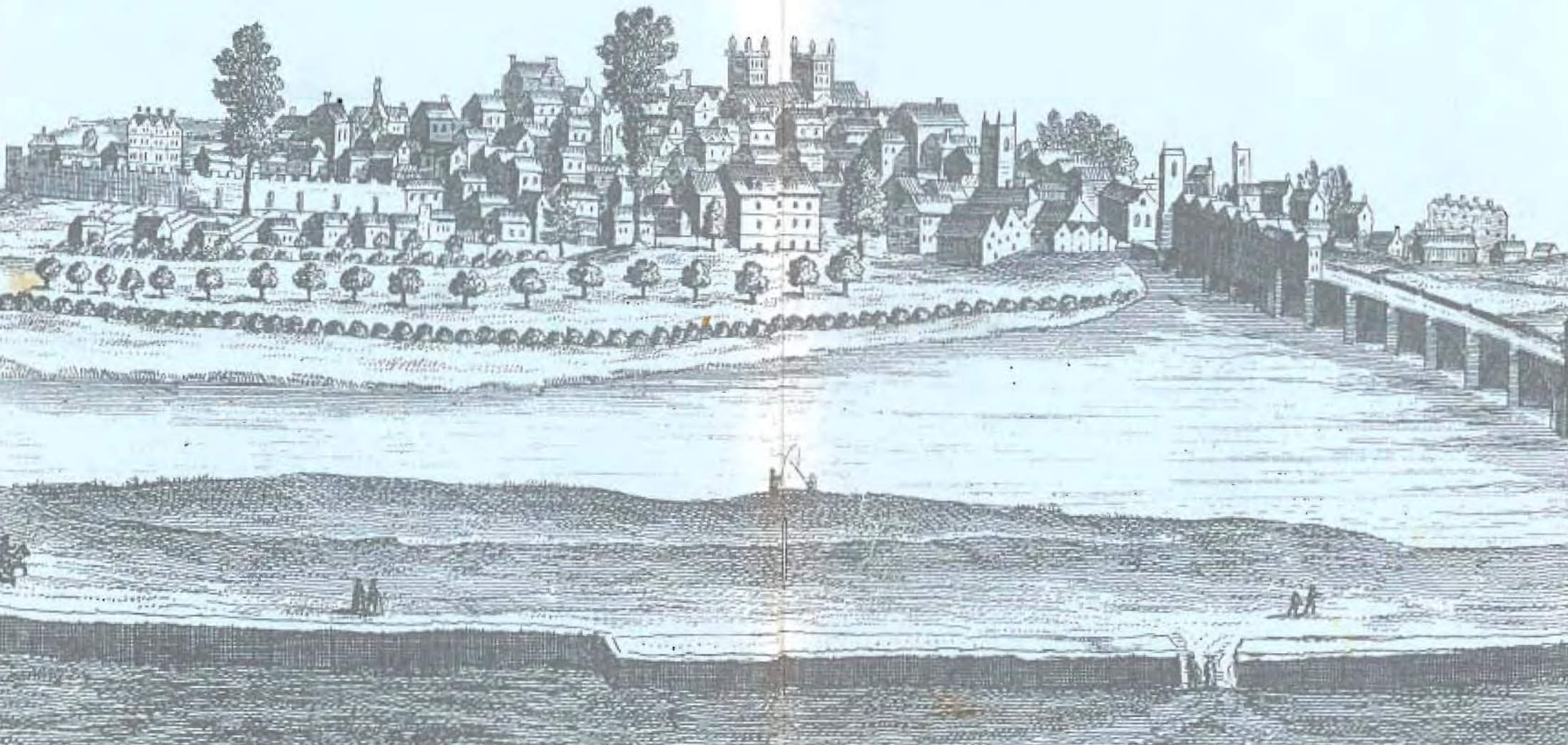


The Devon Historian

April 2005

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Correspondence relating to *The Devon Historian* and contributions for publication should be sent to Dr Andrew Jackson, Hon Editor *The Devon Historian*, Department of Lifelong Learning, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, EX1 2LU (A.J.H.Jackson@exeter.ac.uk). The deadline for the next issue is 1 July 2005. Books for review should be sent to Dr Sadru Bhanji, 13 Elm Grove Road, Topsham, Devon EX3 0EQ who will invite the services of a reviewer. It is not the policy of the Society to receive unsolicited reviews.

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The Society will meet at Bradninch on 19 March, 2005, and at Holsworthy on 25 June.

The print on the front cover is *Prospect of Exeter 1723* by W Stukeley 1724. S.C. 924

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DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Current and back issues of *The Devon Historian* are available from the Honorary Secretary. 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.

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.: 1 July 2005, etc. Where possible, please supply the text also on floppy disc compatible with Microsoft word, in addition to the print-out copy.

DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY WEBSITE

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CRISPIN GILL

Crispin Gill, who died on 24 November at the age of 88, was a noted journalist and an outstanding local historian in Devon, and particularly of Plymouth. He was President of the Devon History Society from 1986-9.

Brought up and educated in Plymouth, Crispin Gill joined the *Western Morning News* and *Evening Herald* as an apprentice staff reporter in 1934. His work brought him into close contact with the city and its ramifications and nourished his feelings for history. During the Second World War he served in the Army, latterly in the Motor Boat Companies of the Royal Army Service Corps, attaining the rank of Captain before demobilisation in 1946. He returned to the *Western Morning News* as chief sub-editor, and later became assistant editor of the paper from 1950-71. He then moved to Oxfordshire for a decade to edit *The Countryman*, overseeing a notable rise in the magazine's circulation. On retiring back in the Plymouth area he concentrated further on writing, completing over twenty books about Plymouth and the South West.

The first volume of Crispin Gill's history of Plymouth – which, as he noted, was 'checked through chapter by chapter by W.G.Hoskins' – was published in 1966; the second volume followed in 1979. Crispin revised both for his third edition: *Plymouth a new history*, published by Devon Books in 1993. As he wrote in his second volume and repeated in his Introduction to the third: 'The writing of history is never done. Not only does Plymouth go on, but there is so much that has gone before that is still hidden'.

There must be many investigators and writers of local history who have cause to be grateful for opportunities that Crispin enabled. For me, he was a valued and kindly mentor from the mid 1960s when he accepted my articles for the *Western Morning News*, later when acting as consulting editor for my *Industrial Archaeology* of Dartmoor, and in the 1980s when he invited me to write the chapter on Dartmoor for the comprehensive book *The Duchy of Cornwall* which he edited with such style. His numerous other publications include smaller books on various aspects of Plymouth life and buildings including St Andrew's Church, which held a special place for him. His other interests included Scouting, the YMCA, yachting, and Dartmoor. He was made OBE in 1981, and was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Plymouth in 1995.

Crispin Gill's first wife, Molly, with whom he had a son and two daughters, died in 1971. The following year he married Betty, who died in 1997. Finally he married Ana, who survives him with his four grandchildren. His son – also called Crispin – and two daughters sadly all predeceased him.

Helen Harris

EDITORIAL

This will be the last issue of *The Devon Historian* to come to you under my editorship and I feel it appropriate to thank all those who have so willingly contributed to its production since I took over twenty years ago. Looking back over past issues one finds, amongst the many who have provided articles and reviews, names that recur through the pages. The late John Pike, Brian George, and Robin Stanes have been stalwarts. Also remembered from early days is Keith S. Perkins, who wrote engagingly of his researches into past civil engineering projects. Then came Adrian Reed, D.L.P. Thomas, Christopher Scott, Bill Ransom, Anthony Greenstreet and Philip Carter. There have been many others, all remembered but too numerous to include here. The quality of a journal is vitally dependent on the knowledge and labours of its contributors, and I have been fortunate indeed to benefit from so many faithful writers.

Technology has changed since 1985. At that time a few papers were still submitted in handwriting, but most as typewritten text – of varying quality! Within a few years some writers acquired the new-fangled computer, and were keen to submit material so produced. Usually these were not the easiest to read (leave alone to edit), with their pale silvery characters and close setting. During the '90s the more legibly-friendly printers became general, and now we have the added advantage of discs (although occasionally, where not fully compatible, these can be a mixed blessing to the isolated editor).

I cannot end without a word of appreciation to our printers. Although the firm has changed, some staff members have been continuous, notably Evan Jones who has consistently interpreted my red-penned margin notes with much co-operation.

As you will know, I am handing over to a very competent successor, Dr Andrew Jackson, who introduces himself in the following article.

Helen Harris

ON LOCAL HISTORY, HISTORY, HERITAGE AND THE DEVON HISTORIAN

Andrew JH Jackson

In April 2005 I take up the editorship of *The Devon Historian*. Ten years ago I wrote my first ever paper for publication, and submitted it to this journal. The editor, Helen Harris, accepted it with kindly encouragement. I would like to express my thanks to Helen for preparing me for the indeed honorary task of the editorship. I would also like to thank her for this opportunity to present a note of introduction to myself here, in the last edition of the journal under her editorial care.

I grew up in Devon, having been born in Exeter in 1966. Spells at university have taken me out of the county: history and geography at Swansea, the celebrated MA in English Local History at Leicester, and doctoral studies on country houses and landed estates at University College London – much of my research for this was conducted at Powderham Castle. It was during these periods of higher education that my enthusiasm for the study of both local history and the county of Devon emerged and then deepened. I have not always been an academic. For a number of years I was variously employed as an archivist surveying and recording churchyards, a cultural history and walking tour leader, a local government officer, and a bookseller specialising in archi-

tectural history texts. For the last seven years, however, I have been working for the Department of Lifelong Learning (formerly the Department of Continuing and Adult Education), University of Exeter, currently as a Teaching Fellow. One of my first courses was in local history, taught in partnership with Robin Stanes, in his last year as a contributor to the university's extra-mural programmes. Currently I lead a programme of courses in Humanities and Visual Culture, and also co-lead the Historical Studies programme. I develop and teach various courses, for both classroom and internet-based delivery, in the fields of local history, rural history, garden history, the history of the country house, heritage, as well as the broader history of early modern and modern Britain. I now live in East Devon with my wife, a priest in the Church of England, and two young daughters.

In the paper submitted by me for publication in *The Devon Historian* some ten years ago, I wrote about the author, Henry Williamson. The article considered his claim to the title of the 'serious historian of the village' – the village being Georgeham in North Devon.¹ Williamson could rightly declare this in two regards. First, he dutifully and foresightedly chronicled aspects of a disappearing culture, such as dialect words, local customs and beliefs, and the nature of kin and class relations. He also accomplished another dimension to his 'local history', that of conjuring up a sense of time and place. This is a more illusive and hazardous goal for the local historian, the ability to create in the imagination a readership a notion of what contemporaries thought and felt about their times and their locale, without being tempted into conjecture or romanticising. Williamson's writing, then, offers something of both a factual record and a more subjective impression of rural and community life in the early twentieth century.

What can be identified in Williamson's writings also points to broader understandings of the main purposes of local history, that is, in terms of its relationship with history and heritage. First, but not necessarily foremost, local history finds a key role as a part of the wider discipline of history, for it is an 'unearther' and conveyor of factual knowledge. Overwhelmingly it is a primary activity, generating an array of data that contributes to the body of historical knowledge, which in turn has the potential to support or thwart generally held understandings about 'national' history.² Second, local history is also heritage, for its pursuit is driven by the urge to, variously, recollect, record, articulate, celebrate or perpetuate understandings of local historical pasts.³ This is the more emotive dimension of local history, one which helps form identities, whether of individuals, families, groups, communities or regional societies.⁴ It is what helps motivate and sustain the activities of, amongst others, the solitary antiquary, detached academic, family historian, community history group or county history society.⁵

The Devon Historian has a part to play in these processes: informing and refreshing the historical record, and, as a dimension of heritage, facilitating the forging of senses of identity, local and regional.

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THE MANORS OF SIGFORD AND STAPLEHILL, ILSINGTON

Bill Ransom

Introduction

The ownership and descent of the principal manors of Ilsington parish, namely Ilsington, Ingsdon and Bagtor, have been reported elsewhere.^{1,2,3} There remained two further small manors within the parish included in the Domesday Book, namely Sigford and Staplehill.

Sigford

The name is thought to derive from the Saxon, *Sigga*⁴ and the settlement probably dates from the seventh century A.D. Possibly *Sigga*'s ford was at, or near, the confluence of the Langworthy Brook and the Rivers Sig and Lemon where the hamlet of Lower Sigford lies today. In the Exeter Domesday Book it is shown as being held by Salomos from Roald Dubbed (the dubbed one referring no doubt to a knightship conferred on Roald by the Conqueror). Just prior to 1086 it was held by Brietric. It was very small with land estimated to be capable of supporting 1½ ploughs though only then having ½ plough. Pasture was recorded of 8 acres, woodland 6 acres and it was home to five sheep, ten goats and one cow. No villagers were reported at all, an unusual but not unique example in a Domesday manor. (The neighbouring small manor of Bagtor had eight villagers and possibly the land in Sigford was tended by labour from there). Like Bagtor and Staplehill it was in the Hundred of Wonford.

