

The Devon Historian, Volume no. 74, Spring 2007

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Reviews

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The Devon Historian

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Journal of the Devon History Society



THE NEW BRIDGE, TOTNES,
1810.

Engraving by W. Daniell. Original in the possession of the Devon History Society.



CASTLE BAYLY, DEVON.
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A Seminar will be held at Queen's Building, Streatham Campus, University of Exeter on Saturday 24 March 2007. The Summer Meeting will be held at Church House, Widcombe-in-the-Moor on Saturday 30 June 2007.

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The restoration of the village cross at Churston Ferrers

Jean Tregaskes

The history of the cross

The year of the Millennium, 2000 A.D., was, in part, the reason for the idea of restoring the ancient village cross at Churston Ferrers near Brixham. The cross had ceased to function as such during years of religious turmoil, probably in the sixteenth century, when objects thought to be idolatrous were destroyed.

The suggestion was made by a churchwarden, Peter Royle, who was heavily involved in 1997-8 in creating an entirely new churchyard opposite the church of St Mary the Virgin, which had never had a burial ground before. Apart from Lord Churston's family vault within the curtilage and a Farquharson burial inside the church all parishioners were buried at St Mary's churchyard in Brixham since time immemorial. This had meant a mile long journey from Churston Church along the lych (corpse) way, now known as Copythorne Road, and up Monksbridge Road to the 'mother church' of Brixham. Local tradition, in the twentieth century, had it that such processions always made three circles around a pile of stones in the roadway, at the junction of the lane from the church with the street through the village of Churston, before proceeding to Brixham. The stones were the remains of the base of the old village cross, long since lost sight of but still respectfully acknowledged.

An article written about 1877 by James Bridge Davidson 'On ancient crosses and cross houses' provides this account of Churston's tradition. After stating, clearly to his amazement, that the 'present church has no churchyard' he goes on to say:

But there is in the high road leading to Brixham a remarkable site, in the form of now only a pile of stones, round which funeral processions used to make a circuit with much reverence. Here, tradition says, a cross stood, here a church was to have been built, but the Author of Evil interfered and marred the design. The writer [Davidson] suggests that it was this cross that gave its name to Cercetona.¹

'Cercetona' is the name for the manor of Churston in 1086 in the Domesday book. There is no mention of a church in the village, which was then in the possession of Judhael, Lord of Totnes. It had been held by Ulf the Saxon, who was probably a relative of King Harold who was killed in 1066 at Hastings. Susan Pearce quotes a well-developed practice by the tenth century that was described about 700 A.D. by an English nun who wrote: 'on estates of nobles and good men of the Saxon race it is the custom to have a cross...erected on some prominent spot for the convenience of those who wish to pray daily before it'.²

Although there is no Domesday evidence of a church existing in Saxon times this does not preclude the possibility of one at Churston. The Reverend O.J. Reichel in his article 'The church and the hundreds of Devon' states that if a lord, with the consent of the Bishop, created a church on his manor, such would not be

mentioned in Domesday, since they were freehold and not 'held in chief of the king'.³ Other thoughts on this come from *Bygone Devonshire* written about 1898 by the Reverend Hilderic Friend, who states that: 'The neighbourhood of Torquay...affords two of the rare local instances of the proven existence of a church before the Conquest'. He refers to Churston as 'glorying in the possession of a Saxon sanctuary'.⁴ He bases this on the use of *cerce* or *cyric* as *church* in Southern England. A soft pronunciation of the *c* led to *church* whereas a hard pronunciation brought the word *kirk*, used in northern areas for religious buildings.

Whether or not there was an actual building for worship at Churston before the Domesday Survey the very name 'Churston' does indicate the presence of a preaching cross, because the word derives from the Anglo-Saxon *cyric* and *tun*, meaning *cross* and *town*, or more properly *a large farm*. It was still customary for villagers to worship around such field crosses even at a time when the lord of the manor might well have had his own manorial chapel. The cross at Churston was probably so used until the simple manorial chapel, built before 1100 A.D., was enlarged in the twelfth century. It is known from the records of the Benedictine Priory of Totnes, founded by Judhael, that Churston paid tithes from 1088.⁵ The Totnes monks came to say mass at Churston where a parvise or priest's room was built for them over the church porch, but the preaching cross remained in the village even when the church was handed to the parishioners in 1480. The cross, while it was a venerated feature of the parish, would have been updated in style some time after 1066.

With the Protestant Reformation, begun by King Henry VIII in 1534 and confirmed in the reign of his daughter, Elizabeth I, the sixteenth century saw major changes in religious observance. Iconoclasm meant the removal of many features that seemed to imply idolatry and crosses were among the objects attacked. Churston's village cross was probably made to disappear at that time. The base of the cross remained in the roadway but the shaft and head were not seen again for centuries.

Churston church underwent a major restoration from 1864-5, during which time two items of pre-Reformation practice were uncovered from beneath render on the porch wall. On the east side of the outer door a holy water stoup appeared and above the parvise window situated over the main porch door a carving came to light. It is a crucifixion scene with the central figure of Christ on the cross supported on either side by the Virgin Mary and probably St John. Its position above a window in the Tudor style suggests that it was deliberately hidden there under new render in the sixteenth century at the time of the Reformation. Edward Masson Phillips, writing about 'The ancient crosses of Devon' in 1937, says that the Churston Ferrers' cross could be of the type where the shaft 'bears a canopied or lantern head'. He says that there are fragments of a carved crucifixion 'built into the South wall of the South porch of Churston church', which could be the 'lantern-head'.⁶ A lantern-head is a rectangular block of stone with carvings on the four sides. It was an unusual shape, for Devon crosses are normally of the simple cruciform type.



Figure 1: the cross shaft against the wall of the church porch (photo: John Risdon).

The 'discovery' in 1937 of the probable head for Churston's ancient cross helped to piece together what had happened to it, for the actual cross shaft had been discovered by the third Lady Churston some years before Mr Masson Phillips' article was written. This may have occurred in the 1920s when Lady Churston realised that the pillar that had long held up a staircase in the farm

adjoining Churston Court was a shaft of a cross. Mr Masson Phillips reports in his article that he was able to:

view and photograph the cross shaft that now stands in the centre of a flower-bed in the walled garden to the South-west of the house. It formerly stood in the garden North of the church, under the trees. It is a tapering granite shaft, octagonal in section and lacks head and arms. At present it serves as a support for climbing plants.⁷

From the Dean Rural's visitations to Churston church it seems likely that the shaft was removed from North of the church to the Court garden about 1927, for in that year the Reverend H.M. Drake reported that 'the trees on the North side have been cut back but not sufficiently'.⁸ These trees had been a matter of concern since 1925 when actual damage to the church had been caused by a broken branch, and the Dean Rural had urged an approach to Lord Churston. So the shaft became a garden ornament and remained as such for at least a decade.

A report appeared in *The Western Morning News* on 6 June 1939 saying that the shaft of the old cross had been removed from the garden at the Court to the church grounds, where it was intended that it be restored with a head and arms.⁹ *The Brixham Western Guardian* of 20 July stated that 'Lord Churston (the 4th) has presented the Churston Parish Church with the old cross shaft'.¹⁰ The village cross shaft was thus transferred into new keeping, but plans to restore it were forestalled by the outbreak of World War II on 3 September 1939. At some time the shaft was kept inside the church and much discussion went on after the end of World War II about making it into a memorial for those from the parish who had lost their lives in the service of the country. Yet, in 1948, such a plan was dropped because the cost, at £112, was deemed to be 'excessive'.¹¹ If translated into modern monetary values it may well be seen as such. The shaft finally, in 1986, found a resting place against the east wall of the porch, leaning there forlornly until the end of the twentieth century (see fig. 1).

The restoration

The life story of this piece of granite was about to begin another chapter that would return it to its original stance if not to its purpose as a preaching cross. It took five years to arrange this as the shaft is Grade II listed and required both Diocesan faculty permission and listed building consent from Torbay local authority. The quest began with both these bodies being consulted; but the latter's representative, without speaking to anyone from the church on his visit, recommended that the shaft be protected by being placed inside the church. It was a setback that Mr Royle overcame by persuading the Diocesan Advisory Council to reconsider its rejection of the idea, for preaching crosses were always open air objects. A search then began for ways and means of accomplishing the proposal.

From the first it was decided that it was essential to involve the local community for the cross had started as a village possession. This proved to be the saving of the scheme for it needed about £4,000 to carry it out, and in contributing

to the fund the people felt that they were helping to restore a village feature even if it was to be sited in the new churchyard.

The Galmpton and District Local History Society took an instant interest in the project and it was their Chairman, local historian John Risdon, who played a major part in its success. Another member, retired architect Norman Berry, was persuaded to design a new head for the cross as the pre-Reformation lantern head was never considered, for it could not be removed from the wall of the church porch. Stonemasons in the area had been consulted about making a base and a head for the shaft, but figures of £7000 or doubts about the wisdom of drilling the granite shaft revealed a reluctance to handle the project. So Churston's Vicar, Andrew Allen, a lover of Dartmoor rambles, suggested the Dartmoor National Park Authority be asked for advice. It was at this point that local JCB owner, John Crisp, moved the shaft to a horizontal position so that its top and bottom could be examined, and in February 2000 Dartmoor archaeologist, Deborah Griffiths, pronounced that the eight feet seven and a half inch tapering octagonal granite shaft with its base cushion stops was a fine one. It could be drilled to insert into a base and be given a new head.



