude carried buffoonery to a pitch utterly inconsistent with his cloth and calling, but did so over fifty years after the parson's death.[7] Similarly, in 1908 Ditchfield described Froude as the worst specimen of his class.[8] Joyce, writing in 1925, viewed Froude as disreputable and vindictive; and Boggis later condemned him as unworthy of the description Christian and guilty of every known crime.[9] More recently, Kerr cites Froude as a disgrace to his vocation and one of the most villainous men in north Devon.[10] Those who knew Froude, or who spoke with those who did, were inclined to a more balanced view. According to 'Jack' Russell, Froude's friend and fellow-huntsman and the perpetual curate of Swimbridge, he was witty and hospitable, albeit domineering.[11] Thornton acknowledged Froude's reputation for evil, but noted also his boldness and cleverness.[12] The claim that Thornton knew Froude well has, however, been questioned.[13] Wilkin summed up Froude as a forceful, unconventional man with little respect for his superiors, but noted also that Joyce's father confided in him that Froude was not a bad-hearted person.[14] Finally, Froude's widow is said to have referred to him as her dear departed saint.[15]

Contemporary accounts of Froude are rare. One of 1832 referred to his paying £50 compensation after being found guilty of assault and battery. During the trial there was much discussion as to who was the drunker, Froude or his victim.[16] Most twentieth century portrayals can be traced back to Russell's biography of 1878,[17] Thornton's memoirs of 1897,[18] and works written in 1900 and 1908 by Sabine Baring-Gould.[19] Many writers appear also to have drawn heavily on the escapades of the fictional Parson Chowne. Although in some respects commendable, the use of pseudonyms has not always helped disentangle fact from fiction. Thus, Thornton used Choune *(sic)*, and later Stroude of Blowstone. Although he eventually named Froude, Baring-Gould first called him Chowne of Blackamoor. Addison referred to the 'original Parson Chowne', but named his fictional counterpart as Tom Chowne and stated that he was modelled on Parson Radford.[20]

Space does not permit a detailed analysis of the many tales concerning Froude. However, before considering the main accusation levelled against the parson, a small sample may serve to illustrate the difficulties in establishing their authenticity. Throughout much of Froude's incumbency his bishop was Henry Phillpotts (1831-1869). Phillpotts was a high church Tory who disapproved strongly of any laxity or liberalism among his clergy.[21] He disliked also parsons who took to the hunting-field; although he

thought highly of Russell.[22] It has been written that the steps Froude took to avoid a confrontation with Phillpotts included having a pit dug in the road, feigning illness, and claiming to have defended the bishop from malicious gossip.[23] What appears to be the only surviving version by Phillpotts concerns his calling into Knowstone during a visitation tour of north Devon in 1831. The bishop noted that Froude was ill, but was more struck by the hunting trophies in his dining room.[24] He made no mention of his coach falling into a hole in the road, but it could be argued that the bishop may not have wished the episode recorded for posterity. However, his comments do support Russell's statement that Froude pretended to have typhus on Phillpotts' one and only visit to Knowstone.[25] The story of the bishop's bogged-down coach may be due entirely to Blackmore. He may have been responsible also for Kerr's account of Froude writing to Phillpotts, on the back of a paper bearing the names of hounds sick with distemper, to explain that there would be no confirmations as none of the candidates could recite the Lord's Prayer backwards.[26] Nevertheless, there is evidence that Phillpotts was concerned about Froude, and that he offered to prosecute him when faced with complaints from the churchwardens. They backed down, however, when asked for firm evidence.[27] Accounts of Froude marrying four times are not unknown,[28] and presumably originated in Blackmore's account of Chowne embarking on a fourth marriage.[29] Another anecdote concerns a second marriage late in life to Jane, the daughter of a local farmer variously named as Heathman,[30] Halse,[31] or Hulse.[32] One rendering states that Froude made a drunken pledge, when officiating at Jane's christening, to marry her should she survive to adulthood.[33] Another stated that her brothers, incensed by Froude's clumsy flirting, got him drunk and extracted a promise that he would either marry their sister or forfeit a substantial sum of money.[34] Froude wed a Mary Halse on 18 December 1838, but the writer has been unable to find any record of an earlier marriage. Mary outlived her husband, and was buried at Knowstone on 14 April 1881.[35] Although Baring-Gould and thence others wrote that Froude ill-treated her, some state that she spoke of him with much affection.[36]

Froude's enthusiasm for the hunt was legendary even in his lifetime.[37] He was often a generous host afterwards,[38] but at times his dealings with his fellow-horsemen left much to be desired. Particularly malicious was his treatment of a young baronet, named by Baring-Gould as Sir Walter Carew. Carew purchased a horse which Froude coveted. Angered by Sir Walter's refusal to sell him the animal, Froude surreptitiously inserted seeds beneath the horse's eyelids. On the ride home, the seeds burst causing severe pain. Sir Walter was thrown, sustaining several injuries, and the horse had to be put down.[39] The writer has been unable to verify this story, which is similar to that told by Blackmore concerning Parson Chowne and Captain Vellacott.[40] As noted, Froude and Russell were close friends.[41] On one occasion, however, they almost came to blows after Russell rebuked Froude for his offensive language. The intervention of the Rev. Mr Joyce, whose son later wrote of the incident, brought about a reconciliation.[42] Another parson to experience Froude's vindictiveness was the one whom Thornton called Jekyll. One day while Froude was out hunting, the fox ran to earth on Jekyll's land. Finding Froude trying to dig out the animal, Jekyll remonstrated with him for doing do without permission. Froude departed in umbrage, but took revenge by making an official complaint that Jekyll, a magistrate, had stolen one of his dogs.[43] Another magisterial cleric bested by Froude was that named by Thornton as Dash and by Baring-Gould as Karslake. He was probably the Rev. W.H. Karslake, rector of Meshaw. With the consent of her parents, Froude hid away a young girl. Her absence from home was reported and a search, involving Karslake hiring a London detective, was set under way. After some

ten days, Froude produced the girl, announcing that she had been staying with him.[44] These last three stories have a ring of truth about them, but the main point in their favour may be that they do not appear to be based on episodes in *The Maid of Sker*.