After the Conquest the earliest reference found was in 1284-6⁵.

Joelus de Bukyngton tenet villam de Sigeford pro homagio et servicio de Robert de Dyneham, et idem Roberto de commitissa et comitissa de rege et est quarta pars f. (Joel of Bickington holds Sigford for homage and service from Robert Dynham who held it from the countess and the countess from the king and is a quarter of a knight's fee).

In 1303 a Joelus de Buketon is shown as holding a quarter of a knight's fee⁶ and in 1316 Hugh de Courtenay, who was then Lord of the Hundred of Wonford, included in his holdings the 'ville' of Sigford⁷. In 14 Edward III (1341) an *Inquisition post mortem* (IPM) on John Daumarle showed that he held Sigford for a quarter part of a knight's fee from the castle of Plympton⁸.

By 1346:⁹

Joel de Bukyngton pro quarti parte un f.m. in Sigford tenta de honore de Plympton i.e. quam Andreas de Tresek quondam tenuit. (Joel of Bickington for a quarter of a knight's fee in Sigford held of the honour of Plympton in chief which Andrew of Telesk once held).

It has not been established whether Andrew held Sigford before or after 1284.

In 1346, too, Feudal Aids shows that:

De Johanne Holonde pro xx ma parte un f.m. in Siggeforde de La Cleyve et Toppesham tenta de Johanne de Bukyngton i.e. quam Joelus de Bukyngton quondam tenuit ijs (John Holonde for one twentieth part of a knight's fee in Sigford of the Cleave and Topsham held of John de Bukyngton in chief which Joel de Bukyngton once held 2s).¹⁰

Why Sigford is referred to as in a cleave is not known and no other such references

have been noted. (Topsham also was in Wonford Hundred).

On 10 June 1355 an IPM on Joel de Bukyngton showed that he then held Sigford from John Daumarle at a rent of 24s. his heir being Stephen Joel aged 14 years.¹¹ By 15 Richard II (1392) an inquest on Margaret, widow of Hugh de Courtenay, showed Sigford as held by John Daumarle.¹² In 1428 Feudal Aids shows that a John Copleston and Henry Merwode held between them, but separately, a quarter of a knight's fee in Sigford which in the past had been held by Joelus de Bukyngton.¹³

In 8 Henry VII (1493) a Ralph Coplestone held the manors of Shyggeford and Lovelane of the Bishop of Exeter by fealty only and worth four marks.¹⁴ The Coplestones were still in possession in 1550 when an Inquisition on John at Exeter Castle showed he held it of the Bishop of Exeter.¹⁵ It was still an identifiable manor in 1563 for at that date it passed from the Coplestone family, an entry in the Calendar of Enrolled Deeds¹⁶ showing a bargain and sale by Christopher Coplestone to Robert Hayman of Newton Abbot of the 'two manners or lordeschippes called Sigfforde and Lovelane. . .'. Fourteen years later a John Hayman sold the manors of Sigford and Lovelane to his brother Nicholas.¹⁷ No further documentary evidence has been found specifically referring to Sigford as a manor. In the sixteenth century George Ford was active in land transactions in the parish of Ilsington and in neighbouring parishes and it is possible, though only conjectural, that at some stage he, or his heirs, purchased Sigford but there are no entries to show this in the Calendar of Enrolled Deeds.

By 1818 the Court Rolls for the manors of Ilsington and Bagtor show William Ball, Grace Layman and John Eales of Lower Sigford and John Ackland of Oxenham's Sigford in the list of commoners attending. It is clear by that date that Sigford as a manor in its own right had been subsumed probably by Bagtor rather than Ilsington.

Staplehill

The name may simply signify a steep hill but if so would seem to suggest the hill referred to is what is known today as Ingsdon hill for both Lower and Higher Staplehill. (see below) are not on elevated ground. In 1086 it was held by Nicholas the Bowman preceded by Brietwold presumably a Saxon.

The land was estimated as capable of supporting two ploughs but in 1086 only had half a plough. Staplehill would seem to be substantially larger than Sigford and did have three villagers and four smallholders. A suggestion has been made elsewhere that in those early times Staplehill may have comprised what later became Lower Staplehill in Ilsington parish and Higher Staplehill in Highweek parish.¹⁸

Documentary evidence of its descent is sparse. Following the Conquest the earliest reference found is around 1241 when Roger de Stapelhill held it.¹⁹ By 1285 together with Stoke in Teignhead, it was held by Robert:

Robertus filius Pagani tenet villam de Stoke in Tynhyde et de Staplehill pro homagio et servicio de comitissa, et idem de rege et est j.f.

It is highly probable that this Robert was a descendant of Ralph Pagenal who in 1086 held the manors of both Ilsington and Ingsdon. (It is interesting to note that Nicholas' holdings of Holbeam and Bagtor were, by 1285, also in the hands of Robert). Robert was clearly an overlord and it is probable that the heirs of Roger de Stapelhill were in possession.

By 1303 Emma de Stapelhill with her sisters held it for a half fee of 20s.²⁰ they were stated to be the heirs of John de Stapelhill.²¹ In 1346 Richard Monsron and John de Stapelhill held it for half a knight's fee from the capital manor of Stoke in Teignhead.²²

Thus:

De Ricardo Monsron et Johanna de Stapelhull pro. di. l.m. in Stapelhull tento de Stoke in Tonhude i.c. quod Emma Stapylhull cum soribus suis quondam tenuit.

In 1377 Staplehill was held by William de Brightelegb for half a knight's fee²³ and some fifty years later in 1428 was held by John Staplehill, Geoffrey Polyng and Geoffrey Daran for half a knight's fee.²⁴ Thereafter no specific reference to Staplehill which could be implied as its being a manor in its own right has been found.

The Land Tax Assessment records show that in 1780 Lower Staplehill was owned by Lord Clifford of Chudleigh who also owned adjacent lands and he continued so to do until 1810. The owner then was James Templer and in 1827 George, his son, followed in 1830 by Lord Seamore. James and George Templer and Lord Seamore were successive-ly the Lords of the manors of both Bagtor and Ilsington. Some time between 1428 and 1780 Staplehill had ceased to be considered as a manor with an overlord and any matters relating to its land and owners would have been dealt with probably by the Ilsington manor court.

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Abbreviations: *IPM* Inquisition post mortem. *TDA* Transactions of the Devonshire Association

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EXE BRIDGES IN EXETER

D L B Thomas

There is no reliable evidence of the date that man built his first bridge in Devon or anywhere else for that matter. Felled and fashioned timber set in a pattern that might have been a part of a bridge or a causeway has been discovered in the beds of a number of watercourses including the Thames, the Wye, the Mersey and the Somerset Levels, for example, and radio carbon dating or dendrochronology has pointed towards construction as early as the Mesolithic Age. As regards crossing the Exe, there is evidence in the form of Hellenistic coins that indicated the Exeter area was inhabited about 200 BC by a trading people sufficiently sophisticated, one imagines, to construct a simple timber bridge across the river at the south west end of the ridgway about the site of the existing Exe Bridges.

Roman occupation of Exeter started about 50 AD and by 120 AD a formal town had been established with, by 200 AD, a defensive masonry wall, some of which exists today. There seems not much doubt that the Romans, as accomplished engineers, would have designed and built a replacement for the earlier bridge, probably on the same site. This might have been a timber trestle structure like Caesar's bridge over the Rhine in 55BC¹ or might have had masonry abutments and piers and a timber deck such as Oakford Bridge prior to 1991 (Fig 1)².



Whatever the construction of the bridge, it was, according to Exeter's first historian, Hooker, in a very poor and dangerous condition during the twelfth century. He wrote that it was 'onely certayne Clappers of Tymbre wch s'vd for men to passe over on foote but in the wynter the passage was very daungerose and many people therby perished and wer carryed away with floude and Drowned.'³

This was the period when the more important bridges were being rebuilt in masonry rather than timber. Peter de Colechurch began the stone bridge over the Thames in London in 1173; Hugh Pudsey, Bishop of Durham, did likewise with Elvet Bridge in 1174 while, on the Continent, St Bénézet started to build a twenty-three masonry arch bridge over the Rhône in Avignon.

Hooker described how the finance and building of the medieval Exe Bridge came about. Nicholas and his son Walter Gervase 'two good men thought betwene theyme selfes to devise howe a bridge might be buylded...' and decided that the father should take on organisation of the construction while Walter would make a general collection 'through out the whole Realme' ³ for the money needed. Building of this new bridge probably started about 1190 and would have taken about thirty years to complete. It seems likely that Gervase's bridge had twelve arches for, at an Inquisition held in 1290 and involving Isabella, Countess of Devon, the suppliant refers to 'a brydge called Exebridge a comon waye for all yor leige people wthout westgate contayninge twelffe Arches' ⁴ William of Worcester in 1488 gave the number of arches as sixteen and the length 200 paces, about 600 feet (182.88m),⁵ but Leland, in 1543 referred to 'Excester Bridge of xiiij (14) Archis'.⁶ In 1635 a lieutenant from Norwich noted that on the Exe there was 'a faire stone Bridge of 20 Arches'.⁷ Schellinks' 1662 drawing shows ten arches to which should be added another two hidden by buildings⁸ and Oliver (1821) gives the number as twelve.⁹ During an archaeological survey of the bridge carried out in 1975 an additional arch was discovered and a bulletin published by the Exeter Museum states that 'It is now clear that there were seventeen arches in the mediaeval bridge.'¹⁰ It does seem likely, though, that the bridge was built as a twelve arch structure and any additions were to provide support to associated structures. Walter Gervase collected 10,000 marks (£6,666) to finance the bridge and this was sufficient 'to buylde a very fayre bridge of stone but also purchased land which they gave to the same for a ppetuall meaintenance thereof.' ³

As with other pre-Reformation bridges of any substance, a church was built at the



Fig. 2

same time as the bridge and as a part of it. The church of St Edmund '*super pontem Exon*' was built at the eastern end of the bridge, its first rector, Vivian, being admitted by Bishop Bronescombe on 25 August 1265'.¹¹ The church was extensively rebuilt in about 1450, part of which included a new bell tower (*novi campanilis*), for which, on 2 February 1448-9, Bishop Lacy made a grant of the usual forty days indulgence to those contributing towards its cost.¹² In 1800 the tower was struck by lightning, and in 1833 the church was demolished, rebuilt in the following year. On the downstream side of the bridge, opposite St Edmund's, was the smaller Chantry Chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded by Walter Gervase and his wife, Alice, in 1257. This, like St Edmund's was demolished in 1833 but was not rebuilt.

Nine of the arches of this bridge remain (Fig 2), the most westerly having part of its western haunch missing. From the eastern end of the bridge, the first four arches and the sixth are semi-circular (Fig 3) with wide ribs and unchamfered arrises and, apart from a small amount of limestone repair, are built of trap. The eighth arch is similar except that the voussoirs are of trap and limestone. The other arches (Fig 4) are pointed in shape, built in three orders, with narrow ribs and chamfered arrises. Stone for these is a mixture of trap and limestone. Some cutwaters are intact and most are generally triangular on plan. The walking surface of the bridge was laid in 1974 with a section of an earlier paving preserved about half way along the bridge on the north side. Spans vary from about 11 feet 10 inches (3.60m) to about 18 feet 5 inches (5.61m), the pier widths, apart from that at the eastern end, being a fairly constant 18 feet (5.49m). Piers are 'abutment piers' as was common with



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

early medieval bridges.¹³ The width of the present path over the structure is about 12 feet 10 inches (3.93m) and, if the original parapets had been 12 inches (457mm) wide, the width between parapets would have been about 10 feet (3.05m). Ribs on the semi-circular arches are 10½ inches (267mm) deep by 17½ inches (445mm) wide and those of the pointed arches 10½ inches (267mm) deep by 10½ inches (267mm) wide. Chamfers are out of 3½ inches (88mm) square. The length of the bridge is approximately 70 yards (64m). The remains of the medieval bridge were restored and formally opened by the Mayor on 12 May 1977 after the two present concrete bridges were completed.