Figure 2: The new base of Dartmoor granite for the restored cross (photo: John Risdon).

John Risdon, another lover of Dartmoor, found a possible source of granite for the work and took the two churchwardens, Geoff Gadsby and Jean Tregaskes, to see farmer Booty in July 2000. A granite boulder in a field was chosen to be the base in return for a donation to Widdecombe Church Tower Fund (see fig. 2). The

Churston Parochial Church Council was then pleased to vote for the whole scheme, although a few voices spoke in favour of leaving the shaft untouched. It was another six months before Mr Risdon again assisted, finding a place where the granite could be worked. He took the wardens to see Leo van Leeuwen, the Dutch owner of Blackenstone Quarry near Moretonhampstead, although a search for a block for the head was unsuccessful.



Figure 3: the carving of the new cross head by David Cram (photo John Risdon).

The outbreak of foot and mouth disease then halted all efforts on Dartmoor, and it was not until December 2001 that the trio with Leo van Leeuwen were able to revisit Mr Booty. The block selected for the head did not prove to be without flaws, and so the cross head was eventually carved from Blackenstone granite by Leo and the Dawlish stonemason David Cram (see fig. 3).



Figure 4: The dedication of the restored cross (photo: John Risdon).

Meanwhile award-winning local architect, Mike Inness, was employed to draw up the necessary documents to obtain listed building consent and the faculty application to the Diocese was made by the wardens. Both permits were available by November 2001. At last it was possible to go ahead. The base boulder was lifted from Dartmoor on a wild, wet day, 2 February 2002. Brought by a lorry with a crane to the churchyard wall its final journey to the centre of the Garden of Remembrance was by means of Mr Crisp's JCB. It was not until the summer weather that the head could be shaped at Blackenstone, but the shaft was brought back fitted with its new head in July 2002. David Cram made the hole in the base and the shaft was lifted by the JCB, fitting precisely into the boulder.

On Sunday, 22 September 2002, John Garton, Bishop of Plymouth, conducted a service of dedication in the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Churston Ferrers and beside the restored cross (see fig. 4). The Millennium Cross was two years late arriving but the village at last had its symbol back, which was another part of the reason for the whole project.

Acknowledgements

The photographs are reproduced with the kind permission of John Risdon.

Notes and references

1. Davidson 1877, pp. 247-8.
2. Pearce 1978, p. 96.
3. Reichel 1939, p. 338.
4. Friend 1898, pp. 181-3.
5. Watkin 1914, p. 11.
6. Masson Phillips 1937, pp. 319-20.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Devon Record Office 1235A/add/PW1/1824-1970 The Visitations of the Dean Rural.
9. *The Western Morning News*, 6 June 1939.
10. *The Brixham Western Guardian*, 20 July 1939.
11. Minutes of the Parochial Church Council of St Mary the Virgin, Churston Ferrers, 1948.

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Jean Tregaskes is of Cornish and Welsh ancestry, born and brought up in South Wales. A history graduate of Reading University, she taught the subject in English grammar schools for more than 30 years. She retired to Devon. A former churchwarden of Churston Ferrers church and author of the booklet *Churston Story*.

Charles Fowler: architect, 1792-1867

Dorothy Presswell

In his 76th year, the architect Charles Fowler died at his residence Western House, Great Marlow, Bucks. His obituary in *The Builder* recorded him as having been born at Cullompton, Devon, to a long established Devonian family.¹ At the start of his career he was bound apprentice at the age of 15 to an Exeter architect and builder, John Powning, after which he moved to London in 1814 to join the architectural practice of David Laing (1774-1856). Probably unwittingly, Fowler had chosen well, for Laing, who had been a pupil of Sir John Soane (1778-1837), was noted for the manner in which he allowed his young associates a free hand in their work and, in consequence, Fowler's architectural ability flourished. Fowler worked with Laing's other young assistants, two of whom possessed the Dickensian surnames of Tite (1798-1873) and Bellamy (1798-1876), and it must have been a very amicable association as they remained friends throughout their lives.²

Early years

Owing to Laing's practice of accepting commissions and then delegating them to one of his assistants, Fowler was responsible for much of the design of London's Custom House, which was completed in 1817. After that, in 1818, he established his own practice in Red Lion Square, soon moving to work from fresh offices in Great Ormond Street. By the end of the 1830s he was well established at the prestigious address of 1 Gordon Square, Bloomsbury. This square was one of the developments in the Bloomsbury area undertaken by Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855) in the nineteenth century, and Fowler's occupation at number one demonstrates how successfully he had become established in the professional circles of his day.

Fowler's early work took place outside his native Devon. The Courts of Bankruptcy in Basinghall Street in 1821, and a small market at Gravesend completed in 1822, were two of his early commissions. From the very first year of setting up practice, he found a patron in William Courtenay, M.P., later 10th Earl of Devon (s. 1835), who at that time, lived at Duke Street, Westminster. William Courtenay looked upon the young Devonian as his architectural protégé, an association that continued until the architect's retirement from active work in 1853. In 1818 Courtenay commissioned Fowler to undertake extensive work at his Duke Street house, and it was at this time that the plans for coach houses at Duke Street were drawn up.³

Diversity of building styles

Fowler's building styles were as diverse as the work he was commissioned to undertake. They encompassed the classical (fig. 1), Norman (fig. 2) Gothic (fig. 3) and Italianate (fig 4), whilst building and rebuilding or adapting churches, lodges, hospitals, markets, a castle, a bridge and a magnificent conservatory.



Figure 1: The Great Conservatory, Syon Park



Figure 2: St Paul's church, Honiton

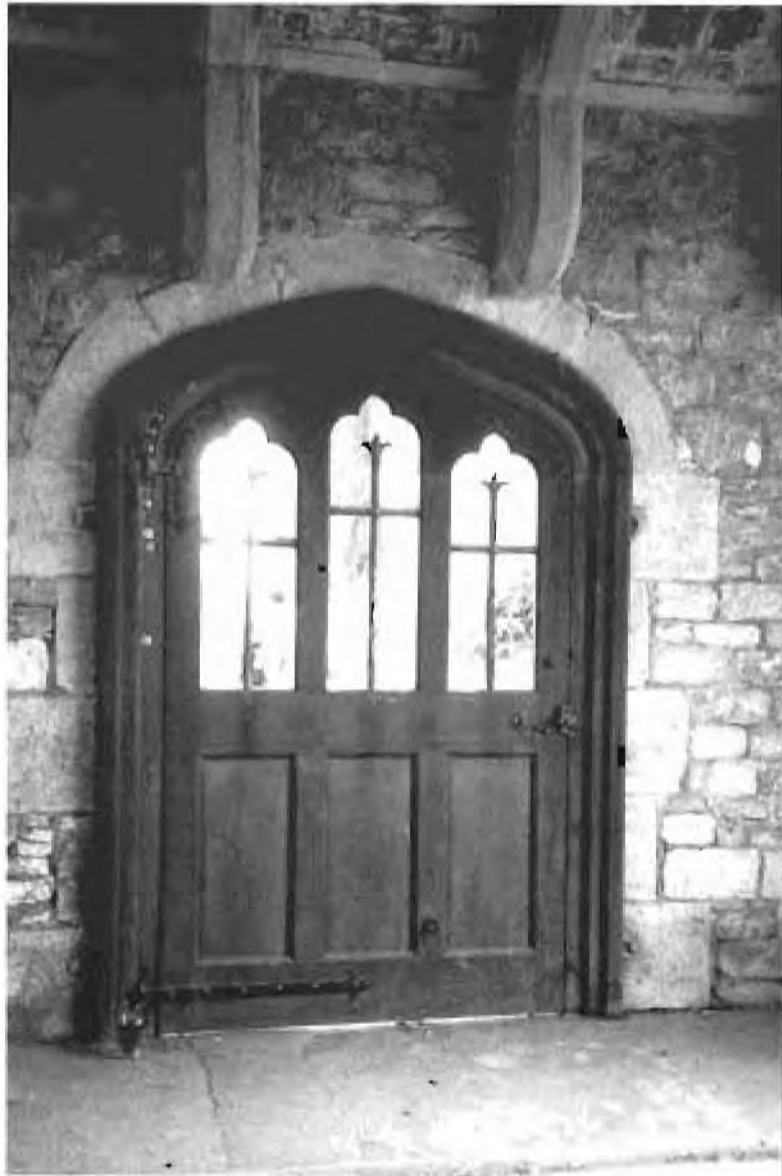


Figure 3: North gatehouse, Powderham Castle



Figure 4: Lodge, Roborough Down

The 1820s witnessed Fowler establishing himself as a pioneering architect who, during his lifetime, became best known for his work on markets. Using the materials of the Industrial revolution, Fowler moved away from the use of wooden structures to those of iron, and Covent Garden market, which he rebuilt for the 6th Duke of Bedford (s. 1802), was considered pioneering in concept. John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), who combined his practice as a landscape-gardener with literary activity, recorded that the area prior to Fowler's work had been covered by open sheds and wooden structures '...which had not the slightest pretension to uniformity or any other architectural beauty...'⁴

Fowler submitted his plan to the Duke of Bedford in 1827. The original design (later adapted) allowed for three parallel buildings, each surrounded by a colonnade. The architect allowed space so that the carts and wagons could be side by side with the horses' heads pointing from the building, without interrupting carriages passing along the street. Loudon particularly remarked upon the chief feature of the market, an imposing quadruple colonnade with conservatories over, which fronted the building. Internally, there was a terrace that served as a

promenade with 'a handsome fountain' in the centre. This market, in Loudon's opinion, '...raised Mr Fowler to the very first rank of an architect'.