The most serious charge levelled against Froude is that, like Blackmore's Chowne,[45] he ran a gang of criminals. The view of Knowstone being in lawless state during Froude's incumbency is indeed supported by many contemporary newspaper reports.[46] For example, in February 1834 the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* stated that felonies committed during the previous weeks included the destruction of property; the stealing of corn, apples, potatoes, lambs and poultry; the mutilation of pigs; the pulling down of hay-ricks; and the breaking up of ploughs.[47] The commonest offence was poultry-stealing; sixteen fowls, four turkeys and six ducks being taken from the King William the Fourth public house in December 1830. Lower down the social scale, a labourer, James Brewer, lost all his four fowls; and a mason, William Davey, both of his.[48] In February 1833 Mr Fisher of Hill and Mr Snow of East Anstey between them had 49 birds stolen.[49] Fisher has already lost a valuable ewe.[50] In addition to these thefts of food, conceivably arising through necessity, some crimes were motivated apparently by malice. These included the cutting into pieces of William Follett's riding gear, the burning of Richard Courtenay's shed, the killing by fire of Mr Quartly's three sows and eighteen piglets, the burning of five acres of produce, and the letting loose of cattle among crops.[51] The culprits usually escaped punishment, but in February 1834 James Perkins was arrested for poultry-stealing. His accomplice, the churchwarden Samuel Fisher, managed to escape. Later that year, two others tried to evade arrest for stealing a hen and breaking up a plough. One, Edward Fisher, was soon captured in Somerset; and his accomplice, John Upham, was found hiding at the King William the Fourth inn. The hope that this would put an end to the depredations in Knowstone and to those instigating them was not fulfilled.[52] In 1841 the parish was described as infamous and notorious to all the western parts of the kingdom.[53] What were regarded in 1830 as malicious outrages without parallel in the annals of atrocity were still being committed.[54] Even allowing for such hyperbole, the lawlessness in Knowstone clearly exceeded the natural level of countryside 'social crime'.[55] As to the ringleader, after two ducks were stolen in 1833, a sumptuous dinner was presided over by a woman well-known for her plucking skills.[56] In 1834 it was stated that a certain tailor was attempting to bribe the prosecutor of the chicken thieves James Perkins and Samuel Fisher into dropping charges.[57] A year later, mention was made of 'an old and infamous offender, who has long been considered an adept in this kind of business'.[58] The suggestion that the parson was responsible for the law-breaking in his parish first appeared in Thornton's reminiscences.[59] His account of those who antagonised Froude having hay-ricks burned down and animals injured, and that such doings were carried out by a band of young farmers and grooms whom he had at his call, was to be echoed by many.[60]

There is evidence, however, that Froude was by no means immune to the local disorder. In January 1834 a Witheridge blacksmith, Thomas Jones, set fire to Knowstone vicarage. A bid was made to free him on his way to gaol, but this proved unnecessary as he was acquitted for lack of evidence. Jones turned informer, and caused the arrests of the Edward Fisher and John Upham mentioned above. Soon afterwards, his poultry were stolen and he and his family left the area.[61] In December of the same year a shotgun was fired at the window of Froude's bedroom. The parson was unharmed, but the bed posts and a mirror were damaged. The culprit was never apprehended.[62] In 1841 the vicarage garden was trampled and produce stolen. During the previous months two silver spoons belonging to Froude were taken, as was the bell by the vicarage gate.[63] Some

years later arson was committed on Froude's barn at Creacombe, and money and valuable papers were stolen from his home.[64] The ultimate insult is said to have been the destruction of a well-loved box tree by a farmer whom Froude had offended. According to some, the realisation that he was no longer held in awe helped bring about his death.[65] Froude being a victim of the crime in his parish does not exclude his being the ring-leader, as the acts against him could have been in retribution. Froude died in 9 December 1852 at Barton House, East Anstey.[66] There is some evidence that the pattern of parish law-breaking subsequently changed. Theft, at least as far as the press was concerned, virtually disappeared and became relatively trivial. In 1866, James Perkins, possibly the chicken-stealer referred to above, was gaoled for stealing a faggot of wood.[67] He was more fortunate a year later when he and Joshua Melhuish were acquitted of stealing hay.[68] In 1868 the case against Susan Perkins for stealing potatoes was dismissed, as was that against James Burnett in 1871 for stealing horsehair from a Knowstone farmer.[69] Four years later, John Blackmore and Thomas Chapple were charged with stealing rabbit gins from Froude's successor, the Rev. Mr Matthews. Blackmore was acquitted, but Chapple was committed to prison.[70] There were no reports of arson or vandalism in Knowstone during the twenty or so years following Froude's death. The fire which destroyed a farmhouse at Punsley in 1861 was thought to be accidental.[71] This substantial improvement in the crime rate may not, however, stem solely from Froude's demise. Matthews, who is said to have driven the drunken Froude home on at least one occasion,[72] was determined to re-establish order. His strong physique, tact, perseverance, and habit of firing off a gun whenever he left the vicarage eventually brought his flock under control.[73]

Many of Froude's contemporaries disapproved of the 'hunting parson', and this alone would have made him unpopular. Other aspects of his life style and his forthright disposition could have further fuelled gossip concerning his part in the law-breaking in Knowstone. The writer is inclined to agree that Blackmore was guilty of much exaggeration when transferring Froude's nature to Chowne.[74] On the other hand, others appear to have been equally culpable in transferring Chowne's personality and behaviour to Froude. Nonetheless, his being a criminal ringleader cannot be ruled out. Even if it could be, almost as damning is the fact that Froude appears to have made no attempt to moderate the behaviour of his parishioners. His personality was such that he could have done so.

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19. Baring-Gould, S., *Old Country Life*, London, 1900; Baring-Gould, S., *op. cit.*, 1908. Baring-Gould acknowledged his indebtedness to Thornton, to Prebendary Matthews (Froude's successor), and to an anonymous collection of anecdotes. The author has been unable to trace the last. It is not among the Baring-Gould papers held at the Devon Record Office.
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PLYMOUTH IN *THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE*

Anthony Greenstreet

In 1731 Edward Cave (1691-1754) founded 'The Gentleman's Magazine; Or, Monthly Intelligencer'. Its expressed object was 'To give Monthly a View of all the Pieces of Wit, Humour or Intelligence, daily offer'd to the Publick in the Newspapers'. It was an immediate and immense success, achieving monthly sales of 10,000 by 1739. The magazine lasted until 1914, but by then its great days of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were long over. Each edition was then packed with fascinating information from all parts of the country (often now no longer available from any other source), usually appearing under the sections 'Country News' or 'Historical Chronicle'. This article reproduces some of the most interesting reports from Plymouth between 1779 and 1812.

