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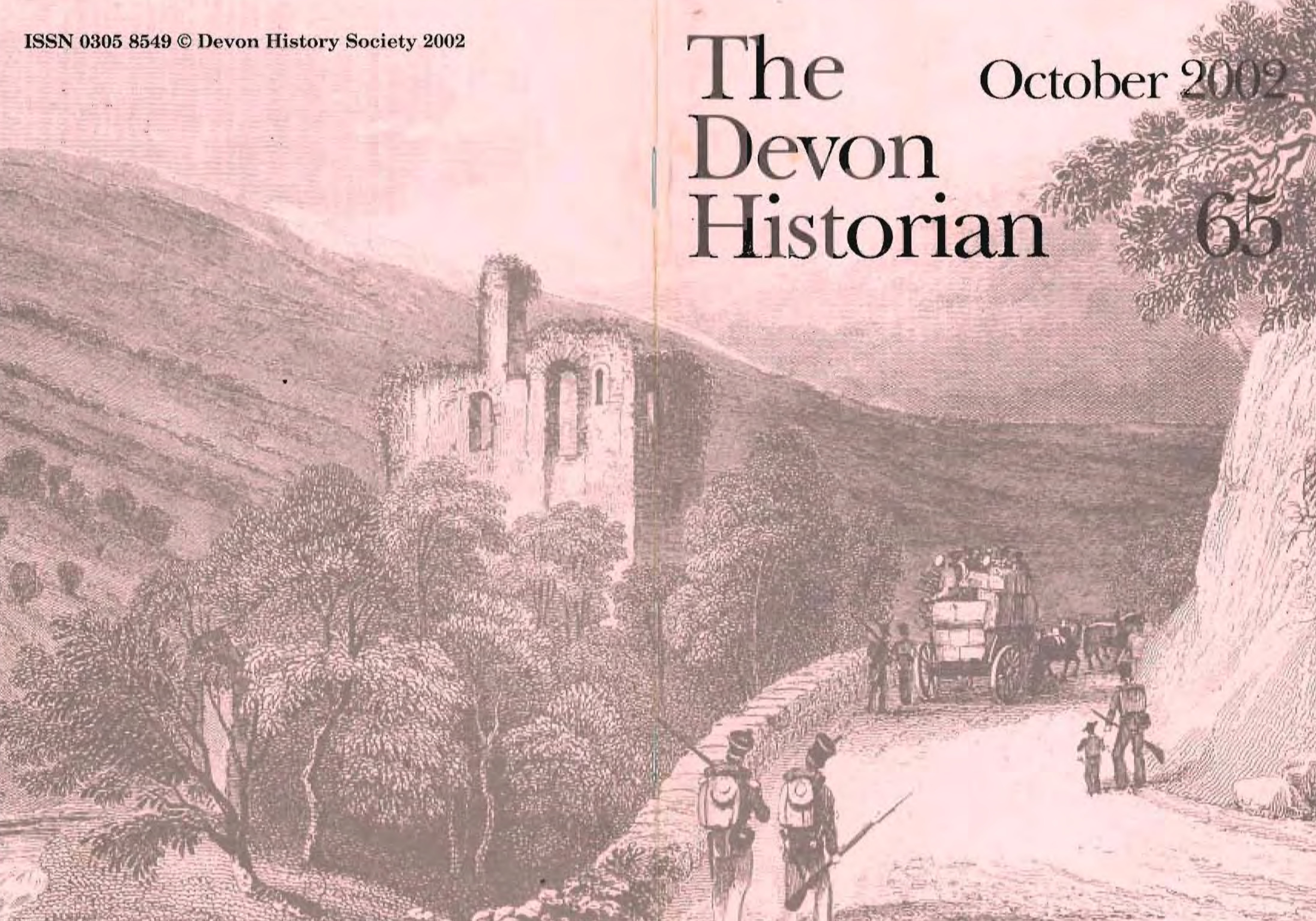

The Devon Historian

October 2002

65

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The AGM of the Society will take place on Saturday 26 October at St Luke's College, Exeter.

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DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Current and back issues of *The Devon Historian* (except for numbers 7, 11, 15, 16 and 23) can be obtained from Mr David Thomas, 112 Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4RW. All issues are priced at £3, post free to members. Also available post free are *Index to The Devon Historian* (for issues 1-15, 16-30 and 31-45), and *Devon Bibliography* 1980 (i.e. No 22 of *DH*, which was entirely devoted to our first *Bibliography*), 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984, all £1 each. Bibliographies for more recent years are available from Devon Library Services.

Committee member Mr John Pike, 82 Hawkins Avenue, Chelston, Torquay TQ2 6ES, would be glad to acquire copies of the out-of-stock numbers of *DH*.

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 2002, etc.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEVON'S ROAD SYSTEM

A. Brian George

Roman Roads

Ivan D. Margary in his book *Roman Roads in Britain* has given the detailed evidence of how two main routes entered Devon, one from the north and one from the east. They appear to have crossed at Axminster and just south of Axminster. The Fosse Way came from Lincoln and Bath via Ilchester and is considered to have commenced at a port at Axmouth. From London and Dorchester to Charmouth two routes, one via Honiton and the other via Sidford led to Exeter, where there was a substantial Roman garrison. The mudstone soft rock underlying the river Exe enabled it to be forded at low flows and the high ground of the city made it an ideal defensive position against attack from the west.

Nevertheless there was a route across Haldon Hill via Ugbrooke to Teignbridge where during the construction of James Green's 1816 bridge successive structures were found in the ground beneath. Another route has been located at Colebrooke in mid-Devon, whence it appears to have divided, one route through Bow to Okehampton and Lifton and the other following the high ground between Roborough and High Bickington, towards Bideford and Barnstaple. Roman roads were built during an occupation of some 400years and were generally straight over long distances but varied their alignment to suit local topography as required where gradients had to respond to their form of traffic. The carriageway foundation, or 'agger' varied in thickness and was very substantial so that the line of the route across agricultural land can sometimes still be visible on aerial photographs.

The Dark Age

When the Romans left in AD 410 Devon might have had a road network of 50 miles of paved road and 700 miles of trackway. By the ninth century Devon was recognised as a Saxon shire and with settlements recognised by -ton, -ham and -bury would have developed a new local network of routes with certain bridges such as Creedy bridge, Bickham bridge and Kingsbridge being mentioned in Saxon charters.

The Middle Ages

The middle of the twelfth century saw a change begin that would have a lasting effect on the landscape of Devon. The Saxon open-field system was mainly abandoned and areas of land were let off by the lords of the manor to be farmed by peasants. (Exe bridge was commenced in about 1180). Fields were enclosed and tracks were diverted around them. Individuals travelled on foot or by horseback and goods were moved largely by packhorse. There were the Royal roads on which travellers were under the sovereign's protection and they were termed the King's Highway. All other roads were termed the Common Highway and the state made no provision for maintaining them. There had grown up the common-law principle that the landowner was responsible for the upkeep of roads abutting his land. Devon's deep lanes were formed as a result of this system of maintenance, landowners would scrape mud off their surfaces and throw it on to the verges and as time went by the road became lower and lower.

After the Reformation the first piece of legislation that dealt with roads was the Statute of Highways 1555 which made each parish responsible for all roads passing

through its area, except the 100 yards each side of a county bridge. Each year the churchwardens in every parish were required to appoint an overseer of highways from among the parishioners. The post was unpaid and labour for repair was provided by each of the parishioners, also on an unpaid basis, who were required to work for four, later six, days of the year. This became known as statute labour. In 1662 the surveyors were empowered to levy a rate to supplement statute labour. During this inefficient form of road administration wheeled traffic was increasing in volume. The undeniable relationship between wheel loading and road condition asserted itself in government legislation. In an Act of 1621 Parliament attempted to minimize wear and tear on the roads by restricting the efficiency of road vehicles. The use of four wheeled vehicles or loads exceeding one ton was prohibited. In 1629 no more than five horses per wagon were permitted and in 1662 the permitted number per wagon was increased to seven but the width of wagon wheels was specified to be a minimum of four inches. Later the width of wagon wheels was increased to a minimum of nine inches with a penalty of contravention of £5 or one month in prison.

Not all legislation was unhelpful to the road user as a late seventeenth century Act required parish surveyors to set up at cross-roads a stone or timber post inscribed with the name of the next town to which the road led. In this county there is the brick cross at the meeting of the Newton Poppleford to Budleigh Salterton with the Otterton road to Woodbury.

The Ogilby maps of 1675

These strip maps produced in *Britannia* in 1675 by John Ogilby were the first to show the measured mile of 1760 yards (introduced by Act of Parliament in 1593) to a scale of one inch to one mile, and showed the position of each mileage point. They were compiled using a large wheel on which was mounted a tape ten miles long. Examples of these maps have been available from the Devon Record Office and the strips have north points associated to each part of the way. Thus we can trace the route from Exeter to Bridport through St Mary Clyst, Sidford and Cullyford where at 22 miles we cross the river Axe and its tributary before reaching Lime at 28 miles.

Other routes in Devon were as follows:-

1. Crewkerne to Plymouth via Axminster, Honiton, Exeter and Buckfastleigh.
2. Plymouth to Dartmouth via Modbury and Halwill.
3. Bridgwater to Launceston via Dulverton, South Molton, Barnstaple, Torrington, Hatherleigh and Halwill (Junction).
4. Exeter to Truro via Dunsford, Chagford, Postbridge, Tavistock and Gunnislake.
5. Bristol to Exeter via Wells, Taunton, Whiteball, Cullompton and Killerton.
6. Dartmouth to Minehead via Churston, Abbotskerswell, Teignbridge, Exeter, Silverton, Tiverton, Bampton, Morebath and Bury.
7. Exeter to Ilfracombe via Crediton, Morchard Bishop, Chulmleigh, Chittlehampton, Barnstaple and between West Down and Bittadon.

As coaching traffic was introduced the appalling condition of the roads became an increasing handicap, and in the eighteenth century the need for their drainage and the use of broken stone for their surfaces was generally realised. In the Highlands of Scotland, General Wade showed how this could be done, beginning in 1726, and this led to Telford and Macadam developing their individual methods and extending their expertise to Devon.

The Turnpike Roads

It took private enterprise to solve the maintenance problem and the first turnpike trust was formed in Buckinghamshire in 1706. The Exeter Turnpike Trust was formed in 1753. All the main roads leading out of and around Exeter were included and with 150 miles were the highest trust mileage in Devon and one of the highest in the country. The Barnstaple Trust, formed in 1760 had 104 miles of road and the Tiverton Trust of 1757 had 73 miles of road. Others brought the total mileage of turnpike road in Devon to 1070. The extent of Devon's roads at the time the turnpike trusts were established is beautifully illustrated by Benjamin Donn's *Map of the County of Devon* published in 1765 and reprinted in facsimile by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society and the University of Exeter in 1965.

The trusts appointed surveyors to organise their work. The later turnpike Acts required the trustees to measure their roads and to erect stones or wooden posts to give mileages to towns at one mile intervals. In Devon the need for new road building became apparent towards the end of the eighteenth century. Perhaps the first of these was a road to short-cut the distance from Crewkerne to Honiton avoiding Axminster and this was built using existing roads through Chard and Stockland in 1786. While shorter, this route emphasised the problems for coaching traffic of steep gradients. Another new route built before the turn of the century was that from New Bridge, Holne, past Dartmeet to Two Bridges. This avoided Holne and kept to the north of the West Dart river until it joined the road from Moretonhampstead to Two Bridges. Yet another early scheme was the crossing of the River Exe at Countess Wear. The road system at the turn of the century is best shown by the original Old Series Ordnance Survey Maps, those for Devon being first published in 1809, and republished in 1977 by Harry Margary at Lympne Castle in Kent.