Two of Fowler's better-known markets have not survived. Exeter's Lower Market, commenced in 1835, was lost as a result of enemy action in 1942, whilst his famous Hungerford market (where Charing Cross station now stands) was very short lived. Opened in 1833, and served by a suspension bridge built by I.K. Brunel (1806-1859) to access the market from the south bank, this development never did receive the public support that the imposing structure deserved, and 1862 witnessed the sale of the site to accommodate the railway station. However, one of Fowler's small markets survives in Devon at Tavistock, where he built a small corn market for the Duke of Bedford in 1835. Successive adaptations, which included solid infilling between the Doric columns during the twentieth century, enabled this building to survive whilst serving other purposes. The latest adaptation has allowed for glass rather than solid material between the columns, and this has better enhanced Fowler's original conception.

The guide book to *The gardens of Syon Park* states 'No more magnificent building of its size and kind exists anywhere in the world than the Great Conservatory at Syon'.⁶ Proof of Fowler's uniqueness in the design of this building lies in the fact that Joseph Paxton (1801-1865) studied the structure when he was preparing plans for the Crystal Palace, Commissioned in 1826 by the 3rd Duke of Northumberland (s. 1817), who was a keen gardener, and in association with the Duke's talented garden architect, Richard Forrester, Fowler designed a structure 382 feet long and 60 feet in height at the dome, which contained a conservatory divided into nine sections, incorporating a central tropical house, an orangery, camellia house and plants house. The architect built in the classical style using wrought iron, cast iron and made lavish use of Bath stone. In all, there were 8000 square feet of glazing, and the heating of the building required four miles of piping.

The Duke's patronage included commissioning Fowler to clad Syon House in Bath stone, and in the grounds to provide a riding school attached to the stables built by James Wyatt (1746-1813). In 1831 Fowler topped Wyatt's stables with a very elegant clock tower, and in 1839 returned to Syon Park where he undertook a lodge and lodge gates.

Competitive work

Fowler's career was greatly enhanced through aristocratic patronage, and in addition to his work for the Russell and Percy families, some of his successes can also be seen on the estates of the Courtenay and Lopes families. In addition to this invaluable patronage, he entered competitions to establish his professional career, although two of the most interesting did not result in the fruition of his proposals. In 1821, a committee of the House of Commons decided against the reconstruction of the existing London Bridge, resolving that a new one should be built. There were 52 competitors and Fowler was awarded the first premium of £250 by a panel comprised of Sir John Soane, Sir Robert Smirke (1780-1867) and John Nash (1752-1835). But the work was not given to Fowler, through no fault of

his own. Many years later, in 1848, the disgusted Earl of Devon (a man not given to mincing his words) recounted that Fowler did not get the work 'because of the grossest jobbing of a Committee of the House in favour to Sir John Rennie who was to employ as contractors Messrs Joliffe and Banks'.⁷ After Rennie's death in 1821, his son completed the work.

It is of interest to note that the reports to the committee contained the harbourmasters requirements, which demonstrated the difficulties experienced with the old London Bridge. In detailing their opinions to the Bridge Committee, they stated that:

we are further of the opinion that during severe frost, the ice by meeting less obstruction, would pass more freely and would not accumulate in such large masses as hitherto has, owing to the stoppage of the bridge and the navigation for craft upwards would remain much longer open. The present construction prevents a large body of water from flowing upwards.⁸

It is obvious from Fowler's design that he bore this requirement in mind (Fig. 5).⁹

The bridge designed by Fowler that has stood the test of time is at Totnes, spanning the river Dart. A narrow bridge, which was built in the reign of King John and later widened, was replaced in 1826-28 by a toll bridge designed by Fowler in the Palladian style. The builders were Oldric and Shepherd of Plymouth. This work must have been one of Fowler's happier occasions, for when the stone was laid on the 6th April 1826 and Fowler read out the details of the plate to be affixed to the foundation stone, it was followed by a firing of canon and a merry and repeated peels of bells. This noisy demonstration was followed in the evening by a display of fireworks, which must have been sensational, as the newspaper report observed that 'we rejoice that no accident occurred to damp the general mirth'.¹⁰ Totnes bridge was completed and opened in April 1828. Guns were fired and the national anthem played on the completion of 'so interesting a work which reflected credit to all concerned'.¹¹

The loss of the work for London Bridge so early in his career must have been a great disappointment to Fowler but, when the second occurred much later in life, in 1838, he was already well established and would have weathered the disappointment. In association with the sculptor Robert Sievier (1794-1865), Fowler entered his design for the Nelson Memorial in Trafalgar Square. The Nelson Memorial Committee, which included Nelson's Captains Hardy, Parker and Troubridge awarded the Fowler/Siever entry third place out of 160 entries. First place went to William Railton (1801-1877) and the second to the sculptor Edward Baily (1788-1867). In the event, the committee decided that Railton should undertake all but the statue, and in further deliberations decided that the statue should be undertaken by Baily. When reading the explanatory notes supporting Fowler's model 21, it is obvious that Fowler and Sievier submitted a design far more grandiose than that which now stands in Trafalgar Square.¹²

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 - ALSO · THE · APPROXIMATION · OF · THE · NEW · PIERS · & · COFFERDAMS · TO · THE · PRESENT · STERLIN

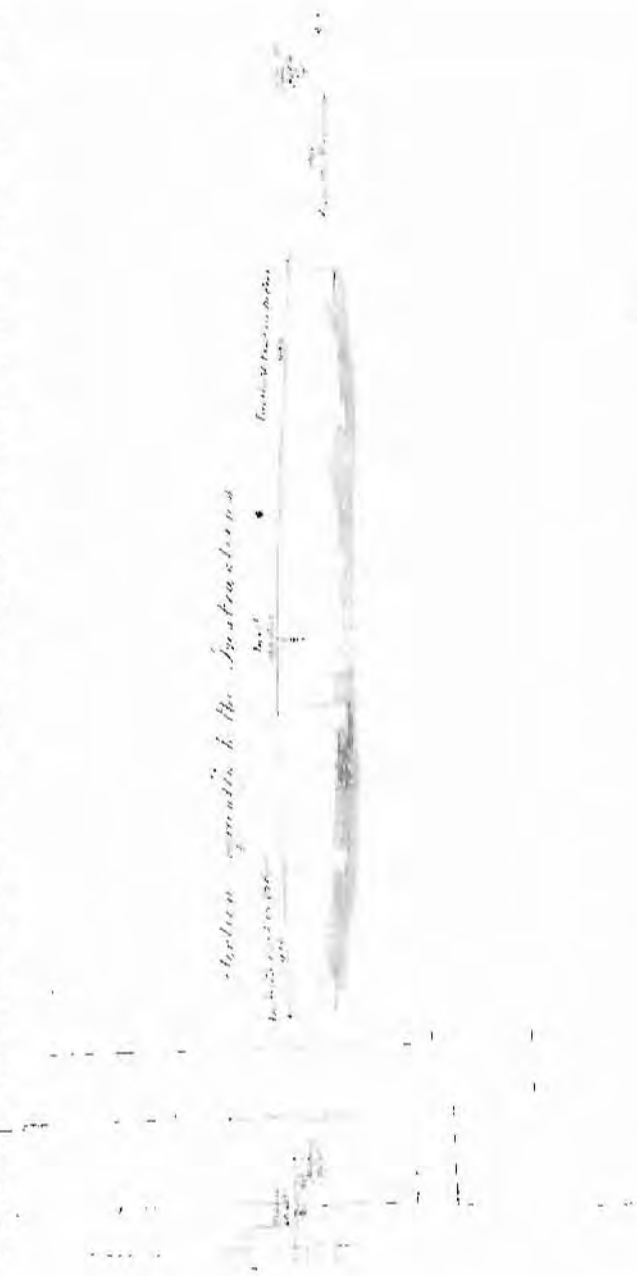


Figure 5: Surveyor's plan of London Bridge, detail (reproduced by permission of Corporation of London, London Metropolitan Archives)

Major work

In 1835 the 10th Earl of Devon invited Fowler to survey the structure of the ancestral seat of the Courtenay family at Powderham Castle. The architect was faced with a monumental task, as the building had remained unoccupied for nearly 25 years. Later, it was made plain in the petitions to the Chancery Court in 1842 that had Fowler not undertaken extensive repairs and adaptations within the building, the structure would have required demolishing.¹³ During the years 1835 to 1847 the construction of a courtyard Gothicized the approach to the castle, providing for a rebuilt wing to the south, the steward's apartments to the north and gatehouses to the west and north of the area. The whole was approached from a viaduct that transformed the main entrance from the east to the west of the building.¹⁴

Fowler's sole walled garden still survives at Powderham.¹⁵ The architect intended that the walls should be robust, establishing two feet wide footings of limestone rubble work grouted. The piers of two brick by half a brick at intervals of about 15 feet were placed outside the wall, which varied in height between 8 and 10 feet. The coping was manufactured expressly with a projecting course of slate underneath to form eaves, the whole set in cement. Hot houses nearly 144 feet in length by 18 feet in depth accommodated unique heating tanks, which, in the event, leaked and had to be supplanted by more conventional heating pipes in 1846.

