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Mormons in nineteenth-century north Devon

Peter Christie

The transcription of the Devon Religious Census of 1851 shows the usual mix of Church of England churches and nonconformist chapels, yet amongst them are one or two oddities, the most unexpected of which might well be the three meeting rooms used by congregations of the Latter Day Saints or Mormons.[1] The sect was established in America in , with its main base at Salt Lake City only being founded in 1847. Of the three Devon locations one was in Plymouth and two in North Devon – at East Down and South Molton. In a recent book on the geography of religion in Victorian Britain the authors note of the south-west that Mormon congregations 'were largely unrepresented'.[2] The East Down group met in William Lerwill's house, but no numbers of communicants are given. The South Molton group used a room just 20 square foot in size in the churchyard, yet claimed 50 attendees at the afternoon service. These early Mormons must have been a rather exotic addition to the religious landscape of nineteenth century North Devon, and not surprisingly they and their beliefs were remarked on in the pages of the *North Devon Journal*. This author has written elsewhere about the strongly Methodist tenor of the *Journal*, so it should be no surprise to find the newspaper was strongly anti-Mormon in tone.[3] A search of the newspaper has revealed coverage spanning the years 1848-58, and it is very clear that the Mormons were more forcibly attacked than any other religious sect, including the Catholics. This was probably because of the extremely shocking, to Victorian moralists, practice of polygamy, along with the perceived blasphemous nature of the Book of Mormon held by believers to be the word of God.

The first notice of the sect came in October 1848 when 'a prophet of the Latter-day Saint, or Mormonite' sect held forth in Ilfracombe on two days.[4] The *Journal* editor does not seem to have known what to make of them, contenting himself with saying 'It appears they have the fanatical impudence to tell the world that there has been no Christianity in it for the last 1800 years' and 'They, of course, are the people now raised up to restore the primitive institution'. It was to be another year before the *Journal* published another reference to the Mormons.[5] It came in the form of a letter from an unnamed North Devon vicar, who passed on an anti-Mormon article from the *Liverpool Mail* which the *Journal* then printed. Intriguingly he started his letter 'I am induced by the efforts which are now making in my parish and I believe also in many other villages, to draw off men from "the old path" and "the good way" by endeavouring to persuade them that the age of miracles has not ceased', and went on to accuse the Mormons of claiming to be able to raise the dead.

Another eight months passed before the third notice of the Mormons appeared in the *Journal*.[6] In August 1850 a news item from South Molton recorded that 'A body of this peculiar sect have lately been formed in this town' under a Mr Hanham. The report noted that this 'minister' had given two lectures, one 'in opposition to one delivered by the Rev. James Sutch in the Wesleyan meeting a short time since on infant baptism' and the other on 'the false teachers, prophets and antichrists of the last days.' The South Molton correspondent of the *Journal* thought that 'neither the reasoning of the lecturer nor his style was satisfactory, or at all likely to make his ministrations popular'.

The lack of any further reference to the group over the next two years suggests they were not that successful, and their claim of 50 numbers in 1851 could well be an exaggeration. In June 1852 the *Journal* reprinted an article from the *Canadian* newspaper by a Mr Harris, 'who formerly belonged to the office of this *Journal*', which was an outspoken attack on the sect and their new communities in Utah.[7] According to Harris the Mormons 'seem to revel in unbridled prodigality and licentiousness' in their 'Modern Sodom'. The *Journal* noted that 'a branch of this vile confederation is formed' in Barnstaple, but no further details are given.

The next notice appears in November 1853 and continues the very negative tone evident in the previous reference – as shown in the heading to the article – 'Mormon Delusions'.[8] Dated Ilfracombe it records how Tobias Dalling 'many years a master sailmaker on the quay' went to Newport in South Wales, 'embraced Mormonism' and travelled with his family to Salt Lake City. Apparently the settlement was 'in a wretched state of immorality and disorder' where 'Polygamy is unrestrained'. The article continues in this vein for some time, but it is clear that it is the sexual aspects of Mormonism that most incensed the writer, a theme revisited to time and time again over the next five years.

Indeed the next article in January 1854 is one of the most dismissive of all those published by the *Journal*.[9] It came from the South Molton correspondent who seemed to have strong feelings about the new group. Headed 'Mormonism' it begins:

> It would be no honour to an encampment of Indians, or even a kraal of Hottentots, to say of it that the doctrines and disciples of Joe Smith and Polygam Young had found a footing in it; but it is a positive scandal to any village, town, or even gipsy tent to have to record such a thing of it in this country. This, however, it is our humiliation to do.

The piece goes on to note how the sect had been established in the town 'about two years ago' and mentions a lecturer 'styling himself' Dr Patrick. It appears from this and preceding notices that Mormons had established themselves in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and South Molton by the early 1850s, and in June 1854 the *Journal* was reporting a lecture on 'Mormonism' by the Reverend S. Kent of the Braunton Independent Chapel which suggests they had made inroads in that

settlement too.[10] As their influence grew the scorn directed at them increased, judging from coverage in the *Journal*.

A good example of this can be seen from an article published in August 1854 from South Molton.[11] Headed 'The Mormonites Tea Party' it recounts a recent meeting by the sect in their 'meeting room' in the town. Apparently their 'orgies were worthy of Hottentots or New Zealand cannibals, and their filthy and obscene conversation must not be represented on paper'. Following 'the exercises of devotion' the company 'were called to listen to vulgar tales, and still more vulgar songs; fortune telling and conjuring varying the performances'. Amongst the ditties were *Over the hills and far away*, *You must not buy tripe on a Friday* and *Why do these fleas torment me so?* Such depravity led to the writer asking 'How is it that public morality, which is outraged thereby, does not indignantly suppress these disgusting scenes of hypocrisy and blasphemy?'. Not all the news was bad for the correspondent, however, as they note that the sect had been 'rooted out from Barnstaple, by being discountenanced and execrated by all right-minded persons'. If nothing else the Mormon meetings seem to have been jolly affairs, though the mixing of religion and contemporary humorous songs was clearly shocking to Victorian sensibilities.

