

# The Devon Historian

April 2003

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Correspondence relating to *The Devon Historian* and contributions for publication should be sent to Mrs Helen Harris, Hon. Editor, *The Devon Historian*, Hironelles, 22 Churchill Road, Whitechurch, Tavistock PL19 9BU. The deadline for the next issue is 1 July 2003. Books for review should be sent to Mr David Thomas, 112 Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4RW, who will invite the services of a reviewer. It is not the policy of the Society to receive unsolicited reviews.

**DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCES**

The Society will meet at Thorverton on 22 March, and provisionally, on 5 July (venue to be arranged). The AGM will be held at Exeter on 18 October.

The print on the cover is *Tavistock from the Launceston road, 1830*. (Somers Cocks 2780)

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## DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Current and back issues of *The Devon Historian* are available from the Honorary Secretary (D.L.B. Thomas) at 112 Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4RW. Members may purchase available back issues at £3 each including postage and, when ordering, should state the issue number(s) or publication date(s) of the journal(s) required. The Secretary is always glad to receive copies of earlier numbers of *The Devon Historian* in good condition.

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### NOTE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

To assist the work of the Editor and the printers please ensure that contributions are clearly typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with **double spacing** and adequate margins, and also, as far as possible, that the journal's style is followed on such matters as the restrained use of capital letters, initial single rather than double inverted commas, the writing of the date thus e.g.: 30 November 2002, etc.

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## GOTHIC REVIVAL IN NORTH-WEST DEVON – SOME EXAMPLES OF VICTORIAN CHURCH RESTORATION

### Part One

Michael Weller

The 1818 Church Building Act<sup>1</sup> made available funds to assist with the construction of new churches for the established Church of England. This had become necessary due to the spectacular growth of population and its associated urban and suburban sprawl especially in the towns of the Midlands and the North, areas where the Industrial Revolution had engendered very significant migration to localities where churches were either too small or too remote from the new residential areas. Furthermore the established Church of England was losing ground to the nonconformists. The problem of church accommodation proved so dire that in the first three years following the Act no less than eighty-five churches had been part funded by the scheme. In 1836 a proposal for building no less than fifty churches in the metropolis alone was put forward by Charles Blomfield the Bishop of London. Even in the South West new churches were required. Devonport St Stephen (1847), St George Truro (1848), Plymstock St John (1853), and St John the Baptist Withycombe Raleigh (1862), all by the prolific (if not well known) Joseph Clarke. Habbacombe All Saints, the work of the nationally acclaimed architect William Butterfield, was completed in 1874.

The Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS)<sup>2</sup> was the instrument for the distribution of funding. However, its mandate did not only include grants towards the building of new churches but, increasingly as the century wore on, the consideration of smaller sums to older, chiefly ancient parish churches, specifically where the accommodation for the poorer classes in free seats<sup>3</sup> was likely to be increased. This was invariably done by the construction of the new style bench pews (with which we are still familiar) arranged in neat rows around the church in a more organised manner than that which had developed since the Reformation. Often a very random pattern of high sided box pews prevailed from which worshippers could not see each other, and could scarcely see the Parish Clerk or clergyman reading the services, thus effectively blocking any sense of corporate worship. In many cases ancient church buildings were actually extended to accommodate the extra seats; a significant concomitant of many cases was a concurrent partial or general restoration of the church building. That much repair was needed after a general lack of attention to fabric during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is irrefutable. However, under the influence of such well known Victorian architects as William Butterfield, Ewan Christian, George Gilbert Scott, and their local imitators, churches up and down the land were often much remodelled, sometimes destroying the architectural accretions of the centuries since the Reformation, thought by the ecclesiologists and their followers now to be 'unworthy'.

Part and parcel of this whole movement, and carried out either as a matter of what was assumed to be 'taste' or by those who fervently supported the Anglo-Catholic ideas which came out of the Oxford Movement of the 1830s (which therefore championed a return to ritual<sup>4</sup> and more beauty in 'Divine Worship'), was the notion of returning the interior of churches to what was assumed to have been their appearance in the 1200s or 1300s. Thus encouraged by the Cambridge Camden Society and its journal *The Ecclesiologist* architects and many clergy sought to recreate what was (to some extent)

an imagined Gothic idyll. In Devon the general 'high church' movement had an important friend in Henry Philpotts, Bishop of Exeter 1830 - 1869. The popularity of the gothic style was apparent not only in churches but in public buildings in general, the classic examples being London's Law Courts, St Pancras Station and the Natural History Museum.

One might imagine that north-west Devon, remote from the metropolis, served only by indifferent roads, largely cut off as it was even from Exeter until the railway reached Okehampton and Holsworthy in the 1870s would have been immune from these trends, but, as this article seeks to show, the area reflected very much the national movement. Some churches were part demolished and rebuilt as at Sheepwash (1879 - 81), or, albeit after a disastrous fire from which only the tower was saved, Okehampton (All Saints), where rebuilding was completed in 1844.

This article attempts to look at various facets of Victorian restoration, concentrating on the state of church buildings before restoration, contemporary plans to change existing structures and practices, the attitudes of clergy and (where possible) laity to restoration projects, and some detail of the changes that took place. Four rural parishes all to the north or north-west of Okehampton have been chosen for study. Of necessity the parishes chosen were those having suitable extant documentary evidence.

On 17 May 1834 the Reverend Mr Woolcombe, the incumbent of the rural parish of Highampton, wrote to the ICBS after a vestry meeting in which those gathered had 'decided on enlarging their present Church which is too small for the increasing population'. The proposal was to build a 'new aisle' which he told the Society would increase the seats from 104 to 230 'when complete'. As evidence in favour of his application in requesting a grant Mr Woolcombe pointed out that 'the parishioners are very poor, being mostly tenants at rack rent & the ground mostly moorland & therefore, unable to pay any increase in Rate for this purpose'. The Rate referred to was the Church Rate which in common with the Poor Rates and Highway Rates<sup>5</sup> represented a considerable burden to landholders and was deeply resented. In furthering his case for a grant the reverend gentleman wrote in a subsequent letter 'the parishioners have lately shewn an increased desire to avail themselves of the advantages & blessings which arise from an attendance on our Church services but which from present confined room... they are unable to do, as fully as they wish' (sic). The Society was sympathetic, and matters were straightforward, a faculty was obtained at Exeter and without the use even of an architect as such (although proper plans were drawn up) the north wall of Highampton church was taken down (without it seems, any thought of its architectural value or antiquity<sup>6</sup>) and a new aisle added. The weight of the roof was chiefly supported by two new pillars, which were placed along where the earlier north wall of the church had been. Regrettably these were of a classical design (doubtless thought fashionable in the post-Regency age) but they remain to this day, totally out of keeping both with the remaining parts of the church and with the new aisle, which was medieval in style. The work was undertaken by William Hooper<sup>7</sup> a builder from nearby Hatherleigh.

The Reverend Mr Woolcombe had got his way easily enough and managed without an architect, which not even the simplest dwelling house can do nowadays. When Charles W. Clarke, the Rector of Bridestowe, wrote to the ICBS on 2 December 1865 he asked, 'is it absolutely necessary to have an architect?' He went on to argue this point by stating that the proposed work was not going 'to touch the fabric'. However, part of the work, although the vicar did not seem to regard it so, was structural, and involved the building of a totally new vestry, 'on the north side of the Chancel... the only effect is to open a passage into the Chancel under a former Rector's monument... I fear the

expense of an Architect's presence.'<sup>8</sup> These protestations it seems cut no ice with the ICBS<sup>9</sup> and John Haywood, an architect from Exeter was duly employed, which was just as well since a significant part of the work was the re-flooring, 'at the same time as at present both chancel and body of the Church. In the body of the Church to substitute wood for stone flooring and with Chancel Tile for stone. The sides of the chancel where now a rough bare wall is covered by faded cloth to ... (cover) the wall' was also to be renovated. The chancel and church were both to have new seating. Indeed the chancel must at that time have presented a very unkempt and neglected look, as there were no choir stalls<sup>10</sup> but 'the two halves of square pews'. In other words a box pew had been cut into two halves. The new floor tiles that were proposed were an essential feature of any Victorian restoration work and there is scarcely a church in the country, which did not escape their installation<sup>11</sup>. As far as the nave and aisles were concerned the box 'pews are so high that they are often hiding places for noisy children'. They were also 'irregular in dimension': in fact some children also sat in the wooden west gallery<sup>12</sup> which was at that time situated against the tower at the west end. Indeed it seems likely that the attitude of some sections of the community was in part the *raison d'être* of the whole project, for Charles Clarke wrote that the proposed work was 'calculated by education through the eye, favourably to permit the advantages of Church worship to a population much inclined to dissent'. Which presumably implies that the rector thought that he could impress and therefore regain worshippers lost to the nonconformist chapels.

In furthering his case for dispensing with the need for an architect the rector further wrote 'Our only object is (to allow) the people to kneel instead of sit and substitute a decent appearance for the present worn and dilapidated look but it do not affect any architectural feature or any way attempt change or restoration. We have not the money to do it'.

In fact the rector intended to pay for the vestry, which was to be built on the outside of the north chancel wall and the work on the chancel itself out of his own pocket. As he had written to the ICBS on 26 October 1865 there should already have been 'a complete restoration of the whole building'. However, the Vestry<sup>13</sup> had so 'opposed the project... which he had first put forward in the summer of 1859 that he had been 'obliged to give up the idea'. The Reverend Mr Clarke must have been a very frustrated and unhappy man since, when he had originally written to the ICBS, on 8 June 1859, he had already received 'a liberal offer of assistance from a gentleman connected with the parish... (and had) ...determined to attempt its restoration and enlargement'.

The benefactor Mr. W Pickering had offered to contribute the then massive sum of £400 to a project, the total cost of which was expected to amount to twice that sum. A further £182 had already been obtained from subscriptions, one contributor being Henry Philpotts the Bishop of Exeter who 'gladly give his sanction', and had sent £5 to its support. This all seemed like a promising start but the rector already feared the vestrymen's reaction. He had thought of trying to raise a rate to defray part of the outstanding £268 but he wrote to the ICBS 'I fear there is little chance of obtaining it'. The proposal of 1859 was to increase the seating capacity of the church 'to contain 145 inappropriated seats for the poor by the enlargement of the church'. The rector had already added 42 seats himself although it is not clear how this was carried out. In the 1859 proposal the total number of seats in the completed church was to have been 214, an increase of 28 seats for the use of the 'Poorer inhabitants' and the 'Children of the Parochial Schools'. Places for all worshippers would then be in the new bench type pews which, and as a condition of the building society's grant, would have to be no less

than 20 inches wide for each adult and a mere 14 inches for children. The depth from the back of one pew to the back of the next was to be 32 inches.

On the application form which Charles Clarke filled in we know that no major building work had been carried out on Bridestowe Church since the year 1812 when no less than £525 was spent, some of it on the tower when a new 'beile' was added. The church was now (1859) 'in a dilapidated state, (owing to), the effects of damp & neglect'. The ICBS report presumably made after a site visit in 1859 makes it clear that at this stage the intention was also to rebuild the roof, states that 'There are no rain water pipes but the water as it falls from the roof is conveyed away by a stone open channel ... It is very desirable that the eaves should have spouts & the water be carried away from the building by proper drains'. As was common when the ICBS inspected plans for structural alteration and repair they queried certain aspects of the work and often recommended the use of thicker timbers. In this instance the principal rafters were to be 5 inches thick rather than the builders' suggestion, which was for only 3 inches. Recommendations about the use of tie beams and bolting the rafters to the collars were also made. But in the end this all came to nothing due to the unwillingness of the vestrymen to pay. Thus it was that only limited work excluding the roof and in part financed by the rector came eventually to fruition.