Although, over the centuries, Fowler's external work has been fulsomely acknowledged at Powderham Castle, as has his dining hall, successive art historians have failed to detail Fowler's extensive internal work, in particular his involvement with adapting what he called 'the grand staircase'.¹⁶ Many photographs have been reproduced regarding this unique eighteenth century staircase, the walls so heavily embellished with stucco work, supposedly untouched since construction. But Fowler's papers are very clear regarding his involvement in the nineteenth century, for his new dining hall abutted the external medieval wall of the castle, thus blocking the light from two large windows on the staircase. These Fowler blocked up, compensating for the loss of light by cutting open the roof and constructing the lantern over the staircase.¹⁷ Careful examination of the stucco on the ceiling of the lantern shows nineteenth century, not eighteenth century work. When adapting the west wall, the architect records 'removing the plaster ornaments' in order to adjust them.¹⁸ He inserted a jib door to give access to the gallery in the adjacent dining hall, using the surplus ornamental work to embellish what he had done.

Fowler's achievements in Devon reached their peak between the years 1835 and 1847. Whilst undertaking his extensive work at Powderham he received, in addition, more modest commissions, and his buildings for Sir Ralph Lopes at Bickleigh and Roborough commenced in 1838. At Bickleigh he rebuilt the church of St Mary's in the Gothic style, leaving the original tower standing when he demolished the old church, and at Roborough Down he built two lodges in

Italianate design. During the same period of time, the architect rebuilt St Mary's at Cofton for the Earl of Devon.

Charles Fowler built churches in London, Somerset and in Devon. By far the most interesting was his design regarding St Paul's Church, Honiton. The foundation stone was laid in 1835 for a church built in Romanesque style capable of containing a congregation of up to 1500 persons, including 500 free seats. The subscribers had sittings allotted to them according to the amount of their subscriptions, and a contribution over £25 ensured eligibility to serve on the committee.¹⁹

Fowler agreed to attend a meeting on 5th March 1835 at a charge, including expenses of travelling to and from London, of £23. On the 6th March he was shown two proposed sites and gave his report the following day, selecting the site of All Hallows Chapel and Tower as the most eligible. It is worthy of note that Fowler did not indulge in delaying tactics when submitting his reports. They were composed, written and copied within 24 hours of him inspecting a site he visited.

In order to allow entrance from the High Street, houses that were all part of the All Hallows Estate required demolition. One of the tenants, Mr Dunning, was due to vacate his premises, but Mrs Tooze, who owned her cottage, declined the church's offer of £500, demanding twice that amount of money – a demand that was refused. Nothing daunted, Mrs Tooze insisted that the issue go before a jury, a tactic that won her no support, as she was awarded £495 for the sale of the house 'and no more'. She also had to pay her own costs.²⁰

The construction of the church, built of flint and Beer stone, proved to be one of Fowler's architectural 'nightmares'. Like his contemporary, Brunel, Fowler was a pioneer in construction methods, and his belief that iron would solve the maintenance problems created by wood might have worked well in markets, but was a disaster in church building. His proposal that iron ribs in the roof would avoid rot and destruction by insects and be fire resistant resulted in monumental problems of condensation. When the church was full of worshippers, the rising heat, when in contact with cold iron, resulted in painful drops of water falling onto the congregation, and the story goes that it was not unusual for members of the congregation to attend church with umbrellas. Fowler had to address the problem of restructuring the roof at his own expense.

Social change

During his career, Fowler, on two occasions, became involved with designing buildings important to social change in the nineteenth century. The first was to fulfil the need for improved accommodation for the mentally ill and, later, the provision of a hospital purpose built for the care of fever patients.

Whilst working at Powderham Castle, Fowler was commissioned to undertake what was, in those days, termed the Devon County Pauper Lunatic Asylum at nearby Exminster. The aim was to house 450 patients, and it was built on land owned partly by the Earl of Devon. Fowler's reports to the Visiting Justices of the County of Devon Quarter Sessions have survived, revealing an initial estimate for the work by Messrs Harvey of £30,433.15.5, although the final

cost well exceeded this. Work commenced on 30th March 1842 with the cornerstone laid on 27th June of that year.

Fowler had to visit several lunatic asylums 'distinguished by their superior management and importance', collecting information on the diversity of theory and practices in order that he could accommodate them in his plans.²¹ Before designing the building, the architect visited the model prison just erected at Islington (Pentonville) to observe the benefits of centralized supervision over radiating wings.²² When it came to the erection of the lodges piers and gates, Fowler wanted them of a 'substantial construction consistent with the character of the establishment'.²³

The problems experienced by architects in the nineteenth century before the provision of mains access to water are well documented in Fowler's Exminster reports. The original well, sunk initially to 15 feet below the level of the turnpike road, contained only 20 inches of water in October 1842. Increasing problems in September of that year required excavation to 93 feet. Fowler observed that the flow of water was more from percolation than springs. It was not until the well reached a depth of 117 feet, containing 39 feet of water, further enhanced with a second well, that the two wells together would reach the required 8500 gallons.

The architect's intention to flood the interior of the whole complex with natural light and provide open fires with guards, '...because they are cheerful for the inmates',²⁴ resulted in a building with an imposing central administration block, behind which a crescent gave access to the wings in order to ease supervision and to provide for an oratory for staff and patients. On his final visit on 28th April 1845 Fowler reported upon minor defects in the refractory wards, there being a need to replace latches with locks, with damage occurring principally in the female wards. But, observed Fowler, 'this was due to poor supervision of the attendants'.²⁵

At the end of the twentieth century, South West Regional Health Authority sold this imposing nineteenth century complex that had been so instrumental in improving accommodation for a disadvantaged group in society. It has recently been transformed into spacious apartments by M.W.T. Architects (now Kensington Taylor, Architects, of Exeter).

The old London Fever Hospital was founded in 1802 under the full title 'The Institution for the Cure and Prevention of Contagious Fevers'. By 1847 the building was considered inadequate and a certain number of architects were invited to submit plans for the building of a new hospital in Liverpool Road, Islington.²⁶ The Building Sub Committee gave clear details of the requirements, namely a hospital for 200 beds, each ward not less than 24 beds and not more than 30.²⁷ There was the need for a beer cellar of sufficient size to accommodate four or five barrels of beer with back entry for the drays. Further requirements included the proposal that 'a mechanical contrivance should be constructed by which patients arriving in an exhausted condition may be raised from the ground floor to the wards above - such a contrivance as is in daily use in large factories'.²⁸ The anticipated mortality rate required that the dead house must be capacious enough to contain ten bodies. Half of the dead house should be dark and cool to

accommodate the bodies and half light and airy for autopsies.²⁹ Among the several architects nominated were Fowler and his old friend from his days with Laing, Bellamy. Owing to the over riding factor of financial constraints, the appointment of an architect did not go smoothly, and when one competitor's, design, by Mocatta, was favoured and adopted, there were serious doubts about his costings.³⁰ Mocatta (1806-1882) was paid £100 for his trouble when his plans were finally rejected in favour of Fowler's work.³¹

It was at a meeting of the Committee of the Fever Hospital at Freemason's Tavern in January 1848 that the Earl of Devon, who was president of the committee, reported on his protégé and in the doing demonstrated the power of patronage that the Earl had exerted throughout his association with the architect. Lord Devon reported that he had known Fowler for 30 years. According to the Earl, Fowler had [re]built the house for him in Duke Street, Westminster, 'which Brunel now occupies', and where Fowler coped with a very bad and rotten foundation. Devon emphasized that Fowler kept within his estimates and had built the best and cheapest lunatic asylum in England in the County of Devon. After passing his opinion regarding London Bridge (see above), he finished by informing the committee that Fowler had 'expended more than £20,000 for us at Powderham Castle, most under the direction of the Court of Chancery where his accounts are passed.'³²

Thus, Fowler's plans were adopted and the corner stone was laid on 29th July 1848 by the Earl. The work was quickly executed, as, by July 1849, the committee secretary had placed advertisements in four morning papers stating that the New Hospital was open for inspection of the public. The committee minutes of the London Fever Hospital recorded the existing, desperate, social conditions of the urban poor, there being cholera, typhus and typhoid in the overcrowded houses. The objects of the institution that Fowler had to address were those of diminishing the mortality of malignant fevers and to prevent the spreading of them. A report for the year 1851 noted that in the new building no serious illness among nurses or servants of the establishment had been recorded, and 'the immunity now being enjoyed is to be attributed to the larger space and better ventilation of the new hospital'.³³ In 1852 the new building admitted 976 patients, and out of that number 791 were dismissed as cured.³⁴

Final years

The London Fever Hospital was the last major work undertaken by Fowler. His health declined and he retired from active practice after his last commission, which was to build Waxchandler's Hall in 1852. During his long and distinguished career, he was one of the founders of the Institute of British Architects, filling the office of honorary secretary for many years and later was appointed vice president. After his enforced retirement he continued to take an interest in professional matters, 'and never relinquished the use of his pencil and drawing board, amusing himself with working out different architectural ideas, which occupied his mind to the last'.³⁵

Perhaps the finest eulogy to Fowler lies in his own words. Published in 1835, at the height of his career, a pamphlet written by him contained the following words:

The proper excellence of architecture is that which results from its suitableness to the occasion and the beauties growing out of the arrangement as applied to convenience, locality etc; and this principle, right pursued leads to originality without the affectation of novelty.³⁶

Acknowledgements

The Duke of Northumberland and the Earl of Devon.