The town features in several reports of natural disasters and phenomena. One of 12 February 1799 relates:

> Yesterday was experienced the most severe hurricane ever remembered here... At 4pm the Naiad frigate broke from her moorings, and got ashore on the wet mud; but the tide flowing, she was got off without damage. The Bon Ordre privateer in Catwater broke adrift and got ashore on the Cat-down side, where she now lies... At 6pm a large stack of chimneys at Ladywell school, at the east end of the Town, broke in upon the roof of the house, forced though into the children's bedroom, carried away the beams, flooring, and beds... down into the first floor, where near 30 children were working. By the beams resting for a few moments, the mistress and 27 of the children escaped; but the cries of three children were heard under the ruins, and Mr Rentfree, the master, with great exertions, took them out, almost suffocated, and much bruised... At night a man walking home mistook his road near Catdown road, (the hedge having fallen in) walked over a precipice 200 feet high, and was dashed to pieces.

A less destructive, but more unusual, event occurred in June 1814:

> After four in the morning a rising of the tide, in the shape of what is called a boar, happened in Plymouth. It rose again at six, seven and nine o'clock, and then was quiet. Those who saw it compared the rushing into the pool, between the sluices of a pier-head, as the running at the rate of five or six knots an hour, on a very rapid river, driving all before it. Those vessels which were working out were forced back; and those in the pool were forced one against the other; the flying bridge was half full of water, and the passengers much alarmed; the cable snapped like a thread but no lives were lost... During the operation of the boar, it thundered and lightened excessively.

Man-made disasters also featured prominently:

> This evening, [16 December 1795] about 5 o'clock, a dreadful fire broke out in a sail-loft, in Southside Street, belonging to Mr Douglass, sail-maker: in a few minutes the whole building was in flames... . In addition to the sail-cloth, rope etc belonging to Mr Douglass, the lofts were filled with a valuable cargo of bale goods, lifted out of a Danish ship that was then under repair, and which the fire soon consumed, and the conflagration became terrible indeed; the flames presently extended to the houses on each side... and threatened the destruction of the whole neighbourhood: it continued burning six hours, with incredible fury, when by the great exertions of the inhabitants and the military, with the assistance of the dockyard and hospital engines, it was fortunately prevented from spreading farther, but the three houses were entirely consumed: this loss is supposed to amount to £15,000. Many of the unfortunate sufferers are uninsured, and subscriptions are now open for their relief. It is a providential circumstance, that the tide was at the flood at the time, or the fire would have communicated to the shipping in the Pool, and probably in that case half the town would have been destroyed.

Another damaging fire occurred on 8 June 1812:

> A fire broke out between three and four o'clock in the Eastern rope-house of Plymouth Dock-yard. The alarm was instantly given, and every assistance rendered, but without the desired effect. The flames raged with great fury until seven o'clock, when, by great exertion they were got under, by the building, which was 1400 feet long, being cut through. The whole of the machinery was consumed. About 400 feet of the building was preserved. The watchmen and military centinels at Plymouth dock yard have all been examined on oath; but after the minutest investigation it cannot be ascertained whether the building was fired by overheated hemp, by lightning, or by incendiaries... The whole of the damage sustained is estimated at £15,000.

There was, indeed, a permanent fear that 'incendiaries' would destroy the dockyard. A report of 23 January 1779 relates:

> About the dead of night, a person was observed to ascend the wall of his Majesty's dock-yard at Plymouth, and to throw himself over, and upon examining the spot outside the wall, there was found a raffling line tied in knots, about 16 or 18 inches asunder, with a large Newfoundland fishhook at the end of it, by which he got up; and a twine thread, with a stone tied to it, which ran from the top of the wall to the bottom; and near the spot was also found a bottle filled with gunpowder, stopped with brown paper, prepared to burn as a quick match. For the apprehending of this person, who is described to be a short elderly person, with his own hair, a shrivelled face, a foreign aspect, and has on a dark surtout coat, and a fan-tailed hat, the Commissioners of his Majesty's navy have offered three hundred pounds reward.

The navy brought the threat of disease as well as fire to the town:

> A Post Letter from Plymouth, of this day's date, [2 June 1782] gives, in substance, the contents of almost all the letters from the sea ports, relevant to the reigning distemper. 'The present epidemical disorder rages violently here, and at Dock; also on the men of war lying here. The troops in town too, and in barracks, are affected with it, more or less; scarce a family, but has some person ill in it. Came in this afternoon, the Fortitude, of 74 guns, and Latona frigate, with 250 sick men from the fleet under Admiral Kempenfelt, mostly with fevers. ...Captain Cripps of the north battalion of Gloucestershire mili-

tia, was seized, while at dinner, with a complaint in the throat, and died the next morning'.

Other naval occasions were more cheerful. A report of 12 August 1812 describes the laying of the foundation stone of the Breakwater:

> Two boats from every ship in Hamoaze attended at the Admiral's stairs, Mount Wise; and about noon the Commander in Chief... accompanied by all the Captains and Commanders of vessels in commission, rowed off in procession, with flags and streamers flying, to the outer part of the Sound. The Mayor and Corporation went thither also in procession. Towards one o'clock the boats assembled round the vessel that held the stone, and at the signal gun the stone was lowered to its base, at the Western extremity of the Breakwater, amid a royal salute of cannon from the ships in Cawsand Bay, Plymouth Sound and Hamoaze. The beauty of the scene was heightened by the fineness of the day; the grand open bosom of the Sound was crowded by an immense number of pleasure boats, cutters, barges etc.

One of the most interesting accounts of contemporary Plymouth occurs in the Letters section of the November 1810 edition. James Neild (1744-1814) was a skilled London jeweller who devoted his leisure to trying to improve conditions in prisons and workhouses throughout the country. He wrote an account of his visitations to his friend Dr J.C. Lettsom who persuaded him to have them published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* where they provided a considerable stimulus towards reform. One letter describes the horrifying situation in the Plymouth Gaol which lay alongside, and partly beneath, the Guildhall. On the top floor was the women's prison:

> The wretched prisoners were put together in one of the rooms, although one of them had a young child, another had the itch, and the third said that the straw of her bed (the only bedding they are allowed) had not been changed in seven months; it was, indeed, literally worn to dust.
>
> The prisoners held a constant communication with the street; and by letting down a hat or a canister, received the casual charity of passengers, in money etc.
>
> The whole prison is dirty in the extreme; the lowermost cells were filthy beyond conception, with urine and excrement. The gaolers live distant from their charge to which they can hardly pay more than a divided attention, whose effects are but too clear. Here is no day-room, no courtyard; and the Gaol is but ill supplied with water. No firing.
>
> The respectable Mayor of Plymouth politely accompanied me; and from him I learned 'that it was in contemplation to build a New Prison'.