It was to be nine months before the *Journal* again deigned to notice the Mormons when the South Molton correspondent returned to the offensive in a piece titled 'The Mormon Delusion'.[12] They began by noting the 'well known' fact about the presence in the town of 'a party professing the creed and practicing the rites of that most extraordinary development of modern madness – Mormonism'. The writer had somehow got hold of various letters between 'Brother John Vickery' and J. H. Kelson and John Francis, the latter two being President and Secretary of the South Molton Mormons respectively. Vickery had not attended the group's meetings on three occasions and had been asked to explain himself. His reply was vituperative in the extreme attacking his co-religionists as 'children of the Devil'. Vickery had clearly had problems before as he had been 'dipped' or baptised into the group three times, the last being 'about three weeks since, when President Lunt, of Bristol, came down'. At that time 'nine of us went to Park-house river, and were dipped by him, late at night, about 11 o'clock before it was over'. He also noted that the meeting at which 'vulgar' songs were sung ended at 5 a.m. in the morning – clearly an unusual time for a nineteenth century religious meeting! Unfortunately there is no follow-up to this article and it can only be concluded that Vickery left the sect, though whether he was followed by the eight other persons baptised is unknown.

Only two months later, however, 'One of the itinerant imposters who acknowledge Joe Smith as their 'spiritual head' 'was preaching in the open at Derby an industrial working class suburb of Barnstaple'.[13] At this date Derby was perceived as a haunt of ne'er-do-wells, prostitutes and the indolent, this explaining the newspaper comment about the preacher, 'He certainly chose a most congenial sphere for disseminating the doctrines of polygamy and the other immoralities and blasphemies which compose the Mormon faith'. Evidently the group was making a renewed effort to attract converts in Barnstaple and, as

usual at this date, were targeting members of the working class, though as mainstream religious leaders found it hard enough to attract adherents in Derby it is doubtful if the Mormons made any noticeable headway. In the absence of any further local news the *Journal* next reprinted an anti-Mormon article from the *Bristol Mercury* in April 1856.[14]

In December of that year a charge was preferred at the South Molton Petty Sessions by John Kelson 'one of the "elders" of the Latter-day Saints' against two young men, Matthews and Cotty, for disturbing his congregation one Sunday in November.[15] There was a legal query as to whether the room used by his congregation was actually licenced as a place of worship, and although Kelson produced a document he quickly 'offered to give up all further proceedings on defendants paying 5s each costs, which they immediately did'. Clearly the Mormons felt confident enough to exercise their legal right to be recognized as a proper religious group subject to and protected by the law.

Indeed their evangelical fervour seems to have been burning bright around this time as two 'apostles of that vile sect of imposters who acknowledge Joe Smith as their founder' preached in Bickington just outside of Barnstaple.[16] Apparently they were listened to 'patiently' and promised to return – which caused the journalist covering the story to suggest 'it would serve them right if on the next occasion they were invited to perform their ablutions in a neighbouring horsepool'.

Only weeks later another Mormon preacher staged an open-air meeting in Taw Vale Parade, Barnstaple.[17] Whether this was successful or not is left unstated, but the feelings of the reporter recording the meeting were made clear when he wrote of the Mormons that they 'have founded a colony, where females are made the victims of the unbridled licentiousness of coarse-minded wretches who there bear rank'. From the coverage it would appear the writer had not actually heard the address but could not resist using the occasion to vent his spleen about the sect.

In January 1858 what I take to be one of the sons of Tobias Dalling (see reference note 8) returned to Ilfracombe from Salt Lake City on an evangelical mission to attract new converts – a pattern that continues today.[18] The unnamed youth, accompanied by another, began preaching on Ilfracombe Quay, but was loudly heckled by a ship's captain named Williams who demanded to know 'how many wives Brigham Young had?'. The young preacher 'fought shy' of answering and Williams then spoke of 'two young women, named Tuckfield, who had lived in Ilfracombe, and who had gone out from Swansea to the Salt Lake, both of whom had been murdered'. On this the crowd who had gathered went into the nearby Bethel and 'listened to something more for their soul's good from the Rev. Thomas Hulme, Wesleyan minister'.

Interestingly the *Journal* article finished by noting that the two Mormons had been 'ordered home to Utah, to take part in the coming struggle with the forces of the United States', a reference to the 'Utah War' of 1857-8 between the Mormons and a 5,500 strong US military force. The two young men evidently left for Utah, as apart from two very generalised attacks no further references to

the sect have been found over the next 20 years in the pages of the *Journal*: although it is clear that not all of them left, as recorded in a series of small items some 42 years later. In December 1900 the *Journal* noted the presence in Cardiff Workhouse of one James Torrington aged 103, a native of North Molton in Devon.[19] He had been a blacksmith in South Molton for 28 years before moving to Monmouthshire and then to Cardiff. A follow-up article the next week added the fact that 'James used at one time to worship at the meeting room of the latter day saints held at a now dismantled room in the churchyard immediately below the Congregational church'. In May 1902 the *Journal* reported that 101 year old (*sic*) James 'formerly a follower of the Mormons' had died in the workhouse, thus closing the nineteenth-century history of the sect in North Devon.[20]

Notes and references

1. Wickes 1990.
2. Snell and Ell 2000.
3. Christie 1996, pp. 139-54.
4. *North Devon Journal* (*NDJ*), 26 October 1848, p. 2, column g.
5. *NDJ*, 20 December 1849, p. 7, a.
6. *NDJ*, 15 October 1850, p. 8, d.
7. *NDJ*, 17 June 1852, p. 5, d.
8. *NDJ*, 17 November, 1853, p. 8, b-c.
9. *NDJ*, 26 January 1854, p. 8, d.
10. *NDJ*, 1 June, 1854, p. 5, d.
11. *NDJ*, 3 August 1854, p. 8, a-b.
12. *NDJ*, 31 May 1855, p. 8, b-c.
13. *NDJ*, 26 July 1855, p. 5, c.
14. *NDJ*, 10 April 1856, p. 6, d-e.
15. *NDJ*, 4 December 1856, p. 5, a.
16. *NDJ*, 30 April 1857, p. 7, d.
17. *NDJ*, 28 May 1857, p. 5, b.
18. *NDJ*, 21 January 1858, p. 4, e.
19. *NDJ*, 20 December 1900, p. 5, f.
20. *NDJ*, 8 May 1902, p. 6, b.