The architectural achievements of Charles Fowler, detailed in the above narrative, have been selectively recorded and are by no means a definitive account of his work. Full details of Fowler's career are recorded within two in-depth publications by Jeremy Taylor (1964 and 1968). I have had cause to be grateful to Mr Taylor, as on many occasions I consulted his references in order to locate primary source documents.

I am also indebted to the staff of Exeter Central Reference Library, who have searched their records for obscure dates with unfailing attention and courtesy.

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Dorothy Presswell is an advocate of lifelong learning, having recently completed her studies with the Open University for an Honours Degree in Humanities with History. Concurrent with her work on Charles Fowler, she has undertaken revisionist research on the life of William Courtenay, 9th Earl of Devon (1768-1835).

The Payhembury Yew

Robin Stanes

The yew tree in Payhembury churchyard is now believed to be one of the oldest in the country, older than the present church and perhaps older than any preceding building there may have been on the little hill on which the church stands (see fig. 1). It is probable that there was some sort of Christian chapel there, or perhaps just a preaching cross, from the seventh century (A.D. 500-600), when the West Saxons converted to Christianity. This means that the yew is maybe 1200-1300 years old at the least. Those who know about yew trees say this is quite likely.



Figure 1: The Payhembury Yew (photo: Mo Bowman)

Most village churchyards can boast a yew tree. It is not very clear why this is so. Yew trees are poisonous to livestock and eating their foliage will kill cattle and horse and sheep, so they are and were a risk. The attraction, probably, was that they were evergreen and that they were the only evergreen to suit a churchyard. We are accustomed to evergreen pines and firs and laurels, but none of those are native to this country; they were seventeenth or eighteenth century imports from abroad. The only native evergreens in the Middle Ages, when the church was built, were the yew and the holly and Scots pine. The Scots pine is native to Scotland and not native here, the holly tree does not grow into a large sheltering tree good for a churchyard, and so the yew was the obvious tree.

It has other 'virtues'. Village people would be careful to keep their unwelcome cattle out of a churchyard with yews in it, as the yew is poisonous to livestock. Cattle strayed commonly in the past, particularly from common land, and were rounded up and impounded in the village pound. Payhembury had its pound of course still surviving by name at Pound Cottage. Forty years ago Slade Barton cows used to stray down the village street from Slade yard after milking, until the cowman, Mr Vittles, could shoo them onto a field; and there would have been other herds of cattle in the village in the past.

The yew has the virtue of being immortal in a curious way. After fifteen hundred years perhaps the main trunk collapses, but the tree does not die. Instead it sprouts from the rim of the tree near the ground and sends up shoots, and these will grow to a great age. This is what happened to the Payhembury yew. It now consists of four large sprouted branches with a mound in the middle where the old trunk collapsed. These branches must at some time have been selected to grow, as there would have been many more such sprouts originally. Some believe that the original tree was struck by lightning and split into four.

Some say yews provided necessary bow staves for village people to practise their archery regularly, as they were at one time bound to do by law. But those who know say that bow staves for the English long bow were commonly imported from Spain. It was their perpetual greenness and their ability to regrow, a sign of perpetual life and resurrection, that distinguished the yew and was appropriate in the churchyard. They gave good shelter to the church from the wind and the rain, summer and winter.

The Payhembury yew has a girth, in 2005, at soil level, of *circa* 35ft, but it is now four trunks not one. It seems likely these trunks were deliberately chosen out of the mass of growth that would have sprouted out of the bottom of the tree, when the old trunk collapsed. Someone must have thought 'let's have four trunks' and cut out the rest. When did this happen? When the old trunk collapse finally? The four stems are odd; botanists say that two carry male flowers and one carries female flowers, and one is uncertain! This does not apparently prove that there were once separate trees; that is how yews are apparently.

The four separate trunks are in girth at ground level 11', 13' 1", 8' 10" and 12' 9" respectively, perhaps not all the same age therefore, or with different advantages of light and exposure. The tree does not stand alone. There is another yew close by of some age, 12' 7" in girth, and recently yet another has been planted, a seedling from the well known ancient Tandridge tree. Long may they grow! They will outlive me and all who read this, and their children and their children's children for many generations doubtless!

Acknowledgements

The figure was made available by Kate Tobin of East Devon District Council, and is reproduced with the kind permission of Mo Bowman. The image is part of a set used to illustrate the 'Great Trees of East Devon Project', managed by the Council, and supported also by other partner agencies and funding bodies (see:

http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/index/visiting/countryside_index/great_trees_of_east_devon.htm).

Robin Stanes is a founder member of the Devon History Society, and has also served as its Hon. Editor. He is the author of the Phillimore county history of Devon, and other books on county's past. He was a farmer in Devon for 15 years, and his particular interest is Devonshire farming practice in the past.

Book reviews

David B. Clement (2006) *Holman's: a family business of shipbuilders, shipowners and insurers from 1832*, Topsham: Topsham Museum Society; 197 pages, 81 colour and B/w illustrations, softback, ISBN 0952439124, £12.00. If purchased from the publishers please add £2.00 for postage and packaging.

This is the fascinating story of a family that was numerous but had the talent to develop the expertise of its members in almost every aspect of shipping. But by the mid-nineteenth century the distinction between shipbuilding and the profitable employment of the ships when built was plain. Holman's found that the newly born marine insurance business offered many potentially rewarding opportunities. Henry Charles Holman was prominent in its development. The West of England Marine Insurance Association founded in 1832 was followed in 1838 by the Exeter Shipping Association, and then in 1847 by the Shipowners' Protection Association. Twenty years later the West of England Protection and Indemnity Association was the name given to the regrouping of the insurance interests. About this time the insurance side of Holman's moved to London.

After World War II the Holman Board decided that the economic climate of the fifties was unfavourable to shipping and so disposed of their fleet. With World War Two Holman's managed tonnage for the British Government including a number of cargo ships on charter from the Canadian Government. But by the late fifties all these minor activities had been concluded. The firm saw its future in insurance of different kinds, including the development of 'niche interests', rather than the concentration on a few types of risk such as maritime. But the ability to respond flexibly to demands remains of great importance as is apparent from the redeployment of offices and staff beginning at the end of the sixties. The assets of the West of England P. & I. Association were passed to the Luxembourg office. While the main operational office remains in London, the regional ones in Luxembourg, Hong Kong and at the Piraeus are still important and well placed to cover the markets they watch.

Adrian Reed

Tony Lethbridge (2005) *Exeter: history and guide*, Stroud: Tempus; 128 pages, 2 maps, colour and b/w illustrations, softcover, ISBN 0-7524-3515-9, £14.99.

It is a challenging task for historian to produce a history of a city. Tony Lethbridge's *Exeter* is a successful work of synthesis, drawing upon a range of well-known sources, authoritative and popular, for example: Hoskins, Newton, Thomas, Harvey, Orme, Gray, Barber and Worrall. The author states that it is not his intention to arrive at an academic text, rather one that will appeal to residents and visitors. The very readable result should accomplish this. Lethbridge is also open about not attempting to cover all perspectives, but instead aspects that have fascinated him personally. The book shows some individuality therefore, reflecting the author's engagement with and enthusiasm for his home city.

The first chapters of the book discuss Roman, medieval, Tudor and Civil war Exeter. These place the fortunes of the city in an effective way into a narrative of national politics. Subsequent chapters benefit from the greater body of evidence available to historians of the city. Two, on Georgian and Victorian Exeter, are accordingly broader, encompassing more of social and economic life, and of the built landscape.

Three chapters cover the great change of the last one hundred years, notably of the Second world war years. The book is in fact very timely, incorporating consideration of the current centre redevelopment, for some a second blitz of the city. This said Lethbridge reflects on all that the twentieth century has brought with much objectivity and circumspection.

The book draws to a close with two walking tours, describing the two 'classic' circuits of central Exeter: Northernhay and Southernhay, and to the Quay and back. These aim to assist visitors and also residents wanting to familiarise themselves more fully with the city's history and heritage.

This *history and guide* is also a finely produced edition in the Tempus local history series.