Over the centuries the bridge suffered considerable damage from the Exe. A 'great part' fell down in 1286¹⁴ and again in 1384¹⁵ but it seems that the revenue generated by bridge property, supplemented by occasional bequests such as 12d (5p) from Henry de Berholind in his will of 8 October 1296,¹⁶ was sufficient to repair damage soon after it occurred. But in later years maintenance must have been neglected - perhaps the funds were diverted elsewhere - and by the middle of the fifteenth century the condition of the bridge was dangerous. According to Jenkins (1841), 'Exe Bridge (in 1447) now becoming ruinous (the lower part, with piers only, being built of stone, while the upper part being of framed timber gravelled over) was dangerous to passengers'.¹⁷ The mayor, John Shillingford, proposed to rebuild the bridge and petitioned the Chancellor, Cardinal John Archbishop of York, the Archbishop of Canterbury and others for financial help. Shillingford refers to 'a grete part of the said brigge by dyvers tymes hath fallen adown and made up again with tymbre'.¹⁸ The estimated cost of repair was £2,000 indicating that a considerable amount of work was required although possibly not complete rebuilding. On 16 June 1447 Bishop Lacy made a grant of forty days Indulgence to those contributing towards rebuilding the road from the west end of Exe Bridge towards Cornwall that had been made impassable by flooding¹⁹ and, on 15 June 1449, he made a similar grant to those contributing to 'the building and repair of the Exe bridge'.²⁰ Less than a month later one of the reasons for the neglect of the bridge became obvious. On 1 July 1449, the Bishop issued a monition which he directed to be read by the curates of all churches and chapels in the diocese to the effect that, unless all monuments, goods, chattels and money, especially the money collected for the construction or repair of 'ruinose pontis de Exe' stolen by persons unknown from the mayor, bailiffs and community of Exeter, were returned within fifteen days those responsible would be excommunicated.²¹

The destroyed arches referred to by Shillingford are most likely to have been towards the centre of the bridge where the velocity of the river flow would probably have been the greatest, and those most likely to have survived would have been near the bank. Thus it is reasonable to assume that arches one to four and six from the east bank are Norman with the fifth, seventh and ninth, all of which are pointed, being initiated by Shillingford around the middle of the fifteenth century when pointed was in common use. Further collapses were recorded in 1537²², 1539²³ and 1599²⁴ and it may be that the eighth arch was reconstructed in the sixteenth century when the semicircular arch shape was coming back into use.

Izacke (1724), in his *Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter*²⁵, referring to the 1537 collapse, wrote that one pier of the bridge fell down, so high and violent was the floodwater. A John Cove, a soldier who had been serving in Doncaster under the command of the Marquis of Exeter, returned home on the night of the storm to his house near the bridge. During the night part of the house collapsed and his servants sleeping

in an upstairs room were thrown into the river and drowned. He and his wife were in a lower room and their bed, with the two of them in it, floated out into the river. John told his wife to keep still and, 'using sometimes his Hands, and then his Feet, instead of Oars' he guided the bed to shallow water where he and his wife were able to wade to safety.

Jenkins (1841), referred to a prophecy that the River Exe would run under St Nicholas Priory. This was fulfilled, Jenkins recounts, because, towards the end of November 1539, after one of the arches had fallen down, the Bridge Warden carried out repairs using stone from the dissolved Priory.

In 1769, the powers of the Exeter Turnpike Trust which had been formed in 1753 for 'amending several roads leading from the City of Exeter', were enlarged to include the building of a new bridge at Countess Wear ford and to widen or rebuild Exe Bridge.²⁶ The trust decided, fortunately for history, that the best option was to build a new bridge rather than widen the medieval structure²⁶. Fore Street was to be extended to meet the new bridge and Joseph Dixon, a civil engineer of London, was engaged to design and supervise a three span masonry arch bridge with roadworks at an estimated cost of £7,500. Work started in April 1770 and Dixon seems to have attempted to run the contract from London. This, unsurprisingly, did not work, for, as early as May 1770, the Clerk to the Trustees wrote to him stating that the trustees were 'uneasy at his not coming down.' Matters did not improve and, in June 1771, the trustees were considering persuading Dixon to abandon the contract. In August 1771 the Surveyor of Exe Bridge - a Robert Stribling - reported to the trustees that the masonry of the piers had not been built in accordance with the contract. In September 1771 Dixon and the Trustees decided each to appoint an independent arbitrator to examine the work and to make an award to settle the dispute between them. On 19 September 1771 the trustees' arbitrator, Mr Alexander Ironhead, and Dixon's, Mr John Lowther, made a joint award finding that Dixon should finish the work in accordance with the contract and that the abutments and piers were built in a very workmanlike manner and 'much to the Honour and Credit of the said Joseph Dixon.' After many more exchanges between himself and the trustees, Dixon completed the work in 1773. In June 1775 the Exe sought out the deficiencies in the bridge that the arbitrators had missed, and a major part of the structure was carried away in a flood. It was rebuilt by John Goodwin, who had at one time worked with Dixon, and opened to traffic in March 1778 after the magistrates from the 'City and County of Exon' and the County of Devon had agreed the boundary of the respective authorities' responsibilities. The bridge (Fig 5) lasted until 1905, although the two piers did prove to cause an obstruction in the flow of the river and a consequent flooding of St Thomas.

To alleviate this latter problem, the Corporation of the City of Exeter obtained an Act for demolishing Goodwin's bridge and replacing it with a structure designed to give a greater waterway. They commissioned the consultants John Wolfe Barry²⁷ and Cuthbert Brereton to investigate the problem and submit a report for a solution. The consultants' report was submitted to the Exe Bridge Committee of the City on 11 April 1902²⁸ and proposed that the three span masonry arch bridge be replaced by single span three pin steel arch bridge with granite faced concrete abutments of 150 feet (45.72m) clear span and 50 feet (15.24m) between parapets. There were to be ornamental cast iron fascias and parapets, the latter surmounted with nine matching posts each supporting triple lamps.²⁹ Drawings of the proposed bridge were included with the report. The cost of construction was about £25,000 and opening took place on 29

March 1905 with the Mayor, E C Perry, conducting the ceremony by driving a tram over the bridge. Wolfe Barry's bridge was demolished in 1972 and replaced by the two existing reinforced concrete and pretensioned steel bridges: one opened in 1969 and the other in 1972.



Notes and References

1. Described by Julius Caesar in his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*
2. Oakford Bridge - built c.17C but an illustration of a type of Roman bridge - see also Roman bridge near Hadrian's Wall on pp72-75 of *The Handbook to the Roman Wall 1895*. The timber deck of Oakford Bridge was removed in 1991 and a concrete deck substituted.
3. Hooker, John Vowell alias. *The Description of the Citie of Excester. c1600*. Transcript 1910. Devon and Cornwall Record Society. (DCRS) p.602
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6. Chope, R Pearse. Reprint 1967. *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall. The Intinerary of John Leland The Antiquary 1534-43*. p.75
7. Chope. R Pearse. 1967, *A Short Survey of the Western Counties By a Lieutenant from Norwich*. 1635. p.90

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10. Exeter Museum Bulletin No 27 January 1976.
11. Hingston-Randolph, Rev F C. 1889. *The Registers of Walter Bronsecombe and Peter Quivil*. London: George Bell & Sons. York Street, Covent Garden. Folio 33
12. Dunstan G R (ed). 1968. *The Register of Edmund Lacy Bishop of Exeter, Vol III*. DCRS, Exeter. p.21
13. An 'abutment pier' is a pier that is sufficiently robust to withstand the thrust from an arch without the assistance from opposing thrust from an adjoining arch.
14. Izacke, Samuel. Second Edition 1724. *Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter. Originally collected by Richard Izacke Esq.* p.26
15. Izacke, Samuel, Second Edition 1724. op cit p.63
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20. Dunstan, G R (ed) 1968. op cit Vol III. DCRS p.37
21. Dunstan, G R (ed) 1968. op cit Vol III. DCRS. p39
22. Izacke, Samuel, Second Edition 1724. op cit. p119
23. Izacke, Samuel, Second Edition 1724. op cit. p.120
24. Jenkins, 1841. op cit. p.103
25. Devon Record Office (DRO) Exeter Turnpike Trust Order Book (ETT/2).
18 May 1769
to
26. DRO - ETT/2. 23 March 1773
27. John Wolfe Barry (1837-1918) was engineer in chief to Tower Bridge over the Thames that was opened to traffic on 30 June 1894. Wolfe Barry was knighted in 1897.
28. DRO - copy of report by Wolfe Barry and Cuthbert Brereton to Exeter Corporation dated 11.04.1902
29. Two of the decorative lighting columns were rescued and each has been erected on either side of Butt's Ferry

DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION
SOME REFLECTIONS ON EXTREME FORMS OF VICTORIAN CHURCH RESTORATION

Michael Weller

From the mid-nineteenth century it became the fashion, indeed almost an obsession, for Victorian clergy and patrons to repair and restore the parish churches of England. There can be little doubt that many buildings had been neglected and allowed to deteriorate since the Reformation especially during the eighteenth century, and it is also true that compared with many modern religious services liturgical practice was without enthusiasm, boring and often lacking any music save metrical versions of the psalms¹.

Given the foregoing it is not perhaps surprising that following the growth of the Oxford Movement in the 1830s, with its greater focus on spirituality, increased celebration of holy communion² and a desire to create a dignified setting for worship, that a gradual restoration and repair movement took place. Typically vestries were added, chancels were re-tiled, altars raised by the addition of steps and plinths, choir stalls added, windows rebuilt, west galleries and box pews torn out, walls were re-rendered and medieval doorways and stairs previously blocked up were opened. Exterior masonry was repaired, and drainage improved.

Such projects sought to restore to the interior of churches a kind of Gothic idyll, removing in some cases the architectural or cosmetic accretions of centuries. As architect John Gould put it to the vicar of Sheepwash in north Devon, in April 1877 his church should reflect:

‘...the pointed architecture of the earliest part of the fourteenth century, commonly known as the geometrical or early Decorated Gothic being the purest phase of the style.’³

To achieve the Gothic result both at Sheepwash and other churches in our own county, the building was not however restored in the sense of being thoroughly repaired but was demolished with the exception of the tower and rebuilt to make it both structurally sound and more importantly (in many cases) to make it Gothic, even if had not been all Gothic in the first place. Monkokehampton (1851), Venn Ottery (1882), Rose Ash (1888) amongst others were treated similarly,⁴ all retaining only⁵ their ancient towers. In the county as a whole well over forty churches were actually rebuilt, representing perhaps an eighth of Devon’s parish churches.⁶

This article seeks to look briefly into the reasons why a number of churches were thus rebuilt, and to see to what extent their destruction was justified. Also to enquire into what was lost and what was saved from the old and to consider the qualities of the new churches. Discussion of how these works were financed has only been very briefly considered; as a rule of thumb, clergy, patrons or lord of the manor and public appeals paid the bulk of the costs with lesser parishioners contributing, sometimes contentiously (since non-Anglicans also had to pay), via the church rates.⁷

To what extent the arguments given by contemporaries for dismantling a church represent the opinion of the majority of the parishioners is impossible to assess since surviving documents tend to be from architects and surveyors whose incomes and reputations depended on the scale of the work, or from vestry minutes which tend to support whatever it is that the incumbent wanted to do.

The church of Rose Ash (St. Peter) near Bishop’s Nympton was, with the exception of the tower and the north west wall, entirely rebuilt in 1888 since the building was found to be unsafe. Its destruction was sad from an historian’s standpoint as the church contained a somewhat unique feature thus described by John Stable (1910)⁸ who notes that ‘Before the restoration there was an old Tympanum filling the space over the rood screen and bearing a painting of 18th century date with a symbolic device of the Eye of God⁹ in the centre with issuing rays.’(sic). Very probably this ‘Eye of God’ was overlaid upon a mediaeval Doom or Last Judgement.¹⁰ More usually after the Reformation tympana were painted over with biblical texts and or royal coats of arms. Sadly earlier Victorian restorers believed typana to be post-medieval date and since they obstructed views of the east window and in some cases the sanctuary, tended to remove them.

At Parracombe (St. Petrock)¹¹ on Exmoor the tympanum *does* survive but the Ten Commandments, Lord’s Prayer and Creed were painted over the Doom in Georgian times. Parracombe church itself was almost victim to the trend for re-building. In 1877 the parish proposed to build an entirely new church. It had been the intention to demolish St. Petrock’s, the structure of which was thought to be unstable and to rebuild on the same site.¹² Luckily this was prevented by a national protest joined by John Ruskin who made a £10 donation himself towards the necessary repairs, saving therefore not only the tympanum, but Norman, Gothic and Perpendicular work and the many Georgian interior fittings.

The old church of St. Mary Major in Exeter also had a rood screen until it was completely rebuilt in 1865/67. Wooden screens, often dilapidated due to neglect and damage rendered by iconoclasts, were often victim to restoration projects.¹³ In this case however the screen was partly re-used in the new building¹⁴ as a screen for the south chapel whereas the major portion was given to the church of St. Mary Steps.

There is no doubt that ‘restoration’ per se was a matter of fashion although it is also true that coming as it did in the wake of the Oxford Movement much of what was done was genuinely intended to create an environment more spiritual and conducive to worship although the creation of interiors having the appearance of medieval Catholicism did not mean that many of those who advocated these things had other than Protestant ideals. Some of the milder forms of ritualism such as the use of candles on the altar, and altar frontals did come as part of the movement to improve the worship environment. Visiting Monkokehampton church in May of 1856 the rural dean John Vincent in his report clearly approved of the works¹⁵ and his words encapsulate the raison d’être of the restoration movement:

‘A new church has been built in the place of the old. The present fabric has been erected at a large expense, and is remarkable for its ecclesiastical propriety and adornments.