A new road into Devon was built by the Honiton and Ilminster Turnpike Trust in 1808. In May 1807 a notice appeared in the *Sherborne and Yeovil Mercury* asking for a contractor for a road from Yard in Devon to Horton Cross in Somerset. The advertisement was signed by C. Flood, the Clerk and Treasurer. William Bond was the Surveyor. There do not appear to be any surviving minutes of this trust except those in the SRO dating from about 1825. This road not only provided the shortest route to London from Exeter, but was carefully graded to suitable inclines for coach traffic. It provided a junction for the revised route from Chard of 1827 through Yarcombe to Devonshire Inn.

The problems of the seventeenth century were narrow width, very steep inclines (>1 in 7), unnecessary undulation and altitude and also excessive rolling resistance due to bad surfaces. These were gradually reduced and new roads such as the Exeter to Cullompton of 1815, the Exeter to Tedburn St Mary of 1824 and the Crediton to Barnstaple of 1830 introduced ruling gradients of 1 in 15 to 1 in 16. They also cut down on the unnecessary ascents and descents such as Whitestone hill on the Okehampton road. This great surge of new work was brought to an end by the advent of the railway to Exeter in 1844. Thereafter some of the turnpike trusts found it difficult to maintain a satisfactory income. Exeter to Cullompton was in particular difficulty, but the Exeter Trust did well. However the alignment and foundations for our future classified roads had been established and secured. The detailed changes over this period can be accurately examined be comparing the Old Series Ordnance Survey maps with the reprinted first edition of about 1890 published by David and Charles in 1969.

The County and District Councils

If the turnpike roads had advanced the condition of the main roads in Devon, the minor roads had also to be considered and the Highways Act 1835 regularised the election by the inhabitants of each parish of a highway surveyor. At Epiphany Sessions 1863, the Devon Court of Quarter Sessions, acting under an 1862 enactment, organised the county, excluding the urban areas, into 26 districts, each having no more than 300 miles of road and one or two waywardens in each parish. An Act of 1864 permitted parishes to borrow money for the building of roads.

Under the Local Government Act 1888, responsibility for the police, of weights and measures and for county bridges and their approaches, passed from the magistrates to the new county councils and roads designated main roads became county roads. The county councils were formed at a time of great change in the use of roads. The steam traction engine had appeared to assist in local heavy haulage and the heavy axle and wheel weights had a profound effect on roads and weak bridges. By 1895 bicycles were in common use in towns and cyclists looked for smoother roads. Then by 1904 there were 17,810 motor vehicles of all classes licensed, which doubled in the following year and were 45,026 in 1906.

Whereas an iron-tyred wheel tended to consolidate a surface a pneumatic tyre tended to tear it to pieces, partly by suction and partly by the driving effect and the increase in speed. In 1906 a Royal Commission was appointed to report on dust prevention. This was solved by the application of a bituminous binder and by 1908 some 1269 miles of road in England had been tarred. In the last 90 years the efficient use of tar or bitumen to bind road surfaces has become a science leading to the development of British Standards, but occasional lapses in application can cause widespread distress.

National Finance

In 1909 the Government established the Roads Board, which drew its revenue from vehicle licence fees and petrol tax. Under the Roads Act 1920 grants were payable from the Roads fund for the maintenance of main roads only; but it soon became evident that in the maintenance of minor roads also, local ratepayers would have to be given assistance and in 1925 grants of 50 per cent were payable for class I roads and 25 per cent for class II roads. The passing of the Trunk Roads Act of 1936 meant that the Ministry of Transport became directly responsible for the administration of 4460 miles of main road nationally, about 95 miles in Devon. In 1946 a further Trunk Road Act added in Devon another 120 miles. Trunk road maintenance was delegated to the County Council and the cost of this was borne by the Ministry of Transport. By this time grants for authorised improvements to the county roads were 75% for class I roads, 60% for class II roads and 50% for a new group of class III roads.

Road Improvements and Maintenance in the Twentieth Century

The existence of a large direct labour organisation for the maintenance and improvement of roads between the wars meant that national grants for work on trunk and classified roads brought large sums of money directly into the county, paying the wages of county labour and the cost of local supplies from quarries and elsewhere. Between the wars Devon County Council had many quarries in various parts of the county. Some contract work was done. The Exeter by-pass, designed by the Southern County Surveyor Andrew Warren, completed just before the second war, was carried out by contract, bypasses to Buckfastleigh and Ashburton also were built to relieve

unemployment. The science of road-building developed rapidly, transition curves were introduced for fast roads and the County Surveyor's Society proposed a national motorway plan in 1938. The road changes between the wars were shown by the Ordnance Survey when they published a Sixth, or New Popular Edition in 1946, at a scale of one inch to one mile and these were the first maps to incorporate a National Grid for position reference.

After the war the county's quarries were gradually eliminated and the labour of the fourteen divisional surveyors was reduced as mechanical facilities were improved. Nothing was done by contract until Honiton by-pass was begun in 1964, followed by Cullompton by-pass on the route of the future motorway M5. Meanwhile the first rural dual-carriageways were built by direct labour in 1959; near Iron bridge on the trunk road from Honiton to Exeter and on the county class I road from Barnstaple towards Braunton. Long lengths of road were improved by direct labour on the holiday routes across Devon and also to eliminate difficult diverted sections of road that had been built as a result of the priority given to railway line alignment in Devon. However, by 1970 county road improvement by direct labour was run down as national funds were more and more diverted to trunk roads and to large contracts for county road improvements.

The concentration of national funds on trunk road improvement was maximised with the formation of the Road Construction Units by the Ministry of Transport in 1968. One of six units, the South Western RCU had its headquarters in Taunton but in co-operation with the County Council, one of three sub-units was based in Exeter to progress construction in Devon and Cornwall. The County Surveyor was Chief Engineer of the unit and 90 per cent of the staff of about 105 people were county council staff whose salaries were reimbursed by Government, the rest being civil servants. During the next fifteen years the unit designed and supervised contracts for dual carriageway roads from Exeter to Plymouth, from Exeter to Launceston and the Launceston and Bodmin by-passes.

Consultants were appointed to bring the motorway M5 to Exeter and in recent years the Highways Agency, as the government department is now called, has taken responsibility for trunk road maintenance from the County Council to place it with their contractors and the design and supervision of trunk road improvements from the County Council to place that with consultants. At present only a small amount of grant money is being provided to assist with the maintenance of county classified roads and improvements are rare indeed as county and government money is concentrated on other things. The extent of the new highways built towards the end of the century can be seen by comparing the 1946 maps with the Landranger O.S. maps to scale 1/50,000 published in 1999/2000.

Since the second war the size and overall weight of road vehicles has steadily increased with articulated lorries weighing 40 tons now having six axles and the occasional electricity transformer on a special trailer weighing 180 tons or more being drawn by heavy tractors. Roads are generally of broken stone and bituminous construction and surfaces have steadily improved, and when properly maintained, are now exceptionally plane. The concrete road has shown great durability but a recent example from Exeter to Honiton is particularly noisy. Speeds of 60 or 70 mph are normal on major inter-city roads, but in towns the need for safety in residential areas is causing the highway authority, the County Council, to bring in 20 mph limits and chicanes and humps to reduce speed. The personal motor vehicle stands or moves everywhere, and much of the urban highway is now temporary parking space.

Apart from the trunk roads, the County Council has since 1974 been the highway authority for all roads in Devon, but in 1996 this function was assumed by the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay for their areas. As highway authority the County Council initiates all the design and improvements of its 8000 miles of roads and carries out maintenance through local surveyors located at Exeter, Tiverton, Sidmouth, Newton Abbot, Ivybridge, Okehampton, Torrington and Barnstaple.

The most significant changes to Devon's roads over 2000 years since the Romans came and departed have taken place during the last 200 years. Remarkably, the routes of the Roman roads can still be traced in various parts of the country, but then, so can the more recently constructed disused railway routes.

In the last 30 years the County Surveyor has successively become the County Engineer and now the County Environmental Director but his work of directing the design of roads and bridges, traffic management, highway and bridge maintenance, development control, public rights of way, waste management and countryside management continues to afford his staff a fascinating range of activity during their working lives.

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TOWNS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY DEVON

Philip Carter

The population of Devon as a whole nearly doubled in the century 1801 - 1901. There is too an underlying trend of an increasing proportion of people living in the towns. In 1801 47 per cent of Devonians, not yet a half, lived in our towns. By 1841 the percentage had increased to over half at 54 per cent, and 1901 it was 74 per cent, practically three-quarters. However it is the varying fortunes of different kinds of towns and indeed individual ones, which is most fascinating.

The figures are, in a number of cases, inflated by a surrounding rural population in the same parish. Broad Clyst is perhaps an extreme example of this, being a large well-populated parish with a minimal urban area. Despite this type of error it is hoped that the figures used will be good enough to show general trends in urban growth or decline. Decisions also had to be made about exclusion or amalgamation. Where satellites are boosting the figures these places have been omitted:- Beer/Seaton; East Budleigh/Budleigh Salterton; Ermington/Ivybridge; Kenton/Starcross; Lydford/Princetown; Malborough/Salcombe; Northam/Appledore and Westward Ho! The following because they later coalesced, were added together:- Dartmouth + Townstall; Exeter + Heavitree + St Leonard's + St Thomas; Exmouth + Littleham + Withycombe Raleigh; Kingsbridge + Dodbrooke; Newton Abbot + Newton Bushel; Plymouth + Compton Gifford + Egg Buckland + Stoke Damerel + St Budeaux + Stonehouse East; Plympton Earl + Plympton St Mary; Sidmouth + Sidbury; Teignmouth + Shaldon; Torquay + Cockington + St Marychurch + Tormohun. Bere Ferrers includes Bere Alston, which was numerically the greater part. Barnstaple is probably short-changed because Pilton is not included but there are particular problems here, as only part of it was later included in Barnstaple.

The towns in this study are listed in the Appendix (page 15) which is in descending growth order. The population is shown at three different dates and in the last column is the percentage comparing 1901 with that of 1801. The outright losers are apparent: Cullompton, Uffculme, Ashburton, and Modbury all finished the century smaller than they started. A closer examination will show that many more had grown at the beginning of the century and then declined. These are:- Bampton, Bere Ferrers, Braunton, Broad Clyst, Chudleigh, Colyton, Crediton, Hartland, Honiton, Kingsbridge, Ottery St Mary, South Molton, Tavistock, Topsham and Torrington. These two groups added together mean that approximately half the towns in Devon did not continue to grow throughout the period.

Administration centres always had an advantage over other towns. Consider Exeter. It was for a long while more than just a county town: it was a provincial capital.[1] Throughout most of the period Exeter was still the see for both Devon and Cornwall. Moreover because it was the political and social capital it prospered as a centre for the distribution of goods and services.[2] A good example of this is the fact that in 1890 Exeter was the head office and administration centre for the 85-branch network of The Devon & Exeter Savings Bank.[3]

In 1834 the Poor Law Unions were established; this resulted in a series of minor capitals, the 'Union" towns of their respective groups of parishes. Fifteen of the sixteen are indicated with a 'U' in the Appendix, the missing one is St Thomas that has been included with Exeter's figures. These were well chosen, geographically, in that

they were usually central to their area. Later these 'Union' towns were chosen for other functions such as registration and sanitary districts.[4] They all finished the century with larger populations than they had at the beginning. A contrary political factor was the disenfranchisement of certain ancient Parliamentary Boroughs, in 1832, 1867 and 1885.[5] The likes of Ashburton and Plympton were never to have the same importance again but they could still prosper, compare Ashburton and Plympton in the Appendix.