However, it is a relief to know that all was not bad in Plymouth. In 1803 Neild had undertaken a tour of workhouses in Devon and Cornwall, and his letter to Lettsom published in the magazine's July 1804 edition described the hideous conditions in the Bodmin workhouse. Neild had taken up the matter with the mayor, 'I represented the cleanliness, good order, health and cheerfulness, I had seen a week before in the work house at Plymouth Dock; and I sincerely wish the masters and mistresses of other workhouses would pay this a visit, and 'go and do likewise'.

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)

John Graves Simcoe, 1752 - 1806. A Biography. By Mary Beacock Fryer and Christopher Dracott. Dundurn Press, Toronto and Oxford. 291 pp. illus. and maps. ISBN 1 - 55002 - 309 - 8. No price given.

John Graves Simcoe is remembered mostly today in Ontario as the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, and in Devon as a landowner who built Wolford Lodge and chapel and developed a large estate in the Blackdowns. He was not a Devonian and his connection with the county stemmed from his father's friendship with a fellow naval captain, later admiral, Samuel Graves of Hembury Fort House, who became his godfather and, childless, helped him in many ways, including finding him a suitably endowed and affectionate wife. His own father died when John was three years old and his mother moved with her two sons to Exeter, where the younger was drowned in the river. John went from Exeter Grammar School to Eton whence he was commissioned into the army in 1770, having rejected the alternative of the law. Thereafter his career fell into four successive phases. The first was as an army officer serving in north America where he led successfully a battalion of the Queen's Rangers, an irregular force raised from colonial Loyalists, during the Revolutionary War. Wounded and a prisoner he returned on parole in 1782 to start the second phase. Over the next eight years he married, founded his estate at Wolford and sat briefly in the Commons as MP for the pocket borough of St Mawes. In 1790 the third phase began with his appointment as Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, arriving there the following year and serving until the summer of 1795. Then came the fourth which was for his ambitions disastrous. In early 1797 he was sent to San Domingo to command the British military forces there, which were assisting the French royalists against the republican and revolted slaves, and to act as a civil governor. He exceeded his instructions by embarking on a campaign of his own devising. It failed and he returned home on grounds of ill health. The authorities were not pleased. However in 1798 the final phase of his professional life opened when he was given the subordinate command responsible for the defence of 'Most of Devonshire and Part of Somerset' against a possible French invasion. This appointment continued after the resumption of hostilities in 1803. Promoted lieutenant general, he was offered the Indian Command, but before matters got very far he went as a member of an urgent mission to Portugal, fell ill and was sent home, reaching Exeter where he died at the house of his friend, Archdeacon Moore, in the Cathedral Close.

For the Devonshire reader the main interest of this biography will lie in the second and final phases of Simcoe's life: the acquisition and development of his east Devon estates and of his organisation of the forces, full and part time, in the county to resist a French invasion. There are similarities in the measures then taken to those adopted in 1940 but one problem which did not arise in that year was who owned the dung created by the hundreds of horses concentrated in a small area for a review or fieldday. This happened on Woodbury leading to a row between Lord Rolle and Simcoe and ultimately to a challenge from the former for a bare knuckle fight which was refused. The chron-

icle of the growth of the Wolford estates has much to interest the local historian; most of the money was from his wife but he laid it out well.

This volume is the result of co-operation between Mary Beacock Fryer in Canada who had published biographies of Simcoe's wife and of his eldest son, and Christopher Dracott in east Devon. As founder of what was later to be called Toronto, Simcoe is of great historical importance in that province. Here he deserves to be better known and this biography is the first full length study published this side of the Atlantic. He is a difficult man to assess. An evangelical Anglican, he held strong moral views. He readily became impatient of superiors who did not act as he felt they should have done. That he was not invariably right was shown by the San Domingo affair when his apparent expectation that his failure would be overlooked was not fulfilled, (as was pointed out also by William Laws in *Devon Historian 57*). He had influential political friends but the impression is given that he was perhaps a little too quick both in rejecting offers and in putting himself forward for appointments. He was never knighted, which was unusual for an officer of his final rank then and would be so even today. It is hinted that he wanted a peerage and may have held out for one at the cost of lesser honours. In the end he was offered, refused and then accepted the appointment of C. in C. in India. Before taking it up he went as member of a mission to Portugal, was sent home sick and died shortly after his return to England. Ill health was a constant problem. Headaches, asthma and bronchial difficulties were probably accentuated by wounds in the American war and by primitive living conditions for much of his time in Canada. How precarious his health had become was shown by the toxic effects of the newly painted cabin in the ship taking him to Portugal. He died of lead poisoning, the others sharing it survived. It seems unlikely that he would have lasted a full term in India.

We are indebted to the authors for introducing us so ably to this fascinating and complicated man. Perhaps their work will inspire further studies of differing aspects of his career by students in this country.

Adrian Reed

A History of Axminster to 1910. By Geoffrey Chapman. TD. MA. 182 pp, 15 photos, 4 maps. Marwood Publications, Ford Farm, Wilmington, Honiton, Devon. EX14 9JU. (Established by the late Edwin Haydon). ISBN 0 952 91492 1. £13.95.

This is an excellent history of a town with a notable past. Mr Chapman is the most recent of a line of historians and chroniclers of Axminster, and his considerable achievement has been to incorporate his predecessors' scattered work into one readable and entertaining whole, and to add his own significant researches.

Those former writers on Axminster are worth remark. The first may be unique. The Axminster Book of Remembrance was compiled by members of the Independent Church there in 1687, to record, in heartfelt and appealing language, their sufferings at a time of fierce religious persecution and their part in Monmouth's rebellion. Next in time and very different is James Davidson, who retired to Axminster in 1820 and devoted forty years to collecting material about its past, wrote three books on the locality, now rare (pub.1830-50), and left innumerable unpublished notes on his researches. More accessible is George Pulman's famous *Book of the Axe*, nine hundred pages of 'historical sketches' of the whole of the Axe valley, its parishes, and 'remarkable places' (published 1875 reprinted 1975).