The cost had been born in part by the parishioners, but mainly with the help of his friends by the rector, who with a desire to promote the glory of God and the spiritual welfare of his people ‘has completed a house of God in which divine worship may be performed in the beauty of holiness.’¹⁶

Why was it necessary to demolish the church to achieve the desired end? The Rural Dean’s Book was a kind of diary kept at each church in which he made recommendations (and sometimes entered praise) to incumbent and churchwardens on his visits to the church. In 1842 the rural dean had noted that the roof of the porch needed to be repaired, that the flooring under the seats and gallery required repair and that the whole of the west wall was in a dangerous state. Two years later the north wall of the

church needed repairs also. By 1848 the roof also needed repair. Did this church just require thorough repair or was a rebuild needed? Or was it a matter of fashion?

At Petrockstowe a faculty for taking down and rebuilding the parish church except the tower was granted to Louis Woolcombe (rector) and his patron Lord Clinton in 1877 because the church was in a dilapidated and ruinous condition and past repair.¹⁷ The architect was Gould who had recently taken down Sheepwash church. No copy of the surveyor's report survives for Petrockstowe so we must accept the evidence of the faculty that the church was truly beyond repair. However it may be that the incumbent and churchwardens agreed with Stephen Glynn who had written of the old church: 'The interior is ugly, both short, low, irregular and disfigured with pews....'¹⁸ Surviving plans of the church before and after show that the rebuild followed the outline of the old church almost exactly except in that a chancel, a feature that the old church had not possessed was added as well as a vestry at the north-east angle. The chancel was also to possess another essential of the new Gothic church since sedilia were included. Ancient church fittings and furniture sometimes weathered these restorations; thus did Petrockstowe retain one mural plaque, the font (c. 1170), the Jacobean pulpit, some pieces of mediaeval glass and two fascinating late Tudor brasses. The fourteenth century north arcade was also incorporated into the rebuilt church. Interestingly Petrockstowe restored is not an architectural unity since whilst most of the windows in the essentially new building are Gothic in style, others seem to emulate the perpendicular. This may suggest that Gould sought to reproduce the window styles according to their appearance prior to rebuilding.¹⁹

Turning to Gould's survey of Sheepwash Church we can gain a clear idea of why Gould suggested what '... must amount to an almost entire reconstruction.'

It was Gould's view that the church had originally been constructed in the fourteenth century but he stated '...the only remaining portions of work belonging to this period appear to be the South porch and some parts of the chancel walls, and external masonry of the East Window. The ... present oak roof over the nave, which is of good character, but has been sadly mutilated in order to receive the plastered ceilings...' he dated as mid-fifteenth century. 'The nave walls appeared to ... have been built about the middle of the eighteenth century probably owing to the failure, from improper construction or insufficient supports of the walls which had preceded them.' He thought that 'the eighteenth century builders evidently endeavoured to avoid these failures, for although they built their walls of very inferior material, small stones and earth mortar only, they were careful to build them of great thickness, thereby curtailing the internal width of the Church...' The chancel walls Gould did not think had been rebuilt since the Middle Ages were however '...from age, and rude construction...' in his view beyond repair.

Luckily Gould drew two plans²⁰ (a before and an after) which both survive²¹; from these we learn that the old nave was lit by only three windows and must have been very dark indeed. The chancel as with so many churches prior to restoration work, was absolutely crammed with high sided 'box' pews making any view of the altar all but impossible from any part of the church. Gould thought the timbers of the nave roof '...certainly worth restoration.' The bench ends²² of the pews which were plain but of '...good old English Oak' the architect proposed to have freshly carved in a similar manner to work which he had carried out at Winkleigh church. The ancient font was also to be retained although from Gould's comments we know that it required cleaning. One or two mural plaques were also preserved and re-fixed on the wall of the new

church.

Clearly Sheepwash church had been a rather basic structure, not perhaps a beautiful church, in a poor and lightly populated area, served by a series of curates, the vicar residing at his other parish of Shebbear. That the church had been neglected seems to have been freely admitted by contemporaries; a draft-version of a letter of appeal penned in 1878 admits:

'Owing to past neglect, the fabric of the Church is in such a condition that ordinary repairs would be insufficient to preserve it from decay and, to use the words of the last report of the Rural Dean "It is useless to attempt anything but a complete restoration"

At a meeting held at Sheepwash on 21 June which sanctioned the appeal, the ratepayers pledged between them £82.13s.0d towards the total of £700 required. Lord Clinton, the lord of the manor, had himself promised the massive sum of £300, and in order to encourage others his name and the amount of his donation was to appear at the top of the appeal leaflet.

The new church was certainly to have improvements. The soil level in the churchyard had been somewhat above that of the nave floor hitherto occasioning the necessity to step down two steps on entering the building. The new church which was to be constructed from selected Hatherleigh stone which Gould described as one of the finest building stones in the country was to have an innovation, a dampcourse. Delabole slates were to be used for the roof, Polished Devon marble was proposed for the altar steps and Godwin's tiles were suggested for the paving. Prior to Victorian restorations comparatively few churches possessed a purpose built vestry, a facility more in demand as the desire for surpliced choirs and clergy became the perceived need for performance of divine worship. Thus did Gould take it upon himself to suggest this addition which would also provide space for a harmonium or small organ and another Gothic necessity, a piscina for the post-communion ablutions. Gould had further varied the ground plan of the old church by proposing an extension of the church eastward in order to obtain increased space for seats in the nave which had been rather cramped. He also proposed to gain a longer chancel which would include both sedilia and a credence.²³

Sheepwash really became a brand-new church, for during the course of the prolonged work in 1880²⁴ it was found that the tower needed a virtual rebuild. All that seems to survive of the ancient at Sheepwash is the restored font and a couple of wall plaques being monuments to local families which were stored and re-fixed (albeit out of sight in the tower) after the building was completed in the spring of 1881. Judging by Gould's survey Sheepwash had been a rather miserable structure seemingly of no architectural beauty. The new building is all that is best in a small Victorian church. It is neat, intimate and bright; its crowning glory are the wooden carved and painted angels which were part and parcel of Gould's new roof for the chancel. But it is essentially Victorian Gothic rather than having any genuine medieval appearance.

At Monkton in east Devon even the wall plaques were lost or destroyed at the rebuilding; only the tower and the late fifteenth century font survive. There was a fine mediaeval water stoop in the porch but this was not restored by architect John Hayward of Exeter who had recommended in 1861 that the present nave, chancel and porch be entirely taken down.²⁶ Creswell²⁷ noted that by 1848 there was a hole in the chancel wall which was damp and wretched and that the chancel arch had been cut away to accommodate the pulpit on the north side. Plaster had fallen away in the porch thereby exposing the beams and laths. As to the appearance of the church hitherto, a

drawing executed in the 1830s and now in the vestry purports to show some late medieval windows placed along the north wall but these were neither restored nor copied by Mr Hayward who took a pseudo-Gothic approach. In the laudable interests of minimising damp Hayward raised the floor level of the church very considerably but this has left a bizarre climb down a short ladder to the unaltered floor of the tower.

Monkton's initial rebuild was completed in 1863 although a dispute over the architect's bill was not resolved until December 1865.²⁸ Parochial finances did not stretch to stained glass and the windows would have been plain glazed at first. In 1879²⁹ however the restoration can be said to have been well and truly completed for in that year Morris and Co installed ten small but striking windows designed by Burne-Jones depicting Patriarchs, Prophets and Gospel figures as well as an east window showing Christ flanked by St John and the Virgin Mary also attributed to Burne-Jones, the latter glass being paid for by the lord of the manor.³⁰ The restoration also spawned two further interesting artistic additions; the finishing touch of Monkton's restoration (now sadly destroyed³¹) was an attractive mural decoration in gothic script taking the form of a frieze on both sides of the nave with words from the Beatitudes.³²

The examples discussed above represent but a pinprick in the catalogue of rebuilt or partially rebuilt Devon churches. Clearly much of interest was lost, yet again the destruction to some extent provided a forum for new architects and designers who now have their own devotees.

Notes and sources

- 1 These were sung by a small group of psalm-singers who were looked at but not joined by the congregation who as a rule took only a passive role in worship, the services being read by the clergyman and the parish clerk who alone made the responses in most churches.
- 2 Hitherto the Sacrament was often celebrated only three times per year, usually at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun although possibly on Trinity Sunday or at Michaelmas.
- 3 Architect's Report on Sheepwash Church dated 18 April 1877. Cat. No. 2940A/PW7. North Devon Record Office, Barnstaple.
- 4 This is not to say that all churches either restored or rebuilt actually ended up with a genuinely Gothic appearance. In many cases it would be more accurate to refer to the changes as pseudo-Gothic.
- 5 Sometimes medieval fonts, and often mural plaques were retained, or even a whole wall or arcade. At Venn Ottery the new chancel does possess something of a continuity with the past having both eighteenth and nineteenth century plaques more or less in their original positions.
- 6 Forty-six Devon incumbents actually applied for grants to the Incorporated Church Building Society (I.C.B.S.), a few of these did not actually go ahead for various reasons, or they did do so but the old church was subsequently retained e.g. Honiton, Parracombe. Equally some parishes did not seek grant funding as at Rose Ash and Sheepwash. I.C.B.S. grants were normally only made to increase accommodation or for brand new churches where there was no nearby adequate Anglican provision.
- 7 At Monkton an extraordinary rate of 6d in the £ was raised on 5 January 1863 to help with rebuilding costs but in many parishes it proved difficult to raise a rate of even 2d in the £ for day to day running costs. At Northlew in the 1810s and 1850s the rate was always contentious and the incumbent had to pay many maintenance costs himself. Church rates became voluntary in 1866.
- 8 *Some Old Devon Churches Vol II*, John Stubb, London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd, 1911. Copy in The Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter.
- 9 No doubt a post-Reformation reference to God's omnipresence and omniscience.
- 10 *Doom or Last Judgement*, a depiction of Christ in Majesty presiding over the passage of the dead either to the torments of Hell (designed to be a constant reminder to parishioners to behave in this world) or to the joys of Heaven.

- 11 This church having been declared redundant is now cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust. See also www.visitchurches.co.uk/GazetteerMain.htm
- 12 The new church (Parracombe Christchurch, designed by William Oliver of Barnstaple) was built but on a separate site closer to the centre of population.
- 13 Although towards the end of the Victorian era and in the first early decades of the twentieth century screens were restored (as at Northlew) or built anew (as at Lydford).
- 14 This church was demolished some years ago. The writer is not aware of the eventual fate of the screen.
- 15 Architect Frank Harger.
- 16 Monkokehampton Rural Dean's Book. Cat. No. 2511 add 2/8 North Devon Record Office, Barnstaple. N.B. The expression 'in the beauty of holiness,' is taken from Psalm 29 popularised by John Monsell's (d.1875) hymn: 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness', which was probably what the dean was thinking of.
- 17 Faculty ref 2387A/PW7. Devon County Record Office Exeter.
- 18 Stephen Glynn was an inveterate visitor of churches. His notes on Devon churches were not published (unlike those for Kent) but were typed up by Beatrice Creswell in 1933. Regrettably Glynn did not date this particular note but since the great majority of his notes date from the 1840s or 1850s we can be certain that his visit pre-dates the restoration of Petrockstowe in 1877. The typescript is kept in the Westcountry Studies Library, Castle Street, Exeter.
- 19 The writer has not been able to find any evidence of the church's appearance before rebuilding. Gould's ground-plans survive but no elevations.
- 20 cat. 2940A/PW15. North Devon Record Office, Barnstaple.
- 21 Survival of the proposed plans only being common with Victorian restorations.
- 22 The fine carved bench-ends, such a significant feature of Devon churches, were often re-used when the bench seating itself was replaced. At Venn Ottery's rebuild (1888) two old bench-ends were joined with new timbers to make the clergyman's reading desk.
- 23 Papers regarding the restoration of Sheepwash Church cat. 2940A/PW12 in the North Devon Record Office.
- 24 Sedilia - wall seats for altar-bogs/servers, a common medieval feature. Credence - a stone shelf on which the unconsecrated elements are kept. The sedilia and masonry credence shelf at Sheepwash are of a very similar design to Gould's work at Petrockstowe.
- 25 Being dogged by disputes between the builder Joseph Stratford of Okehampton and his sub-contractors James and John Hoskins over the supply of stone dressings and payments.
- 26 Devon County Record Office, Exeter. Cat. No. 2892A add 3/PW 31-36
- 27 Beatrice Creswell, Typescript Notes on the parish churches of Devon arranged by deanery. Original in the Westcountry Studies Library, Castle Street, Exeter.
- 28 Monkton Churchwardens' Accounts and Minute Book Cat. No. 2892A add 3/PW2. Devon County Record Office Exeter.
- 29 *See Exeter Flying Post* 22 October 1879.
- 30 Richard Summers Gard, a former M.P. for Exeter.
- 31 Some of the surviving stencils can be found in the Devon County Record Office, Exeter. Cat. No. 2892A add 3/PW 41. John Algar of Exeter actually carried out the work which also included printing the Creed, Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments on walls on the east wall of the sanctuary.
- 32 The designs were sent as stencils by the designer William Searle Hicks of Middlesexborough.