The function of a market is not only ancient but also the *raison d'etre* for many of Devon's towns. Market towns provided 'the core of the urban network.[6] Furthermore the century saw considerable advances in animal selective breeding, four-course rotation, and the adoption of new durable iron instruments on farms.[7] The products needed to effect these changes were largely distributed from the market towns. Barry spoke of decline in marketing function[8] and, for example, with regard to Exeter and its cloth market he must be right. However Tames argued for increase because as well as for food, the enlarging process of industrialisation called for increasing quantities of organic raw materials, such as wool, hides, tallow, flax and straw.[9] These would largely pass through the same market towns. The prosperity of farming in turn not only supported the markets but the tradesmen and craftsmen of these towns as well.[10] On the whole the century was profitable for farming and market towns. This was despite depression after the Napoleonic wars and again from the 1870s onwards, though Devon was less affected than many other areas. The great number of new market halls in towns bears witness to this overall prosperity, for instance:- Torrington 1842[11] Tavistock 1862, South Molton 1863[12]. However the new railways which were to affect agriculture, and indeed so many other things, did alter the established pattern. Crediton, once the railway was in operation, suffered from its nearness to Exeter.[13] South Molton's market also shrank as rail enabled more convenient markets to be set up elsewhere.[14] The point has been made that loss of market status mattered,[15] but it is also abundantly clear that its presence did not ensure success in the nineteenth century. Those towns that were most heavily dependent on their market alone were often those that fell furthest behind. Rubinstein called growth 'unremarkable'[16] but it could be worse than that. The next most widely spread economic factor in Devon towns had been manufacture, especially that of woollen cloth.[17] In many towns it had been far more important than the market. Even at the start of the period this trade was in decline and though some of it survived for longer than the rest, by the end of the century there were probably only two towns actively engaged, on any large scale, in cloth manufacture, Buckfastleigh[18] and Uffculme[19]. Yet how different are their population growths, see Appendix. Manufacturing was not confined to cloth alone. Nearly every town had its tanneries, breweries and corn-mills. The railway was again the agent of change, as it could easily overcome the handicap of distance, so that the bigger more efficient units could bring about the demise of the smaller less efficient ones. It is true that the town, as opposed to the countryside, became the focus of the remaining industrial production.[20]

The days of importance for stannary towns had long gone but mining was still a factor in a few Devon towns. Tavistock was the most important, receiving considerable spin-off from local mines. The Tavistock Canal, built at the beginning of the century, and later the growth of Devon Great Consols near Morwellham, for a while one of the richest copper mines in the world, brought the town significant benefits.[21] The Bere Alston part of Bere Ferrers also had a renewal of mining activity in the period.[22] Clay extraction was of interest to Torrington and Newton Abbot and their respective ports

of Bideford[23] and Teignmouth.[24] Quarrying too was a factor at some towns such as Bampton,[25] and Okehampton[26] amongst others.

Defence in the form of the Dockyard and its ancillary services, barracks, hospital, victualling yards etc. was the reason for the growth of Devon's largest town.[27] Newton talked of the 'stimulus of war'.[28] However the amount of government money expended on a project such as Plymouth's breakwater, largely built in peacetime, was staggering for that age. It must have been an enormous fillip to the local economy, as well as providing a wonderful new safe haven for all shipping, not just warships.[29] Plymouth though was but a single example, no other town was so significantly affected throughout the century by war or preparation for it.

Thoroughfare towns, those that serviced road transport routes, show another facet of urban functions.[30] This increased in importance with the spread of turnpike roads. South Molton[31] on the road to Barnstaple and Honiton on the main London to Exeter road[32] are good examples of towns that thrived by servicing coaches and their passengers. Chudleigh had in fact risen in importance simply because it was on the main road to burgeoning Plymouth,[33] Ashburton too gained for this reason. All these towns were to lose a sector of their business with the coming of the railway. There was no need to stop to change the horses or feed the passengers! The improved roads too emphasized and increased the importance of certain towns as communication centres, e.g. Exeter.[34] As railways developed they performed a similar function, the main line towns had an advantage over those on branch lines.

Educational establishments were a minor but useful factor in the economy of some towns. Blundell's School at Tiverton[35] was maybe the best known example but there were others. Newton Abbot had its College.[36] The training ships for naval cadets at Dartmouth, the *Britannia* and the *Hindustan* needed local supplies and accommodation for staff and their families.[37]

Seaports had from very early times been of great significance in a westerly maritime county such as Devon. In our modern perception we are likely to think primarily of overseas trade. It is possible to overlook the enormous importance in the past of the coasting trade, and its river feeder systems. The Tamar was a major trade route.[38] Railways altered the balance of much inland bulk freight but there was still a considerable coastal trade,[39] particularly in such commodities as coal. Dartmouth staged a revival in the latter part of the nineteenth century because of the development of the coal-bunkering trade.[40] Another aspect of making a living from the sea was the fishing industry. Brixham was for many years the most significant town in this business[41] but Plymouth later grew to prominence.[42] To support this maritime trade, boat and ship-building was present at a number of centres both at Brixham[43] and Plymouth[44] and at several other places as well, such as Bideford, Dartmouth, and Topsham.[45] Ports in the Appendix have been marked with a 'P'. All gained consistently in the period save Topsham which no doubt lost business through Exeter's decline as a manufacturing centre.[46]

Leaving aside Plymouth's spectacular performance because of defence, the biggest growth area in Devon stemmed from its resort towns. At the start of the period there were perhaps five watering places on the south coast: Sidmouth, Exmouth, Dawlish, Teignmouth and Torquay and one on the north, Ilfracombe. By the end of the century there was not much change in numbers. It is the overall changes in the size of population that has far greater significance. Torquay and Exmouth have risen from very small players to become third and fourth in the size hierarchy. All the other resorts have grown significantly, the railway again playing a large and uneven part in this.[47]

Those to which the railway came early, such as Dawlish 1846, Teignmouth 1846, and Torquay 1848 got a better start than those where it came later such as Ilfracombe and Sidmouth.[48] However Ilfracombe overcame this deficit better than Sidmouth having more steamer traffic.[49] Several Devon resorts though were fortunate, during the period, in building a reputation as winter resorts.[50] This not only gave a longer season but also led more often to residence particularly for invalids and the retired.[51] The resorts are marked with an 'R' in the Appendix and they all achieved high growth.

Considering categories highlights general trends but it glosses over the sheer diversity of towns' occupations. A few individual examples from the end of the period are therefore listed. Barnstaple[52] and Bideford had potteries[53] and the latter town its paint industry based on coal, a raw material unique in Devon.[54] Bovey Tracey had a pottery.[55] Buckfastleigh[56] and Exeter,[57] amongst others, had paper mills. Crediton had a substantial shoe-making[58] and smaller lozenge industry.[59] Yet these two active industries did not prevent Crediton's decline, see Appendix. Tiverton's principal industry was machine lace manufacture employing over a thousand.[60] Lace was still made by hand at both Honiton,[61] its traditional centre, and Sidmouth.[62] Torrington was a gloving centre giving work to several hundreds[63] yet it also declined.

Railways have already been referred to in the categories of market, thoroughfare and resort towns. However the railways were such a major catalyst of change in this huge shift of population, that they need further consideration. Hoskins said, 'the railway killed many of the old market towns'.[64] Yet two Devon towns Hartland and Modbury never had a railway. Their lowly position in the Appendix must surely be a contrary argument; no town has done worse than Modbury. Yet the speed and facility of rail travel widened people's horizons and destroyed the once near impregnable hinterland of some seven to ten miles. The small towns were brought into competition with bigger markets and the shopping facilities of larger towns.[65]

The hinterlands of some towns undoubtedly increased in size but it is difficult sometimes to pick out why some towns gained and others faltered. Newton Abbot was geographically close to the star performer Torquay, yet it flourished. Did Torquay's growth assist? However Totnes was positioned just a little further away, yet it languished. Even those towns with a train service could still suffer for topographical reasons. Dartmouth for instance, a town that had a station but no trains! Ilfracombe and Okehampton suffered as shopping centres because their stations were high on hills above the towns; shoppers did not like the long climb back when laden. Sidmouth may have kept its exclusivity but lost business because its station was so far from the town.[66] Newton Abbot on the other hand filibustered to get the station near the town[67] and then improved the access to it.

The nineteenth century was undoubtedly one of change in Devon's towns. The bulk of the remaining cloth trade went, the total urban population grew and the railways came. Plymouth's strategic importance ensured its success. The resorts bear testimony to the beginnings of what we know now as mass tourism. The ports generally gained not declined. The rest of the towns' fortunes varied. Those with the new bigger hinterlands and a mixed economy fared the best. The smaller towns that were solely dependent on agriculture fared the worst. The function that had sustained them for many centuries was now not enough to maintain their prosperity. The nation had moved on and they were left behind.

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14 Hoskins (1954) p438
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APPENDIX

Town				1801	1841	1901	% of 1801
Torquay			R	1,933	7,853	33,890	1753
Exmouth			R	2,601	5,119	20,968	806
Paignton			R	1,575	2,501	8,385	532
Newton Abbot	U			2,126	3,456	10,738	505
Ilfracombe			R	1,838	3,679	8,557	466
Plymouth		P		44,879	95,942	201,926	450
Teignmouth		P	R	2,579	5,634	9,809	380
Exeter				20,553	42,062	66,872	325
Dawlish			R	1,424	3,132	4,584	322
Bideford	U	P		2,987	5,211	8,754	293
Barnstaple	U	P		3,748	7,902	9,698	259
Plympton	U			2,166	3,690	4,954	229
Brixham		P		3,671	5,684	8,092	220
Okehampton	U			1,500	2,194	3,223	215
Sidmouth			R	2,485	5,080	5,109	206
Holsworthy	U			1,045	1,859	2,076	199
Plymstock				1,633	2,966	3,195	196
Dartmouth		P		3,412	4,595	6,428	188
Bovey Tracey				1,431	1,823	2,658	186
Buckfastleigh				1,525	2,576	2,781	182
Bere Ferrers				1,110	2,142	1,995	176
Tavistock	U			3,420	6,272	5,841	171
Braunton				1,296	2,274	2,135	165
Tiverton	U			6,505	10,040	10,382	160
Torrington	U			2,044	3,419	3,241	159
Kingsbridge	U			1,779	2,793	2,596	146
Ottery St Mary				2,415	4,194	3,495	145
Honiton	U			2,377	3,895	3,271	138
Axminster	U			2,154	2,860	2,933	136
Totnes	U			2,503	3,049	3,116	124
Broad Clyst				1,540	2,401	1,900	123
Bampton				1,364	2,049	1,657	121
Colyton				1,641	2,451	1,982	121
Crediton	U			4,929	5,947	5,266	107
Hartland				1,546	2,223	1,634	106
South Molton	U			2,753	4,274	2,892	105
Chudleigh				1,786	2,415	1,820	102
Topsham		P		2,748	3,733	2,790	102
Cullompton				3,138	3,909	2,922	93
Uffculme				1,837	2,011	1,704	93
Ashburton				3,080	3,841	2,628	85
Modbury				1,813	2,048	1,330	73
Total Urban				158,889	288,749	490,187	309
Devon				340,308	532,959	662,196	195

U = 'Union' town of a group of parishes. R = Resort. P = Port

ILSINGTON PARISH AND THE LANDSCARO OF PEADINGTUN

Bill Ransom

Long before parish boundaries and parishes, as now understood, became defined many around Dartmoor had seen settlements established, grow and then decline.Ilsington was no exception.Indeed, although not generally rich in prehistoric remains, its moorland did contain within two parallel reaves the largest such settlement on Dartmoor. Known as the Rippon Tor system this, of about 20 sq. km. in extent, contains the remains of some 121 huts and probably dates from around 1600 to 1400 B.C. Examples of other, smaller, settlements lie on Haytor Down and Bagtor Down. The remains of a chambered tomb, known as the Sig tomb, for it lies near the headwaters of that stream, may date from 2000 B.C. All these, and other examples, have been comprehensively recorded and described by Butler.[1] Accordingly they are not considered further in this paper except to stress the importance, and significance, of reaves.