The rector's fears of an architect must to him have seemed justified when eventually (1866) John Haywood of Exeter wanted to add 4 inches of concrete under the proposed new wooden floor, which it had already been decided must be raised above the existing level<sup>14</sup>. This was to increase the costs by a further £30. In the end it seems that the thoroughgoing restoration which the rector and benefactor Mr Pickering may have had in mind in 1859 was never carried out. The eventual work done in the 1860s seems only to have included the new vestry, the church floor and the reseating. The roof was not completely replaced until 1890. In Part Two of this article serious difficulties with the parishioners in the case of proposed restoration of Northlew church and a relatively straightforward restoration at Germansweck will be examined.

## Notes and References

- 1 58 Geo III, c.45 and many subsequent Acts and amended Acts.
- 2 The ICBS was founded in February 1818 and incorporated in 1828.
- 3 It had long been practice in the Church of England to rent the better situated seating to those who could pay; effectively in many cases this resulted in the less fortunate having to sit on stools at the back or sides of the church in the chilliest and least favoured spots and contributed no doubt to their alienation from the Church of England and subsequent assimilation into the so called 'Free Churches'. ICBS grants stipulated that seats thus provided must be 'free'.
- 4 Some clergy also saw the new church interiors as being a more fit setting for liturgical innovation of a kind which introduced vestments, lighted candles on the altar, making the sign of the cross and the use of incense, and which, although services remained in the vernacular, were very close in many people's minds to Roman Catholic practice.
- 5 The rates so collected were for the maintenance of the services and fabric of the Church of England so were especially irksome to Nonconformists. Countrywide their collection became difficult if not impossible by the 1850s and they were eventually abolished in 1868. After this time Anglican churches had to rely on sub-

scriptions, appeals and 'collections' during services, which, as almsgiving, had in earlier times been charity for the poor and needy. Now it became needful to raise money voluntarily for church running costs as continues down to the present time.

- 6 Thus since no drawing of it survives, like many early restoration projects which involved destruction, all knowledge of its previous appearance is lost for ever. In a more extreme case in Kent a church in which Jane Austen had formerly sometime been numbered amongst the congregation (during her visits to Godmersham Park near Ashford) the church was altered almost out of all recognition by the incorporation of an ancient transept within the church, joined to a totally new south aisle, the construction of a *new* entrance and the building of a new baptistry. See the writer's article in *Bygone Kent* Vol 22 number 9 (September 2001).
- 7 In later years Hooper's son Samuel also worked on a number of local churches: Holsworthy (1865) Buckland Brewer (1878), Newton St Petrock (1880) as well as Germansweck (1870).
- 8 When partial restoration of Bridestowe church was first envisaged in 1859 the firm of Huggall and Male with offices in both the City and Westminster had been involved. Perhaps the incumbent had some poor experience at that time!
- 9 By this time the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who had responsibility for the chancel would no doubt have also required a qualified architect.
- 10 Choir stalls in the way we understand them nowadays were, except in cathedrals and the university chapels, largely non-existent, the singers or often more accurately the Psalmsingers were more usually in a raised wooden gallery at the west end of the church, often accompanied by a small band of instrumentalists having woodwind and sometimes a stringed instrument. Parish churches did not usually possess organs prior to the Victorian period. Choir stalls were a mid-Victorian introduction as were harmoniums and organs where parish churches were concerned.
- 11 During much of the Middle Ages, parish churches were more likely to have rushes or straw strewn on a clay floor although the chancel might have tiles.
- 12 The West Gallery. See note 10.
- 13 The Vestry was a group of local ratepayers who might or might not attend the parish church who met to decide matters not only regarding the parish church but especially until 1834 Poor Law (Amendment) Act, and, to some extent, until the passing of the Local Government Act of 1894, other secular matters.
- 14 This was doubtless justified. The rector himself had written during the autumn of 1865, 'The Church is now low and damp'.

## Sources

Lambeth Palace Library  
Highampton ICBS 1695  
Bridestowe ICBS 5459.

Information about other parishes mentioned in the text comes principally from the ICBS data base accessed from a computer in the search room at Lambeth.

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## TWO TAVISTOCK LEGENDS RE-EXAMINED

R. J. Glanvill and Mary Freeman

Do local legends always have some foundation in fact, or is truth the first casualty of word-of-mouth? In Tavistock there are two curious tales associated with the Glanvill family, concerning John Glanvill of Kilworthy (1542-1600) and his immediate family, that reward further enquiry. John Glanvill, who is commemorated by an impressive tomb in Tavistock parish church, was the first judge to have started his career as an attorney, and was Justice of the Common Pleas from 1598.

The first story, from the sixteenth century, recounts that the judge sentenced his daughter to death for the murder of her husband, an old miser of Plymouth called Page. The crime was commemorated in a contemporary account, and ballads, and in a later play<sup>1</sup>. Even two centuries later the common people of Tavistock firmly believed that Judge Glanvill had condemned his daughter<sup>2</sup>, although he had not yet become a judge at the time of the trial. The kernel of truth here is that the murder did take place and that the Glanvill family was involved. Vivian<sup>3</sup> shows that Eulalia Page was not a daughter, but a niece, of John Glanvill; her father was John's elder brother Nicholas. This legend has been worked over by several authors. Baring-Gould<sup>4</sup> listed the ballads, and Brushfield<sup>5</sup> analysed the records, quoting from a contemporary diary of Adam Wyatt which has recently been published in a fuller version<sup>6</sup>. This established that 'Serjt. Glandyl [lodged] at Rog. Cades' in Barnstaple during the trial in March 1590 o.s.; as a barrister he may have been defending counsel, and perhaps he witnessed the execution of his niece. Baring-Gould<sup>7,8</sup> asserted that she was burnt alive, the penalty for petty treason, but there is reason to doubt this. Wyatt stated that eighteen prisoners were hanged on a gibbet at Castle Green on the Saturday of assize week, having been tried on the Wednesday. Four of these, from Plymouth, were condemned for murder. In the Parish Registers<sup>9</sup>, during March o.s. (before Lady Day), there are burial entries for the three men cited as Eulalia's accomplices, and also for 'Ualya Payge buried at Bishop's tawton' Three other men buried the same day (March 20th) appear also to have been prisoners, and there were three other entries in March for people who died. There is no entry for Eulalia at Bishop's Tawton, and no indication of what happened to the bodies of the rest of the eighteen prisoners hanged, possibly they had no friends to ensure burial in a churchyard. The contemporary records, both Wyatt's<sup>6</sup> and that quoted by Whitfeld<sup>1</sup> do not state that Eulalia was burnt, only executed. Ballads would surely have stressed such a sensational aspect. Perhaps her uncle's pleading led Judge Anderson to mitigate the worst penalty.

The second story concerns John Glanvill the judge, his eldest son Francis (later knighted) and another son, John (later Speaker of the House of Commons and King's Serjeant). The story is that the judge was so displeased with Francis that he disinherited him in favour of the second son, John, who later restored the estate to his brother. The earliest published account (1681) is in Burnet's *Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale*<sup>10</sup>; the younger John Glanvill had encouraged an initially reluctant Hale in his legal studies. Burnet wrote (p11):

I shall mention one passage of the Serjeant which ought never to be forgotten. His Father had a fair Estate, which he intended to settle on his Elder Brother, but he being a Vicious young man, and there appearing no hopes of his recovery, he settled it on him that was his Second Son. Upon his death, his Eldest Son finding that



*Judge Glanvill in his robes of office, artist unknown. Reproduced with thanks to the Masters of the Bench of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn*

what he had before looked on, as the threatenings of an angry Father was now but too certain, became Melancholly, and that by degrees wrought so great a change on him, that what his Father could not prevail in while he Lived, was now effected by the severity of his last Will, so that it was now too late for him to change in hopes of an Estate that was gone from him. But his Brother observing the reality of the change resolved within himself what to do: so he called him, with many of his Friends together to a Feast, and after other Dishes had been served up to the Dinner, he ordered one that was covered to be set before his Brother, and desired him to uncover it; which he doing, the Company was surprized to find it full of Writings. So he told them that he was now to do, what he was sure his Father would have done, if he had lived to see that happy Change, which they now all saw in his Brother: and therefore he freely restored to him the whole Estate'.

Prince<sup>11</sup> gave biographies of the judge and of John the son; his version of the story of the inheritance is taken from Burnet, almost verbatim. Prince also had information from 'an intelligent person, Mr. G.D. of Tavestock, in a letter dated July 29, 1695'. This correspondent can be identified as George Diptford<sup>12</sup>. Neither source was a contemporary witness of the inheritance by Francis Glanvill, who died 29 January 1638 o.s.;

Diptford lived in Tavistock, at least after 1671 when the baptism of a daughter is recorded<sup>13</sup>, and died in 1716. He was churchwarden in 1675<sup>12</sup>, by which time Kilworthy had passed to Ambrose Manaton<sup>13,14</sup>. Whatever George Diptford may have told Prince about the judge and his sons was at best second hand. How Burnet (1643-1715) became possessed of the story is even less clear; he wrote eighty years after the event. He must have known Hale, who was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1629, where John Glanvill was considerably senior to him. Sir John died in 1661<sup>11</sup>, Hale in 1671<sup>10</sup>. Whether Burnet knew Sir John Glanvill personally, and how well, is not apparent. It seems probable that the tale he printed about the disinheritance was gleaned from gossip current in legal circles in London.

Mrs Bray<sup>2</sup> (ip336) whose source was Prince but also local knowledge gained from her husband, saw 'no cause to doubt' the truth of the story. She repeated it, with some embellishment and moral reflections; in her version, some time elapsed between the judge's death and the feast of restoration. Another account was published by Rachel Evans<sup>15</sup> who set the feast of restoration in 9th James [1611]<sup>16</sup> and made John's wife Winifred one of the characters (p61); otherwise she followed Mrs Bray's model.

In a further published version, Glanville-Richards<sup>17</sup>. (p101) introduced a romantic twist to the tale. Francis was said to be spending his 'days in vicious living and great profligacy in London', but to have rescued a William Crymes from attackers in the street. Calling on Crymes next day, Francis saw a portrait of his daughter Elizabeth in the house, and found that Crymes lived at Buckland Monachorum and knew the judge. Francis was so taken with Elizabeth's beauty that he resolved to reform and marry her, and he asked Crymes to intercede with the judge. Sadly, according to the tale, the judge died and 'John Glanvill had succeeded to the property', before that could happen.

Facts and chronology enable some comment on the legend. Judge Glanvill fell from his horse and died on 27 July 1600<sup>18</sup> perhaps negotiating the steep hill between Kilworthy and Tavistock. He was 55. No will of his is recorded, and the following month his wife Alice had obtained administration<sup>19</sup>. His *Inquisition post-mortem* is dated two years later. 12 August 44 Elizabeth. At the time of his father's death Francis was a minor, aged eighteen years and two months. By agreement of Francis and his mother, the estate was managed by Sir Francis Godolphin<sup>20</sup>, who married Alice on Christmas Day 1609<sup>21</sup>. If the judge died intestate, with his eldest son a minor, it would be normal for his widow to be granted administration. The Dukes of Bedford, in their minorities, granted leases through their mothers and other trustees<sup>22</sup>. Francis's brother John was five years younger still<sup>21</sup>, so could not have possessed the estate even if there had been a will in his favour. Francis duly inherited on coming of age.