Other Sources

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A COADESTONE STATUE IN EXETER

C. G. Scott



'Southernhay Baths', illus. from *The Picture of England and Wales*, by A. F. Kendall, London 1831 p.509

Exeter's Southernhay baths (opened 3 December 1821, demolished 1863 to enable the building of the still-existing Southernhay United Reformed Church) is shown in illustrations as topped by a statue of Neptune with a seahorse¹. Was the statue made by the Coade firm whose products are known as Coadestone? In Devon, and Exeter, in particular, are to be found examples of Coadestone, a form of kiln-fired stoneware pottery, highly resistant to weathering. Resembling stone, it was used to make architectural features such as statues, fountains, urns, ornaments and interior and exterior decorations. Its proprietor was Eleanor Coade, born in Exeter in 1733, who lived for much of her early life in that city before moving to London. Her manufactory operated from c. 1769-1840. She died 18 November 1821 aged 89, described as 'among the bright stars of the Georgian decorative world'.²

A record from the Coade firm has the entry: 'Golsworthy's House, Exeter. . . August 1821 Golsworthy, Exeter, statue of Neptune and seahorse £44'.³ The name should be interpreted as 'Golsworthy', as the only similar name locally,⁴ and listed in the *Exeter Pocket Journal* of 1822 (p.52) as James Golsworthy, proprietor of Water Works, Mary Arches Street. Golsworthy had acquired the whole of the water works for £3000 by August 1822.⁵

The connection between Golsworthy and the Southernhay baths is shown by advertisements in the *Exeter Flying Post* newspaper. In 1826 the Exeter Bath was to be let by tender with the adjacent dwelling, with particulars from Mr Golsworthy, Priory Place, Bartholomew Yard (*EFP* 19 Jan 1826); in 1833 the Exeter Bath was for sale with a lease of 60 years, about 12 expired, and an annual rent of £18 (*EFP* 11 April 1833); in 1834 the Public Baths was to be sold or let, capable of conversion to offices or

apartments, with particulars from J. Golsworthy, or W. & H. Hooper (*EFP* 30 Jan. 1834). Golsworthy sold his waterworks for £11,500 in 1833.⁶

The Southernhay baths, associated with the architect John Lethbridge, may be important as the the first wholly 'Greek' building in Exeter.⁷ That architect was also associated with the rebuilt fire-damaged theatre near Bedford Circus, Exeter, as the 'new theatre' of 1820-21 (*EFP* 11 Jan. 1821 p.4c). That theatre, known as the 'Theatre Royal' was destroyed by fire 7 February 1885.⁸ A newspaper report of that fire stated: 'at the top of the facade, still standing, is a bust of Shakespeare, below being two figures representing the Tragic Muses. . .' (*EFP* 11 Feb. p.5d & 26 March p.5b 1885) A photograph shows the figures.⁹ The Provenance of that statuary is unclear. However, it is known that the Coade firm made busts of Shakespeare and statues of the comic and tragic muses.¹⁰

Exeter, and other places in Devon, may have pieces of coadestone awaiting discovery. The definitive work on coadestone: *Mrs Coade's Stone* by Alison Kelly (1990) is deserving of a much wider circulation, perhaps through a Devon publisher.

Thanks are due to Mr Ian Maxted and staff at the Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter, for permission to reproduce material from the library.

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2. Kelly, Alison, *Mrs Coade's Stone*, The Self Publishing Association Ltd, Worcs. 1990 pp.17, 21-23, 26, 49-50, 56-59, 311, 340-43
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4. On interpreting handwriting, especially the long 'S', see E. McLaughlin, *Reading Old Handwriting*, 2nd ed., Federation of Family History Societies 1987 pp. 2-6.
5. Minchinton, W., *Life to the City*, Devon Books 1987 p.25.
6. *Ibid.* p.36; Golsworthy is noted as died 27 Jan. 1850 aged 74 in G. Oliver, *The History of the City of Exeter*, London 1861 p.149 fn. 4.
7. White, J., *Provincialism: A Study of the Work of the General Practitioner Architects of Georgian Exeter 1760-1840.*, unpub. thesis, Manchester University 1963 pp.42, 44. Lethbridge died at his home 1 Chichester Place, Exeter, on Friday 4 Nov. 1825 aged 35 (*EFP* 10 Nov. 1825 p.4a & 5 Jan. 1826 p.1d).
8. Both architects C. Hedgeland (*EFP* 30 March 1820 p.4c) and J. Lethbridge (*EFP* 28 Dec. 1820 p.4c) were associated with the theatre.
9. *Express & Echo*, 8 April 1950 p.4e-f; P. Thomas, *Exeter-Yesterday and Today*, Sutton Pub. Ltd, Glos. 2000 p.50.
10. Kelly, Alison, *op.cit.*, pp.130, statues 127-35, busts 137-40.

LOST CHURCHES AND CHAPELS OF TORQUAY

Lorna Smith

Part 1. Torre Abbey and Anglican churches

In the nineteenth century the village of Torre Mohun including the fishing hamlet of Tor Quay grew into a premier seaside resort. The granting of Borough status in 1892 put the seal on its importance. The population soared from 838 in 1801 to 35,583 in 1901, although this figure included St Marychurch and Cockington which had been absorbed into the Borough in 1900. This meant that public services and facilities had to be provided and this included churches and chapels of both the established church and other denominations. During the twentieth century the drift away from formalised religion and population movement meant that many buildings had a life of less than one hundred years.

This article is divided into two parts. The first part deals with Torre Abbey and Anglican churches of the nineteenth century. A second part to feature in a future issue will cover the non-conformist chapels and churches.

In 1196 Abbot Adam and six canons of the Premonstratensian Order came to the shores of Torbay to set up the new abbey which had been founded and endowed by William de Brewer, Lord of the Manor of Torre. The monastic buildings were laid out in

accordance with the usual plan for monks following a secluded life. The original twelfth century church was 25ft wide but in the fourteenth century it was widened to 40ft with a total length of 168ft. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539 the church was allowed to fall into decay. In the eighteenth century parts were demolished because they were considered to be dangerous although gunpowder had to be used to bring them down. One of the outlying possessions of the



Torre Abbey ruins

canons was the manor of Ilsham which they acquired from the Mohun family in the thirteenth century. They erected a stone building of three storeys with a chapel on the first floor reached by an outside stair. This building still exists in the grounds of Stoodley Knowle Convent School for Girls. Somewhere between 1224 and 1232 William Brewer's son granted the manor of Shiphay Collaton to the canons and they erected a tithe barn, dwelling and chapel similar to Ilsham. Only the outer walls of this building remain in the grounds of the Boys' Grammar School.

On the hill above Torre Station stands St Michael's Chapel. Very little is known about this building except that it probably belonged to Torre Abbey. Its position and construction and its dedication to St Michael suggest that it was used to show a light for the guidance of those sailing across Torbay.

After the Dissolution the Abbey passed through a number of hands until it was purchased by the Cary family in 1662. The family was staunchly Catholic and had a secret chapel over the dining room. With the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1778 they were able to have a private chapel which was used by Catholics in the area until the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1854. After the Torquay Corporation bought Torre Abbey

in 1930 the chapel was used for other purposes until the middle of last century when the Corporation restored it but it has not been re-dedicated.

In 1831 the Independents built a chapel, designed by John Foulston in Meadfoot Road, known as Trinity Chapel. Two years later the minister, the Rev William Greenwood, went over to the Established Church taking all but fifteen members of the congregation with him. The chapel continued as an Anglican church for 63 years until Holy Trinity Church was built nearby. The foundation stone was laid in 1894 and the church opened in 1896, the architect being John Watson. The building standing at the junction of Meadfoot Road, Parkhill Road and Torwood Gardens Road is almost opposite the chapel it replaced which became the Holy Trinity Parish Rooms. In 1980 Holy Trinity Church was closed and stood empty for two years until it became the Breakaway Sports Centre and is now the Fun Factory.



Former Holy Trinity

St Mark's, built to serve Park Hill and the Lincombes, was opened in 1857. Designed by Anthony Salvin on a site given by the Palk family, the interior was beautified by Minton tiles donated by Herbert Minton, a parishioner and benefactor. When the church became redundant the interior decoration had to be retained. The TOADS dramatic society bought the building in 1982 and by the end of 1987 the skilful conversion of the church into the Little Theatre was complete.

There were several little mission churches, for instance St Mary's in Braddon Street, opened in 1872 and closed in 1947 when it became the Boys' Club; it is now a private house. One of the best known mission churches was St Michael and All Angels, partly because of its central position and also due to the interest taken in it by Princess Marie Louise (cousin of King George V). A mission had been set up in a coal cellar in Pimlico and served by the curate of St Luke's. It was so successful that in 1875 a foundation stone was laid at the junction of Pimlico and Market Street and in 1877 the church was dedicated by the Bishop of Exeter. Less than a hundred years later, in 1968, it was sold for £77,000 and demolished. The supermarket that replaced it was the first in Torquay to have 'late night shopping'. Subsequently the building became the Job Centre and then Blockbuster Video.



Former St Mark's

St Barnabas, constructed of iron and wood, was erected in 1878 on Stentford Hill overlooking Fleet Street. It cost £400. The site chosen became unstable and the little church was moved farther up the hill. Standing alone it was joined gradually by houses and finally found itself in Alpine Road. In 1965 it was closed by order of the Bishop of Exeter at the same time as St Paul's and St James'.

St Paul's in Plainmoor was a daughter church of Ellacombe parish, dedicated on 25 November 1890, a year after its foundation. It was known affectionately as the 'tin church' because it was constructed in corrugated iron. These little churches could be bought 'off the shelf' but St Paul's was extended in 1907 by the addition of a hall

always called 'Our Welcome'. It suffered some damage during the bombing of St Marychurch but remained in use until closure in 1965. The site was bought by local builders Pope and Sons and redeveloped with housing.

St James lay within the parish of Upton. It was built in 1891 on land given by a Mr Lavers. A prominent feature of its architecture was a bell turret. The bell itself originally had been an exterior bell on Torwood Manor. When that house was demolished in 1843 Dr Paget-Blake acquired the bell and later presented it to St James'. Prior to the building of the church a cottage was rented in Lymington Road on the corner of Chatto Road from which a mission was run. This house later became a Gospel Hall and has now reverted to a private dwelling. After closure as a church St James' became a youth club for the parish for a time, then offices, and is now an extra mural building for St James' Primary School.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel was a good employer, he designed model cottages for his estate workers at Barton and the building of these began before that of his own house. He intended also that there should be a school which would double as a chapel. He designed this as well in all probability but he died before work could start and it was left to his sons, Isambard and Henry, to erect the chapel in 1875, sixteen years after his death. The brothers presented the chapel to St Marychurch parish. It exists still but converted into two houses.



Formerly St James' Mission

The foundation stone of the Good Shepherd chapel of ease for St Marychurch was laid in Hele Road on 13 January 1883. In the late 1920s the chapel was closed and became a school. Later still the Happaway Estate Residents' Association took over and it became in effect a community centre. Costs soared and the building was finally sold to the Torbay Amateur Boxing Club which still uses it.

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Note: A number of newspaper articles were consulted, accessed through the Local Studies Index at the Torquay Public Library.

Lorna Smith was on the staff of Torquay Public Library from 1954 until retirement in 1998. She qualified as a Chartered Librarian in 1963 and was subsequently cataloguer, Assistant Reference Librarian with special responsibility for local history, and latterly also Railways Studies Librarian at Newton Abbot Library. She has also been valued by the DHS for preparation of our Index series.

ODAMS MANURE FACTORY ON EBFORD WHARF IN THE PARISH OF WOODBURY¹

Gill Selley

Until the early nineteenth century fertilisation of the soil was through the application of burnt limestone, and dung composed of animal and human excrement mixed with household rubbish. Leases for property included covenants as to the application of manures to the soil. Covenants from deeds in the parish of Woodbury indicate how little the method changed up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The first, for a freehold property in Woodbury Town in 1728, required the tenant to add to every acre which he cultivated 'eight hogsheads of good well-burnt stone-lime of our harbour lime or ten hogsheads of Branscombe lime or 160 seams of good dung in lieu thereof and therewith dress and manure the said premises ... according to good husbandry'² The phrase 'our harbour' possibly referred to the lime kilns on the wharf at Ebford or those on the shore at Exton. Nearly a hundred years later the covenant for a tenant farmer in Woodbury Salterton bore a similar requirement for 'ten hogsheads of good well-burnt stone lime or 120 horse loads or seams of well-rotted manure'.³

The lime kiln at Exton was owned by the Rolle Estate and leased out, whilst that at Ebford was on freehold land owned originally by the Haydon family of Ebford Barton and later by the Lees of Ebford Manor. The kiln at Exton was in operation until the 1860s but the Ebford site on the wharf was in the process of change from the 1830s, though lime was still being burned there up to the end of the 1850s. The kiln at Exton died a natural death through lack of demand because of the great changes in fertilisation of the soil, but the site at Ebford was part of the revolution in fertiliser manufacture and is the main subject of this article.