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Christie, P. (1996) 'Folklore in north Devon', *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, vol. 128, pp. 139-54.

Snell, K. and Ell, P. (2000) *Rival Jerusalems: The geography of Victorian religion*, Cambridge: C.U.P.

Wickes, M. (ed.) (1990) *Devon in the Religious Census of 1851*, privately printed.

Appendix

The 1851 Census of population for north Devon has been searched, locating five of the people named in this article. Whether William Lerwill was a Mormon or

just the registered owner of their meeting room in East Down is unclear, but as his socio-economic standing was so different to the other Mormons the latter is likely. It is intriguing that Edward Hanham lists his occupation as 'Mormon Elder' (aged 23!), as if he was supported financially by the local Mormon congregation it does suggest the sect was pretty well organised in South Molton, and that perhaps their claims in the 1851 Religious Census were not that exaggerated.

Table 1: Entries from the 1851 Census of population.

Ilfracombe, 3 Regent Place						
Tobias Dalling	Head	Married	62	Mariner		b. Ilfracombe
Mary "	Wife	Married	60			b. Ilfracombe
Betsey "	Dau.	Un.	21	Dressmaker		b. Ilfracombe
East Down, Mattox Down House						
William Lerwill	Head	Married	46	Landed proprietor		b. Kentisbury
Mary "	Wife	Married	38			b. Combe Martin
John "	Son	Un.	16	Farmer's son		b. East Down
Betsey "	Dau.		13	Farmer's daughter		b. East Down
William "	Son		10	Scholar		b. East Down
Thomas "	Son		7	Scholar		b. East Down
Grace "	Dau.		3			b. East Down
Plus 2 servants						
South Molton, East Street						
Edward Hanham	Head	Married	23	Mormon Elder		b. Batcombe, Somerset
Jane "	Wife	Married	29	Wife of Elder		b. Upton Noble, Somerset
South Molton, East Street						
John Francis	Lodger	Married	25	Tailor		b. South Molton
South Molton, Towns End						
James Torrington	Head	Married	45	Blacksmith		b. North Molton
Ann "	Wife	Married	44			b. Bow
John "	Son	Un.	20	Roper's man		b. North Molton
Mary Ann "	Dau.		17	Servant		b. North Molton
Susan "	Dau.		15	Servant		b. North Molton
Rhoda "	Dau.		13	Servant		b. South Molton
James "	Son		10	Scholar		b. South Molton
Philip "	Son		6	Scholar		b. South Molton
William "	Son		3			b. South Molton

Peter Christie has been studying and writing about aspects of North Devon history for over 30 years now. He is just about to publish his 13th and 14th books on the subject. He was the Reviews Editor of *The Local Historian* for 14 years, is a town and district councillor, and has been Mayor of Bideford twice.

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Developments in rural roads history

Helen Harris

In this age of massive road developments it may be hard to realise the benefits brought to country people by much more modest improvements effected in the years between the two world wars. During the 1920s horse-drawn traffic was giving way to motor vehicles, and as speeds increased many features of rural roads presented impediments and hazards.

My late father, J.R.H. Warren, was Highway Surveyor in Tiverton's large rural area from 1922 to 1960. He served Tiverton Rural District Council until 1947 when he was appointed Divisional Surveyor by Devon County Council. Graphic contemporary newspaper accounts describe not only structural works carried out but also some formal inaugurations. As a child I often went along in the car with my father as he supervised the works, and in 2007 I made a brief tour to note the effects of passing time.

Figure 1: Way Mill Cross, Halberton, 2007.

A safety measure provided at several locations was the improvement of crossroads where visibility was impeded by high hedges, and their replacement with iron railings. One example was at Way Mill Cross, Halberton (Fig. 1), on the unclassified road from Tiverton to Cullompton. A lengthy report and

photograph in the *Tiverton Gazette & East Devon Herald* of 31 January 1933 marked its completion.[1]

A feature of this and other similar improvements was the operation of a relief scheme originated by Councillor F.V. Voysey, adopted by Devon County Council and supported by Tiverton RDC, to help agricultural workers unemployed due to the depression. The County Council provided £8,000 for such schemes throughout Devon which gave work to those who would otherwise have been forced to apply for parochial relief.

Similar works reported as being in hand at the time were: near Huntswell Farm, Stoodleigh; Kerswell Cross, Hockworthy; Gibbet Moor Cross, Stoodleigh; and Ruffwell junction, Silverton. Schemes were scheduled for Pigsfoot, Halberton; on the Ponsford road, Cullompton; near East Butterleigh, Butterleigh; Guddiford Hill, Kentisbeare; and at Borden Gate, Clayhanger.

The surveyor reported that in the current week 29 men were being employed, probably to increase to 36 in the coming month. Mr Warren said:

> The men employed are working well, and they appear to appreciate the work which is offered to them. In some cases the men have to travel 7 or 8 miles to the job, but as yet they have not complained in any way.[2]

The response from landowners in reply to applications for permission to make the alterations was said to have been "most gratifying"; in practically every case consent had been readily given.