To add to all that, recently Harold Fox has explained the complex history of the land-

scape and agrarian history of the parish of Axminster, Harry Dutfield has described the origins and success of the present Axminster carpet industry that he himself founded, and there are recent archaeological articles on the fragmentary remains of the great Cistercian abbey of Newenham, two miles from the town, and on the recent remarkable local finds of a Roman 'fort' and of the real Roman foundations of the road from Dorchester to Exeter. Mr Chapman has happily absorbed all of these into his narrative, a daunting task.

The bare bones of Axminster history can thus be stated: sited at a river crossing close to a Roman road; a minster-church - the site of a royal burial - from as early as 755 AD; a 'renowned place' in 901AD, the meeting place of a royal Council; the head manor of a Saxon hundred and a considerable place with dependent estates in Domesday Book.

By 1210 there was a weekly market and an eight day midsummer fair and - probably - economic growth, stimulated by the foundation of Newenham in 1246. Three centuries later Newenham was no more - it is hard now to find a trace of it - and the manor and much other land passed to Lord Petre, whose staunchly Catholic heirs still owned property locally until this century.

More than most towns Axminster was in the thick of the political conflicts of the seventeenth century. Burnt twice by the Parliamentary garrison of Lyme in 1644, it saw both the enthusiastic passage of Monmouth through the town in 1685 and the hesitant arrival of William of Orange in 1688 on his way to London. He stayed two nights in the town, along with, somehow, the 1500 men of his army.

After 1688 there were no more wars or rumours of wars. By then the business of making a living and running the affairs of the town were the main concern of Axminster folk. Unlike Honiton and Lyme, Axminster never became a 'parliamentary borough' and sent MPs to Parliament, and again unlike Lyme, never became an 'incorporated borough' with a mayor and corporation. It remained only a manor and a parish, the first run by Lord Petre and the latter by the inhabitants. Charters of incorporation and the right to send MPs were often obtained by local landowners using their influence in Parliament and at Court, but as a Catholic, Lord Petre was barred from Parliament and probably from Court and this perhaps could do little for the town. This may have been just as well, Honiton became a notorious rotten borough with grossly corrupt elections and Lyme fell into the hands of a minute self perpetuating corporation in the clutches of the Fanes, the Earls of Westmoreland. Axminster folk ran their own affairs under the supervision of the local Justices and Mr Chapman thinks they did it pretty well.

The town had to be healthy and had to have a water supply and drainage and unusually in such a history this endless subject is interestingly dealt with. Schools had to be supported and started, there had been one in the town since probably the seventeenth century. The parish constables had to be replaced by a police force with a police station. All this had to be done by the Vestry - in effect a parish council unpaid and chosen by ratepayers - its officials selected by the JPs. That it was as well done as it was is a tribute to the local sense of public service. The Vestry also had to look after the poor of the town raising rates for poor relief and building workhouses. Mr Chapman believes that the poor were well treated in Axminster. If so this must be the exception that proves the rule that workhouses and the like were hated by the poor. An episode quoted here for 1836 shows that on that occasion Axminster was no exception.

Axminster folk made a living mostly by farming - largely for the dairy - the fat meadows and pastures of the Axe valley. They also catered for the coach trade. Four turnpikes met in Axminster and at one time sixteen coaches and many wagons passed

through the town daily and filled Axminster's eighteen inns and public houses. A notable survival of that age is the George Inn with its elegant assembly room.

Axminster had also made cloth from the seventeenth century and when that was failing, one local man of genius Thomas Whitty, having seen a Turkish carpet on display in London, adapted familiar cloth making techniques to manufacture carpets. He made the name of Axminster famous. The story of how he and his family made the first carpet themselves and of his fairly short lived enterprise (1755-1830) and its revival in 1937 is well told here.

Such are the dry bones of Axminster history. To put appetising flesh on them the reader must go to Mr Chapmans excellent and engaging book and hear him, as the poet says of another Chapman, 'speak out loud and bold'.

Robin Stanes

The Life and Times of William Veale Master Mariner 1791-1867 by Linda King. Dartmouth History Research Group Paper No.26. Illustrated. 23pp. £3.00 from Dartmouth Museum or Harbour Bookshop (£3.75 by post). ISBN 1 899011 16 1.

The author came upon William Veale when researching her family history. She found that she had discovered an ancestor whose life was well worth recording. Veale was born in Dartmouth, where his father was a cabinet maker, and went to sea as a fourteen year old apprentice in 1804, serving in the Irish and then in the Newfoundland trades. In 1820 he became master of a converted Margate hoy for a sealing voyage to the South Atlantic. The ship was driven ashore on one of the Crozet Islands and the crew had to live as best they could for nearly two years on the scanty resources available. Rescued, after returning to England he went on to serve in the Australian trade, first as a mate and then as a master. In 1832 he commanded a convict ship carrying female prisoners - and some of their children - to Sydney. Later he had the more congenial command of an emigrant ship, finally retiring from the Australian trade and from the sea in 1846. In 1854 he and his wife were admitted to the Trinity Almshouses in Deptford where he died thirteen years later.

The author has been fortunate in that Veale's time on the Crozet Islands was written up by one of his seamen and published as *Goodridge's Narrative* in 1838. It went through several editions and its popularity stemmed both from its descriptions of survival in a most unfriendly climate and, appropriate for the times, the spirit of christian feeling for each other developed by constant biblical study. For his voyage in command of the convict ship *Surrey* his own papers survive as does the medical journal of the ship's surgeon. Taken together these have enabled the author to give an interesting description of the lives of the 141 Irish women and their 11 children on a four month passage from Cork to Sydney. One can understand the surgeon's assertion that male convicts gave less trouble!

William Veale was married twice and his first child, a girl was given as one of her names Crozette, perhaps rather as a mark of thanksgiving than as commemorating a place of happy memories. His eldest son followed his father's profession and so perhaps he may also be the subject of a biography. This one certainly maintains the high standard of the Dartmouth Studies. It is well illustrated and describes the life at sea of a Westcountry mariner with all its interest and perils at a time before government intervention in the lives and qualifications of seamen and their officers had started to be felt. It was also a time when wives had to reconcile themselves to separations from their husbands, sometimes of years. Most of them, like the two Mrs Veales, seem to have accepted this without question busying themselves with housekeeping and their children. It would be interesting to read the diary of one of these necessarily hardworking women, if any of them had the time or inclination to keep one!

Adrian Reed

The Old Devon Farmhouse. An illustrated study and catalogue of the Devon Farmhouse Collection. (At Torquay Museum). By Peter Brears. Devon Books. 1998. 160pp. ISBN 1 85522 626 X. Price £19.95.