In 1835 an advertisement appeared in the local papers for a tenant to lease the Ebford lime kilns and coal cellars together with a new and convenient dwelling house, stable, cart linways and two acres of pasture and garden ground. 'The whole of the buildings have been erected in the best manner within five years, are most conveniently situate both with respect to water and land carriage and a large and profitable trade (particularly in the coal line) had been lately carried on there.'⁴

In 1842 the lime kilns and coal cellars were again advertised for sale or let with the further details that the premises were on a site of 3½ acres and comprised three lime kilns capable of delivering 100 hogsheads per day; a store large enough to hold 1,000 tons of coal; a stable, sheds and a landing quay on the tideway of the Clyst (with a sufficient depth of water for a sixty-ton lighter) on which was carried on an extensive business in lime, coal, slate and timber.⁵

It is assumed that the site continued in the business of lime and coal until 1850 when two brothers from Clyst Honiton, Charles and Henry Phillips, both chemists by profession, advertised that they 'have taken very extensive premises at Ebford where they are making arrangements for the Manufacture of Manures ... they trust that their experience in chemical operations, and their knowledge of the constituents of the matters which they intend to employ, will enable them to prepare various efficacious manures, adapted for different crops'.⁶

Though this factory of the Phillips brothers was the first sign, in the parish of Woodbury, of an opportunity for farmers to try the new methods of fertilisation, there is

written evidence of how, from the early nineteenth century, men were looking for better and cheaper ways of manuring the soil and the science of chemistry was being applied for this purpose. Until 1840 the only 'artificial' manures were bones, salt and gypsum (apart from manufactory refuse). Local manufacturers were offering for sale in the 1840s a variety of simple fertilisers with instructions for their use.

W. Strong & Co. had a Bone Manufactory on Exe Island in which was sold bone-dust, gypsum and ammoniacal composts in 1842; whilst in the same year Tuckett's Stores in Commercial Road (leading to the Quay), was offering Bay Salt, which 'if mixed with slaked lime, make a fine manure for wheat, turnips etc. It will require 3-4 cwt per acre (1 ton of salt to 2 tons of lime) and will cost 1s. 6d. per cwt. Bay Salt is 30% stronger than common salt when mixed with coal ashes.'⁷

In the early 1840s two materials burst on to the agricultural scene that were to revolutionise the manure trade: nitrate of soda, and guano. Agricultural journals were publishing articles about the application and efficacy of the wonder fertilisers and explaining that though more expensive to buy initially the saving on horse- and man-power was enormous, with one expert quoting a saving of 20s. per acre. Nitrate of soda was being manufactured in the big cities and advertised in Devon through appointed agents, whilst Peruvian guano was being imported, and advertised and sold in the same way.

The Incas of Peru had used guano (bird droppings) as a fertiliser, and its efficacy was evidently known by the conquering Spaniards. In 1806 samples were analysed in France, and Sir Humphrey Davy described guano in 1813 as 'a powerful manure'. In 1840 William Myers, a merchant from Liverpool, obtained the first contract with the Peruvian government to export guano from the country. Though it bid for this contract, the firm of Gibbs Crawley, a branch of Anthony Gibbs & Sons of London, did not manage to clinch a deal until 1842 in which one third of the consignment of Peruvian guano to Europe went to that company and two thirds to William Myers. Myers got into financial difficulties and was forced to share his part of the monopoly with Anthony Gibbs & Sons. By 1849 the Gibbs company had exclusive rights to sell guano in all of Europe (except France) and its ships sailed to Liverpool, London and Bristol. In 1857, the year before the peak of importation, 133 ships sailed to London, 43 to Liverpool and ten to Bristol. The founders of the company were descendants of the Gibbs family of Clyst St George.⁸

Agricultural journalists and scientists wrote endless articles about the value and application of the guano, and lectures were given around the country to farmers encouraging them to use guano and the more sophisticated manures based on it. These experts included Professor Voeleker, J. C. Nesbitt FGS FCS (Principal of the Chemical and Agricultural College, Kensington, and corresponding member of the Imperial and Central Agricultural Society of France), Captain George Peacock FRGS (a pioneer of steam navigation in the Pacific), *The Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, *The Journal of the Bath and West Agricultural Society* and *The Gardeners' Chronicle*.

In 1842 Mr R. W. Rexford of Newton Abbot, a commission agent for 'a respectable London house' advertised that he would take orders for guano, nitrate of soda, saltpetre and urate to be delivered in Totnes and other ports. At the same time Mr Downman was advertising the sale of Nitrate of Soda at his premises in Fore Street, Exeter.⁹ Gibbs, Bright & Co. publicised themselves as importers of guano to their Bristol warehouses and Rounthwaite & Co. to theirs in Liverpool in the following year,¹⁰ and the

firm of market gardeners, James Veitch & Son, of Mount Radford Nursery, was receiving deliveries of urate from the London Manure Company as well as Peruvian guano direct from the bonded warehouses in London, together with reports of recent experiments and printed instructions for using it.¹¹

Once the railway network had been established in the south-west the sale and use of chemical manures and guano increased hugely. London manufacturers were advertising for agents for their artificial manures and the advertisements in the local papers grew in size and numbers. Fertiliser was becoming a very cut-throat business in which small companies who had set up factories found themselves unable to compete with the larger firms in the cities which were able to force their smaller rivals out of business or take them over.

The south-west had attempted to produce several different types of manure, as well as stocking the Peruvian guano from Anthony Gibbs & Sons. In 1849 Mr Tuckett was selling a specially produced manure using ground bone and salt especially for wheat and barley.¹² The Plymouth Manure Company had extensive warehouses at the Great Western Docks where they held large stocks of various patent manures and huge quantities of Peruvian guano, advertising free carriage of their merchandise to the railway stations of South Devon. In the same year in Plymouth a Sub-Marine Manure had been patented and manufactured with a licence for manufacture in Salisbury and Dorchester and appointed agents in Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Sussex, Wiltshire, Norfolk and London. This manure is not advertised again and was probably another victim of big business rivalry.¹³

There is no evidence as to the ultimate fate of the Phillips Brothers at Ebford after 1851, though their advertisement in January of that year announced the sale of their chemical composts, which could be seen at their factory, or at Veitch & Son or Richards Stores on Quay Hill in Exeter.¹⁴ In the middle of the decade William Wheaton, originally an ironmonger from Honiton but now an Exeter merchant, acquired the site and set about forming a business to manufacture chemical fertilisers. In April 1857 a new company was registered in London called the Devon Agricultural and Manure Co. (Ltd), with offices in Market Street in Exeter and a manufactory in Ebford.¹⁵ The company announced that it had bought the premises at Ebford and was constructing buildings and chambers necessary for the manufacture of brown acid and oil of Vitriol. The nominal capital was to be £10,000, with 2,000 shares at £5 apiece. The original subscribers were all from East Devon, with William Porter from Hembury Fort as chairman and William Wheaton as general manager. The objects of the company were stated as manufacturing and selling super-phosphate of lime, vitriolic acid and artificial manures; selling seeds used in agriculture and oil cakes and other food for cattle; also selling all classes of agricultural implements.¹⁶ In November of that year there was a complaint from residents of Ebford that a great nuisance was caused from effluvia coming from the works. One of the Medical Officers of St Thomas Union inspected the factory and reported that no effluvia arising was 'injurious to the health of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood'. The parish officers decided, though, to take the company to court for the nuisance, with a view to compelling them to conduct their business in such a way as to prevent further complaints.¹⁷

The company had a further setback in its first year when Henry Phillips also took it to court for a breach of agreement and was awarded £7. 16s. 7d. William Wheaton had consulted Phillips, as an agricultural chemist, about various technical aspects of setting up the business in his expectation of being appointed as chemical superintendent,

but a chemist from Bristol was appointed in his stead.¹⁸

Meanwhile, after their failure at Ebford, Charles and Henry Phillips had become involved in the registering of a new fertiliser company, in 1858, called the Clyst Vale Manure Company (Ltd), with their office in Exeter but manufactory in Clyst Honiton, where they lived. Charles was chosen as one of the directors and Henry appointed as the chemist and Superintendent of Works. This venture was on a much smaller scale than the one at Ebford and its shareholders were resident around Exeter.¹⁹ The business was too small to survive and by October 1860 a liquidator was appointed and the company was wound up.²⁰

The shares of the company in Ebford were fully taken and advertisements for the business appeared regularly in the local papers, but evidently the business was not thriving. By 1863 the larger companies had a firm grip on the manure market in Devon and the Ebford company, too, found itself in debt. An agreement was made with a merchant of London, James Odams (who with Robert Morgan, a salesman of Smithfield Market, had patented a Blood Manure), to amalgamate the Devon Agricultural and Manure company with the Patent Nitro-Phosphate or Blood Manure Co. (Ltd) of London. James Odams was to become the managing director of the whole company, whose manufactories were to be in Plaistow Marshes in Essex and also in Ebford. There was to be a Devonshire branch of directors, with William Porter as chairman and Edwin Elford appointed the branch manager. The capital of the company was increased to £100,000 and shareholders in the Devon Company were given the option to change their £5 shares into £10 ones with the London company. All the stock and premises were conveyed to the new company, and the land at Plaistow, which had been leased, was to be bought and mortgaged.²¹ At some time in the nineteenth century a branch line was laid into the large sheds at the Ebford complex, which, together with the accessibility by boat too, indicates the amount of manufacture and trade that was taking place there.

The surviving records of the Port Dues at Topsham give full details of the materials brought to the wharf at Ebford from 1861 up to May 1867; unfortunately there do not appear to be any records surviving after the last date. In a period of just over 6½ years the increase in production and variety of fertiliser being manufactured can be seen through these records. The last year, being only six months, does not give a true picture as amounts and materials differed greatly from month to month. The following is a table of tonnage of the most common materials delivered to the factory by boat. There is no record of what was delivered by road or train; there was a rail link to Topsham from Exeter and Exmouth from 1861 and a siding was put into the factory building from this line at a later date. The old track can still be seen in what is now the main work shed for the boat-building business.

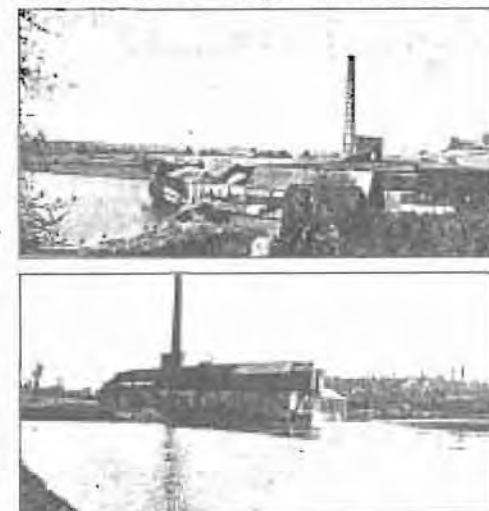
IMPORTS	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867 (6 months)
CONSIGNMENTS	8	16	22	21	26	34	11
Mundic	125	231	294	577	459	1126	33
Bone ash	150	103	144	162	108	220	57
Salt	307	232	286	80	-	-	65
Nitrate of soda	-	5	-	-	15	20	34
Manure	-	47	213	595	376	336	33

Copralite	-	-	490	404	503	1314	515
Superphosphates	-	-	192	307	35	182	-
Guano	-	10	-	-	113	281	281

The manure imported was probably blood manure, though in many cases it is just recorded as 'manure'. Over the period the following items were also brought into the factory: coal, brimstone, oil cake, linseed dust and huge quantities of paper bags.²²

The company was re-registered under the name of The Nitro-Phosphate & Odams Chemical Manure Co. (Ltd) in 1872 and twenty years later as Odams Manure & Chemical Co Ltd. The heading of a letter dated 1905 shows an illustration of an enormous complex of wharves and warehouses, known as Odams Wharf, in Victoria Docks in London, on which the mortgage was increased, so one can presume that the company had continued to flourish. The years of the First World War give an indication of a downturn in the business: in 1914, the capital of the company was reduced to £45,000 and shares fell to £3 due to a loss in available assets. The following year the name of the firm was changed again, to Odams Nitro-Phosphate & Chemical Company, and the value of the shares again fell. In 1919 additional mortgages were taken out on the factory in Essex and on the land at Ebford, which the company had recently bought. In 1920 a liquidator was appointed and the company was voluntarily wound up and a new company, bearing the same name, registered.²³

The works at Ebford continued to operate on the site but in a much-reduced form, as indicated by an evaluation by the St Thomas District Council in 1928. All the machinery for the chemical manures had been removed from the site excepting one slag-crushing mill. The premises were now being used as a store and distribution centre in addition to the manufacture of compound manures made from crushed slag and lime. The railway siding was in great use, but it was stated by the manager that the river was not used for carriage of materials or finished products. The manager also stated that the fertiliser trade was going through a serious phase and that probably the whole trade would soon be out of the country, and as a consequence the premises were not fully occupied. This pessimistic opinion was born out by the run-down of the company.²⁴ At some period after this the parent company appears to have sold the Ebford branch to The National Fertilisers Ltd of Cattedown in Plymouth - this firm was possibly the old C. Norringtons, manure manufacturers, established at this address in the middle of the 1840s. In 1939 the whole site was offered for sale, including the foreman's cottage and workmen's cottages, with a proviso that it was not to be used for the manufacture or sale of fertilisers for seven



1930s photos of The Manure Works at Ebford Wharf before the chimney and many of the buildings were demolished

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years following the sale.²⁵ Whether it was sold or not is uncertain, but a local farmer affirms that he collected fertiliser from the premises during the war. Since the end of the war the site has been occupied by a succession of boat builders, its present occupants being Tremlett's Boat Sales Ltd.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to the West Country Studies Library for the copies of the 1890 and 1906 Ordnance Survey maps and to the Devon Record Office for the copy of the Woodbury Tithe Map and the photograph of Odams factory.