Nevertheless there must have been some reason for the origin of the story of the disinheritance. It is credible that Francis, already certain of a life of comfort as the judge's heir, had little enthusiasm for the law. He enrolled at Lincoln's Inn in January 1595 o.s.<sup>23</sup> but there is no record of his being called to the bar. Brother John followed him to the Inn in February 1602 o.s.<sup>23</sup> and took after their father as an assiduous student. Francis may have been high-spirited, but the only suggestion that he was vicious and profligate comes from the disinheritance story, which has been shown to be untrue. The Tudor dress codes of the Inns of Court were somewhat stringent. At Lincoln's Inn 'cut or pansid Hose or Bryches; or pansid Doblet' (fashionably padded), long hair, large ruffs, cloaks, or boots with spurs were all banned<sup>24</sup>. Such regulations were probably irksome to a young man such as Francis Glanvill who did not intend a legal career but would have preferred to be in fashion, and he may well have got into scrapes that his upright parents disapproved of. It has been shown that the story was transmitted part-

ly through legal gossip, where is also a possibility of mistaken, or confused, identity. Another young Glanvill, Francis's nephew John (the Speaker's son) was implicated in a scandalous pub brawl in July 1640, the eve of the Civil War, while a student at Lincoln's Inn. The Whitehall enquiry<sup>25</sup> into this 'Affair of the Three Cranes' (a pub near the Glanvill house in Chancery Lane) heard that John and other legal trainees drunkenly fought with and 'pumped' (half drowned under a water pump) employees of the influential Earl of Northumberland. John himself was heard to raise an unadvised toast to 'the confusion and destruction of my Lord's Grace of Canterbury', the controversial William Laud; this episode, at a sensitive time, would have earned parental disapproval from John the Speaker.

Francis was pronounced the lawful heir on 12 August 1602<sup>20</sup>. Even before this date, 'Francis Glanvill esq.' was acting as a foefee in Tavistock, 10 January 44 Elizabeth [1601 o.s.<sup>12</sup>] so must have been resident at Kilworthy. He did indeed marry Elizabeth Crymes on 21 September 1604<sup>17</sup>, and they lived at Kilworthy for many years.

As to the final scene of the legend, that the title deeds were presented to Francis in a covered dish: when he came of age in May 1603<sup>20</sup> there would naturally have been a family feast to mark the occasion, and it is not at all improbable that younger brother John would have arranged a ceremony by which the title deeds were presented in a dish, as a merry joke. We think that some such prank, probably related later by John himself to his friends in London, was the origin of this part of the inheritance story, which became increasingly garbled by repetition and got into print from the Inns of Court, many years after the event.

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**Rick Glanvill**, writer and broadcaster living in London, is a direct descendant of John and Alice Glanvill, in the 12th generation.

## A SCOTSMAN IN EXETER

**Audrey Deacon**

The following epitaph is in the north aisle of Exeter Cathedral; (the actual burial was beneath the south transept, where there is another tablet)

Coat of Arms  
Per Mare Per Terras  
SACRED  
To the memory of  
John Macdonald Esq., F.R.S. F.A.S.  
Fifth son of Captain Allan Macdonald  
of the 84th Regt. and of  
FLORA MACDONALD  
Obit 16th August 1831 aet 72  
Beloved by the poor for his benevolence  
by the philosopher for his talents  
firm in moral rectitude  
In integrity sincere  
he departed this life  
revered and lamented  
Christianity having to deplore the loss  
of a disciple  
who admired and venerated her principles  
and enforced by constant practice  
her benevolent and charitable admonitions

John Macdonald was the fifth son and sixth child of the seven children born to Flora and Allan MacDonald. The sobriquet Flodigarry was sometimes added to his name, (as was the custom, to distinguish him from others of the same name) from that of a piece of land in the Isle of Skye where he was born in 1759, his father having recently purchased it. Similarly his father was known as Kingsburgh – when Dr Johnson and Boswell visited him and his wife in September 1773, Boswell described him as 'completely the figure of a gallant Highlander'... He had his Tartan plaid thrown about him, a large blue bonnet with a knot of black ribband like a cockade, a brown short coat of a kind of duffil, a Tartan waistcoat with gold buttons and gold buttonholes, a bluish philibeg (kilt) and Tartan hose. He had jet black hair tied behind, and was a large stately man, with a steady sensible countenance'. He was a tacksman - a lessee who, not farming himself, was entitled to sublet parts of the land to farmers.

John MacDonald was educated at the Portree grammar school and the Edinburgh high school. He remained there when his parents emigrated to America in 1774, and did not see his mother again until she returned in 1779, followed by her husband in 1780. In that year John obtained an Indian cadetship and was sent to the Bombay infantry, under the East India Company. Since the pay and allowances were poor he managed to obtain leave to Calcutta, and, helped by a relative, was appointed ensign in the Bengal engineers and was sent to the company's settlement of Bencoolen (later spelt Banghulu, and now Benkulu) in Sumatra. There he carried out a survey of the



lands to be returned to the Dutch. Apart from a short interval, he remained in Sumatra until 1796, attaining the rank of captain. He made many maps and charts, now in the British Museum, together with observations on the variations of the magnetic compass needle. This last became one of his major interests: in the course of his return voyage to England on sick leave he made at St Helena a further series of observations. (The ship was delayed in order to allow him to carry out this work). He sent them to the Royal Society in 1798 and was elected Fellow of the Society on 15 May 1800. At that time his address was given as Queen Anne Street, London (W1). He had married Mrs. Boyle, a widow, and two daughters were born to them, but by 1787 both daughters and their mother had died. He was married again, to Frances, daughter of Sir Robert Chambers, Chief Justice of Bengal, who was president of the Asiatic Society, with John MacDonald as a founding member. This second marriage resulted in the birth of seven sons and two daughters.

In 1800 he retired on half-pay from the East India Company's service, in which he had spent so many years, and was appointed Commandant of the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers, a corps of Edinburgh gentlemen who formed a body of pikemen - having in the previous year become a major in Lord MacDonald's Regiment of the Isles. Also in 1800 he became lieutenant-colonel of the Royal Clan Alpine Fencible Infantry, serving with it in Ireland until it was disbanded in 1801.

During the peace resulting from the Treaty of Amiens, MacDonald visited France several times and translated some French military books. War broke out again in 1803 and William Pitt, in his capacity of Colonel of the Cinque Ports Volunteers, chose him as field officer. This necessitated living at Dover. From there he crossed the Channel several times in an open boat to reconnoitre the preparations at Boulogne for invading England. After the Battle of Trafalgar and Napoleon's change of plan, and Pitt's death in 1806, the Volunteers were no longer important and MacDonald's services were not needed.

He subsequently moved to Exeter, but there has been some difficulty in establishing the date. In June 1816 he wrote a letter to *The Gentleman's Magazine* from Mortimer Street [London W1] and one on 5 August 1818 from 'Summerlands, Exeter', so must have moved between those dates. His full address was 1 Higher Summerland's Place - one of a series of fine Regency villas built about 1805. Interestingly, his house was adjacent to the former Workhouse Fields - in 1827 he is mentioned as being one of the Poor Law Guardians.

During his years in Exeter 'this accomplished and amiable gentleman' wrote on many and varied subjects. At first these related mainly to military matters, but he went on to write some forty-seven letters (really essays) to *The Gentleman's Magazine* on many subjects, including magnetic variations (sixteen letters), harmonics, parliamentary reform, suggestions for increasing the difficulty of forging banknotes, experiments on bread, distresses of the labouring classes, the Thames tunnel, and the constabulary force. He was also active in benevolent work, assisting local charitable bodies both financially and with advice and administration. He died in 1831 and left over £40,000 in his will. His funeral in Exeter Cathedral was followed by five mourning coaches-and-four, and a long line of private carriages.

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*Exeter Cathedral, West Front*  
(Somers Cocks 841, dated 1853)

## DEVON'S PLACE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

Philip Carter

Over the years the ostensible reasons for tourism have changed. The fact that holiday comes from 'Holy day' alerts us to a change of emphasis. Our ancestors indeed would not have looked upon, or considered their activities as 'tourism' at all. However that need not stop us looking back and seeing the early vestiges of the ethos that fuels a vast modern industry, in certain of their activities.

The earliest incidence known in Britain was the use of Bath by the Romans 'who may have found healing cults already established.'<sup>1</sup> A tour of the remains of the Roman baths will provide plenty of evidence that pleasure and relaxation were present. In the Middle Ages medical centres and pilgrims' shrines were indistinguishable. Granville wrote: 'The springs at Bath were managed by the Abbey, where medical skills were cultivated'. Such springs became centres of worship and pilgrimage so that 'commercial trade had often been spawned by the religious and temporal needs of pilgrims'.<sup>2</sup> Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is fiction, but it gives us an inkling of folk on pilgrimages and a Devonian was in the party, the Shipman from Dartmouth. There were pilgrimages to places in Devon such as Exeter and even Frithelstock.<sup>3</sup> Pilgrims brought back hat badges as souvenirs; a collection is held at Buckland Abbey.

In the Tudor period the Reformation of Henry VIII proscribed the cult of saints, and shrines were demolished. 'Pilgrimage was no longer a respectable and legitimate activity'.<sup>4</sup> However rudimentary science intervened, in 1562 came the first known English book on the medical properties of bathing *A book of the nature and properties of the bathes in England...* by Dr William Turner.<sup>5</sup>

The Stuart period, despite the Civil War and Commonwealth, saw a major expansion of spa towns. They drew more upper class visitors, 'who cavorted through' them. They became 'ever more prominent centres of secular leisure'.<sup>6</sup> The waters of Bath began to attract the great; the first royal patronage being Anne of Denmark, wife of James I in 1613.<sup>7</sup> The later visit of Queen Anne in 1702<sup>8</sup> really secured the foundations of the town's phenomenal success.

The eighteenth century saw significant developments in tourism. The most important was the beginning of the move from spas to bathing in the sea. A Dr Richard Russell published a learned tract *De Talc Glandurvi* that extolled the medicinal values of seawater.<sup>9</sup> He did not establish the practice but it helped to entice people from a distance to partake of it. The Prince Regent in 1783 at Brighton and George III at Weymouth in 1789 publicised the vogue.<sup>10</sup> George III also reportedly 'discovered Devon' when he paid a visit to Sidmouth in 1791 but the publicity generated never equalled that of the Dorset town.<sup>11</sup> Another important development was the Grand Tour. In 1785 some 40,000 English were touring or resident on the Continent.<sup>12</sup> Although the English were the pacesetters there was a small reciprocal flow from the Continent. It was the denial of the Continent to the English, during the Napoleonic Wars, which was to precipitate a significant shift in travel destinations in England. A further major development of the eighteenth century was the beginning of a change in outlook. Trevelyan describes it as the taste for mountains.<sup>13</sup> William Wilberforce rented a house at Windermere in 1781 in search of 'solitude and peace'. Wild places formerly had been looked on as desolate, now they were perceived as romantic. Finally, perhaps surprisingly early, were the beginnings of regattas and aquatic sports that

attracted visitors to a number of seaside places. For instance Teignmouth regatta was perhaps the earliest in the country and dates from the 1740s.<sup>14</sup>

Needless to say the biggest event of the nineteenth century was the coming of the railways. Stanes noted that 'It is unlikely that tourism could ever have developed in the way it did without the railways.'<sup>15</sup> Trevelyan with unusual exaggeration wrote, 'Now the whole coast of England and Wales opened out to 'trippers' and 'lodgers'.<sup>16</sup> Thomas Cook was not the first to organize excursion trains but he was primarily responsible for establishing them commercially. He was the forerunner of mass tourism and the 'package tour'.<sup>17</sup> Also of importance, at first on a very small scale, were paid holidays. In the last two decades of the century a few firms and municipalities granted the privilege.<sup>18</sup> Strangely the TUC did not overcome their dogged resistance to the idea until 1911.<sup>19</sup> The year 1871 saw the passing of legislation inaugurating Bank Holidays.