Reaves are boundary walls, not fortifications, and may demarcate individual fields, farms, entire settlements or major territorial divisions. While many post-date the Conquest others are from the Bronze Age. They are of importance in helping to interpret the possible line of a pre-Conquest Saxon boundary known as the landscaro of Peadingtun, for it is suggested that, in the absence of specific natural features such as rivers or tors, they may have been used to define the line of such a boundary. This touched upon, and may have helped to establish, what later became the parish boundary of Ilsington and the boundaries of neighbouring parishes, in particular those of Ashburton, Bickington, Widecombe and Woodland. The strip of parchment, written in Anglo-Saxon, defining this boundary, is believed to relate to an episcopal charter. The landscaro, while undated, is accepted as being of pre-Conquest date, perhaps around 1050 or earlier, and contains the earliest known references to places which now lie on, or within, the Ilsington parish boundary.

Davidson[2] was the first to bring this document to public attention and the first to attempt to relate the lands it describes to places known today. There have been attempts since, particularly by Rose-Troup[3] and Gover, Mawer and Stenton[4], but little of significance relating to Ilsington parish. My suggestion, but only for that area and its immediate neighbourhood, and the reasons for it are given below against the Anglo-Saxon wording as transcribed by Davidson.
Coming in from the north-west of Ilsington parish we have:-

1. Of cealfa dune on sufon stanas. (From calves down to the seven stones). A pre-historic reave runs from the upper East Webburn to Two Barrows on Hameldown, SX 707792, following what is now a boundary between the parishes of Widecombe and Manaton. It terminates somewhere in Soussons, perhaps close to Ephraim's Pinch, SX 678786, where there is still a stone circle. This route would pass through the southern end of Challacombe Down. Soussons is generally accepted as deriving from sufonstanas.

2. Of sufon stanum on hyfan treow. (From the seven stones to the hive tree). I believe this is not to Heatree Cross, SX730810, as sometimes stated, but much nearer to

Headland Warren, SX 693812, where hives are still put out today. Heatree Cross and Langstone Cross, (see point 5 below), have also been suggested as two points on the boundary but that would involve points 3 and 4 below lying between them within an overall distance of only about 1 km, an unlikely disparity in distances between points on a route, for the preceding point, Soussons, is some 6km from Heatree Cross.

3. On hyfan treow on hord burh. (From the hive tree to the treasure fort, or fortified place). Possibly from Headland Warren following what is now the boundary between Widecombe and North Bovey, to King's Barrow, SX 709814.

4. Of hordbyrg on deorford. (From the treasure fort to the deer ford). Very uncertain but the line would suggest a ford in the area of Vogwell, SX 723816.

5. Of deorforda on langastan. (From the deer ford to the longstone). Possibly to Langstone Cross or Langstone in Manaton parish, SX746824.

6. Of langa stane on eofede tor. (From the longstone to the ? tor). No accepted *translation* of the word 'eofede' has been found despite extensive enquiries. A positive identification of this point is crucial to a more certain identification of preceding and succeeding points. The *interpretation* favoured by Gover, Mawer and Stenton is Haytor Rock. However, this is a greater distance from Langstone Cross than would seem consistent with the general placement of points on the boundary. It would also raise great difficulties with the identification of subsequent points. There is much to be said for 'eofede tor' being Manaton Rocks, SX 747815. Ekwall[5] believes that eofede may be derived from 'ifig' meaning 'ivy'. If so, this would certainly fit far more comfortably with Manaton Rocks than with Haytor Rock for while ivy can readily be envisaged as cloaking the former it would be difficult to conceive it for the latter.

7. Or eofede torre on hean dune forewearde. (From ? tor to the forepart of the high down). I favour Hayne Down.

8. Of hean dune on thone blindan wille. (From the high down to the blind well). Very uncertain: Yarner Wells has been favoured by some. However, a substantial reave on Hayne Down runs between the summit rocks and is associated with a passage-way which runs in a south-easterly direction towards the Becka Brook. It is suggested that a well or spring in the area around SX 752792 is a more likely candidate. There are still, today, springs in that area and the line would then reach the Becka Brook at, or close to, the existing boundary between Ilsington and Manaton parishes.

9. Of (th?)am wille on writelanstan. (From that well to the inscribed? stone). There is uncertainty as to the translation of 'writelanstan'. If it means 'inscribed', as believed by Davidson, then one can only conjecture as to its original position. There is an inscribed stone at SX 768757 suggested by Brewer[6] as lying on the boundary. (The grid reference given by Brewer is incorrect). Pearce[7] shows the stone in the right position and also takes it as being probably on the boundary. However, there are difficulties in so doing, with subsequent points. A more likely position would be near Hole Rock, SX 756785, visible from Becka Brook, which is at the western end of a prehistoric reave which runs along the northern line of the Ilsington parish boundary.

10. Of tham stane on ruwa beorh. (From the stone to the rough mound). The boundary may have followed the line of the reave to the east and then along the ridge towards what is now known as Owlacombe Barrow, SX 776776. There is now no sign of a barrow or cairn but the name suggests that there might once have been.

11. Of ruwan beorge on fyrspenn. (From the rough mound or barrow to the furze hill). Possibly from Owlacombe Barrow to the vicinity of Penn Wood. There are both a Furze Hill and a Broom Hill shown in the schedule to the Tithe map of 1838[8], a little to the south of Penn Wood and lying on the current Ilsington parish boundary. Peadingtun's boundary may have passed down what is now Tipley Lane, to Tipleyhill Cross, SX 800757, thence to Willis's Cross, SX 800753 and around Rora Wood on the western side. It is suggested that the Rora Wood and Penn Wood shown on maps today would, in that distant past, not have been considered as separate entities. (At the bottom of Tipleyhill Lane there is a field known locally as 'Firepan', clearly a close corruption of 'fyrspenn'[9]. Although it is not a feature of sufficient prominence on its own to be a strong candidate as boundary marker, nevertheless it is a pointer to this being in the right area for the boundary).

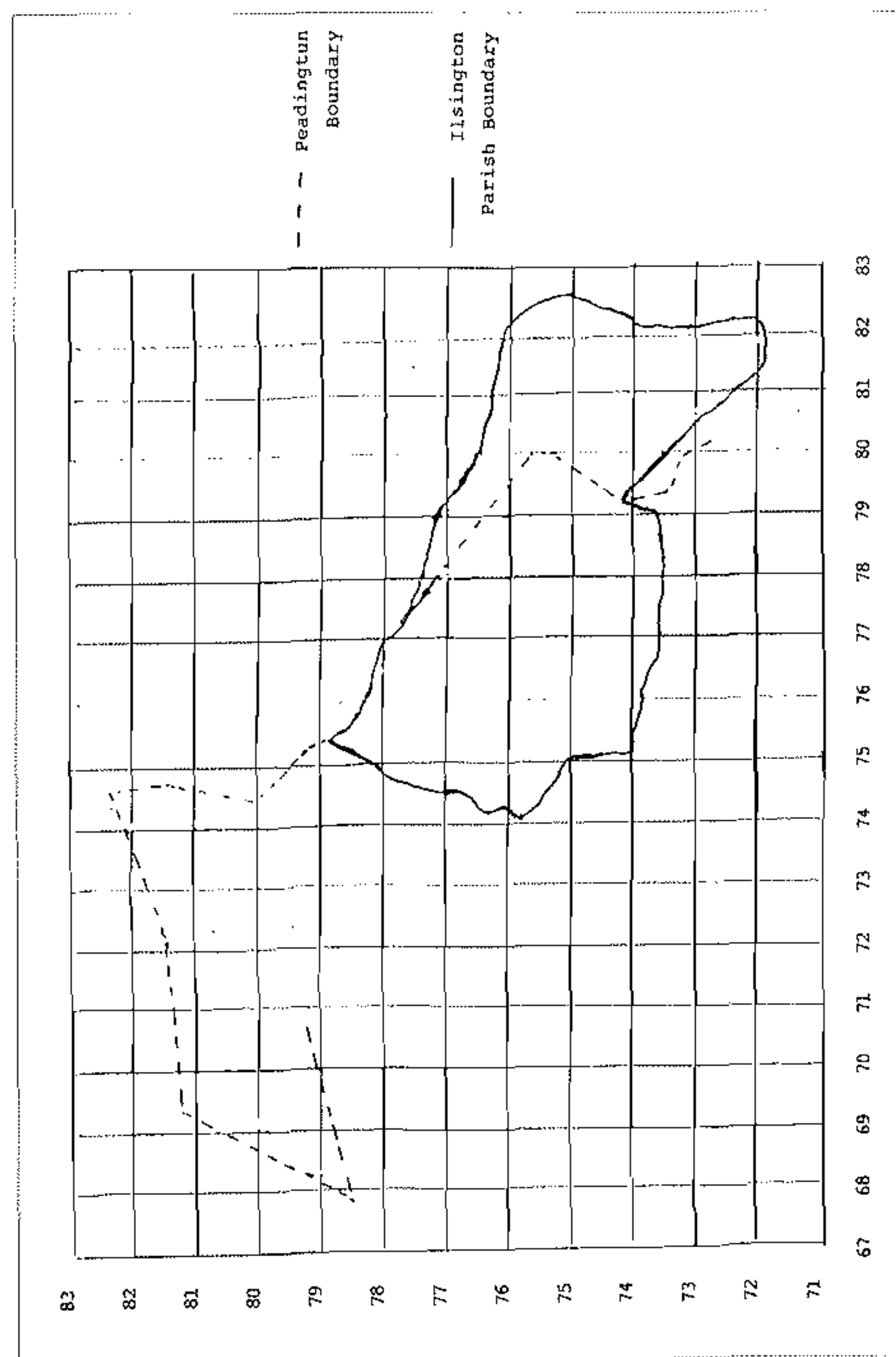
12. Of fyrspenne on wyrt cumes heafod. (From furze hill to the head of the herb or plant valley). This could well be the head of the deep valley which runs up from Willis's Cross to the Ilsington/Bickington boundary stone at SX 792741. About two-thirds of the way up this valley are fields shown on the Tithe map referred to as Woolcombe Park and Higher and Lower Landscove. The former seems a plausible phonological derivation from 'wyrt cumes' and the latter might be from 'Landscore' possibly by a textual or phonological change. As the next point, 13, is one of the few positively identified points, and as this is the only combe running up to it, this interpretation of the line of the boundary has a firm foundation.

13. Of wyrtcumes heafde on rammeshorn. (From the head of the herb or plant valley to Ramshorn). here we have at last a certain position, Ramshorn lying in the adjacent Bickington parish, SX 793734.

14. Or fammeshorne on lulca stile (From Ramshorn to Lurcombe). The boundary now passes to the parishes of Bickington, Ogwell and Ashburton and is no longer relevant to this paper.

This interpretation of the relationship of Peadingtun's landscaro to the boundary of Ilsington parish is strengthened by the fact that the demesne farm of Rora and its fields lie adjacent to it: the name 'Rora' is generally accepted as deriving from 'Hore', that is at the boundary.[4] It is further strengthened by reference to a survey of lands in Ilsington manor undertaken in 1566.[10] In that survey a description of the holding of Smallacombe refers to 'divers parcels of land lying together about the Londscore next Idetore Down,' (Haytor Down). A description of Oldertown also mentions 'divers parcels of land called Lez Shotes lying in common about the bounds called Lez Londscores'. These holdings of Smallacombe and Oldertown lie at the north-eastern side of the Ilsington parish boundary.