Notes

1. Ebford was in the parish of Woodbury at this time – it was transferred to the parish of Clyst St George in 1987.
2. A covenant in one of the deeds of lease of Springhayes House in Woodbury, dated 28 September 1726 (the property of the owner).
3. DRO 96M 50/4 – a deed of lease, dated 19 November 1807, for Holwells Farm in the hamlet of Portislake in Woodbury Salterton.
4. *Exeter Flying Post*, 3 December 1835.
5. *Woolmers*, 18 June 1842.
6. *Exeter Flying Post*, 17 January 1850.
7. *Woolmers*, 16 July 1842.
8. Matthew W. M. (1981) *The House of Gibbs and the Peruvian Guano Monopoly*, London, Royal Historical Society.
9. *Exeter Flying Post*, 3 March 1842.
10. *Exeter Flying Post*, 16 February 1843.
11. *Exeter Flying Post*, 23 and 30 March 1843.
12. *Exeter Flying Post*, 10 May 1849.
13. *Exeter Flying Post*, 11 April 1850.
14. *Exeter Flying Post*, 30 January 1851.
15. PRO BT 31/14281/365 – Registration of Companies and Businesses.
16. *Exeter Flying Post*, 14 May 1857.
17. Woodbury Parish Vestry Book 1848-1884
18. *Exeter Flying Post*, 18 March 1858 – action for breach of agreement.
19. *Exeter Flying Post*, 11 February 1858.
20. PRO BT 31/319/1116.
21. PRO BT 14281/365.
22. DRO 71/7/6 – Port Dues at Topsham.
23. PRO BT 14281/365.
24. DRO 1896B/EAST/4/14 – inspection and valuation of Odams Factory in 1928.
25. DRO 62/9/2 box 8/65 – sale of Odams Factory in 1939.

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

Devon County Prison Exeter 1853-2003 by Charles Scott-Fox. Published by the author 2004. £10. 56 pages. 26 illustrations. ISBN 0-954701-0-5.

This volume is divided into five chapters describing the history of imprisonment in Exeter and its relationship to central authority, the establishment of the present Devon County Prison and its predecessors, past and present prison staffing and outside support routine and notable events at the prison. A chronology of prison governors and secondary and primary bibliographies are included in the appendix. There are five maps that are clearly printed and the reproduction of photographs is of reasonable quality.

Chapter 1 describes how gaols, a feature of Anglo-Saxon criminal justice, were allowed to continue after the Norman invasion and how William the Conqueror was responsible for the first Royal Gaol, the Tower of London. In the fifteenth century there were five prisons in Exeter, the Devon County High Gaol being at Rougemont Castle. The start of major penal reform was brought about by a report published in 1777 on the state of prisons in England and Wales by John Howard. After Howard's death James Neild published a further report in 1812 and continued Howard's drive for penal reform.

In 1771, a serious outbreak of gaol fever broke out at the Rougemont High Gaol and, in 1775, Howard drew attention to the poor state of the buildings and the unsatisfactory state in which the prisoners were held. On a visit in 1783, he found that conditions were no better and, after an investigation by a committee appointed by the Justices in Quarter Sessions, an Act of Parliament was passed into law in 1787 for '...improving and enlarging...' Rougemont Gaol or building a new one. The justices decided to build a new gaol and, in 1790, work on its construction started to the design of William Blackburn, who had already completed nineteen prisons. Neild's report of 1812 was full of praise for the regime and cleanliness of the new prison. A new Bridewell, designed by George Money Penny, was started in 1807 and completed in 1809 at a cost of over £15,000. By the end of the 1840s urgent attention was needed to conditions in the gaols and, on the recommendation of John Hayward, the Surveyor of County Buildings, it was decided to build a new prison on the site of the 1790 building. Work started in 1848 and the present prison was completed at a cost of £35,534 and opened in 1853. Devon County Prison was governed under the guiding doctrine of 'hard bed, hard fare and hard labour' reinforced by the introduction of the 'silent regime' on the lines of an American system. Fraternisation between prisoners was strictly forbidden and imposed by the wearing of masks or working in separated compartments. Prisoners wore clothing with the broad arrow motif, copied today for more light-hearted purposes, and were engaged on unproductive tasks such as breaking large stones into ballast, picking oakum, operating the treadmill or crank machines and so forth. Execution was by hanging and the author describes events such as the last public hanging, that of Mary

Ashford of Clyst Honiton, when the scaffold failed to work and the hangman had to pull on her legs to hasten her end, and of John Lee of Abbotskerswell - the man they could not hang.

The final chapter traces the development of responsibilities for the prisoners and their welfare from the eighteenth century, when it rested solely with the governor and his appointed officers, the chaplain and surgeon, until the present when there are over 400 members of staff, mostly uniformed but including non-uniformed Governor grades and administrative, educational, medical staff and civilian workmen. The author, who was for sixteen years a member of the Board of Visitors, writes of the founding of this organisation by a Quaker, Mrs Elizabeth Fry and of the integration of the Probation Service into the fabric of prison life.

This is clearly the result of considerable research by the author and is a well constructed and readable work. Scott-Fox modestly states that he is aware that his brief history will not provide a definitive academic record, but that is precisely what it does.

D L B Thomas

The Most Rebellious Town in Devon: the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 and the citizens of Colyton by Colin Haynes. Colyton Publications 2003. 150 pages, illustrated. ISBN 0-9546432-0-8. £9.50, which includes a donation to Arthritis Care. Copies from the author at 15 Govers Meadow, Colyton plus £1 for p & p.

Colyton was a prosperous town: in 1543 it was estimated to be the fourth wealthiest in the county, coming after Exeter, Totnes and Plymouth and before Ottery St Mary and Tavistock. It dyed and finished cloth and made lace as well as having a prosperous agriculture. By the late seventeenth century the export trade in textiles was not so substantial but many crafts with local markets seem to have developed. The author examines the different strands of religious non-conformity and their effect on the lives and ideas of those who lived in and about Colyton. Personifying the Protestant cause was the Duke of Monmouth who in 1680 made an unauthorized 'Progress' through Devon, Somerset and Dorset. In Colyton he stayed with the local magnate, Sir Walter Yonge, who was to remain in London throughout the Rising five years later.

The planning of Monmouth's expedition was sketchy, with inadequate supplies brought to arm the expected volunteers and no bodies of professional soldiers to give any backing to the necessarily untrained local insurgents. The campaign that followed Monmouth's landing at Lyme Regis on 11 June and ended at Sedgemoor on 6 July is not considered in depth by the author. His interest lies in the effect of the rebellion on the people of Colyton, which he studies from a number of sources including the lists drawn up by parish Constables of suspected rebels and the cases of those sent to trial. For Colyton, the list of 67 included 36 believed taken at Sedgemoor. There were no published casualty lists for the battle and many may have been killed or died of wounds in the weeks following it. One calculation taking the adult male population of the town as 375 estimates that 105 of these were for Monmouth, with the surprisingly high average age of forty years. Apart from the

known dead, the missing must have included those who were afraid to return home for some months, perhaps until the General Pardon was announced in March 1686. The prisoners awaiting trial and sentencing were lodged in jails and other secure buildings in the counties concerned. They were overcrowded and suffered from contagious diseases but some were able to bribe their way to freedom or sometimes to take the names and papers of other prisoners. Of the Colyton prisoners fourteen were hanged, two publicly in the town, and 22 transported.

The last chapters describe the life of a European slave in a West Indian plantation, including some dramatic escapes. In the end it appears that those who wanted to get home on the whole succeeded in doing so, most by the end of the decade.

The book has a number of illustrations in pencil of scenes from the Rising and its aftermath as well as photographs of buildings and several useful plans and maps. The fates of so many of the rebels are still unknown. The author is hopeful that there still may be families who might be able to identify and say what happened to ancestors who took part in the Rebellion.

Adrian Reed

2000 Years in Exeter by W. G. Hoskins, edited and updated by Hazel Harvey. Phillimore and Co., Chichester 2004. x + 182 pages, 101 illustrations. ISBN 1-86077-303-6. Hardback £15.99.

This was not an easy book to review. Those familiar with Hoskins' work will have snapped it up already. Those who are not will wonder why the book was worth reprinting after a gap of a quarter of a century. After all, to some, Exeter is a minor cathedral city whose best days disappeared at least two centuries ago. The present city is both locally and nationally regarded, rightly or wrongly, as a prime example of the worst of rebuilding following the Second World War. So why publish an edited reprint - other than out of nostalgia? The answer, this reviewer suspects, lies in Hoskins' enduring reputation. Alternatively, could it deserve a readership beyond those who recall him with affection, respect and admiration?

Hoskins, the pioneer of English local history as an academic discipline, published the first version of this book in 1960. The last appeared in 1979. All were written in a style that satisfied the professional historian and at the same time engaged the layman without having to resort to patronizing dumbing-down. Despite her unique opportunity, Harvey has not succumbed to the temptation to rewrite what many regard as a classic work. Instead, she concentrates on retaining Hoskins' style and opinions and at the same time skillfully brings the reader up-to-date. In particular, she incorporates the Cathedral Close archaeological explorations of the early 1970s. These corroborated Hoskins' views on the importance of the Romans to the growth and development of Exeter. The other major addition is the chapter on Exeter since 1960. Here, Harvey demonstrates a feeling shared with Hoskins: love for their city shared with reservations, if not angry disappointment, over what its governing body was and is doing to it.

This book is well presented, and contains many illustrations. The last are apt, clear, and vastly outnumber the sixteen presented by Hoskins in 1960. He finished

with a series of notes on Exeter street-names and place-names. This is substantially expanded. As in the first edition, formal academic-style references are not given. However, useful suggestions for further reading are now provided. As with earlier versions, the work is well indexed.

This book can be highly recommended to all interested not only in the history of Exeter, but in English local history as a whole. The answer to the question posed in the closing sentence of the first paragraph of this review is a definite yes.

Sadru Bhanji

Exeter Unveiled by Todd Gray. Mint Press, Exeter 2003. 135 pages, illustrated. ISBN 1-903356-26-1 (Softback); 1-903356-25-3 (Hardback). Softback £17; hardback £25.

With this fine book, intended to be regarded as a companion volume to 2002's *Lost Exeter*, Todd Gray has again enhanced his reputation as the foremost modern chronicler of the city's past. It comprises a collection of some 270 illustrations, drawn in a variety of mediums, which vividly capture the quality of the city's environment both before and after the tragic events of the twentieth century which served to deprive it of much of its former lustre.

The first artist whose work is covered in detail is Willern Schellinks, a Dutchman who came to Exeter soon after the Restoration and whose illustrations (now housed in the Austrian National Library in Vienna - most of the other material in the book is held by either the Devon Record Office or the Westcountry Studies Library) offer a fascinating glimpse into the seventeenth century city. As with the work of all the other artists, the reproductions of Schellinks' work are excellent and are accompanied by a pertinent and interesting commentary by Gray. The same is true of the representations of Exeter people and places from the sketchbooks of Henry Ellis and John Harris, following which Gray includes a colourful and thought-provoking section on the city's buildings, which serves to remind the reader how much of value Exeter has lost in the last two hundred years. The one-time splendour of Dix's Field - now known only to most Exonians as the postal address of the Civic Centre; - Broadgate; the medieval Exc Bridge, complete with houses; and Southernhay. Most of the illustrations in this section and the following one on 'The River Exe in the Nineteenth Century' are immaculately reproduced in their original colour and serve to enhance the authority and charm of the book.