The twentieth century brought the car and the motor coach but it was not until over half way through the century that road transport became more important than rail. Walvin's phrase was 'passengers seduced away to cheaper, more flexible road transport'.<sup>20</sup> Holiday camps although 'personified by Billy Butlin' were in fact started at Cayton Bay, near Scarborough in Yorkshire in 1924 by the Civil Service Clerical Association.<sup>21</sup> They later had another at Croyde Bay. The rather different Youth Hostel movement, begun in Germany early in the century, was well established in Britain by the 1930s. Among early hostels in Devon were Ottery St Mary, Gidleigh and Bellever. In 1949 came the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act which was the enabling legislation for the National Parks, and Long Distance Footpaths. The outcome of this for Devon was Dartmoor and part interest in Exmoor and the South West Coast Path.

Tourism's importance to the county should be stressed. Hoskins said that in Devon in the nineteenth century there were two major changes, 'the great exodus from the countryside, and the rise of a new major industry - the holiday industry.'<sup>22</sup> Since he wrote there has been a reversal of the exodus. However, tourism and agriculture are still more important to the economy of the county than any other occupations. Because their patterns of development are dissimilar the south and the north of the county will be considered in two different sections.

### South Devon

South Devon's holiday industry started in a very small way in the middle of the eighteenth century with four resorts. Its inception was owed to the proximity of the then great industrial city and provincial capital of Exeter.<sup>23</sup> In 1750 Bishop Pococke visited Exmouth and said it was a 'place to which the people of Exeter must resort for diversion and bathing in the sea'. Andrew Brice, an Exeter publisher, described Teignmouth as developing a holiday trade and was being 'visited both for health and recreation'. By 1776 Sidmouth was playing host to 'company resorting hither for the benefit of bathing and drinking the waters'. Two years later there was a similar report about Dawlish.<sup>24</sup>

Before the end of the century there were reports of a fifth resort, which would, in time come to dwarf them all, then called Tor Quay. Maton, an early visitor, in 1794 wrote that even then it far exceeded their expectations 'instead of the poor uncomfortable village that we had imagined, how great was our surprise at seeing a pretty range of neat, new buildings, fitted up for summer visitors' and 'a most romantic situation'.<sup>25</sup>

In 1792 war broke out on the Continent, and England became involved a year later. These wars, first Republican then later Napoleonic lasted almost continuously until 1815. This put an end both to Grand Tours and the journeying to the Continent to

improve health. The search was on for the nearest English equivalent. All the Devon resorts started to benefit, for instance Sidmouth expanded in the 1790s.<sup>26</sup> Hoskins wrote specifically of Torquay that its real development 'as an all-the-year-round resort, dates from the Napoleonic Wars.'<sup>27</sup> Plymouth had no breakwater at that time so the Channel Fleet was often based in Torbay.<sup>28</sup> This resulted in officers with spare time seeking recreation in nearby resorts, and Torquay especially had the windfall of naval officers' wives coming to stay.<sup>29</sup> The beginnings of Seaton and Budleigh Salterton stem from this time. In 1793 John Swete found Seaton 'beginning to have its share of company' while two years later he commented on Budleigh Salterton noting 'improvements in equipping a few cottages for invalids.'

The end of the war brought a period of depression. Travis wrote 'While Napoleon had been pillaging Europe, the south Devon tourist trade flourished' but afterwards it was generally a different picture. The urge to visit the Continent returned. Furthermore, Exeter, at a period when many English cities were mushrooming, was facing hard times.<sup>30</sup> The war had killed its staple woollen trade and agricultural prices sank too at the war's end. There was therefore less wealth to be spent at nearby resorts. There was an exception to the decline, this was Torquay.<sup>31</sup> A Dr James Clark wrote *The Influence of Climate in the Prevention and Care of Chronic Disease* which was published in 1829. This work particularly recommended Torquay and was denigratory about some of its near rivals. Teignmouth was 'unsuitable for sickly people' and Exmouth 'battered by chilling gales.'<sup>32</sup> This was a filip to Torquay which also justifiably reaped a harvest from its war time hospitality. A number of the wives who had stayed there came back or recommended it to friends. By 1840 it was the biggest resort on the Devon coast with a population of 5,982 and firmly established as England's principal winter health resort.<sup>33</sup> Paignton emerged at this time through the success of its nearby neighbour.<sup>34</sup>

Transport improvements were significant. At first it was the improvement to the roads brought about by turnpikes.<sup>35</sup> However, it was the railways in the 1840s, which really made the difference. F.M. M. Lewes in his essay 'The Holiday Industry' included by Barlow, is specific that the older resorts owe a great deal of their charm to the fact that their centres were developed before the coming of the train. He then goes on to say 'Nevertheless it was the arrival of the railways, often opposed with as much vehemence as their disuse was to be opposed a hundred years later, which formed the basis of the present siting of resorts.'<sup>36</sup> Hoskins writes of 'watering-places being transferred into holiday resorts.'<sup>37</sup> Minchanton underlined the importance of rail thus: the resorts on the railway flourished; those off the railway stagnated.'<sup>38</sup> The railway reached Exeter in 1844 and by 1846 it had advanced to Newton Abbott, running through Dawlish and Teignmouth. A branch line to Torquay was in place by 1848, although at first it only went to what later became known as Torre Station, rather than the later Torquay Station nearer the sea. The train brought considerable business to those resorts fortunate enough to have rail connections. It did though have a negative affect on those places which were late receiving it, and indeed those who never had a rail link at all such as Salcombe. For instance east of the Exe, the spur lines to the coast followed the opening of the Salisbury - Exeter line, Exmouth 1861, Seaton 1868, Sidmouth 1874, and Budleigh Salterton 1897.<sup>39</sup>

As already stated trains continued to be the main generator of holiday business until the middle of the twentieth century. Until then south Devon resorts continued to have the advantage because of their better communications. Even afterwards this advantage continued. The M5, the only motorway to the Westcountry came to Exeter, enabling easy communications to the south Devon resorts.

## North Devon

The northern coast of the county had a later and less well recorded start in tourism. Hodskins as late as 1954 wrote 'Ilfracombe seems to have been discovered after the Napoleonic wars, by the 1820s it was much frequented for bathing.'<sup>40</sup> Travis writing nearly forty years later, at first states 'Ilfracombe was the only watering place to emerge in the period up to 1788' Later he quotes a piece in the *Exeter Flying Post* in August 1771 listing just ten visitors at that time.<sup>41</sup> The Rev John Swete's one comment on Ilfracombe's tourist business was to express his disappointment that there was only one bathing machine! North Devon was of course much more remote from the then bustling city of Exeter. The two largest towns in north Devon, Barnstaple and Bideford, were much smaller. The main difference between north and south was topography; the high land in the south of the county did not seriously impede access to its resorts. In complete contrast Exmoor and the hills north-west of Exeter were a considerable barrier to reaching the north coast. Later as perspectives changed the same hills would be an asset in attractiveness but even to this day they present a physical obstacle.

The physical difficulties of road-making coupled with the depression of the main centres meant there was no incentive to provide good roads. Attempts were made to start running coaches from Exeter to Barnstaple in 1778 but even in 1787 it still took some twelve hours to cover the thirty-nine miles. Wheeled passage from the east over the hills of Porlock, Countisbury and Lynton would have been formidable and not even attempted until much later. Not surprisingly therefore Lynton and Lynmouth were not 'discovered' until the first decade of the nineteenth century;<sup>42</sup> the first hotel was opened in 1807.<sup>43</sup> Visits by a clutch of romantic poets; Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, and Shelley, provided publicity, for the infant resort.

At the end of the eighteenth century Appledore is briefly recorded as a resort but soon lost any trade it had to Instow, across the Torridge.<sup>44</sup> Although Instow was the first north Devon resort to be connected in succession by turnpike road and rail it never achieved greatness. Travis calls the period 1816-1843 in north Devon one of 'new openings'. This was in part caused by a major programme of road improvements with better roads, for instance from Exeter to Barnstaple and Bideford.<sup>45</sup> This was also the time when steamboats began to play a part in the area's development. The first packets from Bristol started calling at Ilfracombe in 1824, and a more reliable regular service with Swansea began in 1826. In 1830 this service also started calling at Lynmouth.<sup>46</sup> Later steamers were to cause problems with the kind of passengers they brought<sup>47</sup> but in early days all were welcome.

After 1844 the north Devon resorts had a period of economic depression because the railways had reached south Devon. Not until 1854-5 did the line reach Barnstaple and Bideford. However entrepreneurs and literature were to play important parts in the north. Westward Ho! was a completely new resort on a virgin site. Short-lived Woody Bay started in a grandiose manner but ended spectacularly in the courts. The major literary contributions were Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* whose name was taken for the resort, and R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*.<sup>48</sup> The latter was so popular that parties of Americans were booking in Lynton at the end of the century.<sup>49</sup> A comparison can be made with the later H. Williamson's *Tarka the Otter* and the setting up as a tourist attraction of the Tarka Trail. Philip Gosse and Charlotte Chanter are also significant writers, in that they both started collecting hobbies that aided tourism, but unfortunately devastated habitat in the process.<sup>50</sup> Two other places deserve a mention. The first is Clovelly, where visitors were recorded from 1840 with numbers rising rapidly in the 1850s,<sup>51</sup> but whose landed proprietors refused to develop.<sup>52</sup> Secondly, Combe

Marton, which had a completely new road in 1844<sup>53</sup> and which towards the end of the century began to grow as a resort.

The railway reached Ilfracombe, the most important north Devon resort of the rail era, in 1874<sup>54</sup> this is over a quarter of a century after it arrived at Torquay. Lynton later had its line from Barnstaple but this did not open until 1898<sup>55</sup> and the short-lived line from Bideford to Westward Ho! did not open until the next century in 1901.<sup>56</sup>

In the twentieth century the north Devon coast, wilder and more sparsely populated than the south, provided its own range of attractions to visitors, despite routes into the area being less easy. The withdrawal of many rail services in the century's later half increased the sense of remoteness. Construction of the North Devon Link road however, opened in 1987 and connecting with the M5, has greatly facilitated road traffic.

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Ilfracombe c.1900 (copyright Ilfracombe Museum)

## SCANDAL IN ASHREIGNEY<sup>1</sup>

Gill Selley

In King's Nympton in 1734 Samuel Johnson married Elizabeth Tossell, and fifteen years later a son, John Tossell, was born.<sup>2</sup> John studied at both Oxford and Cambridge, and on his matriculation was presented with the living of the Rectory of Wembworthy by his uncle John Tossell, an apothecary from Ashreigney, who had bought the presentation.<sup>3</sup> At the same time he became the curate to the Rev John Cutcliffe, the Rector of Ashreigney, succeeding him to the living in 1770.<sup>4</sup>

In 1777 Mary, daughter of the Rev John and Mary Cutcliffe of Wembworthy, married her father's successor, John Tossell Johnson.<sup>5</sup> A daughter, Mary was born in 1778, followed by three sons between 1785 and 1789, John Tossell, Peter and George.<sup>6</sup> The parish registers show nothing to be out of the ordinary in the Johnson household, yet the locals would not have been too surprised when, in January 1791, Mary went to the justices and asked that her husband be bound over to keep the peace towards her.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly John Tossell Johnson was bound over, on 7 January, in the sum of £400, with two friends standing surety for him at £200 apiece.