Andrew Jackson

Philip Photiou (2005) *Plymouth's forgotten war: the Great Rebellion 1642-1646*, Ilfracombe: Arthur H Stockwell Ltd; 328 pages, 3 maps, 13 photographs, hardcover, ISBN 07223 3669-1, £18.99

The English Civil War was the most devastating period in Devon's history in terms of human cost and material damage. Yet, as the author of this study Philip Photiou points out, this time of conflict has often been forgotten.

Andriette's work in the 1960s and 70s, Roberts in the 1990s and Stoyles more recent body of research has greatly improved our understanding of the causes and consequences of Devon's war, while the latter's concise history is an accessible introduction to the county's experience. Photiou, in concentrating on Plymouth's protracted stand against Royalist forces, has also been successful in his attempt to relate the conduct of the war to a general readership, a work that may remind us of Cotton's 1889 *History of the Civil War in Barnstaple*.

The book commences by analysing the build up to war both locally and nationally, and describes Plymouth's strategic coastal location, which made control of the port a necessity for both factions. We read of the progressive alienation of one of England's most loyal towns, the Plymouth and Plympton areas being the embarkation point for England's continental adventures since the days of Edward I. Escalating religious conflict, the disastrous 1638 war with Scotland and the Stuart lack of interest in Plymouth's merchants and seafarers all contributed to this breakdown in relations between town and monarch - indeed Trevelyan saw 'the ghost of Raleigh pursuing the House of Stuart to the scaffold'.

Also included are the biographies of the major participants, along with personal details gleaned from arms lists, account books, pension petitions, burial records, siege tracts, diaries and letters. These then give us the human stories behind the battles, sieges and skirmishes in the Southwest. They also illustrate the

political and social aspects of conflict, and the importance of ideas and ideology to both sides causing a Plymouthian resistance to those armed 'strangers' - including the Cornish and Welsh who, as Stoyke points out, often spoke a different language.

The author describes the development of the town's ancient defences, well illustrated by maps and illustrations and, though there is little now left of the siege with all the major outer forts having been demolished, photographs are provided of what remains. Meanwhile, beyond the city associated sites are noted - among them Modbury's Royalist escape route, the wonderfully named 'Runaway Lane'. Incidentally, following Photiou's theme of a forgotten war, there is perhaps a need for an accessible guide to Devon's Civil War sites along the lines of the well-illustrated Welsh history 'A Nation Under Siege' produced by *Cadw: Welsh historic monuments*.

'Plymouth's Forgotten War' concludes with a description of the post-war experiences of the individuals involved. This chapter, 'The Forgotten Role', relates the Restoration's rewards for vanquished Royalists and the punishments for Parliamentarians. Along with the fates of aristocratic and gentry adversaries, we also have glimpses of lesser-known combatants, those individual experiences that illustrate the true tragedies of war - such as Michael Bloye, killed in the Sabbath Day fight, later known as the Battle of Freedom Fields, who left a wife and three small children impoverished; and of William Cellyn, a soldier in Captain Hughes Company, who lost both eyes.

The author's research and dedication to this period has therefore greatly added to our knowledge in this fascinating and rewarding book, which I recommend to anyone interested in seventeenth century Devon.

Kevin Dixon

The Retired Engineers Club Exeter (2006) *The spirit of engineering: inspiration and invention in the West Country*, Exeter: RECE: 155 pages: £5.00. For further information contact: www.scenta.co.uk/receexeter.

A definition of the word 'engineering' is the 'application of science for the control and use of power...', and one who practises engineering of any sort is generally called 'an engineer'. Those that are the subjects of the chapters of this excellent little book can be classified as 'engineers' in the context of the title.

Each member of the 'Retired Chartered Engineers Club' has a minimum academic qualification as a university graduate in engineering, and has gained practical experience by practising the specialist branch of their profession for as much as forty or fifty years. It follows that the members are well suited to prepare a book of short biographies on the lives of engineers during the last three centuries, and this they have achieved.

Men chosen by the authors for their biographies include those involved in mining, inventing, civil, mechanical, railway, electrical, marine and chemical engineering, with allied subjects such as metallurgy, mathematics, physics, naval architecture, clock making and computer technology. The subjects are confined to the West Country, either by birth or by introduction so that, apart from a few

exceptions, nationally well-known engineers such as Brunel, Telford, Reginald Mitchell, Issigonis, *et al.* are absent.

Biographies of two computer pioneers, both Devonians by birth, are included. Charles Babbage (1791-1871), born in Totnes to a Devon family, spent much of his life pursuing 'the relief of human intellectual effort with machine operations', and, his biographer, J.A. Knivett, suggests this probably gained him the title of 'father of the computer'.

N.S. Macaulay records in a chapter on Thomas Fowler (1777-1843) that he was born in Torrington and was apprenticed to a seller of animal skins. He devoted his mathematical ability to simplifying complex calculations, initially by reference tables and, later, developing a calculating machine. The author records that Fowler's machine used a ternary calculating method making it superior in many respects to Babbage's machine who used a complex decimal calculation.

Biographies of the civil engineers, written by Knivett, George and La Touche, illustrate the emergence of the profession of civil engineering from the architectural and military engineering professions. Interesting facts relating to this profession include: G.P. Bidder (1806-1878) - 'The Calculating Boy' - being elected President of the Devonshire Association in 1869; P.J. Margery, who lived for many years in Dawlish, succeeding Brunel as Chief Engineer of the South Devon Railway, and in 1863 directing that the latter's viaducts of Baltic timber should be replaced by the present masonry structures; James Green (1781-1849), the first county surveyor of Devon, being remembered in many existing bridges such as at Cowley, Fenny, Cullay and many others. Readers will spot how mechanical engineering gave birth to naval, marine, electrical, mining, and other associated branches.

G.A. Briggs' biography of Stringfellow (1799-1883) is a particularly fascinating look back at the birth of aeronautical engineering. Stringfellow was born in Sheffield in 1799 and moved to Chard in Somerset in 1831. He was responsible between 1846 and 1848 for the design of a monoplane that made the first successful powered flight at Chard not, the author reminds the reader, the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in 1903.

More recent engineers included are George Churchward, (1857-1933) born in Stoke Gabriel and responsible for the design of the first railway engine to haul a train at a speed of 100 mph, the famous 'The City of Truro'. Air Commodore Sir Frank Whittle (1907-1996) designed the jet engine. His design was fitted to a 600 mph twin engine fighter, the Gloster Meteor, brought into service before the end of the 1939 to 1945 war.

Engineers and lay readers alike will find this book an interesting and educational work on a specialist branch of recent history.

D L B Thomas

Richard Whidborne (2005) *Crosses and Comforts*, St John's, Newfoundland: Great Auk Books; xiv + 217 pages, 13 illustrations, softcover, ISBN 0954965507, £14.50.

This well-produced book is a biography of Sir Richard Whitbourne, a distant ancestor of the author. Sir Richard was born, probably on the family farm near Teignmouth, in 1561 and died, possibly after being shipwrecked on the coast of France, in 1635. After serving an apprenticeship to a Southampton merchant, Sir Richard set up in business on his own accord and became a noted Exmouth-based merchant and ship-owner. Although he contributed to the success of the English fleet against the attempted Spanish invasion of 1588 and did much to counter a possible attack on a Church of England still in its infancy, Whitbourne is better known through his attempts to establish an English colony in Newfoundland. He wrote of his experiences there and his hopes that many would follow his example. The prime source of this book is Whitbourne's *Discourse and Discovery of Newfoundland*, first published in 1620. Other records are not neglected and the author draws well on primary material held in local and national archives. These include a manuscript draft of Whitbourne's preface to the *Discourse*, a transcript of which is presented as an appendix. Where documentation is lacking, the writer acknowledges this and displays a commendable resistance to the temptation to embark on flights of fancy.

Sir Richard comes across as a down-to-earth, commonsense person whom the writer describes with much affection. Unfortunately, such qualities are associated often with ignorance of the way of the world. It was this that led to Sir Richard's *crosses*. Despite repeated pleas to the King and Privy Council, he was never recompensed for losses incurred in his duty to his country. Nevertheless, perhaps pricked by conscience, the authorities supported the publication of his discourse and its circulation throughout the country. One hopes that, at last, this provided some *comfort*.

This book deserves to be widely read, and may restore Sir Richard Whitbourne to his now largely forgotten place among Devon's seafaring heroes.

Sadru Bhauji

Jonathan Wood (2006) *Bill Miller: black Labour Party activist in Plymouth*, Mitcham: History & Social Action Publications for Labour Heritage; 20 pages, 11 illustrations, softcover. ISBN 0954894324, £3.

Jonathan Wood's booklet about the life of Bill Miller has been published by Labour Heritage, whose mission is to ensure that 'the history of ordinary people within the Labour Party and trade union movement is not forgotten and that working men and women have a chance to study and record their own history'.