It is not the intention of this paper to make a claim that this is a correct solution to the line of Peadingtun's boundary in the vicinity of Ilsington parish. It is put forward as a reasonable interpretation but one open to change should other data come to light.



One can do no better than to quote from Hooke[11] who summarises the position here, and also in regard to other early charters and their boundary clauses, when she states 'correct solutions are probably almost impossible to attain'.

*These letters are a transliteration of the letter used by Davidson for to do otherwise would need its special printing.

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See also:-

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THE LOST LIFE OF SAINT BRANNOC OF BRAUNTON

Nicholas Grant

The village of Braunton in north Devon takes its name from a Celtic saint Brannoc; the Domesday Book records the place-name as *Branton,* that is, *Brannoc + tun,* 'Brannoc's settlement'.[1] What can we discover about St. Brannoc? The short answer is very little; because those medieval and later writers who refer to Brannoc themselves knew nothing historical about the saint. Nevertheless, someone managed to produce a written life of Brannoc by the fifteenth century. This account is now lost, but a copy was seen by at least two antiquaries in the post-medieval period, and we can at least partially reconstruct its contents, and analyse what sources it drew from. Whilst it is impossible to determine much about the historical St. Brannoc, it is still possible to say something about what Devonians believed about St. Brannoc in the medieval and post-medieval periods.

The evidence concerning St. Brannoc falls into three chronological groups. These are, firstly, charter evidence for Braunton in the later Anglo-Saxon period; secondly, medieval records of the bishop and cathedral of Exeter, the latter of which acquired Braunton and some relics of the saint during this period; and thirdly, immediate pre- and post-Reformation records of the legends of St. Brannoc collected by early antiquarians. This evidence is firstly presented, then discussed, below.

(i) Anglo-Saxon Records (ninth-tenth centuries)

Braunton is referred to in three Anglo-Saxon charters. The latest of these in date is the most straightforward: in 973 King Edgar granted 7 hides at High Ham, Somerset, to Glastonbury Abbey in exchange for *Branceminstre.*[2] Glastonbury had earlier been granted Braunton by the king of Wessex; William of Malmesbury in his *de Antiquitate* of c.1135 notes the existence in the Glastonbury archive of a charter of King Aethelbald dated 867 granting 10 hides at *Brannocminster* to the abbey.[3] However, this charter is now lost, and either its date, or its grantor, is recorded incorrectly, as Aethelbald ruled from 855 to 860. A third charter suggests that the grant could date instead to the reign of King Aethelwulf (839-55). This charter, dated 854, enfranchised a tenth part of Glastonbury Abbey's lands, including ½ hide at (depending on the manuscript copy) *Branot* or *Branok.*[4] This charter has been regarded with suspicion by commentators, and may be partly or wholly a later forgery. It exists only in two fourteenth-century copies, although again the charter is recorded by William of Malmesbury as present in the abbey's archives in 1135.[5]

(ii) Medieval Records (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries)

Land in Braunton was first acquired by the Bishop of Exeter in the time of William I (1066-87), and in 1225 this land was used by Bishop William Briwere as part-endowment for the newly-formed deanery of Exeter.[6] Brannoc begins to appear in the Exeter records following the donation of relics to the cathedral in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. A cathedral inventory of 1327 notes 'a silver reliquary with the bones of the blessed Brannoc, donated by Dean Bartholomew'.[7] Bartholomew was dean of the cathedral and rector of Braunton between 1310-1326. A brief notice of St. Brannoc appears in the cathedral's fourteenth century martyrology (Parker MS 93), under 7 January, 'in Britain the commemoration of Saint Brannoc, confessor, who rests at

Braunton in the diocese of Exeter'.[8] In Bishop Grandisson's *Ordinale* of 1337, a handbook prescribing how daily services were to be performed in the cathedral (Exeter Chapter MS 3502), are a number of brief notices of St. Brannoc. In the Calendar for 7 January are directions for the saint's feast celebrations 'Saint Brannoc, abbot and confessor, 9 lessons'.[9] A number of other brief mentions in the *Ordinale* provide no further biographical information beyond confirming that Brannoc was regarded as an abbot and confessor.[10] Brannoc's lessons would have consisted of brief biographical readings for use in the cathedral on the saint's day. Readings for the saints venerated at Exeter Cathedral were drawn up by Bishop Grandisson in his *Legenda Sanctorum* (Exeter Chapter MSS 3504 and 3505) Unfortunately the legenda for a number of Celtic Saints - Brannoc, Pieran, Petroc and Sativola - which should appear at the end of the volume are now lost.[11] A catalogue of the books of the cathedral library in 1506 includes 'Legends of Saint Brannoc'.[12] Unfortunately this work has also not survived, but it could have been a copy of the lost readings from the *Legenda Sanctorum*. A separate medieval copy of the *Legenda* for Sativola was made and does survive.[13] In any case, Brannoc's *Legenda* probably post-dates 1327 as it does not appear in the previous surviving library catalogue of that date.

(iii) Pre- and Post-Reformation Records (fifteenth-seventeenth centuries)

In 1478 during his tour of the Westcountry, William Worcester noted in his *literaries* that 'St. Branocus, in English Barnoc, hermit, lies at Braunton 4 miles north-west of Barnstaple; he was the son of the King of Calabria and his day is kept on 7 January'.[14] Also probably of medieval date is a lost list of English saints and their resting places copied down by John Leland in his Collectanea, writing c.1540. According to this list 'in Braunton rests St Brannoc, a man famous for miracles'.[15] Nicholas Orme has suggested[16] that this list could date back to the twelfth or thirteenth century.[17]

Nicholas Roscarrock's *Lives Of The Saints*, compiled between c.1610-1620 records that 'St Brannoc was a blessed man who gave name to Brannocstowne, now Brampton in Devonshire, and agreeth with St Bernack in so many things, as namely in the stone which he is said to use as a boat to come over the sea, in turning water into wine, etc., as I would think them both one, but that the Feast of St Brannoc was wont to be kept the 7th January, whereas St Bernachus is kept the 7th of April. Besides, the legend (as I here) of St Brannoc saieth he was a king's son of Calabria, but where St Bernachus was born I have not read, and therefore may be very well one although their feasts may be divers, for one may be the day of his death, another of his translation or dedication of the church of Brampton to him. Read St Bernachus as I have collected and as Capgrave has it. They used in Brampton in Devonshire to keep a Feast of him at Easter, as I think the Monday, which they call St Brannocks Ayle, Ile or Yule'.[18] The legend of the Welsh saint Bernachus, or Brynach, as referred to by Roscarrock, is of critical importance to an understanding of the legend of St. Brannoc and is discussed further below.

The Devon antiquary Thomas Westcote, writing in 1630, notes 'Braunton ... some will have it to be called Brannockstown, and to take name from a holy man, a saint; of whom, if you will be attentive to a legend, I will read you briefly what I have found in the history of this place; which saith that he was the King's son of Calabria, a province (as I take it) of Naples, who arrived here in the time of King Malgo Conanus's son, 581, after the time of our Redemption, here he landed, was seated, builded a church and preached God's word, and taught the people to manure their land (which was then in manner of a wilderness), by yoking harts, who mildly obeyed him, and

milking the hinds; and with this plough brought timber to the place, where the church now stands, to build it. But to proceed no further and to forebear to speak of his cow (which being killed, chopped into pieces and boiling in his kettle, came out whole and sound at his call), his staff, his oak and his man Abel, which would seem wonders. Yet all these you may see at large, lively represented unto you, in a fair glass window at this present, as I think, if you desire it ... we might now leave Braunton, but we must first taste their ale, (the ancient drink of England,) which the inhabitants say is better, and to be preferred before Webby-ale, or Darby-ale, or Modbury-huff-cap, and they call it St. Barnard's cow's milk'.[19]

Finally, Westcote's friend, Tristram Risdon, also writing in 1630, makes similar remarks; one copied the other (probably in this case, Risdon drew on Westcote, who has the fuller account). Risdon's account runs 'Branton, anciently Brannockstowne, so named of St. Branock, the king's son of Calabria, that lived in this vale; and as appeareth in the book of his commemoration of the place, arrived here in the days of Malgo-Coname, king of the Britains, and three hundred years after Christ, began to preach his holy name in this desolate place, then overspread with brakes and woods. Out of which desert, now named the Boroughs, (to tell you some of the marvels of this man) he took harts, which meekly obeyed the yoke, and made them plow to draw timber thence to build a church; which may gain credit, if it be true. Historians write that in foreign countries they cause red deer to draw, and milk their hinds. Of which, Giraldus maketh no wonder, but avoucheth, that he hath seen the same often used in Wales, where he did eat cheese made of hind's milk. I forbear to speak of his cow, his staff, his oak, his well, and his servant Abel; all of which are lively represented in a glass window of that church, than which you shall see few fairer of one roof.'[20]

The window was destroyed by Puritans later in the seventeenth century. However, it did not represent the only iconography of Brannoc in the church. A series of sixteenth century bench-ends survive; of these Number 3 is carved with a saint and a cow, which must represent Brannoc. Less certainly, Number 6 is carved with stags' heads, which may refer to Brannoc's taming of the wild deer. A roof boss showing a white sow with its farrow may also refer to a legend, discussed further below, which could have become associated with Brannoc.[21] Finally, it has been suggested that an unidentified saint carved into the chancel side of the rood-screen immediately over the central arch could be Brannoc.[22] Both the roof and the rood-screen date from the fifteenth-sixteenth century.[23]

Discussion

What conclusions can be drawn from this? The 973 charter, and the charter dated 867 refer to Braunton as 'Brannoc's minster'.[24] In the period before the establishment of the parish system, a minster was a major church served by a team of clergy and responsible for pastoral care for a large area up to the size of ten modern parishes.[25] Clearly the saintly dedication of the site implies pre-Saxon origins. Susan Pearce has suggested that the ninth-century grant to Glastonbury represented the endowment of a decayed former Celtic monastery, and its absorption into a larger monastery.[26] Pearce further suggests that the Celtic monastery could have been founded c.550, although really such a site could have been founded at any date between about 500 and 700AD. Any ecclesiastical significance the site might have possessed in the pre-Saxon period is unlikely to be directly relevant to its choice as the site of a minster, however. Rather, the Devon minsters seem to have been planted from the eighth century onwards through royal initiatives, most being on or close to royal manors, as

Braunton was.[27]

However, Brannoc achieved no wider fame despite the cults of Celtic saints becoming fashionable amongst the Anglo-Saxons in the tenth and eleventh centuries. There is no mention of Brannoc in any Anglo-Saxon litany of the tenth - eleventh centuries, including those associated with Exeter (which was eventually the site of Braunton's bishopric) and Glastonbury (which owned Braunton for a century).[28] Neither is Brannoc listed in *The Resting Places Of The Saints*, an early eleventh century pilgrimage document, although admittedly this lists only Sidwell at Exeter and Rumon at Tavistock for Devon.[29]

It was only with the acquisition of Brannoc's relics by Exeter Cathedral that Brannoc emerges from complete obscurity via a few brief notices in the bishopric's records. By the fourteenth century, he was believed to have been an abbot and confessor, with a death-day of 7 January. This last point, if anything, is likely to be an authentic fact about Brannoc. At the same time, a brief biography would have been prepared; certainly a life of some description existed at Exeter by 1502 when it is noted in the inventory.