No-one would automatically or instinctively go to Torquay to see or study the agricultural past. Yet Torquay Museum houses what is probably one of the best collections of farm and farmhouse materials in the county and indeed in the country. This is the Laycock/Chope/Fielden collection. It is far too little known and only a small part can ever be on display at a time. Mr Brears' exactly illustrated catalogue and book, with nearly 1500 drawings and an excellent description of how the objects described were used, will go a long way to remedy this situation, but the collection needs to be seen to be fully appreciated.

Part of the importance and interest of the collection lies in when and how it was collected. It dates almost entirely from well before the last war, before the time when the tractor was in common use (there are no tractors in the collection) and well before the time when electricity and mains water were, by and large, available on farms, when farmers' wives cooked in the fireplace on the open hearth or in a Bodley stove and heated water in a copper, and their husbands ploughed with horses and sowed, as often as not, from a fiddle or a zillup. It thus reflects the end of a way of living and farming evolved over millennia of trial and error, adapted to soil and climate and to the availability of local materials and skills. It harks back to the age of 'horse husbandry' when much of the work of the farm and in the farmhouse was hand work, still done with tools locally evolved and locally made in workshop or smithy. Ploughing was with horses and the only machinery comprised the reaper and binder - relatively new - and the much older threshing machine. It is this world, now quite gone, that the collection reflects.

About two-thirds of the collection of the c.1500 objects is domestic and the other third agricultural. Much relates to the hearth and demonstrates remarkable ingenuity of design to enable the farmer's wife to boil, bake, roast, toast, or just to heat food on, or in, or in front of, an open hearth. Quite unfamiliar to this writer are the six legged 'cats' (always on their feet) to support plates of different sizes at different heights in front of the fire. Most remarkable of the agricultural objects is perhaps the complete set of packhorse gear, saddle, gurry buts and crooks of varying sizes, collected from Exmoor perhaps a century ago.

The principal collector was Charles Laycock, the son and grandson of rich Huddersfield solicitors. His family had moved to Devon in the 1890s. Charles eventually settled at 32 Cross Street, Moretonhampstead, where he bought some traditional buildings once part of the old manor house and furnished them so as to create the old Devon farm kitchen and parlour. What he used to furnish this house was still in use or nearly so; he said that he had seen all the objects he collected used, or had spoken to folk who had used them. Eventually all this was left to Torquay Museum, along with further materials collected in the thirties by Mrs Marjorie Fielden, and much earlier by R.P. Chope and Paul Karkeek, both eminent Devonshire historians at the turn of the

century. Laycock left enough money to build a gallery at Torquay for at least a good representative display.

He expressed a hope that one day his collection would be housed in a farmhouse and court like the ones he lived in and described in his three articles in the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* (vols 52, 53 and 55) and elsewhere. This seems unlikely to happen, sadly, as such a display in such surroundings could not be matched, but the next best thing - and better in some respects because all is entirely accessible - is the finely illustrated 'catalogue raisonnee' Mr Brears has produced, a labour of love for sure. Devon Books must be congratulated too on what must be a unique venture.

Robin Stanes

One thousand years of Sherford by John R Goodman. Published by the author, July 1998. 92p. illus. £6.00 ISBN 0-9533903-0-6.

Having seen Group-Captain Goodman's appearance on television talking about the 'love of his life', the DH Mosquito, which he had flown with distinction in the Second World War (he was awarded the DFC and Bar), I was surprised to be asked to review his history of the little village of Sherford near Kingsbridge. The same initiative which had brought him such a distinguished service career had driven him to write the story of the ancient Devon village which has been his home for the past two decades. John Goodman has produced a fascinating and well-researched study and, using the same principle, has financed the handsome little production himself (all profits going to the Parish Church of St. Martin which he believes dates back to very ancient times).

In about 1057 Countess Gytha gave 'my land at Sherford which is my dowry for the sake of my soul and that of my Earl Godwin' to the Church of St. Olave in Exeter. This was when the Bishop was Leofric. The events of the next thousand years follow. There is social history also. Tithes, craftsmen and local charities are just three of the chapter headings. There is one story about the Wesleyans which involves a family I have known all my life. In 1880 a local preacher named John Callard from Kingsbridge sought the burial of Sarah Pillage of Torquay in the Sherford churchyard 'according to the rites and ceremonies of the Wesleyan Methodists'. The Callards of South Devon still worship as Methodists almost a century and a half later.

Historians in Devon are hoping that every village in the county will produce a history to celebrate the new Millennium; this may be one of the first - and a model for all. It is the result of a very small group of 'amateurs' (in the true sense) working together, with John Goodman as author, using modern technology to record and find items in the parish records and on tombstones in the churchyard. All are recorded on a computer data-base. The quality of both presentation and typography is outstanding.

In November 1943 Sherford was one of the villages evacuated as part of the Slapton Battle Area, the Old School House becoming the headquarters of a US Army infantry company. Shortly after writing this review, I return to Normandy for the 55th Anniversary of D-Day. Group-Captain Goodman concludes: 'A memorial was placed in the British War Cemetery at Bayeux. The inscription reads: "We who were once conquered by William have now liberated his native land". As far as Sherford is concerned the wheel has turned full circle'.

John Pike

The History of Lloyd Maunder 1898-1998 a West Country Family Business, by Henry Clarke and Hilary Binding. Halsgrove 1998 95pp. £14.95. ISBN 1 864114 000 7.

This book is the story of a remarkable Devonshire family, and the equally successful company that they formed one hundred years ago, and which is trading even more profitably today. Conditions in agriculture towards the end of the nineteenth century were, in many ways, similar to the economic situation that the agricultural industry finds itself in today. Here was one big difference, both producers, and the shopkeepers who sold their food at that time, were still trading on a very small scale. Looking back in retrospect, it is easy to spot that the conditions were ideal for an entrepreneur to move in, and to organise the collection, distribution and marketing of farm produce more efficiently. The arrival of the main line railway, and the construction of a number of branch lines meant that villages that were remote in the early nineteenth century, were just a few hours away from London by the end of the century. What is rather surprising is that a number of local farming families thought of this at about exactly the same time. Within 20 miles of Witheridge, where the Maunders started trading, the Culm Valley Dairy Company was formed in Hemyock by the Farrants, Lutleys, Wides and Clists, in Taunton the A.J. Baker firm was established; in Wiveliscombe the Langdons, at Tiverton Junction both Harris's and the 'Duchess of Devonshire' traded, and in Hemyock again, Alfred Wide and company. Today only Lloyd Maunder continues to flourish.