Miller was the son of a black seaman and a local Plymouth woman, and grandson of a freed slave from Sierra Leone. Born in 1890 in Stonehouse, Plymouth, he worked first in the building industry and then in Devonport dockyard. After serving in the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War Miller returned to the dockyard and played a prominent role in the local branch of the Electrical Trades Union. He had always been active in the Plymouth Labour

Party and in 1925 he was elected a Labour councillor and over the years served on numerous City Council committees. Unaccountably Plymouth was not considered a risk area in the initial evacuation plans drawn up by the government on the outbreak of the Second World War, so when the bombing started Miller organised an unofficial evacuation of women and children from the city. He was arrested and reprimanded for his conduct but shortly afterwards the authorities ordered that women and children should be evacuated from Plymouth, thus vindicating Miller's actions. His work for the city included chairing the housing committee during the post-war reconstruction years, and in that capacity he helped to institute a massive house-building programme, which resulted in 6,832 permanent and temporary houses being built or rebuilt in Plymouth by March 1950. In 1947 he received an OBE, and after years of service on Plymouth City Council he retired in May 1970 and died a few months later.

In his pamphlet Wood adopts a straightforward biographical approach that discusses Bill Miller's life in terms of the Labour Party and trade union activism, which formed the basis of his commitment to improving the lives of Plymouth's working-class communities. He sees Miller as an important figure in Plymouth's recent history, particularly in terms of his influence on its post-war development, and his vision of the city being divided into urban villages, in which communities would centre round a green space, with local shops, schools and churches, all within easy walking distance. In a postscript to his account Wood outlines the achievements of Miller's son, Claude, a Labour activist and local councillor like his father, who became Lord Mayor of Plymouth in June 2004.

Wood's informative and readable biographical sketch has an introduction by former Labour MP Stan Newens, who places Miller's life and work in a wider national context. This can be read alongside the short entry on Miller in Lucy MacKeith's excellent booklet 'Local Black History: A beginning in Devon' published in 2003 by the Archives and Museum of Black Heritage, which was established in the 1980s to collect and document the history of black people in Britain. Bill Miller was a Devonian who made a considerable contribution to the political and socio-cultural life of the South West, but he was also a black man living in what has been viewed in the past as a mono-ethnic county, and as such he is part of what MacKeith demonstrates is a long history of the presence of black people in Devon.

Mitzi Auchterlone

G. Woodcock (2006) *Tavistock's yesterdays: episodes from her history*, 15, privately published by the author; 96 pages, 25 illustrations, softback, no ISBN, £4.95.

This, the latest edition of *Tavistock's yesterdays* - the fifteenth written by Gerry Woodcock in twenty years - is well up to usual standards of interest. Intended as informed recreational reading for the people of Tavistock (and beyond) who, as a result of the series must be amongst the best educated about their town's history as any in Devon. The pages do not carry footnotes; however, sources of reference are listed in the Preface, together with acknowledgements.

The subjects of the sixteen, mainly short, chapters are widely varied. They include an interesting account of how the three ancient inscribed stones that stand in Tavistock Vicarage garden were discovered, acquired and placed here in the nineteenth century. In another chapter explanation is given about the short-lived Council of the West, established in 1539 as one of three in Britain aimed at strengthening law and order.

Extracts from the journal of John Hawkins (born 1676) give fascinating insights on local life with some historical explanations by the author; while providing a glimpse of Tavistock business associations from 1782, with many local names, is a chapter on the Tavistock First Tradesmen's Friendly Society. 'Two literary ladies' comprises brief biographies of Elizabeth Rundle Charles and Rachel Evans, and there is an account of past gifts to Tavistock Church for an organ and organist by former Dukes of Bedford.

Lastly, Gerry Woodcock continues (from previous volumes) and concludes his revised and updated history of Tavistock School, of which he is a former Head of History.

Helen Harris

Correspondence from members and other information

The Hon. Editor is pleased to receive notices concerning museums, local societies and organisations, information about particular research projects, as well as notes, queries and correspondence from Society members. Such items can be reproduced in *The Devon Historian*, space permitting.

Queries

Peter Daubney writes: 'Reference to my enquiry in volume 73, Autumn 2006, of *The Devon Historian*, I would like to thank the members who kindly wrote identifying the cottage on page 37 as being Kirkham Cottage, Colley End Road, Paignton. I understand it was recently damaged by fire, but has now been restored. Readers may be interested in a recent photograph taken by Society member Lorna Smith. One would assume the picture on page 38 may also have been taken in Paignton, but no one has been able to place its location'. Further correspondence to Mr C.P. Daubney, 3 Alkham Close, Margate, CT6 3JP.



Kirkham Cottage, Colley End Road, Paignton (photo: reproduced with kind permission of Lorna Smith)

Alfred Strahlberg asks on the Society website discussion board, 14 August 2006: 'I am a Swiss trade mark attorney and am trying to convince the Swiss Trade Mark Office that the name 'Devonshire' a historical name and is not in common use as the name of the county of 'Devon' (as confirmed by the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia). 'Devonshire' is, however, used as a surname, aristocratic name, name of buildings, street name and adjective (e.g. as in

Devonshire cream). As a result it would not be recognised by people in Switzerland as denoting 'Devon'. According to our office practice geographical names cannot be registered as trade marks if there is a possibility that they would be recognised as such by Swiss consumers. Does anyone happen to know when use of 'Devonshire' was discontinued as the principal name of 'Devon'? On the Vision of Britain website (<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk>) 'Devonshire' is still listed as the alternate name of 'Devon', making reference to F. Youngs. Local Administrative Units, Southern England (Royal Historical Society, London, 1979). Is there any official document or publication that can confirm that 'Devonshire' is no longer used officially as the name of 'Devon'? Views on this are welcome to the Hon. Editor, or direct to the enquirer at stahlberg@zb.lv or via the message board at <http://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk>.

The Courtenay Society

The Courtenay Society will be hosting a seminar on the life of William Courtenay, ninth Earl of Devon, on Wednesday 20th June 2007 at 2.30pm. The seminar, entitled 'The coal shed redemption', considers the reputation of 'the notorious third Viscount', who died in 1835, and examines papers dated between 1823 and 1825 that were found in a shed in Teddington, London, some 30 years ago.

The venue is Exeter Central Library and the cost is £10.00 (including tea/coffee and study material). For further information contact Dorothy Presswell (01626 891632) or in writing to The Courtenay Society, Powderham Castle, Kenton, Devon, EX6 8JQ.

Old Plymouth Society

The following speakers are scheduled to give talks to the Old Plymouth Society in 2007:

- 16 Feb 2007 David Keeling, 'Yelverton before and after Harrowbeer'.
- 16 Mar 2007 Peter Smith, 'Plymouth's historic links with Gdynia'.
- 20 Apr 2007 AGM and Peter Bromley, 'Plymouth fisheries'.
- 18 May 2007 No meeting
- 15 Jun 2007 Andrew Young, 'Plymouth trees'
- 21 Sep 2007 Peter Hall, 'Plymouth Argyle from 1886 'till today'.
- 19 Oct 2007 Hon. George Lopez, 'Maristow House and its surrounding area'.
- 16 Nov 2007 John Boulden, 'History of Plympton'.
- 07 Dec 2007 Piers Le Cheminet, 'Day to day running of Devon Air Ambulance'

Meetings are normally held in the Spurgeon Hall, Mutley Baptist Church, Plymouth, at 7.00 for 7.30pm start. Entry free to members, £2.00 to non-members. For information on events please contact the Society Secretary, Mrs Gloria Dixon, 22 Mutley Road, Mannamead, Plymouth, PL3 4SB (01752 227992).

Society reports and notices

Membership and subscriptions

The Society is pleased to attract the membership of local history groups that are not yet affiliated members. The first year of membership for an affiliated society is £5.00. Existing affiliated societies are reminded to contact the Membership Secretary whenever there is a change of contact and correspondence address: Mr David Thomas, 112 Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4RW.

Programme organisation

The Committee of the Society is seeking a new Programme Secretary, or help from a couple of individuals who may like to share the work associated with this position. The main responsibilities of the Programme Secretary are the organisation of the Annual Conference and AGM, and the Spring and Summer meetings of the Society. The Committee would also welcome the help of any affiliated societies that are able to host and organise one of the Society's Spring or Summer meetings.

Those interested in contributing to programme organisation are asked to approach the Hon. Secretary (01404 42002, su3681@eclipse.co.uk).

Devon History Society website

The Society's website can be found at <http://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk>. The website gives information on the following: the contents of the current and recent issues of *The Devon Historian*; programmes of forthcoming events; links to useful websites; and a message board for comments, queries and answers.

2005 Devon History Book of the Year Prize

The Devon History Society announced the winner of the 2005 Devon Book of the Year the recent AGM. There was a shortlist of 49 books and the award was made to: Fry, Helen P., *Jews in North Devon during the Second World War: the escape from Nazi Germany and the establishment of the Pioneer Corps*. Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2005; 183pp; ill; 31cm; ISBN 1841144371

The following were highly commended: Bennett, Daryl, *Shapland and Petter Ltd of Barnstaple: Arts & Crafts furniture*, Barnstaple: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, 2005; viii, 132pp; ill; 29cm; ISBN 0955031605. Cox, Peter, *The arts at Dartington 1940-1983: a personal account*, with a preface by James Cornford, Dartington: The Author with the assistance of the Dorothy Elmhirst Trust, 2005; vii, 412pp, ill; 24cm, ISBN 0902386220. Grant, Alison, *North Devon pottery*, Bideford: Edward Caskell, 2005; xii, 180pp; ill; 28cm; ISBN 1898546770. Hobbs, Stephen J., *St Nectan's: the question of a seat*, Hartland: Hartland Digital Archive, 2005; 286pp; ill; 30cm. Holloway, Grahame, *Final touchdown: stories of Devon aircrew and RAF bases in South and East Devon*,

Exmouth: Brevet, 2005; 224pp: ill. ports: 21cm; ISBN 0953901521. Mayers, Kit. *North-east to Muscovy: Steven Borough and the first Tudor explorers*, Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2005; xiii, 241pp. ill.: 24cm. ISBN 0750940697. Milton, Ruth, *Sisters against the sea: the remarkable story of Frank Milton*, Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2005; 152pp: ill; 31cm; ISBN 1841144355.