The accounts of the antiquaries from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century may derive from another source, however; a life held at Braunton itself. In 1330 Bishop Grandisson commanded that two or three copies be made of the lives and legends of the Cornish saints preserved in churches, before all were involved in irreparable loss. Whether this command was obeyed is not known, but this reference does prove that it was official policy to keep a written life, or *Vita*, of the local saint in his or her church.[30] Such a life could be the source used be the later antiquaries. The accounts of Westcote ('what I have found in the history of this place') and Risdon ('as appeareth in the book of commemoration of his place') make it clear that they had, in the early seventeenth century, seen a written account of Brannoc. It is not certain how their contemporary Roscarrock obtained his information about Brannoc, probably oral hearsay rather than a written account.[31] William Worcester states that he obtained his information about Brannoc from a Tavistock man named Thomas Peperelle, papal notary public.[32] However, as both Roscarrock and Worcester make reference to Brannoc being the son of the king of Calabria, their information could ultimately relate to the same written account as that seen by Westcote and Risdon, which would push its date back into the later fifteenth century.

Roscarrock draws attention to similarities between the legends of St. Brannoc, as he had heard them, and the life of St. Brynach, as set out in John of Tynemouth's fourteenth century *Nova Legenda Anglie*, which Roscarrock refers to as 'Capgrave'.[33] The cult of St. Brynach is found in south-west Wales, his most notable churches being Llanfrynach and Nevern.[34] A Latin *Vita* of c.1200 written in Wales exists for Brynach[35] and was the source of the *Nova Legenda Anglie* account. Roscarrock notes two miracles as common to both Brynach and Brannoc - sailing on a rock over the sea (Chapter 3 in the *Vita* of c.1200) and turning water into wine (Chapter 14). Neither of these miracles are included in the legends recorded about Brannoc by Risdon and Westcote. There are other legendary motifs shared by Brannoc (as recorded by Westcote and Risdon) and Brynach (in his *Vita*). These are a holy well (Chapter 4); the yoking of stags (Chapter 10); the cow which gives an abundance of milk and when later killed, proves uncookable (Chapters 12-13); and the oak tree which produced loaves (Chapter 14). There is a further legend in the *Vita* of Brynach, where the saint receives instructions in a vision to build a church where he finds a white sow and her farrow (Chapter 7), which may also have been imported into the lost life of Brannoc. Although none of the written sources about Brannoc link him with such a legend, a roof boss above the font in the parish church shows a sow and her family and could suggest that this Brynach story too came to be part of Brannoc's legend. However, this is a common motif on roof bosses.

It is clear then that the *Nova Legenda Anglie* account of Brynach must have formed a major source of the lost life of Brannoc. However, it is most unlikely that Brynach of Wales was the same man as Brannoc of Braunton. Neither the original Welsh *Vita* of Brynach or the *Nova Legenda Anglie* account link Brynach with Braunton or Devon at all, and both assert that Brynach was buried at his church in Wales. Brynach's festival and alleged death-day was 7 April whereas Brannoc's was 7 January. There are legends associated with Brannoc that have no parallel in the accounts of Brynach, namely those of his servant Abel, and his staff, not that we know what these stores were. Neither is there anything in the accounts of Brynach about that saint being the son of the king of Calabria. Whereas the name of the king that Brynach came into conflict with is not given in the *Nova Legenda Anglie* account (although the king is named as Mailgonus in the original Welsh life), in the account seen by Westcote Brannoc is associated with King Malgo, Conanus' son. Finally, it also appears probable that the medieval records referring to Brannoc as an abbot and confessor incorporate other material - semi-scholarly conjecture or local folklore not obviously linked to accounts of Brynach.

By the sixteenth century, therefore stories of Brannoc were recorded not only in literary form at Exeter and Braunton, but in pictorial form at Braunton in the church window and bench-ends. The local saint Brannoc had been identified with a Welsh saint Brynach, whose life had been published in a popular collection of saints' lives. Large parts of Brynach's legend had been adapted and relocated to Braunton. This saint bore a similar name but was almost certainly a different man. This appropriation was doubtless possible because so little was known about Brannoc. Other legends unique to Brannoc either accrued later or were absorbed into this account. The lost life of Brannoc was therefore a mish-mash of common legendary motifs and direct lifts from the *Vita* of another saint, plus probably some distinctive local material. That of course makes it far from unique amongst medieval saints' lives, but it does show how important and meaningful Brannoc and his cult remained to the parishioners of Braunton, that they needed to know these things about their saint.

The writer acknowledges with gratitude the helpful comments of Professor Nicholas Orme.

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A PLAQUE FOR ERNIE BEVIN

Robin Stanes

The plaque provided by the Devon History Society for Lee Mount, Copplestone to commemorate Ernie Bevin's stay there is now firmly in place, not too easily with cob, and the small ceremony to mark its fitting went off well. 4 May was the best of spring days and about 25-30 people attended. Amongst them were Cllr Jane Campbell, Chairman of Mid Devon District Council; Nick Harvey, Lib Dem MP for North Devon; David Brassington, Chairman of Copplestone Parish Council; Adrian Price Chairman of Tiverton and Honiton constituency Labour Party; and Elizabeth Maycock, Vice Chairman of the Devon History Society. About a dozen other members of the Devon History Society were there.

Donald Stewart-Cape, formerly British Ambassador to the Common Market, who was at the Foreign Office in Bevin's Day, spoke of the affection and respect with which Bevin was regarded at the Foreign Office, he was probably the best British Foreign Minister since the Second World War. He it was who took up immediately the

immensely generous Marshall Aid Programme offered by the USA after the war that set much of Europe on its feet. Although a life long Socialist he saw Stalinist Soviet Russia clearly for what it was and was involved in the formation of NATO to protect Europe from Communist aggression. As Foreign Minister he failed only with Palestine, as everyone else has, and wisely passed the then British mandate back to the United Nations. All this considerable achievement was with a formal education that ended at the age of twelve, but with a lifetime's work in the 'hedgerows of experience', as he once explained to King George VI.

Nick Harvey spoke of how Bevin helped to shape the modern world and said that we should be proud that someone who began as a farm labourer had so much in him to do so much at national level. Adrian Price commented that it was not often that great Socialists were commemorated in Devon.

I spoke in my article in *The Devon Historian* (No.42, April 1991) about his life in Copplestone, his very elementary schooling at Colebrooke and the Hayward School in Crediton, about formative time working on farms for a pittance, and reading the newspaper aloud to his employers, and then of his supposed great row with his employer that moved him on to Bristol and a different life. I suggested that he was the only farm labourer to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

After the speeches there was an excellent lunch at the Cross Inn in Copplestone. Some took the opportunity to look at the 1000 year old Copplestone Cross, now with an explanatory board on the wall opposite, from which Copplestone gets its name.

Two stories about Ernie Bevin survived in Copplestone that I was able to check while making the arrangements for this meeting. One was that he used to wash and

peel potatoes in the open air using a stream that emerged from the bank opposite Lee Mount. I could originally find no sign of this stream but then noticed a small culvert under the road in front of the yard to Copplestone Mill. Tracing this back led indeed to the stream at the very back of the yard, a strong cold stream of water good for both washing potatoes and inducing the chilblains from which Ernie suffered acutely. The other story was that he used to swim naked in a reservoir belonging to the railway that was nearby, and that the Copplestone Stationmaster would chase him and other boys out of this. I had had to find a map to get listed building consent for the plaque to be fixed on Lee mount, which is listed in fact only because Ernie Bevin lived there. the map shows the reservoir clearly, a large tank built evidently above ground but now gone, fed, I suspect, by the aforesaid stream, just south of Lee Mount on the corner of two roads, a real ready made swimming pool and a temptation in hot weather.

The suggestion I made years ago in *The Devon Historian* has thus born fruit successfully, delayed largely by the fact that Lee Mount was mostly up for sale. The Devon History Society is very grateful to the present owners of Lee Mount, Mr and Mrs Drayton, for permission to erect the plaque, which they gave with enthusiasm.

(He is 'Ernie' Bevin in this piece and not, more respectfully, 'Ernest', because that is how he liked to be addressed).

Other Plaques?

This plaque has been a success in my view and has aroused interest. My own suggestion is that this provides an opportunity to discuss possible other plaques that the Society might erect. The Government recently itself suggested that Blue Plaques should be put up where appropriate. Devon County Council decided not to follow that advice but perhaps we could take this on, cautiously. Both Sidmouth and Tiverton and Torquay and I am sure other towns have put up a number of plaques, but we might be able to initiate some ideas in rural areas for instance or where no such efforts have been made. A policy would have to be worked out as to whom or what to commemorate, events as well as people, and there would have to be both a high degree of certainty about the person or the event and careful co-operation with local and other societies and councils.

One name springs to mind immediately that is surely a must for this society, that is that of W.G.HOSKINS, the 'onlie begetter' of modern 'better' local history, a past President of this Society and a native of Exeter. He lived for quite a time at No 2 Lyndhurst Road in Exeter.

Plaques are instantaneously arresting and educative and add a dimension to the landscape that I, for one, respond to immediately. Perhaps members of the Society would like to suggest other names of distinguished men and women who lived in Devon that might be commemorated.

(Pictures by David Thomas)

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)

Devon Thatch, by Jo Cox and John R.L. Thorp. Devon Books 2001. 187 pages plus glossary and bibliography. Illustrated. £24.95. ISBN 1 85522 797 5.

This volume makes a major contribution to the available information on the history and practice of the craft of thatching and although it concentrates on Devon it contains much information which is relevant to other parts of England. The approach is that of a historical survey of the craft of thatching divided into chapters describing conditions at times of particular historical significance and the social and economic backgrounds during these periods. Although not that of a technical handbook there is no shortage of information on materials and methods. For example, the authors, opening a section dealing with the pitch of thatched roofs comment that the high rainfall and humidity in Devon do not provide ideal conditions for thatch and increase the speed at which the material decays. Norfolk and Suffolk have a kinder climate nevertheless these counties have fewer thatched roofs than Devon where the material is to be seen in most of the rural parts of the county, though less so in the few areas where local slate has been available from early times. The material has a very long history in Devon dating from the fourteenth century, or earlier, to the present day and Devon contains 3983, or about 17 per cent, of the national total of thatched buildings of special historic or architectural interest. Dorset is second with 2052.

Thatched roofs in Devon are of a relatively shallow pitch and this slows down the drainage of water and speeds the decay of the thatch. The reason for this is not clearly understood as the earliest roofs, which date from before 1340, are steeper, with pitches of about 48 degrees. Pitches as steep as 60 degrees cause difficulties for the thatcher and the recommended pitch for new thatched roofs is 45 degrees. The character and quality of the available material has always been determined by the practices and prosperity of the farming community, methods of crop growth and threshing being of primary importance. Although at the present time most work is carried out using water reed, often imported, the traditional material in Devon is Combed Straw (sometimes confusingly referred to as Combed Wheat Reed), from wheat or rye crops and this gives an appearance which is different from the Crushed Straw (Long Straw), commonly used in other parts of Southern England and the Water Reed used in east Anglia. The differences between materials and techniques used are well explored in this book and there are many helpful illustrations. A major factor is that when a roof of combed straw is renewed or repaired the thatch is seldom stripped back to the roof timbers but is usually 'overcoated', the old and rotten material being cut back only sufficiently to expose sound material to which the new thatch can be fixed. Eaves and verges however are usually completely replaced. Roofs of water reed are normally removed completely and the new material is fixed directly to the roof timbers. The practice of 'overcoating' makes it difficult to date a combed straw roof as it is common for much earlier material, sometimes even from the medieval period, to become evident when this is done.

Successive chapters describe changing practices due to social and economic factors

and are of considerable historic interest and a final chapter gives a useful summary of the current situation and looks to the future.

The book is well produced and illustrated with many black and white photographs and 52 coloured plates. It is perhaps disappointing that art paper was not used for a book of this price.

Altogether, this is a volume which will be of great interest on account of both its information on the techniques of thatching and the economic and social changes in the rural scene during the long period under review. It can be well recommended.

J.S. Rowe.