Relocating the Way improvement on today's busy 'over the hills' Tiverton-Cullompton road was not difficult. The fencing is still there, although partly obscured by brambles and other vegetation. However, other safety measures are now provided by 'GIVE WAY' signs and dotted white lines on the junctions of the side roads.

During those earlier years many of Devon's rural roads were subject to flooding, at fords and inadequate bridges. While footbridges might be available for pedestrians, and horse traffic could generally negotiate the crossings, motor vehicles frequently faced hazards.

My father was responsible for building several bridges in Tiverton District. One of these was Rull Bridge, Uffculme. Proposed by Uffculme Parish Council in 1924, the watercourse involved a stream rising in the Blackborough hills at 'Draught Well', Sheldon, a tributary of the River Culm. At Rull there was previously a ford which in winter frequently flooded, cutting off Blackborough and Ashill from Culmstock and Hemyock except by a devious detour. The RDC was approached on the prospect of a bridge and after consideration, and with parish and Ministry of Transport support, building began in 1925.

After the start difficulties ensued, due to an exceptionally frosty winter and very heavy floods, causing delays. But by early 1926 the iron and concrete bridge was complete, spanning the stream by RSJs (reinforced steel joists) built into concrete abutments, at a cost of £560.

The official opening of the bridge on 15 March 1926 (Figs 2 and 3)[3], reported by the *Tiverton Gazette*, was attended by over 20 county, rural district and parish councillors as well as the RDC surveyor Mr Warren, and a representative of the Ministry of Transport. Mr H.G. New, JP, CC, chairman of Tiverton RDC, made a speech and the surveyor – who was much praised – also spoke.

Figure 2: Group at the opening of Rull Bridge, Uffculme, 15 March 1926.

Figure 3: The surveyor, J.R.H. Warren, then aged 26, stands on the new Rull Bridge, Uffculme, 15 March 1926.

Complimenting the contractors, Messrs Nicks of Bradninch, who had had very bad weather to contend with, Mr Warren said he had endured 'many sleepless nights' wondering whether the timber centering and shuttering would be washed away during the heavy floods.[4] Next, the new bridge, which had been decorated with daffodils and primroses for the occasion, was officially opened by the cutting of a string by Mrs Wood, of Rull, wife of the original guarantor.

Figure 4: Rull Bridge, Uffculme, in 2007.

Today the bridge is remarkably little changed from 1926 and still carries the increasing weight of local traffic (Fig. 4). A similar pattern was followed in the construction of other bridges in the district, including Madford Bridge, Hemyock, where I remember seeing, in the 1930s, a diver at work and coming up out of the water, impressively attired in heavy suit and helmet.

In many cases stream crossing points were improved by the piping of culverts. Sometimes however, where conditions permitted, streams were not actually covered, but the ford improved by careful re-direction of the flow and providing a concrete bed, to form a more easily negotiable 'water-splash'. One such operation, that I remember with some delight, was on the same tributary as that at Rull, but farther upstream towards Sheldon, at Belvin. Here the stream at times resembled a pond until in about 1937 works were carried out to improve the flow and regulate its course. I recall the rapture in the hot summer of being allowed to paddle here in the clear waters flowing over the recently laid smooth pristine concrete.

When I returned in 2007 the scene had changed drastically from what I remembered (Fig. 5). The structure was the same, including the side channel where I used to cool my feet, and the system was still working efficiently, but

instead of the former open scene, trees and hedges had grown up to present a shaded prospect. A pheasant was walking across the footbridge. Inevitably the cementing had weathered and greened, and I had no urge to take off my shoes and step in!

Figure 5: A 1937 improvement, Belvin Ford, Uffculme in 2007; formerly a much more open site before the growth.

In frequent use by the greatly increased traffic, such facilities are now barely noticed and are taken for granted, but they marked welcome notable improvements for those who travelled these roads in the past.

Notes and references

1. *Tiverton Gazette & East Devon Herald,* 31 January 1933.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Figures 2 and 3 are from a family collection of the author.
4. *Tiverton Gazette & East Devon Herald,* 15 March 1926.

Helen Harris has qualifications in agriculture and dairying, and is a Devonian. She knows north and west Devon particularly well from her eight years as a Ministry of Agriculture dairy adviser up to 1956. Her numerous books written since then, mostly on Devon, include three canal histories and *A handbook of Devon parishes* in 2004. From 1985 to 2005 she was honorary editor of *The Devon Historian.*

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Thorncombe's 1644 mortality crisis

Eve Higgs

According to its parish register, between June 1644 to September 1644 burials in the former Axminster Hundred parish of Thorncombe increased to a total of 46.[1] This compares with 28 and 27 over the same period of months in 1643 and 1645 respectively, and suggests a possible mortality crisis. In order to justify further investigation into possible causes, the first task is to establish whether there are reasonable grounds for such a crisis given that 'even modest random fluctuations... can generate spurious crises thereby overstating the frequency of crises in small parishes compared to larger ones'.[2]

The mean number of christenings, marriages and burials recorded in the parish register for Thorncombe between 1551 and 1839 totals 61 per annum, and defines Thorncombe as a small parish. It is statistically insignificant, 100 being the acceptable minimum for the purposes of quantitative analysis. But by amalgamating data from the neighbouring parish of Chardstock on the Devon border, the mean rises to 115. Burial figures for Thorncombe and Chardstock for 1630-1650 confirm the occurrence of a peak in burials in 1644 with a combined total of 77 (Fig. 1). Statistical material identifying Thorncombe's 1644 mortality crisis is drawn from a major study initiated in the 1960s by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Structure. The Group's consolidation and analysis of the christenings, marriages and burials records of 404 English parishes was first published in 1981 in Wrigley and Schofield's standard work *The population history of England 1541-1871: A reconstruction*, and subsequently in database format in 1988.[3]