2006 Devon History Dissertation Prize

The Devon history dissertation prize originated as an idea of the former President, Professor Nicholas Orme, and was brought into being by the Hon. Editor, Dr Andrew Jackson and the former Head of the Department of History, University of Exeter, Dr Andrew Thorpe. The best dissertation by a student on a Devon theme is proposed by the Department and endorsed by the officers of the Society.

The first winner of the prize is Charlotte Cook for her dissertation on 'The Causes of Migration 1841-1891 - A Case Study of Ashburton'. Amongst various concluding observations, the author writes: 'The causes of migration include a complex range of range of variables and outcomes. The woollen industry in Ashburton became surplus to requirements in terms of the national economy and demand began to fall. In addition, the industrial revolution brought about improvements in transport, and the coming of the railways negatively affected Ashburton. When Ashburton was by-passed by the line from Exeter to Plymouth this led to the relative extinction of Ashburton as a main thoroughfare and the down turn in associated trades. This recession led to a lack of demand for labour, forcing former employees in the wool trade to migrate. Thus, the poorest section of the populace migrated, but as the research showed, this was predominantly within the county - short distance migration. Females were found to be the most migratory sex within the county, but men were more likely to migrate long distance, alone or with family... However, it was not only negative effects that caused migration from Ashburton. This study has found that long distance migration was positively related to the affluence of the migrants. Such migrants were moving primarily in response to positive factors at the destination, rather than minus factors at the origin... Another significant result of the research is the discovery of the importance of the family in terms of migration... Families formed chains of migration to certain areas... Local and family histories provide in depth research into the complex nature of the causes of migration... Without local histories alternative evaluations into alternative causes of migration would be almost impossible to obtain' (pp. 42-3).

Report and minutes of the 2006 Annual General Meeting

Abridged Report and Minutes of the thirty-sixth Annual General Meeting held at the University of Exeter School of Education on 14th October 2006 (NB: the

formal Report and Minutes containing transcripts of the officers' annual reports will be available for inspection at the 2007 AGM or may be inspected at reasonable hours by appointment with the Honorary Secretary). The President, Dr Nicholas Orme, was in the Chair.

1. Apologies for absence: apologies for absence were reported from John Draissey, Arnold Sayers, Vincent Spring, Ken Scott, Brian Greenslade, Christie Benskin, Pamela Wootton, Brian Le Messurier, Judi Moss, M Makin, Derek Jackson, Clare Greener, Adrian Reed and Dr Todd Gray.

2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting: the formal Report and Minutes of the thirty fifth Annual General Meeting, an abbreviated version of which had been printed in The Devon Historian No. 72, was approved by those present and signed by the President.

3. Matters arising: There were no matters arising out of the Minutes.

4. Honorary Secretary's Annual Report: The theme of the 35th conference of the Devon History Society last October was family and community life. Professor David Hey spoke on Family names and English local history and Dr Andrew Jackson gave a talk on Families and community history in Devon. The Society's council met on three occasions over the year to discuss the Society's business under the chairmanship of Mrs Shirley Purves. The Society owes huge a debt of gratitude to Miss Elizabeth Maycock for organising the Spring and Summer meetings and the AGM. A total of twelve books were reviewed in the 2006 editions of The Devon Historian. Geoff Bulley of The Devonshire Association has undertaken to co-ordinate an events calendar for all of the Devon voluntary History groups on the internet on their website www.devonassoc.org.uk. Devon County Council had invited members to vote on a list of twelve nominated "Greatest Devonians" with a closing date of 3 November.

5. Chairman's Report: The Chairman reported that the Spring Meeting at Modbury was excellent despite adverse weather and thanked the Membury local history Society for arranging the day. The Summer meeting was held at Chagford followed by a visit to Whiddon Down Park. A new initiative for the Society is the £200 dissertation prize, which would be awarded later in the day. Mrs Purves thanked the West Countries Studies Library for their assistance with the Devon Book of the Year and Miss Elizabeth Maycock for arranging the 2007 seminar. She appealed for someone to come forward to take on the Programme Secretary's role. The retiring President, Professor Nicholas Orme was thanked for his help over the past three years.

6. Honorary Treasurer's Report: The Honorary Treasurer reported that the 2006 membership was: honorary life members 2; life members 20; individual ordinary members 219; family ordinary members 245 (Total 266); Corporate members 26; affiliated societies 56. Referring to the Financial Report:

	2006	2005
Gross income	£5212.72	£4728.42
Gross expenditure	£3077.74	£4477.09
Excess of income over expenditure	£2134.98	£251.33

BUILDING SOCIETY ACCOUNT

Transfers in	£480.00	£480.00
Interest	£158.63	£127.30

Carried forward to 2006-2007: £7658.63 (plus £7476.30 with Building Society)

The reduction in expenditure was due in the main to DH73 not yet having been paid for. Mr David Pike audited the accounts last year and had agreed to undertake the duty this year. Mr D L B Thomas proposed and Mr T Collings seconded that Mr Pike should be re-appointed auditor and this was approved nem con. The Treasurer's recommendations that the money in the Building Society account be withdrawn and placed into a COIF account and that the membership fees should not be increased were also agreed nem con.

7. Honorary Editor's Report: Dr Andrew Jackson expressed his thanks to his predecessor, Mrs Harris, for her assistance and the contributors to the journal. Dr Jackson reported there had been a change of printer and that the format for images on the cover had been changed to allow more flexibility. Proofs had been mislaid during the local postal strike, which caused the delay in posting out *The Devon Historian* No. 73. Professor Orme's idea for a Devon History Dissertation prize was set up and the first prize winner was Charlotte Cook, for 'The Causes of Migration 1841-1891 - A Case Study of Ashburton'. An abstract will be published in the journal.

8. Programme for 2007. Miss Maycock reported that the Spring meeting would be a Seminar on March 24th 2007 at Queens Buildings on the subject of the Emergence of old Devon fishing villages into the resorts of today. Discussions are taking place on a summer meeting at Widecombe in the Moor. Miss Maycock reminded the Meeting that she has resigned and repeated her appeal for someone to take over.

9. Professor Nicholas Orme introduced the newly appointed President Dr Malcolm Todd who thanked the Society for appointing him as President for the next three years.

10. The Honorary Secretary reported that a nomination for Mr Adrian Reed had been received. This nomination and that of the existing officers and members: Mrs Shirley Purves, Miss Elizabeth Maycock, Mrs Margaret Lewis, Dr Sadru Bhanji, Mr Tony Collings, Mr Arnold Sayers, Mr Robin Stanes, Mr David Weller, Mr John Draisey, and Dr Andrew Jackson, should be re-elected was agreed nem con. Professor J Youings was confirmed as a co-opted member of the Council.

11. No notice of any other business had been received prior to 7th October 2005. The President declared the meeting closed.

The Devon Historian

Correspondence for the Hon. Editor and contributions for publication in the Society's journal should be sent to Dr Andrew Jackson, Hon. Editor, *The Devon Historian*, School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Exeter, St Luke's Campus, Heavitree Road, Exeter, EX1 2LU, or by email to A.J.H.Jackson@exeter.ac.uk.

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.

The contents of articles and reviews reflect the views of their authors and not those of the Society.

Notes for contributors

The Hon. Editor welcomes articles to be considered for publication in *The Devon Historian*. Normally, the length should be between 2,000 and 4,000 words (plus endnotes, references and bibliography), although much shorter pieces of suitable substance may also be acceptable. Pieces of more than 4,000 words can be reproduced in separate articles, or in exceptional circumstances printed in full.

It is preferred that articles are word-processed using double line spacing and page margins of 3cm, and submitted by email attachment in Word format. However, the editor will accept versions by post on disk, CDROM, as typed hardcopy, or in clear handwriting. Authors should ensure that the journal's style is adhered to on such matters as the restrained use of capital letters, initial single inverted commas, and the writing of the dates thus: 1 July 2005. Article layout conventions also need to be followed. Endnote numbers through the article and a corresponding list of notes and references at the end should give details of primary sources used, and indicate where books and other articles have been quoted, paraphrased or derived from. Bibliographies are required to list all books and journal articles that have been quoted, paraphrased, cited, or in some way have informed the content of the article. The format of references and bibliographies in this volume of the journal can be followed. Illustrative material can be submitted electronically in most formats, or as a good quality print or photocopy. Where relevant it is the responsibility of authors to ensure that copyright holders have granted formal permission for the reproduction of images.

The final format of articles is at the discretion of the Editor.

Back issues

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