However, the most impressive and interesting sections of the book are the last two. The first of these showcases the quirky, colourful and beautifully drawn caricatures of notable Exeter people produced in the 1860s and 1870s by one William Tucker. The latter serves to transport the reader from the grandeur and refinement of pre-Second World War Exeter into the grim but nonetheless optimistic years which came after 1945. The book's final scribe, Harold Murray, was a journalist who lived in Exeter for several years immediately after the end of the war. He was obviously captivated by the city, its citizens and their collective wish to recover from the devastating effects of the conflict: his legacy was a collection of stylised, Lowreyesque colour drawings of people and cityscapes which are redolent of Exeter's desire to move on and leave the privations of the war years behind.

It is often easy to forget, in the light of the depressing ugliness of much of the contemporary city centre, how elegant and impressive Exeter used to be. This is not to say that all is lost - the Cathedral still stands, Southernhay is still true to many of its architects' intentions, it is still possible to promenade through Northernhay Gardens or enjoy a view of the city and its rural environs from Pennsylvania or Exwick. This book is not perfect - there are a few typographical errors here and there - but Gray shows how much more impressive Exeter would still be had it not suffered so heavily at the hands of the Luftwaffe and its own post-war planners. For that, any reader with a high regard for the city has cause to be truly grateful.

Brian Carpenter

Exeter in the 1940s by Todd Gray, The Mint Press, Exeter 2004. 152 pages, illustrated. ISBN 1-903356-39-3. Softback £9.99.

I was only a child when war broke out in 1939, but even on that first day I was aware that something momentous was about to happen. Young men quickly disappeared from the streets and older people soon wore the uniforms of LDV (later to become the Home Guard), the Fire Service, NAAFI and many others. The arrival of the evacuees, many from the East End of London was a real reminder that this war was going to affect us all. The example in the book brought back memories long since forgotten..

In the gardens, 'Dig for Victory' was the order of the day; and flowerbeds disappeared together with all the railings. Shelters were built in back gardens - I remember the wail of the siren that sent us to our retreat in the cold clay trench below the hedge. In May 1942, Exeter was one of the cities chosen by Hitler for what was termed a Baedeker raid, and this is well documented in the book.

A sense that the war was turning in our favour came with another invasion: the Americans. At last the war in Europe came to an end, and every street seemed to have its own VE Day celebrations. It is hard to imagine what a euphoric day that was. For the moment, thoughts of rebuilding were in abeyance, shortages forgotten. The last years of the 40s meant that we could look forward to a new Exeter as the scars of war gradually faded and the people began to live without fear again.

For the older readers of Devon Historian I can recommend this walk back in time. I am sure you will find yourself adding personal details, just as I have done. For the younger - look around as you walk in Exeter. There are still many memories of the people and places of the 1940s.

P.J.Salter

MESSAGE FROM ANTHONY GREENSTREET

In 'Dr Samuel Johnson in Devon, 1762' (Devon Historian 69) I mentioned a traditional supposition that Dr Johnson had retired to read in a gazebo in the grounds of Sir Joshua Reynolds' sister Mary's house in New Street, Torrington.

I am indebted to A.L. Sayers, R. Bowden and H. Le Messurier for information about the subsequent fate of this gazebo. Built in 1752 and listed Grade II*, it had become a virtual ruin by 1996 when it was rescued by The Devon Historic Buildings Trust, with the aid of matching grants from a number of bodies. The gazebo was dismantled, restored and re-erected in 1999 in the Royal Horticultural Gardens, Rosemoor, Torrington, and received a Civic Trust Award Commendation in 2001. There seems also to be a traditional supposition that Reynolds used the gazebo as a studio during his joint visit to his sister with Dr Johnson.

DEVON BOOK OF THE YEAR

The panel of the Devon History Society, after long deliberations, made the following awards for 2003:

Overall winner in the subject category:

Stoyle, Mark, *Circled with stone: Exeter's city walls 1485-1660*. University of Exeter. A meticulous and readable survey of an important but neglected subject, well referenced and illustrated.

Commended in the subject category:

Ed. Lepine, D. and Orme, N. *Death and memory in medieval Exeter*. Devon & Cornwall Record Society.

Woods, Stephen, *Dartmoor farm: an illustrated history based on the Southcombe diaries and photographs from the Hunt collection*. Halsgrove.

Highly commended in the local category:

Mettler, Alex, and Woodcock, Gerry, *We will remember them: the men of Tavistock who died in the First World War*. Tavistock and District Local History Society. An interesting way of approaching social history, through the lives of those who fell in the Great War. A detailed presentation of a wide range of sources.

Commended in the local category:

Lethbridge, Henry James, *Torquay and Paignton: the making of a modern resort*. Phillimore.

Matthews, Gerry, *Black Torrington: the second millennium*. Edward Gaskell.

Highly commended in the general category:

Gray, Todd, *Lost Devon: creation, destruction and change over 500 years*. Mint Press. A wide ranging and well presented survey covering the whole of Devon.

Commended in the general category:

Shephard, Sue, *The seeds of fortune: a gardening dynasty*. Bloomsbury.

Hoskins, W.G., *Devon*. New ed. Phillimore. Although this is not a new text, a revised issue of this important work in a new format deserves special mention.

Abridged Report and Minutes of the thirty-fourth Annual General Meeting held at the University of Exeter School of Education on 30 October 2004

NB: the formal Report and Minutes containing transcripts of the officers' annual reports will be available for inspection at the 2005 AGM or may be inspected at reasonable hours by appointment with the Honorary Secretary.

Present: The President, Professor Nicholas Orme, was in the Chair and members as listed in the attendance register were present.

1. Apologies for absence: apologies for absence were reported from Dr W. G. Stephens, Mrs Ann Adams, Mrs Clare Greener, Mr Geoffrey Harding, Mr Ian Stoyle, Mr Vincent Spring, Mrs Judith Farmer

2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting: the full Report and Minutes of the thirty-third AGM, and abbreviated version of which had been printed in *The Devon Historian* No. 68, was approved by those present and signed by the President.

3. Honorary Secretary's Annual Report: The Secretary, Mrs Margaret Lewis reported that the thirty-third AGM of the Devon History Society was held in Baring Court last October. The theme of the last AGM was Devon's Church History, with a talk by Professor Nicholas Orme on 'A Thousand Years of Change', a quiz compiled by Mr Tony Collings and a talk by Professor Eamon Duffy entitled 'Reforming the Parish'. The Society's Council met on three occasions under the chairmanship of Mrs Shirley Purves during the past year to discuss the Society's business. The spring conference was hosted by the Torquay Museum Society in Torquay on March 20 2004. After an introduction to the Society by Ms Ros Palmer and illustrated lecture on 'A Torbay Century' was given by Mr W. Mike Thompson. In the afternoon Mr John Risdon presented an illustrated lecture on '1000 Years of the River Dart Estuary'. In May, it was with great regret that we learned of the death of Mr John Pike, a founder member of the Devon History Society. He is greatly missed. The summer conference was held in Branscombe where Cllr. Margaret Rogers gave a talk on 'The use of Salcombe stone before 1700'. After lunch members had the choice of visiting Beer Quarry Caves or joining Mrs Rogers on a guided walk through Branscombe and a visit to St Winifred's Church. The Society owes a debt of gratitude to Mr Robin Stanes and Miss Elizabeth Maycock for organising these events. Fifteen books were reviewed in the 2004 editions of *The Devon Historian*. Mr David Pike audited the Devon History Society's accounts last year and has agreed to undertake the duty this year. Mr David Pike was re-appointed as auditor. Mr David Thomas thanked the Honorary Secretary for taking on the office.

4. Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report: the Honorary Treasurer reported that 2004 membership was: honorary life membership 2; life membership 14; ordinary membership 233; family membership 27; affiliated membership 57; corporate membership 27. The Treasurer pointed out that affiliated membership had increased by 20 over the last five years, largely due to the free use of the Record Office by their members that affiliation provided. It was anticipated that free use would be available to all once the Record Office re-opens in the New Year, and some other inducement may be necessary to avoid many societies disaffiliating. The Society continued to recruit ordinary members through the website, and Dr Bhanji recommended that this be continued.

Referrals to the financial report:

	2004	2003
Gross income	£5,065.30	£5,046.11
Gross expenditure	£5,274.37	£4,738.07
Excess of income over expenditure	-£209.07	£308.04
Building Society Account		
Transfer in £480.00		
Interest £100.76		
Carried forward to 2004 - 2005	£5,272.32 (plus £6,230.37 with Building Society)	
The apparent deficit was due to the transfer of the £480 to the Building Society Account		

5. **Honorary Editor's Annual Report:** the Honorary editor reported that *The Devon Historian* Nos 68 and 69 were duly published in April and October, and thanked all those who had contributed to them. She also thanked Mr Ian Maxted for selecting appropriate art work from the Westcountry Studies Library for cover material. The papers published had been wide-ranging in their subject matter and of varied interest. But she currently had insufficient material for issue No. 70, and appealed to members to submit further material before the deadline of 30 November, if the issue was to be of the usual size. Mrs Harris reminded members that she would be retiring from the office in the spring of 2005, having completed 20 years, and was delighted to say that Dr Andrew Jackson, Teaching Fellow in Historical Studies at the University of Exeter Department of Lifelong Learning would be standing for election as her replacement. Dr Jackson had over recent years contributed various articles to *The Devon Historian* and would bring a fresh approach and many new ideas, and she commended him to the Society and wished him well.

6. **Elections for the year 2004/2005:** Those existing officers and members of Council wishing to serve for another year were re-elected *en bloc*. Dr Andrew Jackson, having been proposed by Mrs Helen Harris and seconded by Mrs Shirley Purves, was elected to the office of Honorary Editor from April 2005. Mr Michael Weller, having been proposed by Mrs Shirley Purves and seconded by Mr Tony Collings, was elected for three years as a member of the Council.

7. **Programme for 2005:** Mrs Margaret Lewis reported that the Spring Meeting will be held on 19 March 2005 and hosted by the Bradninch Local History Society. Mr Warwick Knowles, their archivist, is to arrange a buffet lunch and there will be displays, short town walks, a speaker from the Duchy of Cornwall and Mr Knowles will give a talk on the work of their Society. The Summer Meeting will be on 25 June, hosted by Halsworthy Museum. Mrs Curtis, the secretary, is arranging a town trail and visits to the Church and Museum. Speakers will be Mrs Helen Harris on the Bude Canal and Mr Peter Christie whose subject will be 'Church, Sex and Slander in Elizabethan north Devon'. Mr David Hey of Sheffield University has agreed to speak at the 2005 AGM

8. **Any other business:** Mr David Thomas said that he was aware that three members had not yet received their copies of the October *Devon Historian*. It was agreed that this would be investigated

The President declared the meeting closed.

Dartmouth History Research Group

As part of its 'Dartmouth Archives' project, which is funded by the Local Heritage Initiative, the Group is holding a Local History Day on Saturday 5 March, 10am-4pm in the Guildhall, Dartmouth. For further information contact Irene O'Shea on 01803 712531 or john@oshea65.freemove.co.uk

The Lustleigh Society Forthcoming meetings include:

Weds 30 March: 'Lustleigh small talk of the 50s and 60s' (Anne and Bill Beaumont)
 Weds 27 April 'Geology of east Dartmoor' (Dr Richard Scrivenor)
 Weds 25 May 'Policing the Peninsula' (P.C. Simon Dell)
 June (date to be arranged) 'Trip to Tyntesfield'
 Weds 27 July Private visit to Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust at Old Station. 7.30 pm
 Weds 28 September 'The worldwide Lustleigh Wills family' (Mike Wills)

Except where otherwise stated meetings are in the Village Hall at 8.0 pm.
 For enquiries contact Maj Gen Joe Crowdy, 01647 277419

Widcombe and District Local History Group Programme includes:

Weds 6 April Discussion evening
 Weds 4 May 'The history of Dartmoor Prison' (Trevor James)
 Sat 7 May Visit to Princetown Museum followed by walk around King Tor.
 Sat 14 May Annual outing - Morwellham Quay
 Weds 1 June 'The Pengelly Cave' (Sheila Phillips)
 Friday 3 June Evening visit to Pengelly Cave, meeting at Centre 7 pm.
 Weds 6 July 'The moorland Erme' (Mike Perriam)
 Sat 9 July Walk on the moor along the Erme, led by Mike Perriam. Meet at Cornwood car park 12 noon with picnic lunch.
 Weds 3 August Discussion evening
 Weds 7 September 'Devon's century of change' (Helen Harris)

For further information contact Tony Beard on 01364 621246