Historians will be interested in the circumstances that caused, or allowed such businesses to start trading. This book is very useful, for it traces the family and its various business activities, through some thirty years before Lloyd Maunder started business. The family tree is there, warts and all, and tells how the Partridges, Elworthys and Maunders all intermarried over two generations, and later F.J. Maunder produced nine children, of whom Lloyd was one. An examination of the businesses listed above shows some common features in their family backgrounds. Obviously they were farmers, as a result of their expertise, or by careful marriages, or both, they had risen to become yeoman farmers, they had become involved in local parish affairs and were invariably both liberal politically and nonconformist by religious denomination. Most were very interested in education, for example Frederick's wife is quoted as saying that she was 'a firm believer in education as the secret of worldly success and personal solace'. Throughout the book there is frequent mention of Lloyd Maunder's association with the Sainsbury business. Perhaps this book should be read in conjunction with a similar volume, published to commemorate Sainsbury's 125th anniversary in 1994[1], which contains a number of references to Lloyd Maunder. Both companies kept their trading identities secret, and almost used a code - as an example Lloyd Maunder called the contract between the two firms 'A1', whilst Sainsbury's advertised food from Lloyd Maunder's as 'products from our own farms'.

There are very few factual mistakes in the book. One, presumably because the authors did not trace a quoted text to its original source, states that the partners of the Culm Valley Dairy Company dissolved after three years. I have in my possession a plaque commemorating their twenty years of partnership in 1906. On page 42 mention is made of hampers of poultry being despatched by rail, each containing 30 dozen, which must have weighed at least half a ton!

This is a well written book, charting the progress of an important company. There may be lessons that could be learnt, and followed, by present day small farmers in Devon.

Brian Clist

1. "The Best Butter in the World - A History of Sainsbury's" Bridget Williams, Edbury Press, 1994.

Clearbrook: the story of a Dartmoor hamlet by Pauline Hemery. Devon Books. 1998. 112pp. Illustrated. Paperback, price not given. ISBN 1 85522 635 9.

During the last four years of his life Eric Hemery produced five hardback books on Dartmoor, totalling nearly 2000 pages, but evidently without exhausting the subject, as his widow has now produced a very well illustrated account of the moorland hamlet to which they moved in 1975. While I am sure that a majority of subscribers, most of them locals, whose names take up four pages will be very pleased with their purchase, I am less sure of its appeal to a more historically-minded readership from further afield, with some 40 per cent of the pages dealing with the period since the Second World War.

I admit to feeling ambivalent about the large amount of space given to an account of who has been living where, and there are times when I feel that the best place for such detail is in a time capsule, but then again anyone who wishes to know who was living where, will require the materials to be more accessible. I had hoped to learn more of the early years of the hamlet; to be told that it 'may have existed for less than two hundred years' seems rather vague. The terrace of some twelve houses which formed the core of the community appears to have been an early Victorian greenfield development, but while the baptismal register for that period has been searched the only census referred to is that for 1891. This seems odd, given that those for 1851 and 1881 have been indexed for Devon and are therefore easiest to use. Being in the fortunate position of having access to the former on CD-Rom it was literally the work of minutes for me to find ten cottages, all but two of which were then occupied by tin miners. Presumably the subsequent censuses would enable the decline of the nearby mine to be traced.

I found the chapter dealing with the years from 1890 to 1945 to be the most enjoyable, before the hamlet had become virtually a dormitory for Plymouth, with Mrs Hemery sympathetically evoking a period when one could tell the time by the trains - indeed part of the world we have lost!

Tony Collings

The History of the Castle Hotel Dartmouth by Ray Freeman. Dartmouth History Research Group Paper No. 25. Illustrated 44pp. Paperback available from Dartmouth Museum, The Butterwalk, Dartmouth, TQ6 9PZ and Harbour Bookshop, 12 Fairfax Place, Dartmouth, TQ6 9AE. £3.00 plus 75p to cover p. and p. ISBN 1 899011 15 3.

This is an enlarged edition of the Research Group's Paper No. 14, originally published in 1995, occasioned by the emergence of new materials, which has allowed it to be increased from 32 to 44 pages, with the inclusion of five more illustrations, now reproduced to a much higher standard, together with the provision of a glossy cover.

The new material has provided the opportunity to re-write the section on the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, which now includes extracts from a particularly detailed inventory, room by room, of the Castle Inn, as it then was, along with the description of the landlady which the Reverend John Swete confided to his diary, so that one's mental picture of the ambience experienced by the clientele of the period is considerably enhanced.

I could not help but notice that the improved standard of the illustrations was not matched by the text, which retains its very much home-made appearance, with two spaces after most commas, as well as after full stops, so that, when the text wraps around at one of those spaces, either that line ends with a space or the next line starts

with one. This I found distracting and all the more noticeable given that the very first paper in the series, being a straight reprint from The Devon Historian No. 31, had a much more professional appearance.

Nevertheless, one hopes this edition will have a wider circulation than its predecessor, perhaps even extending to the present proprietors, and perhaps even persuading them to amend the inaccurate account of the building's antiquity currently displayed on its frontage.

Tony Collings

OTHER PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Totnes Historian
Totnes Museum Society has embarked upon the publication of an annual journal, under the honorary editorship of Bob Mann. Issue No 1 of *The Totnes Historian* appeared in October 1998, sponsored by Harberton Art Workshop, and is available free to members and on sale at Totnes Museum (price not given).

Of 20 A5 pages the opening edition, besides carrying reports relating to activities and the Museum, includes articles on 'The First Totnes Historians' (by Bob Mann), 'the Lepers of Totnes' (Kristin Saunders) and 'Totnes Traffic Problems - 1803' (Jim Fyrth). We wish all success to the new venture.

Yelverton & District Local History Society Newsletter No. 16, 1999.
Yelverton's Newsletter continues to offer a wealth of interesting information to members of the Society, to whom it is available for £1.50, and to non-members for whom the cost is £2.00. The 1999 issue, following established A5 format with card covers, contains 36 internal pages. Of particular note is a contribution by Tom Greeves on Great Roughtor Mine, Sheepstor, and an account by Alan Rowe of new evidence revealed by his and others' research of former settlements and cultivations on Buckland Down. Other pages carry a diversity of subjects. Details from Treasurer/Membership Secretary Peter Laxton, 4 The Coach House, Grenofen, Tavistock.