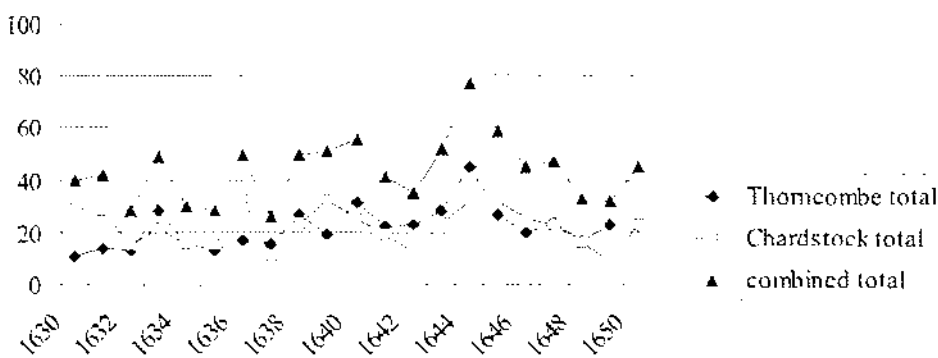

Figure 1: Thorncombe and Chardstock burials.

While highlighting the dangers of misinterpreting random fluctuations, Wrigley and Schofield also argue that given the relative stability of population size in small communities during short periods, an increase in burial numbers can be a reliable identifier of a local crisis. In Thorncombe's case useful data for the seventeenth century survives. The 1660 Poll Tax return, complete apart from the total, names 112 taxpayers. This correlates with the 1674 Lady Day Hearth Tax return. It lists 106 individuals liable for tax and 94 paupers. Applying Alldridge's recommended multiplier of 4.5 to reach an estimated adult population gives a total of 900.[4] Thorncombe's total for the 1676 Compton Census, a survey of Anglicans and dissenters based on three 1669 conventicles returns, is 885. Given the relatively insignificant differential of less than 2% between these figures, the evidence suggests population stability, enabling the following investigation into the possible contributory factors that led to Thorncombe's 1644 mortality crisis.

The parish of Thorncombe was and remains a secluded rural settlement located in a vale below Blackdown Hill in the West Dorset borderlands, abutting East Devon and South Somerset. In 1644 the 4,896 acre parish was part of the Axminster Hundred in Devon. Its boundaries were delineated by the River Axe to the north and west, the Blackwater River in the south and the Synderford River in the east. Twenty-first century Thorncombe retains its seventeenth-century structure and boundaries. Habitation is concentrated around the village, radiating outwards from the church at its centre. Its two gentry seats, Forde Abbey and Sadborow Hall, owned a substantial proportion of the parish in 1644. The village is surrounded by isolated farms and houses scattered across open countryside. Several structures date back to the seventeenth century. Further concentrated habitation is found in the outlying hamlets of Hewood and Holditch. Like neighbouring parishes in Marshwood Vale, Thorncombe's commercial activities are likely to have embraced sheep farming, dairy products, hemp and flax production, and various processes related to woollen cloth production.[5] Out of 56 seventeenth-century Thorncombe wills listed on The National Archives website, four individuals are husbandmen, nine are yeomen, and five are involved in the woollen industry.

Writing in 1640, west-country antiquarian Tristram Risdon described Thorncombe as being 'full of *combes*, so is subject to *thorns* and briers (if manurance does not prevent it) unto which it is naturally prone'.[6] Application of fertilisers to improve crop yields is a feature of developments in seventeenth-century agriculture. The trend for Devon and Dorset and surviving deeds and marriage settlements from the early modern period suggest that by the 1644 most of the land in the parish had been enclosed by local landowners, driven by commercial considerations of improvement and exploitation.[7] England and Wales' estimated population increased from between 2.5 and 3 million in 1500 to 5.8 million in 1700. The expanding market for food, materials and consumer products was served by a network of specialist markets in the area. Cattle markets were held at Crewkerne and Chard. Leather and cloth was sold on Ilminster market. Bridport market specialised in linen and hemp. Cheese and butter went to Yeovil.[8]

Produce was transported from the area by road and sea to the growing conurbations of Bristol, Cardiff and London. As a result of enclosures, small-scale farming declined and the numbers of men and women seeking paid work on the land increased. Supply exceeded demand. Rates of pay for agricultural labour were well below subsistence levels, leading to severe financial hardships among 'the fourth class', of day and farm labourers. Wages were controlled centrally by the local justices. In Devon in 1654 they were increased by 25% to 5s a week from the 4s in 1594. Meanwhile food prices had risen by 50% over the same period.[9]

Rural poverty was a nationwide problem. Writing in *Considerations touching trade with the advance of Kings revenue 1641*, a government official observed that 'the fourth part of the inhabitants of most of the parishes of England are miserable poor people, and (harvest time excepted) are without subsistence'.[10] Given that 46% of the population of Thorncombe were listed as paupers in the 1674 Hearth Tax return, and that populations in small communities tended to be stable during this period, there are reasonable grounds for suggesting that a significant proportion of Thorncombe's population was dependent on poor relief. Due to enclosures it was unable to earn a living wage or to support itself from subsistence farming.

If most of the land in Thorncombe was given over to sheep and dairy farming, and pasture for fodder and hemp and flax growing, its population in general was particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in wheat prices.[11] Poor harvests meant high prices throughout Western Europe, which precluded imports. The result was national shortages of wheat and high food prices, particularly bread, the staple of the poor. The knock-on effect was recession as demand for consumer products such as woollen goods fell. Those employed in spinning, dyeing and weaving, such as the Thorncombe piece-workers, would have been adversely affected therefore.[12] 1630 had seen a particularly bad English harvest. Although wheat prices dropped during the next 15 years, indicators of food prices via commodities such as poultry, rabbits and dairy products show they were are still relatively high in 1644. The evidence suggests that farmers, unable to afford feed, sold off their stock: for example, between 1644 and 1645 the price of eggs increased by 26% due to reduction in numbers of laying birds. The inevitable outcome of high food prices was a weak undernourished population.