This must have caused Johnson great embarrassment, and his wife wisely moved out of his house to stay with friends in South Molton. The explanation he gave to his parishioners for his wife's sudden removal can be surmised from the following announcement, which he had inserted in the *Exeter Flying Post* of 3 February 1791.

Whereas Mary, the wife of me, John Tossell Johnson, clerk, did on Tuesday, 25th January, against my consent and without my leave, elope from my dwelling house, situate in Ashreigney in the County of Devon. This is therefore to caution every person from trusting her with any monies, or for any necessaries she may want, as I am determined not to pay any sums of money, or for any necessaries she may take up in my name, or on my account.

The following week Mary replied in the same newspaper:

Whereas John Tossell Johnson, clerk, hath in your paper (with a view to injure my character), asserted that I, Mary, his wife, did elope from him on 25th January last, this is therefore to inform the public, that I did on that day leave his house to avoid the unjust, tyrannical & brutal treatment I there met with, in order to put myself under the protection of the law; and that the said John Tossell Johnson hath in consequence been obliged to give sureties for his appearance at the next General Session of the Peace.

John Tossell Johnson was determined that Mary should appear in a bad light, and in order to defend his position as a good clergyman and kind father he inserted, on 17 February, a further advertisement in an attempt to blacken her name:

In answer to an advertisement in this paper last week, signed Mary Johnson, it would be trespassing too much on the printer and the public to enter into the affair at length, I shall therefore only remark on her several charges: Was it an act of justice, nine months after my unfortunate connection with Mrs J----, in 1777, when

she thought proper to elope upon a charge of incontinence, that I made her a handsome separate allowance, without receiving 6d with her at the time of her marriage, and continued until her importunate entreaties for a reconciliation, and consequent return to my house, about seven years after? Has it an appearance of a tyrannical disposition in me, that she was, at the time of her late elopement, enabled to take with her several scores of pounds, her own private purse, or that her children (three of which are of knowledge and sensibility) could part with her without the least symptom of regret? Or does it look like brutality, except in the idea of a wag, that I could propose, for her sake, her connections, and that of avoiding obloquy, tho' unmerited, to connive at a crime held unpardonable in the marriage state, the consciousness of which could alone stimulate her to that base act she triumphs in, the demanding sureties of the peace against me. . . The public, I trust, will by this short sketch be convinced that my late advertisement was inserted solely with a view to self-defence; and that Mrs J---- could not be affected but in one respect by it, unless here feelings are more than to the consciousness of an act that shames human nature. I now take my leave of newspaper altercation, and Mrs Johnson, till I see her return to me and her family, where I now invite her; and in the meantime caution the public against giving her credit in my name.

The final word, though came from Mary Johnson on 24 February:

It would add greatly to Mrs Johnson's present distress, if she could for a moment believe that the least credit would be given to any one of the cruel assertions respecting her in this paper of last week. As far as the characters of the parties are known, she trusts to her own innocence for protection against the voice of calumny, and relying on the candour of a generous public, requests that they will suspend their judgement on her conduct till it has passed the ordeal of justice. From thence Mrs Johnson hopes to come forward to the world, in a much better light than she can possibly do as a writer in a newspaper; and therefore begs leave to retire from the public notice till that much desired period.

On 4 May 1791 Mary returned to the magistrates and exhibited Articles of the Peace at the Devon Quarter Sessions.<sup>8</sup> She felt induced to complain to the court because of the constant mistreatment she suffered and through fear of serious injury or death at Johnson's hands. She said that some time after her marriage on 29 June 1777 his behaviour to her was of the most brutal and cruel kind. He regularly pulled her out of bed, without her clothes, and dragged her downstairs, kicking her as he went, horse whipped her severely, dragged her about the room by the hair, and would rave and storm and declare that he would shoot her. She had left him after a few months of marriage, when pregnant with their daughter Mary, and taken refuge in her father's house in South Molton until she was obliged, on her father's death in 1784, to return to her husband. The document gives precise dates and places of Johnson's violence, as a consequence of which justices bound him over in the increased sum of £5,000, with his friends standing surety for £500 apiece.<sup>9</sup> This large sum of money shows the gravity with which the magistrates considered the case as well as the financial ability of Johnson to pay.

Mary then went before the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Exeter on 20 May 1791 and asked for a separation from her husband on the grounds of cruelty, pleading that

there should be an allowance of alimony suitable to her station, since he had refused to grant her maintenance of any sort.<sup>10</sup> The transcript of the case, amounting to more than 5,000 words, shows his behaviour to have been even more brutal than appeared in the facts laid before the magistrates. John Tossell Johnson agreed before the court that Mary was 'a person of a mild affable and obliging disposition and temper and of a very modest and sober carriage and behaviour and of religious and virtuous life and conversation'. Evidently she had brought to the marriage over £1,000, which remained in the hands of her husband. The account given in the Bishop's Court differs from that given to the magistrates by showing that his young daughter, Mary, was also a victim of beating and ill-treatment, her mother saying to her on one occasion 'tis well Mary we have pretty thick skulls', which remark caused Johnson to knock his wife to the ground and throw her down some stairs. His behaviour was quite sadistic, as shown by the times that he horsewhipped her, forcing her to kneel and ask his pardon, though for what Mary did not know. Some of his most violent treatment was in front of servants and even visiting clergymen, as if to show them the power he had over his wife. Marks on her body would last for weeks from the severe beatings he gave her. If signs of his brutality were visible he would ask her to say 'she had knocked her eye against the door of the press' so that no-one would know of the attacks. He would frequently kick her out of bed and say 'there madam, I will give you a cooling', and make her lie on the floor, sometimes for hours, 'till she was ready to perish with cold', even when she was pregnant. Any domestic problem, however petty, drove Johnson to uncontrollable anger, which resulted in violent attacks on his wife. Such trivial incidents as putting more eggs than he had ordered in a pudding being prepared for the Farmers' Dinner on Tithing Day resulted in such a beating that her head was 'swollen up in large knobs in several places'.

The Consistory Court evidence lays more emphasis on Johnson's jealousy and accusations of Mary being unfaithful to him. In 1790 the youngest son, George, was seriously ill and Mary's brother, Charles Cutcliffe, a surgeon and apothecary, was asked to attend him. Charles felt it necessary to stay the night as he considered the child might not survive till morning. Later Johnson accused Mary of 'being an incestuous whore -- (who) has committed adultery with her brother' and of having had a relationship with him for twenty years: 'it was no wonder she could run up and down the country for six or seven years and leave her husband', referring to the period when Mary had returned to her father's house, 'and when she thought her brother was going to be married to come back to him and fill his house with her bastards, an incestuous vile whore. Two of his children he was convinced were not his, the eldest and the youngest and the others were doubtful...she got herself with child before he married her, by her first cousin, as he then thought, but that he was now convinced it was by her brother'.<sup>11</sup> Johnson even said he had seen her in an act of adultery with her brother in the house, and conjectured 'that the effects of this connection with her brother would appear about the twelfth of October then next'. Mary refuted all his charges but he answered her with further abuse. Young Mary, the daughter, was sent to her mother with *The Duty of Man* open at chapter XI, with this added note 'a lesson to an incestuous adulteress'. He wrote a letter to Mrs Cutcliffe forbidding her husband from 'ever entering his doors'. He frequently asked his wife to swear on the Bible that 'she had never committed that abominable sin of perjury adultery fornication or incest with her brother or any other man either before or since her marriage and also to comply with her husband's wishes in everything and do whatever he commanded her'. She was ready to swear to all but at the last request since she feared he would 'lay some improper command on

her'. He attempted to cajole her, saying 'he did not like to be refused', but Mary stood up to him. From this time his abuse increased, culminating one evening in Johnson forcing her face down onto a press bed and beating her on the back of her head so violently that 'it made her cry out murder'. Her maidservant came up and asked him not to kill the mistress and Mary herself really believed that she was going to die. She ran for safety to the servants' room, from which Johnson attempted to coax her out; but she answered him, 'kill me here I can't return'. She eventually went to his room but, through fear of him, refused to allow the maid to remove any of her clothes except her shoes. His sadistic behaviour increased to such a pitch, with added threats of what he would do to her if she attempted to leave, and his avowal that 'he would, to the utmost of his power, do everything to make her miserable to the end of her life', that she finally made her escape to friends in South Molton, and applied to the magistrates to exhibit Articles of the Peace.

The evidence of the Consistory Court states that the Rev Johnson received £500 a year from his two livings of Wembworthy and Ashreigney, whilst his estates and other interests, valued at over £60,000, gave him an annual income of over £3,000. Unfortunately there is no record of the final outcome of the case or what Mary was awarded by the court, but it would appear to have been sufficient for her needs. John Tossell Johnson returned to the magistrates, who released him from his bail at the Epiphany Sessions of 1792, the solicitors for both parties having produced in court the Articles of Separation.<sup>12</sup>

The Rev John Tossell Johnson died in 1829 leaving an estate worth nearly £45,000. His first bequest was to 'my unworthy wife the sum of £10 by way of bar to every claim she may have or supposed to have to any part of my personal estate'. His oldest son John, was appointed executor, but due to mental inability left much of the will unadministered.<sup>13</sup>

Mary lived, with her daughter Mary, at South Molton until her death in 1849 at the age of 91. The separation must have left her comfortably off, as her goods, monies and property were valued at £4,365 (after expenses).<sup>14</sup> Her estate was left to her sons Peter (who was made executor) and George; John had died in 1835, after several years of mental and physical illness.<sup>15</sup> Peter, who had studied at Oxford, succeeded his father as Rector of Wembworthy in 1830.<sup>16</sup> At Peter's death his estate was worth nearly £60,000, which, after large bequests to his daughters, was left to his son, John George, whose successful career he did not live to see.<sup>17</sup> John George graduated from Oxford in 1848, became a JP and High Sheriff for Devon and from 1874 to 1880 represented Exeter as Member of Parliament.<sup>18</sup> The youngest son, George, also a clergyman, who had acted as a curate to his father, was found, in 1851, to be of unsound mind after five years of illness, and incapable of managing his own estate.<sup>19</sup>

John Tossell Johnson's hatred for his wife survived to his death, but there is nothing to indicate why he behaved with such brutality and vindictiveness to the woman whom he had chosen as his life companion. One wonders what the relationship between father and sons must have been like; was it the effect of seeing their father's brutal behaviour that caused the mental instability in two of his sons, neither of whom married? Or was there an inherited weakness that was the cause of his uncontrolled jealousy and rages and the sad decline of John and George into insanity?

Is it possible that Johnson, a very clever man, used his profession as an intellectual rather than a spiritual exercise? In her evidence to both courts his wife described how he would whip her over the head while she was riding behind him to church on Sundays, and continue the treatment all the way home. Was his attitude to Mary typ-

ical of a wealthy, domineering man with contempt for women, or was it Mary's own meek demeanour that caused him to want to dominate her? Society allowed him to continue his ministry although the facts of his behaviour were in the public domain. It would be interesting to know what action the church authorities of the time took against him, or whether, perhaps, his private life was of no interest to them.