NEWS FROM LOCAL SOCIETIES

The Widecombe and District Local History Group has an attractive list of talks, mainly on Dartmoor subjects, planned for the coming winter. They include Paul Rendell (6 October) on ancient trackways, Ted Fitch (1 December) on Dartmoor and its treasures, Peter Wakeham (5 January) on Man's influence on the Dartmoor landscape, and Brian Maddock (2 February) on Dartmoor under pressure - its sites and sounds. Meetings are held at the Church House, Widecombe, on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p.m. Donations of £1 appreciated. Details from Hon Sec Anthony Beard, 01364 621246.

Clayhidon Local History Group came into being in June 1983. Chairman Ken Wakeling writes: A programme of transcribing parish records and collecting documents, photographs and modern records has been maintained up to the present day. Monthly meetings have been a feature of the group's activities, coupled with outings to places of historical interest. An annual 3 day exhibition in the parish church (1999 we take a break) and publication of a monthly newsletter rounds off the general activities of this group. The wealth of material acquired has resulted in an office being set up in a member's house with the inevitable numerous filing cabinets, and has become a mini record office. We have very recently become affiliated to the Devon History Society and already have received speedy help when it was asked for.

As the Millennium approached the most logical way forward was to use this accumulated material and attempt for the very first time a history of Clayhidon. It was decided this should be a group effort with members researching and writing chapters on their chosen subjects. As this idea was fermenting in our minds we became aware that funding might be available from an unexpected source. Clayhidon forms part of the Blackdown Hills which cover a large area of Devon and Somerset and has been made an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A Project Office for the Blackdown Hills has been set up and to that office an offer was made by the Local Heritage Lottery Fund to support villages within the area to set up Parish Chest projects. As this was to be a pilot scheme, time was of the essence. The history group applied for funding to publish a history of Clayhidon and were included in an umbrella bid covering six parish projects coordinated by the Blackdown Hills Project. In addition it was proposed that from these different projects material would be drawn to create a modern version of the Parish Chest. This would take the form of a World Wide Web page. The bid to the Local Heritage scheme was successful. Again the time factor came into the reckoning as the money had to be spent by mid summer 1999, which meant there was no time for complacency and deadlines must be met or hey presto - no money.

The web site has now been established. Project Cosmic, of Ottery St. Mary, were the IT specialists who translated the information into web pages. It took three visits to Clayhidon where a huge quantity of documents and photographs were scanned. Five members of the history group have been trained by Project Cosmic to take over the running of the Clayhidon site so that we are able to build on and amend the site as necessary. It has also been proposed that a CD-ROM be produced which will be distributed to key access points which will include the Devon Record Office.

The web site can be accessed via the following address code:
http://www.blackdown-hills.net/parishchests

Clayhidon A Parish on the Blackdowns published by Clayhidon Local History Group on 6 August 1999 will be available from the C.L.H.G. Office, The Old Rectory, Clayhidon, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3TJ priced £6, or £7 including postage.

HISTORIES FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Ian Maxted, Local Studies Librarian, reminds that volunteers are still sought to help with the project to produce parish histories. (For details see DH 58). Copies of the Open University leaflet can be obtained from OSFACHI, (mm leaflets), Faculty of Social Sciences, Open University, Milton Keynes. MK7 6AA.

DEVON TITHE INDEX PROJECT

A project to index the Devon Tithe Apportionments has been launched by the Friends of Devon's Archives. The group, formed last year, is to produce two indexes - one of which will be arranged in alphabetical order of parish, giving ownership details, the names of holdings and their acreage; the other index will be generated from the same data, but will be in alphabetical order of personal name of the owners or occupiers of the properties. The project is being undertaken by volunteer members of the Friends. The final product will enable researchers to find, at a glance, the parishes in which landowners held property, details about land tenure, size of holdings, etc., for the whole county, without having to consult each Apportionment (numbering over 470 in total!). If you require more information about this project and/or Friends of Devon's Archives, please contact the secretary - Michael Sampson, 7 Merryside, Witheridge, Tiverton, Devon EX16 8AW.

GROUP TICKETS AT THE DEVON RECORD OFFICE

Since the Devon Record Office introduced admission charges in 1981, transferable group tickets have been issued on request to local history societies for use by members carrying out research on behalf of those societies. More recently this facility has been extended in a special way to societies affiliated to the Devon History Society.

Each year the DHS pays a lump sum to the Record Office to cover group membership for all local history societies who pay the annual affiliation fee. A ticket can be issued on the first occasion when a member of an affiliated society visits the searchroom in either Exeter or Barnstaple (there is no need to apply in writing), and additional members can have their names added to the ticket when they visit. All that is needed is evidence of membership of the particular society. An up-to-date list of affiliated societies is kept in

the searchroom and can be quickly checked. All the tickets run from 1 May to 30 April and can be renewed automatically from year to year, as long as this arrangement lasts. Individual members will still need to complete a registration form at either record office on their first visit and produce a CARN ticket or other proof of identity annually.

There are of course many other advantages of affiliation to the Devon History Society, but this is one of which not all local history groups who use the Record Office may be aware.

FRIENDS OF DEVON ARCHIVES

The objectives of Friends of Devon Archives, formed in 1998, are to promote the preservation and use of historical records in Devon and to raise public awareness of their importance for research and education. The group works closely with Devon Record Office but interests are not restricted to that body. Activities include 'special events' such as talks and trips, some publishing, and conservation work. Enquiries to Michael Sampson, 7 Merryside, Witheridge, Tiverton EX16 8AW.

DEVON BOOK OF THE YEAR 1998

Read any good books lately? If you have read a book about any aspect of Devon which has impressed you with its research and presentation and if it was published during 1998, please show your appreciation by nominating it for the Devon Book of the Year award. This award reflects the importance the Devon History Society attaches to good standards when writing about Devon's heritage and it will be awarded at the Society's annual meeting on 23 October 1999. Please send your nominations to Ian Maxted, the County Local Studies Librarian, Exeter Central Library, Castle Street, Exeter EX4 3PQ. The works will be considered by a panel of members of the Society under the following categories:

1. Works relating to the county as a whole
2. Works relating to an individual community
3. Works on a specific topic

More than one award may be made, but there will not necessarily be an award in each of these categories. Last year two awards were made, to the Uffculme Archive Group for The Uffculme wills and inventories, and to Devon Books for the first volume of John Swete's Travels in Georgian Devon 1789-1800, edited by Todd Gray

PLEASE SEE REVISED NOTE ON PAGE 2 REGARDING BACK COPIES OF *The Devon Historian*

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