Weather was a root cause of poor harvests as well as poor health. During the seventeenth century England was in the grip of the climatic extremes. Floods or drought were a characteristic of summers during what has become known as the Mini Ice Age. In the harvest year 1644-5 the price of wheat increased by 8%, which suggests that during the summer of Thorncombe's mortality crisis while the sun shone it was also wet. The price of spring sewn oats increased by 19%. The winter of 1644 was therefore probably dry and cold and spring was frosty, making the ground too hard to sow the seed.[13] Weakened by malnutrition, and the cold winter and damp summer of 1644, the resistance of Thorncombe's parishioners to disease was further undermined.

Statistically market towns have an above average incidence of mortality crises during this period. As well as a weekly market, Thorncombe also had an annual

Easter Tuesday fair. In 1644 it fell on 22 March. Burials in Thorncombe began to climb in April. Due to military activities linked to the Civil war local mortality crises in the south-west are statistically higher between April and October 1644.[14] Disease endemic in both armies often spread into local populations. In 1644 the port of Lyme, 13 miles from Thorncombe, was a strategically important Parliamentarian garrison. Given that Thorncombe was for the puritans, soldiers from the garrison may have patronised Thorncombe's Easter Tuesday market and spread the contagion into the civilian population. On 20 April the Royalists, under the command of Prince Maurice, laid siege to Lyme and mounted a determined assault lasting several weeks. By early summer the town was in desperate straits, and Earl of Essex's army set out from Blandford Forum on 15 June to relieve Lyme. Before Essex's arrival Prince Maurice withdrew to Exeter. Essex marched his troops through the Axe valley to Taunton and onwards into Cornwall. Subsequently Essex's army caused an epidemic of 'sweating sickness' at Tiverton.[15]

The source of this information is Creighton's *History of epidemics*. Although it was first published in 1891, it is still regarded as a standard work, even though the author makes 'hazy distinctions between typhus and other diseases'.[16] Drawing on contemporary sources, Creighton describes the progress of an epidemic that was spread into the population of Oxford and its environs by the Prince Rupert and Essex's armies in 1643. Hostilities in Oxfordshire commenced in April, so there was an almost identical timeframe to Thorncombe's 1644 crisis. The symptoms changed month by month. Fever and diahorrea were followed by weakness and convulsions. About midsummer 'the disease betrayed its malignant eruption of welks and spots'. By autumn the epidemic had nearly run its course. The symptoms were less severe, and fewer died. With the onset of winter it vanished. Creighton suggests it may have been a 'lesser plague'.

Burials in Thorncombe began to climb in May 1644, following the withdrawal of Prince Maurice and Essex's troops. Cause of death is not given in the Thorncombe parish register. Deaths of named women have been cross-referenced with christenings for the same period. None of the women appear to have died as a result of childbirth, nor are there any infant mortalities. But there are three incidences of individuals sharing the same surname dying within days of each other during this period, suggesting contagion. Others listed may be related, but only a family reconstitution exercise would provide further evidence. Among them is an unnamed solider who was buried on 27 June. Burial numbers diminish from October onwards with none taking place in December, which reflects the pattern of the 1643 Oxfordshire epidemic (Fig. 2).

Thus, as has been shown, Thorncombe's mortality crisis was not a 'random fluctuation'. While no specific primary source material has been traced, statistical evidence linked to circumstantial evidence suggests that the likely cause was the same lethal combination of factors. These factors were consolidation of landholdings into the hands of powerful individuals (resulting in loss of amenity for subsistence farmers), a low wage economy, climate change, poor harvests, high food prices, malnutrition, economic recession, civil war and epidemic.

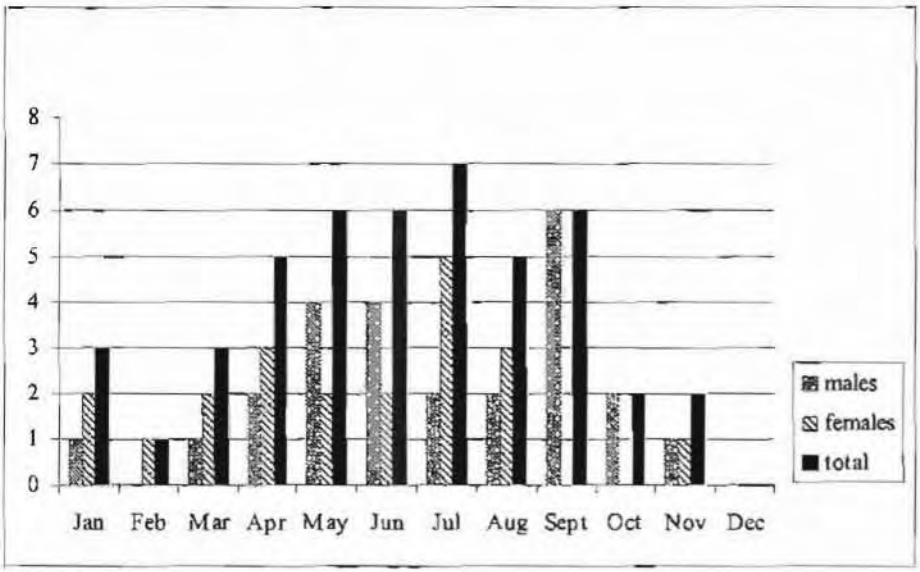

Figure 2: Thorncombe burials 1644 .