## Notes

- 1 Although Ashreigney and Ring's Ash (the alternative name) are both used in documents consulted, for simplicity I have used Ashreigney only.
- 2 3330/A (King's Nympton parish registers)
- 3 North Devon Record Office (NDRO) 146B/F1 (papers of the Johnson Family)
- 4 NDRO 146B/F1-3
- 5 2990A/PR2 (Ashreigney parish register)
- 6 2990A/PR2
- 7 Devon Record Office (DRO) QS Bundles (Box 317)
- 8 DRO QS bundles (Box 317)
- 9 QS.21 page 312
- 10 DRO Consistory Court Act Books (20 May 1791) and CC Box 85
- 11 Mary, born after her mother had left Johnson, was privately baptised on 14 April 1778 in Wembworthy and publicly received into the church at South Molton. The marriage took place on 23 June 1877.
- 12 DRO QS/22 page 3
- 13 NDRO 2309B/W139/1-2
- 14 DRO 146B/F12
- 15 DRO 146B/F16, NDRO 2309B/W140
- 16 Alumni Oxoniensis 1715-1866
- 17 NDRO 146B/F16
- 18 Alumni Oxoniensis 1715-1866
- 19 NDRO 2309B/F13/15, 2309 B/W138

**Gill Selley** moved to Woodbury with her Devonian husband in 1991. Since then she has researched the history of the parish, founded the Woodbury Local History Society and continued as its secretary, and attended the Local and Regional History Certificate Course.

## 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.)

**Zeal Monachorum: A Devon Rural Parish, 1086-1801** by Ann Adams. Published by the author, printed by Short Run Press, Exeter 2002. 162 pp. Illustrations, maps, plans. £9.95 (+ p. & p. £1.85), from the author, Hayne, Zeal Monachorum, Crediton, Devon EX17 6DE.

W.G. Hoskins (*Devon 1954*), p. 520 dismissed the history of Zeal Monachorum in some eighty words and Ann Adams notes that it was a parish 'hardly on the highway to anywhere' (p.48), which 'never seems to have inspired any serious inquiry' (p.11). She has rectified this in a substantial monograph, based on a prodigious amount of original research and clearly the fruit of much labour, which successfully demonstrates that even the remotest community has a history of interest. The volume is attractively presented with many illustrations and a number of helpful maps and plans. Its strength lies in its series of extremely detailed studies of the interconnected histories of individuals and families (with genealogies of seven of the most important families), in its painstakingly compiled data on the ownership and tenantry of particular pieces of land, and in its examination of topographical features and of physical aspects of buildings, domestic and ecclesiastical. Where direct information is lacking the author has legitimately sought to fill the gap by making tentative but plausible suggestions based on evidence surviving for neighbouring parishes.

Few books have no weaknesses, and *Zeal Monachorum's* lie mainly in the area of presentation and subediting. This admirable volume, so packed with factual information, deserves a fuller index than one which ignores many important items covered in the text and whose exciting entries lack comprehensiveness. And, though the text is much better referenced than many popular histories, the provenance of information is too often unstated and there is no key to the abbreviations used in the footnotes. Sometimes, too, the author assumes knowledge readers are quite likely to lack. They may, for example, be mystified by the unexplained letters L, G and W which appear after names in the lay subsidy of 1524-7 (p.33) (they indicate tax based on land, goods or wages), and they may not know that the numbers of the villagers mentioned in Domesday represent not the whole population but heads of families.

Understandably a book covering such a long period has not tapped every available source, nor exhausted the information which could be derived from those examined. A bibliography would have helped the reader know what sources have been used and what others might be searched for further data. This reviewer may notice for instance, one source not used which may add a little to the allegedly sparse evidence of religious sympathies in the seventeenth century (see p. 40); the Compton Census of 1676 records that Zeal Monachorum then had 200 conforming Anglicans, no Roman Catholics and 5 Protestant nonconformists (A. Whiteman, ed., *The Compton Census of 1676* (1986), p.291). Incidentally this would suggest a total population of some 340 in that year. Various other returns cited by the author might also have been used to estimate a population of about 270 in 1569 and 330 in 1641 and 1670.

Space however, is always at a premium today and Ann Adams has, probably wisely,

chosen to concentrate on providing a history which investigates topics of interest primarily to the residents of Zeal Monachorum and its vicinity and to Devonians generally, rather than to use local data to contribute to broader historical themes and controversies. In this she has been very successful and is to be congratulated. Her book, moreover, does contain information which is likely to be of use to those with more general and abstruse historical interest (particularly aspects of the economy and social structure) and for that reason is doubly welcome.

W. B. Stephens

**Devon Families** by Rosemary Lauder, Halsgrove, 2002, 160 pp 182 illustrations £19.95 ISBN 1 84114 140 2.

The author believes strongly in the importance of the great landed estates in preserving the integrity of the countryside and so protecting it from ill-considered development. She points out that in Devon 25 per cent of the estates have remained in the same families as against a national figure of 15 per cent. This she considers reflects the determined success of those Devon families in guarding their landed inheritance from the economic and fiscal threats of the twentieth century. In this book she examines the history of twenty-six families, all of whom she visited.

Today we often hear about the 'incomers' in Devon villages but this seems always to have been true of the estate owners. Tradition says that the Christies of Instow were descended on one side from a Scots sea captain and on the other from a Swiss officer in the HEIC. The Lopes of Maristow came from Jamaica; the Tiverton Heathcoat Amorys from Loughborough and the Cayes of Sidbury were Bristol bankers. Inheritance in the long settled families was not always in the direct line and the author patiently unwinds the complications of family relationships. A good example is the Carew family of Haccombe, Mohuns Ottery and Bickleigh. Each branch had an exciting and influential history in and outside the county. By the middle of the twentieth century the last of their Devon estates had gone. Other families had played important parts in national life and then either stood back or parted with most of their lands and so had no continuing base in the county. The not infrequent failure of direct lines has sometimes meant successors coming in from Australia or the United States.

Some families have been luckier than others in preserving continuity of occupation of the central estate, for example the Fursdons of Fursdon and the Fulfords of Great Fulford. Larger estates seem to have been vulnerable to marriage dowries and to division between family members leading ultimately to their forming part of estates based in other counties and so at risk of being broken up and sold in the interests of their non-Devon owners. As a balance there are instances of family members returning to the former principal residence and restoring it as a dwelling. The most striking, perhaps, is the return of the Gilberts to Compton Castle, which had been a ruin for several centuries. They rebuilt the house and bought back several hundred acres of land that had belonged to it. Other owners mentioned by the author have not been so fortunate.

The histories of the twenty-six families recounted in this book vary from those whose members have from time to time played leading parts in the government of the country to those who have been content to lead quiet lives, if possible, although their members have often earned distinction in their country's wars. Most of them are still attached to the land but there are many more that are not but who still live in the county. Those described are a good cross section. The book itself is well illustrated with



reproductions of photographs or paintings of leading family members and of the traditional seats. It follows the Halsgrove pattern of generous size and weight and has ample margins for the reader to use for comment or for the addition of further information. Such annotations would have to be made on return home because the book is not one to carry on visits.

*Adrian Reed*

**Regional Architecture of the West of England** by A.E. Richardson and C. Lovett Gill 1924. Facsimile edition with introduction by Simon Houfe 2001. Published by Halsgrove, Tiverton £24.95 Introduction & preface xiv; 187 pages + 203 illustrations. ISBN 1 84114 127 5.

Born in 1880, Albert Edward Robinson was articled at the age of fifteen to a London architect. He set up an architectural practice in 1906 and formed a partnership with Charles Lovett Gill, son of a Dawlish vicar. Richardson published this book in 1924 jointly with Gill whose main contribution was to supply most of the volume's excellent photographs.

The book forms a 1924 snapshot of significant buildings, apart curiously from churches, in the western region, which Richardson defines for the purposes of the book as Devonshire, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. Although, of course, the choice of date to take and record this 'snapshot' was fortuitous it could not have been better chosen. Many of the buildings described in the book were destroyed during the air raids of the 1939-45 war or were subsequently demolished to make way for contemporary development. The author's simple verbal descriptions of buildings with thumbnail sketches of details and excellent monochrome photographs are easily understood by non-technical readers, thus widening the book's appeal. A circus and a pair of crescents, Bedford, Barnfield and Colleton were built in Exeter by, it is thought, Matthew Nasworthy, between 1790 and 1800 and it is sad, when looking at the book's photographs to realise that Bedford Circus, the most beautiful, need not have been demolished after damage by the bombing. Richardson, an architect, is generous in his praise for Sir John Rennie, a civil engineer responsible for the design and construction of the Royal Victualling Yard at Stonehouse, and refers to the structures as 'among the monuments of this country.' Chapter IV is devoted to describing the development of the regional tradition in the Westcountry and quotes such extant buildings as the sixteenth century house on Exe Island, now called 'The Old Tudor House' with its slate shingling, the seventeenth century Italian influenced almshouses in Moretonhampstead and the eighteenth century Salutation Inn at Topsham. He expresses regret at the removal of the Doric columns of the inn coach entrance and replacement with brick, now incidentally painted white. A further three chapters describe the period from the reign of George I to early Victorian, giving such examples as Saltram House (c1725), Haldon House (1750), Maristowe (1740), Ugbrook (1730) and The Royal (1795-1820). A photograph of the Regency Winslade lodge at Clyst St Mary shows that, in 1924, it was almost as badly weathered as it is today. The design and building of Dartmoor Prison in the nineteenth century is described and it is interesting that on 18 July 1805 Thomas Tyrwhitt, Lord Warden of the Stannaries and auditor of the Duchy of Cornwall, and Daniel Asher Alexander, described by Richardson as an 'architect engineer', visited a number of sites on the moor in order to select one suitable for the prison. Six months later the plans were ready, a lease for 390 acres granted by the Duchy and on 24 May 1809 the first batch of 2500 prisoners marched up from Plymouth. Alexander was also responsible for various hous-

es for prison staff in Princetown. Buildings on the Isles of Scilly are described and the final chapter is an essay on physical features, building materials and techniques in the region and a description of roads, railways, canals and infrastructure generally.

Apparently, with one exception, this had rather indifferent reviews in 1924 but, nearly eighty years later, it comes across as a pleasant book written in a slightly antiquated style for the reader. Despite Pevsner's reference volumes there is still a secure place for Richardson and Gill in the scheme of things!

*D.L.B. Thomas*

**Hallsands - A Village betrayed.** By Steve Melia 2002. Published by Forest Publishing, Newton Abbot, Devon. 72 pages + 52 plates £4.95. ISBN 0 9536852 4 1.

Most Devonians know the story of Hallsands, a fishing village built between a near vertical cliff face and the sea shore of Start Bay about 3 kilometres south of Torcross. At high tide on the night of 26 January 1917 a southeasterly gale drove the shingle-laden waves over the sea walls and battered the buildings in the village. By the morning the village had been destroyed, the only buildings untouched being those at the top of the cliff. Fortunately no one was killed or seriously injured but families were rendered homeless and most of the fishing boats and equipment was damaged or destroyed.