Roman Devon by Malcolm Todd. ISBN 1-903356-10-5;
The Vikings in Devon by Derek Gore. ISBN 1-903356-11-3;
Elizabethan Devon by Todd Gray. ISBN 1-903356-12-1;
Devon and the Civil War by Mark Stoyle. ISBN 1-9033656-13-x.
All The Mint Press. Each 96pp., £4.99.

These four little volumes, each of some 10,000 words, represent the first of the Mint Press's **Concise Histories of Devon** series, advertised as being written by recognised scholars to bring the 'latest research and clear understandings of key periods' in Devon's history to a wider audience 'in an easy-to-read format'. This claim is admirably fulfilled, as is the requirement to present the topics selected very concisely. Although the full apparatus of academic referencing is absent, the books are clearly authoritative, and each contains detailed suggestions for further reading. The authors of the first two volumes, however, have faced problems different from those of the others. The primary evidence for *Roman Devon* is almost entirely archaeological and (except for Exeter) relatively sparse, and *The Vikings* is necessarily based mainly on a modicum of archaeological and place-name data and on partisan Anglo-Saxon writings, so that a great deal of speculation and interpretation has been required. Conversely, both original evidence and secondary material for *Elizabethan Devon* and *Devon and the Civil War* are almost embarrassingly extensive, so that the problem of compression has been greater. Yet each volume deals appropriately with complex issues and periods both succinctly and readably.

Given the significance of Roman Exeter and the extent of archaeological research there, it is not surprising that Malcolm Todd devotes a quarter of his excellent account of *Roman Devon* to Exeter's development from legionary fortress to Roman city. But he also provides a lucid outline of the invasion and military occupation of Devon and its environs, detailing evidence of camps, forts and fortlets and their significance for land communications. He presents, too, evidence of settlement in the county, the nature of farming and the extent of other economic activity, and points to sites which would merit further archaeological investigation.

The Vikings stresses that there is very little if any data supporting the existence of permanent Norse occupation or settlement in Devon. Moreover, the evidence relating to centuries of sporadic raids is difficult to interpret, and that clearly relating to Devon often hard to identify. Derek Gore thus quite rightly embraces the Westcountry generally. While clearly presenting the chronology of the main known events, he has chosen to outline the state of Devon before the Vikings, the (largely indirect) impact of their raids on the structure and nature of society in Wessex and particularly the role of

Alfred and his successors. He thus provides a splendidly lucid insight both into Viking activity and into aspects of Anglo-Saxon Wessex.

Faced with a plethora of information on *Elizabethan Devon*, much of its chronological outline well known, Todd Gray, has preferred a topical approach. In a series of admirably informative and clearly written sections he covers the social structure of the county, its main industries, maritime trade and fishing, the exploits of the 'sea dogs' against Spain, the part played by Devon men in exploration and colonisation, and, briefly, religion. Despite the fact that Elizabeth never visited Devon, Dr Gray stresses that it was of special interest and importance to her. And as well as serving the queen, Devon's maritime activities enriched the county and laid the basis for further trading and colonial enterprise. Wallace MacCaffrey's *Exeter, 1540-1560* (1958) should be added to the 'Further Reading' list in any new edition.

'The English Civil War was the most devastating episode in Devon's recorded history' (p.7), the first sentence of *Devon and the Civil War*, may be queried by those of us who experienced the Plymouth blitz, but the subsequent analysis of the protracted, brutal and bloody war of three centuries before the Nazis suggests that this verdict may well be correct. Already the author of the best modern account of the impact of the Civil War on Devon, Mark Stoyle presents a concise chronological description of a conflict which was part of the national struggle but also fought as a separate local war, he follows this by treatment of the war's impact sequentially on men, on women, and on children in Devon. In this he embraces the detrimental effect on the local economy, the slaughter of troops on both sides and the devastation of towns and destruction of buildings of all sorts. And he provides a vivid picture of the suffering of the thousands of Devonians made homeless, maimed, widowed and orphaned. This vividly told story has none of the aridity often associated with condensed accounts. It is difficult to see how it could have been better devised or written.

The Mint Press is to be congratulated on this new initiative. Hopefully, further volumes of the same high quality will follow.

W.B. Stephens

West Britons: Cornish identities and the early modern British state by Mark Stoyle. University of Exeter Press. 2002. xxvi + 262pp. Illustrated. £40.00 ISBN 0 85989 687 0.

The core of this admirable compilation (of eight essays - five previously published) lies in its treatment of Cornwall in the Civil War and its aftermath, and the volume, therefore, invites some comparison with Mary Coate's *Cornwall in the Great Civil War and Interregnum, 1642-1660* (1933). Stoyle's book lacks the detail of Coate's more exhaustive monograph and complements rather than replaces it, reviewing Cornish development in the early modern period against a backdrop of decades of post-Coate historical research on the Civil War, and in the context of current interest in ethnicity and in British rather than merely English history. Coate certainly remarked on Cornish particularism. She noted the 'passionate attachment of the Cornish people to their own county, *and their own race*', their 'local patriotism, *born of racial difference*' (my italics), and that their 'apparent Royalism was often something more primitive' (Coate, 1963 edn., 180, 351). But she did not pursue the theme in depth. Stoyle investigates it more thoroughly, in the process registering a significant addition to the current historical

debate about Britishness in which Cornwall has hitherto been largely ignored.

Stoyle's thesis posits Cornish participation in the rebellions of the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries and the part Cornwall played in the Civil War as a continuum rather than the isolated events depicted by other historians. Throughout the period Cornishmen's religious and political attitudes were coloured by their belief in being a racially different and particular people, distinct from the English who threatened their cultural identity. With varying degrees of approval (or more often disapproval) the English, too, acknowledged Cornish singularity.

Cornish royalists, Stoyle argues, saw the Civil War as a 'quasi-national struggle' between Cornwall and England. Their support for the King stemmed from their belief that basic elements of Cornish autonomy (particularly the Duchy and the Stannaries) and the Established Church (allegedly seen as built on Celtic Christian foundations) were bound up with the fortunes of the Crown. The King was believed to be sympathetic to his Celtic subjects, while Parliament was seen as a threatening party of Englishness and radical religion. But Cornish royalism was limited. The Cornish, unlike other royalists, fought as a people in entirely Cornish regiments under Cornish officers and in defence of Cornwall and its identity as much as or perhaps more than for the general cause. Tensions with other royalist troops and commanders increased during the war, and when the defeat of the King loomed large the Cornish general, Richard Grenville, even proposed (albeit unsuccessfully) a separate peace for Cornwall involving establishment of the Duchy as a semi-independent state. And Cornish participation in the royalist rising of 1648, centred in the Cornish-speaking west of the county, may perhaps have had an ethnic 'undertow'. Following the Restoration, however, the earlier English view of the Cornish as innately rebellious barbarians was transformed. English royalist frustration with Cornwall's limited loyalty in the Civil War gave way to general approval of its war record, with Cornishmen hailed as the loyalist of the Crown's subjects.

The foregoing survey has necessarily been simplified, omitting consideration of many of the divers issues pursued in this well-researched volume. Without doubt, however, the book's main theme, the significance of Cornish ethnicity in the turbulent events of early modern Britain (though in places based on conclusions drawn from accumulations of largely inferential evidence) is generally both plausible and convincing. In recent years historians have stressed the importance of Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Irish (and, less strongly, Anglo-Welsh) differences in this period but have treated Cornwall as but another English county and ignored tensions between it and its Anglo-Saxon neighbour. Mark Stoyle has rectified this situation and in the process made a major contribution both to the history of Cornwall and the south-west and more generally to our understanding of the early modern period and in particular what must now be regarded as the British Civil War. And the book is as enjoyable to read as it is scholarly.

W.B. Stephens

The Story of Weare Giffard. Ed. Keith Hughes. A Millennium book written by the Community, 2001. Printed by Torrilitho, Great Torrington. 240pp. 203 photographs, 8 plans and maps. £10, A4 soft back. No ISBN.

Any book about a Devon village that can sell 900 copies within a year must command

attention. This volume in A4 size paper with a font size of 12 points is easily readable and commences with an early history that includes an ancient history, the origin of the name Weare Giffard, events of the Civil War and the unsettled times from 1646 to 1800.

The chapter on people of the parish gives a rare insight into life in this rural community from the nineteenth century onwards through two great wars to modern times. There is a chapter on the natural history of the area and another on the more important buildings. In Communications we read of the highways and byways, the railway, road names and the financing of Halfpenny bridge, though not of its designer or builder. Agriculture, horticulture, industries and education are followed by notes on the distinguished personalities, Robert Smith, the Rolles and the Clintons, the Giffards and the Fortescues, Sheila Hutchinson and John Brinsmead.

The wealth of coloured photographs, not only aerial views but of houses, the poster of 109 wild flowers and trees found within the parish, and groups of people, backed up by black and white photographs, adorn nearly every page. The map work is well executed, particularly the copy of the 1809 Ordnance Survey, which is so much clearer than the shaded original. Even the worst crimes in Weare Giffard are described before the appendices containing charts and tables with details of population from 1861 to 1981, workers on the Rolle Canal, facts and figures relating to Weare Giffard and tithe maps of 1839. This book is an extraordinary example of the teamwork of twenty writers with a large support staff and the commitment of a hundred early subscribers whose enthusiasm has produced a work that once opened is difficult to put to one side. A bibliography for the serious student would be helpful but the wealth of illustrations makes this a delightful record.

A.B. George

Devon Building: An introduction to local traditions Ed. Peter Beacham. Devon Books. Third edition 2001. 176pp £19.95 ISBN 1 85522 808 4

This book was first published in 1990, a second edition came out in 1995, and last year a third edition, fully revised, and with an extra chapter, became available at the same price as the first edition. The book is clearly filling a need, but its success owes nothing to exposure in these pages as it has not been reviewed previously in *The Devon Historian*.

Peter Beacham is the editor, and he has pulled the other contributors together to produce a well-balanced, easily-understood but erudite volume which concentrates, rightly, on the more humble buildings of the county. The term 'vernacular' tends to be used in respect of rural houses, but there is no reason why it should be confined to the countryside, and in *Devon Building* the vernacular town houses get their due in two chapters.

Peter Beacham's fellow expert collaborators are Peter Child, Michael Laithwaite, John Thorp and Jo Cox. The last-named is a colleague of John Thorp and co-author with him of the new final 11-page chapter titled 'Recent Research Projects in Devon'. This deals with the Devon Dendrochronology Project, Devon Thatch and Traditional Slate Roofs.

Dendrochronology measures tree-ring sequences by drilling into carefully selected timbers to produce pencil-sized cores which can be examined in the laboratory.

Structural material can thus be dated.

A photograph shows a dust-masked technician from the University of Sheffield sampling the roof timbers of a roof at Caffcombe, Down St Mary. (This appears to be one of the farms Ernest Bevin worked at while he lived at Copplestone as a youngster. See *The Devon Historian* no 42, page 22, also this issue.)

The book is splendidly illustrated with numerous photographs, many of them in colour, and helpful cut-away drawings, plans and maps. There is a most useful bibliography, and the contributors' qualifications are outlined. The book is excellent value at £19.95, and it is worth bearing in mind that even with sixteen extra pages the price remains the same as eleven years ago.

Brian Le Messurier

Dartmoor Crosses by Bill Harrison. Published by Devon Books in association with Halsgrove 2001. 311 pages profusely illustrated. Price £24.95. ISBN 1 85522 791 6.

My first reaction on handling this book was: how am I to pack this into my haversack to use it as a field guide? The answer was, with too much difficulty, so I have to make notes to carry in my pocket, and I suspect that others who wish to inspect the crosses in situ will have to do likewise.