Notes and references

1. Thorncombe was moved from Devon to Dorset following changes to parliamentary boundaries in 1844.
2. Schofield 1988, p. 14.
3. Wrigley and Schofield 1981 and Schofield 1988.
4. Alldridge 1983, p. 57.
5. Bettey 1977, pp. 15-8 and 42-4.
6. Risden 1811, p. 15
7. Thirsk 1984, pp. 358 and 362.
8. Thirsk 1967, pp. 23, 74 and 597.
9. Hoskins and Finberg 1952, pp. 422-423.
10. Clapham 1949, p. 598.
11. Kerridge 1969, p. 127.
12. Thirsk 1967, p. 602.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 624-9, 832-3, 845 and 855.
14. Wrigley and Schofield 1981, pp. 681, 688 and 692.
15. Creighton 1949, pp. 552-5
16. Wrigley and Schofield 1981, p. 668.

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Eve Higgs retired (early) to Thorncombe 1988 following a chequered career embracing publicity and public relations, arts administration and second-hand bookselling. Initial explorations into sense of place via print-making not only aggravated her RSI but resulted in Eve discovering local record offices. This whetted her appetite for investigating Thorncombe's neglected distant past, and resulted in her undertaking a programme of formal study. Eve is completing the Distance Learning Advanced Diploma in Local History at Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education, and this article draws upon work undertaken for that course.

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Payments to itinerant travellers seeking alms in Hartland, 1612-1706

Stephen Hobbs

Administration of the remote Devon parish of Hartland in the seventeenth century was divided between the offices of the Manorial Borough of Harton and those of the ecclesiastical authorities. The parish had long been separated into secular and religious land holdings since the grant of the Manor of Stoke to a small number of canons.[1] The line of division effectively gave a north and south area of secular holdings, in the hands of the Dynham family and forming the Manor of Hartland, and a central portion, which eventually formed the land holding of Hartland Abbey.[2] A fourth area of approximately 160 acres was granted in 1295 by the Dynhams to form a manorial borough. On the death of the last Lord Dynham, Lord of the Manor of Hartland, in 1501, his estates were divided between his four sisters and managed by a steward.[3] At the Dissolution the religious land holding was sold in 1546 to the Abbat family and has remained with their heirs ever since (Fig. 1).

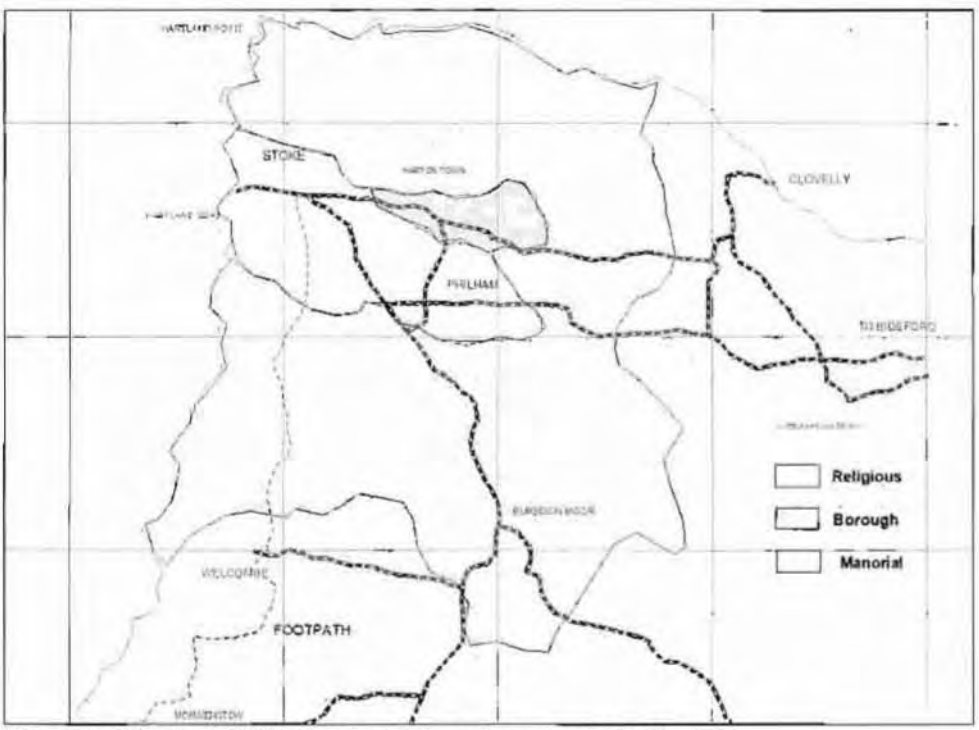

Figure 1: Divisions of Hartland parish and some principal roads

How these three administrations interacted to form the 'local government' of the area is a subject that has not been explored in any depth. Were there strictly established lines of responsibility, or were the boundaries blurred with various financial aspects inter-related? An investigation using the accounts of the churchwardens and the 'Governors of Goods of the Church', and the accounts of the Portreeves of Harton Borough on the payments to itinerant travellers may give an insight into how much co-operation existed. The manorial estates and the manorial borough under the Dynham's heirs would be co-existing, and have in place management comprising the likes of steward, bailiff and courts.

The first known ledger of the church accounts runs from 1597–1706, and is a combination of the 'Governors of Goods of the Church' and the Churchwardens' accounts. Their income was derived from the rate collections each year,[4] together with a small and irregular sum from gifts, sales of seats in the church and minor trades. The churchwardens' income was largely from the Governors' account, but also from bequests either as money or gifts, such as sheep to be sold off. Both bodies kept their accounts separately, but eventually a combined set was produced from 1664 for presentation to the Rural Dean.[5] The average income and expenditure for the church over the period was £34-19-5 and £31-19-1 per annum respectively.