This was not an isolated incident and the author seeks to demonstrate, by rehearsing the events leading up to the disaster, that it was not an act of God. It was generally accepted that the cause was linked to the removal by dredging of shingle from the village foreshore in order to provide aggregate for the manufacture of concrete in the Keyham Dock extension contract. This undermined the village buildings and exposed them to damage from storms and high tides. The dredging started in 1897. By 1900 damage to the sea wall and village properties was apparent and by March 1901 the coastal road was in a dangerous state. In 1902 dredging ceased at Hallsands but continued a few miles offshore for a further two years from the Skerries Bank described as a natural breakwater for the coastal villages in Start Bay. Damage to Hallsands continued until it culminated in the 1917 disaster.

The reaction of certain of the leading characters is interesting. There was much comment about the great restraint shown by the villagers although one, a Mrs Spital, described patronisingly as 'a housekeeper, an uneducated woman (with) no resources to go to law' sprung a surprise by issuing a writ, through her solicitor, against the contractor and a witness subpoena against the Board of Trade Inspector. The villagers were blessed with a conscientious MP, Frank Mildmay and a sympathetic Plymouth civil engineer, R. Hansford Worth, who placed his professional expertise at the disposal of the villagers mostly on an unpaid basis. It was a sign of the changing times, too, that the *Western Morning News* was able to launch a relief fund which raised sufficient donations from its readers to build four new houses on the cliff top for dispossessed villagers.

The author has prepared a readable history of events relating to the destruction of the fishing village from primary and printed sources and one cannot but feel sympathy for his conclusion that the State, despite having paid some compensation, still owes a debt to the community of Hallsands. The narrative illustrates the mechanics of central and local government legislation and procedures in the particular circumstances at that time and should provide a useful research tool.

*D L B Thomas*

**The Story of the Theatre Royal Exeter** by Dick Passmore. The Mint Press 2002. x 118 pages. 138 illustrations, some in colour. £17.99. ISBN 1-903356-21-0.

The bulk of this informative and enjoyable production opens with tragedy and closes with what some nowadays would regard as farce. As a prologue, the author sets out the early history of the theatre in Exeter and does so without the muddle and contradictions of many earlier accounts. The histories of the Seven Stars, the Waterbeer Street Theatre and its successors in Bedford Circus are well summarised; and in the case of the Waterbeer Street Theatre throw light on national eighteenth-century attitudes to 'the stage'. The first Bedford Circus Theatre was destroyed by fire in 1820. The second suffered the same fate in 1885. In keeping with the actor's regard for superstition, a third disaster was to come.

The fire of 1887 which destroyed not only Exeter's newly established Theatre Royal but also many lives, is well described and discussed; and, again, justifies more than local interest. The newly built Theatre Royal opened its doors in 1889 (unfortunately misprinted as 1879). From then on the book comes into its own, as does its author's affection and respect for his subject. Not only is the theatre building described in detail, but there are full accounts of its many varied productions. In view of their fame, particular attention is paid to the pantomimes. The performers are by no means neglected. Some were well known locally; others were nationally recognised 'stars'. Leading figures in the management of the theatre are presented, but not at the expense of their front-of-house and backstage staff. The more peripheral aspects dealt with include Exeter's theatre 'digs' and the special transport arrangements needed to ensure that audiences not only arrived on time but also returned home in safety and comfort. The account of the confusion, controversy and possible chicanery which led to the Theatre Royal's demolition in 1962 is well presented and analysed. As an epilogue, the author discusses the possibility of a new theatre comparable to the Theatre Royal being built in the city centre. One again, this has implications beyond Exeter.

There are many illustrations, all of high quality and some in colour. Some might have liked an index, but the lack of one is to an extent compensated for by the systematic manner in which the text is organised. As the work draws heavily on the author's memories and his collection of theatre memorabilia, detailed references would be superfluous. However, there is a bibliography for those wishing to delve further.

The reviewer understands that Dick Passmore is well-known for his enthusiasm for the local theatre, but his zeal does not overwhelm his objectivity. This is a comprehensive, well-researched book, and deserves a readership far beyond Exonians seeking no more than a trip down Memory Lane.

*Sadru Bhanji*

**Dartmoor Artists** by Brian Le Messurier. Halsgrove and the National Park Authority. 2002. 144 pages. Profuse colour illustrations. £19.95. ISBN 1 84111 165 8.

Brian Le Messurier's writings are well respected by those ranging from the casual visitor to Dartmoor wishing to do some 'homework' before setting out on a walk to those with an enduring academic interest in Dartmoor's history and topography. The work under review represents a new approach. Various artists and their impressions of Dartmoor are skilfully and interestingly presented. Comparable earlier publications are by no means as specific or as comprehensive as the book under consideration.

There being no 'Dartmoor School' to monopolise the book, the author sets out his artists in chronological order. Most are painters, but sculpturers, photographers and lithographers are included. The first section after the introduction concerns the early visits by well-known artists to the fringes of Dartmoor. These begin with that of John Inigo Richards (1731-1810), a former member and later secretary of the Royal Academy and end with that of J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851). Perhaps inspired by such eminent colleagues, a number of local artists took to Dartmoor as a source of inspiration. These form the subject of the next section. Possibly reflecting his taste, the reviewer found this the most pleasing. Others may well feel differently, and it is one of the merits of this book that all are catered for. Not only will each reader find his own favourite depiction of Dartmoor, but, more to the point, he will be given the opportunity to look further into the artist concerned. The third section is devoted to those families of artists who made a particular reputation out of their paintings of Dartmoor. The next two sections concern the arrival of the true 'Dartmoor Artist'. No longer regarding the moor as an occasional subject, a generation of artists of various sorts developed Dartmoor as their prime subject and used a variety of media to depict what they saw and felt.

A book of this complexity and length deserves an index. The reviewer was glad to find one. He was pleased to find also an ample bibliography. There is in addition a list of artists with tenuous connections to Dartmoor who may merit further study. This section may also point to the origin of the unattributed painting of Dartmoor hanging over the reader's mantelpiece. The illustrations, almost without exception in colour, are of a high quality. Accounts of the various and many artists are largely biographical. Some may feel that more attention should have been paid to analysing their style and technique, but this is not a publication intended primarily for art critics. On the other hand, they may well benefit from reading it. This book can be highly recommended to libraries and individuals with an interest in Devon and Dartmoor in particular or in landscape painting in general.

*Sadru Bhanji*

**A River to Cross:** a history of the Dartmouth ferries, by David Stranack. Published by the Dartmouth History Research Group in association with the Dartmouth Museum. 2002. iv + 56pp. Illustrated. £4. ISBN 1 899011 21 8

David Stranack has amassed a wealth of information about the three Dartmouth ferries. He commences with the oldest from 1365, the lower ferry, shows how its work was modified and complemented by the railway ferry and completes with the history of the higher ferry of 1831. For the lower ferry the landing stages were at Kittery Point on the Kingswear side and Bayards Cove on the Dartmouth side, and the ferry traversed one of the narrowest parts of the river. Until 1840 the crossing was provided by rowing boats for foot passengers only, but from then onwards a large float capable of carrying one horse drawn wagon was provided. So the settlement of Kingswear became established on the southern side of the Waterhead Creek.

On the northern side of the Waterhead Creek another ferry was established from Hoo Down to the New Ground at Dartmouth in the seventeenth century but this ceased with the coming of the railway to Kingswear in 1864. We read how the railway Act made specific provision for a ferry service to be operated between Kingswear and a station at Dartmouth that would have a landing place but no adjacent railway track.

Meanwhile, as in the early 1800s the pulling ferry between Kingswear and Bayards Cove could only carry one cart and horse across the river, James Rendel was asked to prepare a plan for bridging the Dart between Dittisham and Greenway with a suspension bridge. This proposal was unacceptable to the landowner so Rendel proposed a 'floating bridge' – a steam-driven platform that would carry passengers and vehicles across the river guided by chains with new approach roads on either side of the river. This, the Higher Ferry, began operations in August 1831, and its designer built many such ferries and eventually became President of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

The difficulties and dangers in the operation of all these ferries, and the names of all the people and organisations involved, have all been carefully detailed. On pages 7 and 19 the author has overlooked the fact that the railway had not only been built to Newton Abbot, but had reached Torre. The author concludes the book by asking the question whether a bridge should ever be built to Dartmouth. Perhaps such a structure would be both too costly and intrusive for the charm of this area. However this book is very good value indeed.

A.B.George

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## Devon Book of the Year

The Devon History Society selection panel for the Devon Book of the Year had a difficult choice when they met on 14 August to view some thirty titles, which were published in 2001. They finally made awards in three categories:

**1. General Devon History.** For a work which contributes in a new way to the understanding of the county's history: *The evolution of the fishing village: landscape and society along the south Devon coast, 1086-1550*, by Harold Fox, published by Leopard's Head Press. This work provides new insights into the early development of many Devon coastal communities.

**2. Community History.** For a work which provides new insight into an individual Devon community, relating it to wider trends: *Voices of Morebath: reformation and rebellion in an English village*, by Eamon Duffy, published by Yale University Press. While an academic work, this has been widely praised for the way in which it reflects the impact of a turbulent period in Tudor history on a Devon community. It also reflects the wealth of information which can be drawn from the study of a single source, in this case the churchwarden's accounts. Commended in this category was *Chronicles of the Exmouth foreshore*, written by James Saunders and published by the author. This is very much a one-man production, using desktop publishing and distribution in limited numbers rather than being conventionally published, but gathering together a wealth of information on the Exmouth foreshore.

**3. Special Topic.** For a work which makes a contribution to a specific aspect of Devon's heritage: *Devon thatch: an illustrated history of thatching and thatched buildings*, by Jo Cox and John R.L. Thorp, published by Devon Books. This is a beautifully illustrated and well-referenced volume on Devon's vernacular architecture. Commended in this category is *Philip & Son Ltd shipbuilders and engineers* by Derek Blackhurst, published by Ships in Focus, an extremely detailed account of the work of this Dartmouth firm.

The awards were announced at the annual general meeting of the Devon History Society in Exeter on 26 October.

Among the other works considered there were several millennium compilations by individual communities which arrived too late to be considered for last year's award, for example *The story of Weare Giffard: a millennium project written by the community for the community*, edited by Keith Hughes and published by him, *Memories from the mill: a collection of historical items of the hamlet of Hele*, compiled and published by Mrs Paddy Marsh. Halsgrove were responsible for a number of well produced items, unfortunately not indexed, such as *The book of Rattery: a portrait in words and pictures*, compiled by the people of the parish, *The book of Cullompton: celebrating a Devonshire market town*, compiled by the people of the parish, and *The book of Hemyock, heart of the Blackdowns*, compiled by Brian Clist & Chris Dracott. *Population and society in an East Devon parish: reproducing Colyton 1540-1840*, by Pamela Sharpe, published by the University of Exeter, was an excellent academic study of a well-documented community. Other local publications include: *Sidmouth: the war years, 1939-1945*, compiled and published by John Ankins, and a pamphlet entitled *The religious history of Bampton, Devon from Saxon times to the twentieth century*, by T.J. Francis, published by Fort Press. On a countywide level, the Mint Press with the *Concise histories of Devon* series has enlisted specialist historians to present different periods of Devon's past in a novel pocket format.