The book has been carefully compiled, possibly too carefully. An early chapter, 'The Evolution of the Cross', although of general interest, is not entirely relevant to the study of moorland crosses, but his short history of 'Dartmoor Crosses' is certainly helpful to the average walker who is bound to show some interest in the crosses that may be encountered, or searched for, on the moor or in contiguous villages or small towns.

The crosses are identified in seven areas which are clearly shown on a general map and thereafter by maps at the beginning of each section. The area index names the 132 crosses described in each of the seven areas which are then easily located within the text. Each cross is carefully described with the measurement of its height and width; its OS reference and precise details of its location. Frequently accompanying the description of the crosses are interesting snippets of moorland history and anecdotes. One such entertaining example is the story about Pixies' Cross. The last cross described is the Mary Tavy cross which is to be found in the village churchyard where William Crossing is buried. Mr Harrison suggests that it would be a suitable recognition of 'the father of Dartmoor' if a cross were erected in his memory 'on a lonely height on the open moor surrounded by tors within sight of a fast-flowing river.'

The previous unseen photographs from the Taylor, Thompson and Burnard archives will be of particular interest to dedicated moormen.

That the late E.N. Masson Phillips, who is probably the foremost authority on the subject of stone crosses, should have written a foreword is an honour indeed, and his generous appreciation of the late Bill Harrison's enthusiasm can be regarded as a fitting tribute to Mr Harrison's contribution to Dartmoor literature. Mr Harrison himself was explicit in recognising the expertise and authority of those who had written on the subject before him.

A. Robertson

Victorian Wild Flowers of Devon. Unknown artist and edited by Todd Gray. The Mint Press 2001. Main text pages and illustrations 139. £20.00. ISBN 1-903356-09-1.

A young lady of good family in Victorian times, free of responsibilities, was encouraged to use her leisure usefully - and usually pleasurably - by developing an interest in natural history, music or the arts, sometimes revealing an extraordinary talent for her chosen subject. Botany provided a reason to walk with a purpose and to educate oneself in a socially acceptable way. Such a person perhaps (and this must necessarily be conjecture) was the artist who painted the watercolours of the wild flowers found mainly in the Exmouth area nearly 150 years ago which forms the basis of the book.

There is little supporting text but part of the interest lies in the mystery of the identity of the artist. Todd Gray has investigated this from the very few available clues, chief of these being the inscription on the box in which the original paintings were stored, that is, 'S M A from A L H '. It would be safe to assume that A L H lived in the Exmouth area as the majority of plants painted were from that part of the county, but that she (for surely it is 'she') also travelled as far away as Kent and Surrey. Despite Dr Gray's researches, which lead him to the voters' list for Exmouth and the census records for the period where many unlikely candidates were swiftly eliminated, no conclusive evidence was found.

Although the mystery of the identity of the artist adds intrigue to the book, it is the watercolours themselves that give delight. Comparison with plant illustrations reproduced by modern technology capable of almost 100 percent accuracy in colour and form of a particular plant is unfair. In place of this precision the emphasis here is on the plants' characteristic form. It may be that some of the drawings were not done in the field, but the plants uprooted (no crime then), taken home and painted at leisure. This might account for some of the colours not being quite true: the yellows particularly lack vitality and the whites do not sparkle. But this minor quibble may possibly be deterioration due to ageing.

Urban spread and changing agricultural practices have contributed to the decline of many formerly common species of wild flowers, and this little book might provide documentary evidence of this. It is interesting to speculate how many of the species found in a particular habitat 150 years ago remain in any numbers there today and to anticipate how the numbers might be changed 150 years hence. Apart from this historical perspective the book itself has a gentle charm that intrigues and enchants.

M.H. Robertson

Christmas in Devon: Stories of Romance; Stories of Exeter; Ghost Stories and **Stories 'round a Dartmoor Hearth'.** By Todd Gray. The Mint Press. 2001. £4.99 each. ISBN 1-903356-17-2; -18-0; -29-9 and -20-2.

Between them these four books contain, as well as introductions, twenty-two short stories selected by Dr Gray from newspapers and periodicals published during the second half of the nineteenth century. As suggested by the titles, each book has a different theme associated with Christmas. Most of Dr Gray's selections are from *The Devon Weekly Times*, which published locally written stories in its last edition before Christmas. All tended to reflect the Victorian concept of the spirit of Christmas - convivial, comfortable, with dashes of sadness but with no malice. Although the plots are

predictable some finish with a twist, invariably inoffensive as, for example, with Iris's story of Mrs Armitage at the end of the first volume. Most of the writers introduced a degree of local topography and history into their tales that Dr Gray suggests in his introduction has resulted in some misleading place names and illustrates an unreliable understanding of local history. Few of the writers were well known: 'Tickler' wrote regularly for *The Devon Weekly Times*, five of his narratives being reproduced in the volumes, and Dr Gray suggests that he was probably on the staff of the paper.

These books are small: the four would fit easily into a Christmas stocking and leave space for the average Jaffa orange and other goodies. At the same time the print is normal size and no strain on the eyes.

D.L.B. Thomas

NOTICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Change of address. We have been asked by the publishers Confraternity of St James to note that their address is not now that given in the review of *William Ley: an English Pilgrim to Compostella* published in DH 64. The correct address is as follows: 27 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NY.

Blackawton and Strete History (BASH) Group are now up and running with a constitution, officers and achievable aims. The two parishes are now producing a 'modest' history booklet. For further information contact the secretary, Ms Ali Denham, 4 Town Farm Cottages, Blackawton, near Totnes TQ9 7BU, tel 01813 712595.

'Moor Memories', an oral history project set up by the Dartmoor National Park Authority to record the stories of everyday life of people on Dartmoor during the twentieth century, was launched in 1 July. A 'listening post' has been established at the High Moor Visitor Centre at Princetown where visitors can hear on CD a compilation of the memories collected so far. Conducted professionally by Becky Newell, the interviews are of a high standard and offer recommended listening.

Golden Jubilee Not only does Her Majesty the Queen celebrate her Golden Jubilee this year, it is also 50 years since the Devon Record Office was founded, although the collection and preservation of Devon's written heritage dates from earlier. The DRO reports that individual visits in the year 2001-2002 were 9 per cent down on the previous year. Nevertheless, individual visits to the Exeter office numbered 10,087, and to Barnstaple 2,802. Preparations are proceeding for the move to new premises at Sowton, provisionally planned for the year 2004.

DHS member Mr Charles Stewart, of Ashburton writes:

'Have you ever wondered why the A38 up the hill from Riverford Bridge (aka Hood Bridge) suddenly turns left at the lower gates of Hood Manor and similarly turns right at the higher gates when descending from Huxham's Cross?

'Originally the road passed close to the windows of the manor house and the then owner mentioned to my grandfather, W.R. Coulton of Dean Court near Buckfastleigh, that he was fed up with the drivers of horse drawn carriages and carts being able to stare into his rooms as they passed by; this was before the Totnes-Ashburton railway was built in 1872 and the products of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh woollen mills, the farms, the tin mines etc were taken to Totnes station and the coal and other imports to the area were all carted past the windows of Hood Manor.

'WRC, a farmer, landowner, quarry owner, lime and corn merchant, suggested the road should be diverted through the field in front of the house and this was done much to the surprise of the road surveyor who periodically would take the train from Exeter, stay at the Seven Stars at Totnes, hire a horse and travel the roads and lanes on his inspections.

'I understand that after a dinner at Hood Manor and the consumption of some claret and the larger portion of a barrel of port the matter of the road diversion was closed.'

Editor's note - Comparison of the First Edition OS map and one of later date clearly shows the variation in the road alignment at this point. The county surveyor may have been Thomas Whitaker who succeeded James Green in 1842 and had charge of Devon's bridges until his retirement in 1865.

Our specialist on Devon roads, A. Brian George, writes: 'The Epiphany Quarter Sessions minutes of 12 January 1813 contained an item "For repairing road over Emmett's bridge, £17-19-0" (Emmett's was an earlier name for Hood or Riverford Bridge). The Quarter Sessions maintained the roadway over their bridges for 100 yards on either approach, so by that date Emmett's must have been a county bridge, and while it did not appear in the 1809 review by James Green it did appear in the 1831 list. It looks very much like a James Green bridge, so I have always presumed that Green built it around 1810/11 to the instruction of the Buckfastleigh or Totnes Turnpike, was paid for doing so and therefore recommended it to the QS as a County Bridge. The bridge is not shown on the 1809 Ordnance Survey, but it does seem there might have been a ford at this site. The diversion of a road away from a home was a good idea in those days. In Volume 57 of *The Devon Historian*, page 24 in the fifth paragraph, I noted Sir Thomas Acland did much the same, though he took the road much farther away.'

And further: 'I noted that in Volume 36 of *The Devon Historian* in an article on the Totnes North End Turnpike Trust, page 25, M.C. Lowe has written "The Act of 1809 amalgamated the Totnes North End Trust with the Ashburton Trust ... to form the Ashburton and Totnes Consolidated Turnpike Trust" Presumably the amalgamation would have provided the necessary funds to build Emmett's bridge and improve the road from Totnes to Buckfastleigh.'

The Gentleman's Magazine

Anthony Greenstreet, one of our regular contributors, has sent in a series of extracts from *The Gentleman's Magazine*, which, as he says, was launched in 1731 to provide the superior classes with a monthly digest of the most interesting reports appearing in the daily newspapers. It was an immense success, with monthly sales of 10,000 by 1739. From it editions one can trace the themes that most interested those classes for nearly two centuries.

Here are some of the extracts:

In 1755 Lisbon was destroyed by a massive earthquake, said to have killed 40,000, with the shock being felt as far as Scotland. The disaster excited much moralistic reflection and commercial anxiety, and it is not surprising therefore that the magazine assiduously reported 'earthquakes' occurring in Britain. Although accounts of earthquakes in the Westcountry usually came from Cornwall, the May 1789 number reported, 'At Barnstaple an earthquake was very sensibly felt on the 5th instant in the morning, at a quarter after three; it began with a rumbling noise, and continued for near a minute. The direction was from East to West.'

The propertied classes comprising the magazine's readership naturally feared loss by robbery at least as much as by natural disaster, and in most months the magazine contained accounts of such outrages. Thus, in the May 1789 number:

'On the fourth instant, Mr Tawton, a farmer, in his way from Hatherleigh to Exeter was attacked by two desperate ruffians, about 4 o'clock in the morning, who knocked him down, rifled his pockets for 70 guineas in gold, tied his hands behind him, and threw him over a ditch into an adjacent field, where one of them proposed to murder him, to which the other would not consent, but tied a handkerchief through his mouth and left him. He was discovered by a boy, who alarmed the town of Hatherleigh, the inhabitants whereof spread themselves everywhere in pursuit of the villains, but without effect. The money was land-tax money which the farmer was going to pay in.'

At this time of vigorous commercial expansion, issues of overseas trade featured prominently in the *Gentleman's Magazine* - together with the hazards that attended it. Although the great days of the Barbary corsairs raiding Westcountry towns were now over, ships trading in or near the Mediterranean were dangerously exposed to their depredations. Four Westcountry ships including the *Anne* brig of Topsham, Captain Pike, with total crews of 38 men were captured by the *Dey* of Algiers in November 1733. The magazine of February 1734 reported that these men were included in some 100 English slaves who were in the process of being redeemed by the following presents from George II to the *Dey*, -

'20 pieces of Broad Cloath, 2 pieces of Brocade, 2 pieces of Silver Tabby, one piece of Green Damask, 8 pieces of Holland, 15 pieces of Cambrick, a Gold Repeating Watch, 4 Silver ditto, 20 Pound of Tea, 300 of Loaf Sugar, 5 Fuzees, 5 Pair of Pistols, an Escrutoire, 2 Clocks, and a Box of Toys.'

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