Among special topics represented are: public houses: *The Warren House Inn, Dartmoor*, by Tom Greeves and Elisabeth Stanbrook (Quay Publications), stag hunting - *The Tiverton Staghounds* written and published by Richard Lethbridge, speedway racing - *The story of Exeter speedway, Volume 3: the Falcons and the phoenix 1954-1964* by Tony Lethbridge (Ali-Kat Publications), railways - *The Okehampton line: the Southern Railway route between Exeter, Tavistock and Plymouth*, by John Nicholas and George Reeve (Irwell Press.), the fire services - *Topsham's burning! a short history of the Topsham Fire and Rescue Service*, by Colin Piper (Topsham Museum Society), cricket - *Three shades of green: the first century of the Devon Dimplings*, (St Leonard's Press), mail services - *Landy packets*, by Mike Tedstone (Twelveheads Press), smuggling - *Smuggling on the Exmoor coast 1680-1850* by John Travis (Exmoor Society) and pottery, *Candy Art pottery: a history of art pottery manufactured at the Candy & Co factory*, by Ian Turner (Hillain Press). All in all these represent a wide range of publications from a great variety of publishers. The *Devon bibliography* is no longer published in printed format but the issue for 2001, which lists all these titles and more, can be seen on the Devon Local History website at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/library/locstudy/devbib01.html>

Ian Maxted  
County Local Studies Librarian

## NOTICES AND NEWS

In his contribution in volume 65 of the *Devon Historian* entitled 'The development of Devon's road system', Brian George greatly regrets that in the Sources of Reference and Suggestions for Further Reading, while mentioning Devon Roads edited by Michael Hawkins, he omitted drawing attention to chapter 1 for which the copyright is held by D L B Thomas, particularly as he drew heavily from that particular chapter in the early part of the paper.

**Ottery St Mary** celebrated 2002 by producing the 216 page softback *Golden Jubilee book of Ottery St Mary*, covering the years between Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee and that of Queen Elizabeth II. Sponsored by Heritage lottery, Ottery St Mary Town Council, and East Devon Council, and produced by a team of society members with Hazel Abley as researcher and compiler, the work does not purport to be a history, but rather a 'pot-pourri of memories'. Most of the 115 years are covered individually with items of local or relevant national news and many interesting photographs, all very attractively arranged.

The Ottery St Mary Heritage Society's programme of talks for 2003 includes:

Ron Salter	History of the Devonshire Regiment	APR 15
Tom Brooks	An Intelligent Stone Age Society?	May 20
Miss Peggy Cooke	The Village School 60 Years Ago	JUN 17
Chris Wakefield	A Field Trip	JUL 15
Tom Coleman	History of Devon Farmhouses	SEP 16
Jim Hansen	Royal Letters	OCT 21
Mrs Anne Willoughby	Exeter Cathedral with special reference to Grandisson	NOV 18

**Wembury Local History Society** Programme for 2003 includes:

20 MARCH	The Polish Community – Joe Loosemore
17 APRIL	Field Archaeology in South Devon – Robert Waterhouse
15 MAY	Film Show – presented by South West Film & TV Archive
18 SEPTEMBER	History of Theatres in Plymouth – Jan Horrell
16 OCTOBER	Hallsands – Steve Melia
20 NOVEMBER	An Evening With Julian Richards – Julian Richards

Meetings are normally held in the Knight Room, Wembury Memorial Hall, commencing at 7.30pm.

Contact: Hon. Sec. Mrs S. Johnson, 01752 863 252

**Ringmore Historical Society** Programme for 2003 includes:

Weds 16 April: Agatha Christie – Literary daughter of south Devon

Talk by Mr John Ridsden

Tues 10 June: Summer visit, to be arranged.

Weds 12 November: AGM, elections, business, talk.

Further events to be announced in the Ringmore Newsletter.

The society, of Ringmore near Kingsbridge, also researches the history of the village.

Several publications have already been produced.

Contact: Meetings and visits secretary Mrs M. Stark, 01548 810324

### Axminster Historical Society

Mrs Margaret Dangerfield (01297 33326) has provided details of the society's meetings, which are held at the Masonic Hall, South Street, Axminster at 7.30pm.

Those arranged for 2003 include:

**Thursday March 6th** After the AGM, Margaret and John Dangerfield will try to show how two men with strong Axminster connections were nationally and internationally famous in their chosen area of study. Their subject is *'The Gentlemen Geologists of Axminster'*.

**Thursday April 3rd** Mrs Carolyn Keep will speak about *'The Devon Gardens Trust'*, which is concerned with the historic aspects of gardens in Devon.

**Thursday May 1st** Glanville Magor will tell us about Brunel's attempt to do something different, in his talk about *'The South Devon Atmospheric Railway'*.

**Abridged Report and Minutes of the thirty second  
Annual General Meeting  
held at the University of Exeter School of Education  
on 26 October 2002**

NB: the formal Report and Minutes containing transcripts of the officers' annual reports will be available for inspection at the 2003 AGM or may be inspected at reasonable hours by appointment with the Honorary Secretary.

**Present:** the President, Dr W B Stephens, was in the Chair and members as listed in the attendance register were present.

**1. Apologies** for absence were reported from Dr Sadru Bhanji; Mr J Dilley; Dr Harold Fox; Mr RA Letcher; Professor Nicholas Orme; Mr John Pike; Miss G B Westell and Mrs P Wootton.

**2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting:** the full Report and Minutes of the thirty-first Annual General Meeting, an abbreviated version of which had been printed in *The Devon Historian No 61*, was approved by those present and signed by the President.

**3. Matters arising out of the Minutes:** the question of whether all Members could use the County Record Office without payment in the same way as members of affiliated societies was said by the County Archivist not to be practicable at present.

**4. Honorary Secretary's Annual Report:** since the annual general meeting held in 2001, the Council of the Society had met on three occasions and there had been two conferences. The Spring conference was held at Ottery St Mary and that in the Summer at Buckfastleigh. These and the present AGM were arranged by Miss Elizabeth Maycock to whom the Society owes a debt of gratitude.

On 4 May a small ceremony was held at Lee Mount in Copplestone to mark the fixing of a plaque provided by the Society to commemorate Ernest Bevin's stay there early in his life. The provision and fixing of the plaque was arranged by Mr Robin Stanes. Seventeen books were submitted by publishers for review during the year and of these nine were reviewed in the April and eight in the October edition.

Miss Lorna Smith had prepared an index in manuscript form for *The Devon Historian* from 1969 to 2001. This had been put on disk and sent to the printers for a quotation. It is hoped that the index will be sent out with *The Devon Historian* of April 2003.

The Honorary Secretary proposed and Mr Tony Collings seconded that Mr David Pike should be appointed Auditor in accordance with the Constitution for the period until next Annual General Meeting.

This was approved *nem con*.

**5. Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report:** in the absence of the Honorary Treasurer, his report was read by the Honorary Secretary. Membership on 30 September 2002 was: honorary life members – 2; life members 15; ordinary members 228; family members 29 making a total of 274. Affiliated societies were 53 and corporate members 28.

Referring to the financial report:

	2002	2001
Gross income	£4475.45	£4776.69
Gross Expenditure	£4367.15	£4072.62
Excess of income over expenditure	£108.30	£704.07

Building Society Account

Transfer in	£480.00
Interest	£139.66

Carried forward to 2002/2003 £5173.35 plus £5081.37 with Building Society.

The Treasurer reported that the Charities' Commission, in order to allow for a precipitate fall in funding, had suggested that charities should allow a safe balance between 'safe reserves' and expenditure, say, between two and three. In the case of this Society, the ratio for the previous year was 2:2.35.

The Treasurer did not suggest any increase in membership subscriptions at present.

**6. Honorary Editor's Annual report:** the Honorary Editor reported that issues 64 and 65 were published in April and October of this year. She expressed the thanks of the Society to the Honorary Secretary for despatching the 400 or so volumes twice annually.

A year ago Penwell, who had printed the journal since 1985, ceased trading during a crucial production period of the April issue. The firm was able to deal with this and subsequently a new company – Four Way Print – was established. This includes staff who previously handled work for the Society so that continuity has been maintained. The Editor expressed thanks to all who contributed articles for *The Devon Historian* and also those who had provided the reviews of books.

She asked members to keep contributions coming and mentioned that the deadline for the next edition is 30 November.

**7. Election of President:** the presiding President, Dr W B Stephens, handed over the chairmanship to the Council Chairman for this item.

Mr Adrian Reed said that Professor Nicholas Orme has agreed to serve as President of the Society if elected.

Mr Reed proposed and Mr G F Quinn seconded that Professor Orme should be elected President for a three year term from the Annual General Meeting to be held in October 2003.

The proposition was approved *nem con*.

**8. Election of Members of Council:** the Honorary Secretary reported that no nominations for officers or other members of the Council had been received. Four members of Council (Messrs Clist, Collings, Maxted and Stanes), having served for three years and retired under rule 4(b) of the Constitution were re-elected as were the officers of the Council.

Mrs Sheila Stirling and Professor Joyce Youngs were confirmed as co-opted members of the Council.

**9. Any other business:** Mr Stanes said that, as the placing of a plaque to Ernest Bevin had been considered a success, he thought a further plaque should be erected, this time to Professor Hoskins. It could be erected at three sites, namely, St Leonard's Road, Lyndhurst Road or St David's Hill with a possible fourth, at Brampford Speke. He

thought that other organisations with whom Professor Hoskins had been associated would contribute to the cost of about £140. Mr Peter Beacham, Dr Harold Fox and Dr Michael Havinden had expressed favour for the project. Dr Gray said that the reason this subject had been brought up was to seek guidance on whether the erection of plaques is something the Society should be doing. If it was decided to go ahead with the erection of plaques, local history societies should be involved. Mr Le Messurier strongly supported the idea of erecting the plaque and said that this should be negotiated with Professor Hoskins' daughter. Mr Adrian Reed questioned whether this is the best way to spend the Society's money. Would not spending the money as a prize for an essay be a better use? Mr Maxted said that persons selected to be commemorated by a plaque should be historians. Mr Ransom suggested that members of the Society who wished to express views on the viability of the erection of plaques or any other matter should write expressing their views to the Honorary Secretary for referral to the Council. This suggestion was agreed.

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## END PIECES

Contributed by Anthony Greenstreet

Extracts from issues of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1789 includes a report of a visit to Plymouth by King George III and Queen Charlotte

The outbreak of the French Revolution gave a special cause of concern to the British propertied classes. The October 1789 magazine reported in detail the attack by the mob on Versailles when the Royal Family was taken back to Paris, and the heads of the royal guards had been 'shewn about the streets on tent poles, as a further specimen of the savageness and ferocity of the Parisian mob'. How different things were in England! And how reassured the readers of the December 1789 magazine must have been to read a belated, but fully detailed, report of the British Royal Family's visit to Plymouth from 15 to 25 August.

Here at Plymouth there was, by contrast with France, an outpouring of popular enthusiastic loyalty, reciprocated by expressions of royal gratification and benignity. The royal barge was accompanied by 'A very handsome cutter, rowed by six fine young women, and steered by a seventh, all habited in loose white gowns, with nankeen safeguards, and black bonnets, each wearing a sash across her shoulders of royal purple, with Long live their Majesties! in gold'. So great was the popular enthusiasm to greet the royal family that on 17 August a crowded sloop overturned off Mutton Cove, 'and not less that thirty persons were plunged into the water': (the *Gentleman's Magazine's* diary of the royal visit however stated on the following day that this report had 'been rather exaggerated. . . not more than twelve persons perished!') The diary for 19 August must have strongly reassured the magazine's readers that all was well between royalty and the people: 'The goodness of their Majesties' hearts never shone more conspicuously than upon the unhappy occasion of the sloop's upsetting. . . Their Majesties sent very particularly to enquire into the circumstances, and ordered, where assistance was necessary, that it should be supplied at their Majesties' expense.'

## UNIVERSITY OF EXETER PRESS

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Mark Stoyle

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