The composition of church and borough organisation were very similar, with each having a body of governors. The church had twenty-four 'Governors of Goods of the Church': from these, four were chosen to be in office for a four-year period. One of these four was then selected as a Receiver for twelve months, and the position rotated through the four year period of office. There are occasions when a receiver stayed in office for a second year, especially if they were involved in complex parish affairs. Two churchwardens were elected each year, one for the parishioners and a second for the minister, and up to six people were appointed as gather collectors.[6]

The operation of the accounting system for the church is rather complex, running from April of each year; it is not such as the modern, profit and loss system. The money collected from the rates in the gathers was passed into the receiver's account for the church. The success of the rate collection was variable and frequently the accounts show entries for arrerages (*sic*) due and being paid. The consequence of this is that the tallied income could vary considerably each year. On the culmination of the four year rotation often a balancing of the account was undertaken and the 'church stock' was increased or decreased accordingly. There are entries in the church accounts indicating where men of substance, usually a governor, agreed to lend money to cover shortages, the amount being repaid when funds allowed or were in some cases reclassified as a gift. The churchwardens operated their own account and often ran at a loss. This was made good from the receiver's account, and on any occasion when a profit occurred then the same was paid to the receiver. The governors mainly came from the primary farming families and contained men of wealth and influence.[7]

The Borough held its charter to the benefit of the Manor of Hartland on annual payment of a rental fee, which was often remitted, collected by the manor

steward on behalf of the heirs of the Dynham estates. The administration of the borough and its accounts was the responsibility of a Portreeve chosen annually, from a body of seven governors, for a period of office of twelve months from the feast of St Michael the Archangel. In common with the church, the finances of each administration utilised a 'stock' sum that formed a float; the borough stock amounted to £40. The income of the borough was derived from the tollage, stallage and payments from the two annual fairs, and also a bailiwick collection; to these incomes were added the rentals of houses, shops, shambles and various privileges. The average income and expenditure for the borough over the period was £8-8-1 and £6-7-6 per annum respectively.

The payments recorded for itinerant travellers form a common aspect of both sets of account books and will form the basis for this investigation. Supporting data may be obtainable from the accounts of the Overseers of the Poor, Parish Constable and bastardy, habitation and apprenticeship records of Hartland. Further supporting data may be obtained from the churchwardens' accounts of the neighbouring parishes or tithing where available.

It is not possible to provide a regular calendar of payments from either set of accounts, as no dates other than the year are recorded and there is no discernable sequence by which the accounts were written. There can be little doubt that in each case they are transcribed from the notes, invoices, receipts and so forth of the organisations' officers. This can be seen in the palaeography as each account is in one hand; one mix of ink. if the entries had been written daily or weekly, then this would not be the case.[8] This then does not allow interpretations to be made as to whether the arrival of people seeking aid coincided with the markets, festival days or similar occurrences in the district.

Both sets of accounts used for this investigation have to be paired across a core period. The church accounts run from 1597–1706 in the first account ledger and continue in further ledgers until the present day. The borough accounts commence at 1612 and run until 1688, when there is a break in the recording in their first ledger until 1703. From this date they continue in various ledgers until 1898, when the borough was reorganised into a Parish Council and a charitable trust, the Harton Town Trust, which still manages the property of the ancient borough.[9]

It will be appropriate, therefore, for an investigation to take a period of 1614–1688 as the core period, as this is within both account books. The years from both accounts that fall either side of the core period will supply supplementary evidence of possible trends in payments. The range of payments to all categories of travellers are common in both sets of accounts.

In strict terms all the payments given were to people travelling through the parish. However, both administrations saw it necessary to identify their payments for certain categories of travellers; thus there are identifications of: Seamen, Irish, Soldiers, Travellers, Families, Prisoners, Poor, those with briefs to collect, and some with official responsibilities.[10] It has to be said that the categorisation is not definitive and cross-category identification occurs, such as '...paid 5 Irish travellers their wives and children...', which would be equally

well placed in three categories, Irish, travellers and families. However, by selective, or if appropriate multiple, categorising then the information contained in such entries can be used effectively to show trends and the reflection of national events on the parish: and possibly be extended to other parishes throughout the country.

The church vestries, in undertaking their lawful responsibilities, used such officers as the overseers of the poor and the parish constables to organise and control the indigenous parish poor by means of relief payments and provision of accommodation and employment for both adults and children. The itinerant traveller posed a separate problem, less predictable in behaviour or numbers. The control of such people was defined in a variety of ways, such as restrictions of movement, rights of habitation and the necessity to have passes to travel. Certain categories of traveller often placed a duty on a parish to offer monetary and/or sustenance by aid, such as naval sailors travelling from one from ship or port to another. Soldiers on passage to quarters or deployment often carried passes of entitlement to relief. People ejected from a parish due to their non-residence status were passed from parish constable to parish constable until they arrived at their rightful parish.

Table 1: Tabulation of events of aid payments to travellers 1597-1719

Event	1597-1613	1614-1688 (core period)	1689-1719
Church	7	243	176
Borough		485	0

During the core period under investigation, the Borough of Harton paid out to a considerably greater number of travellers than the church across all categories (Tab. 1). This would appear to be expenditure outside the borough responsibility, on the management of the fairs, markets and borough property on behalf of the manorial owners; and it is not readily apparent why such payments were made.

Are there topographical reasons why the borough may have been a more appropriate first call for a traveller than the church? To understand Hartland's position within its neighbourhood an explanation of the commerce and transport systems is beneficial. Hartland parish had a number of advantages. Historically the presence of a large monastic house and a market provided a centre for commerce and status for the community. The harbour, built in late sixteenth century, would have provided a relatively safe haven for shipping on what is a rather treacherous coastline, as well as a trading port for import and export of produce. The use of this port for military purposes is not specifically recorded, but as a sponsor was Sir Richard Grenville, it could be taken that such purpose was available if needed.

The Borough of Harton was a principal regional market town and the recorded income of the Portreeve shows how steady this commercial enterprise was throughout the period under consideration. The entries in the borough

account book for sales across the 'tome stone' recorded purchases by people from some considerable distance, mainly for cattle and horses. There was also the trade from the shambles in such as leather, meat and dairy products. There were further markets at Stratton, Bradworthy and Bideford, all within a thirteen mile radius of Hartland.

The road system had not yet fully adopted the modern layout,[11] and possibly more accurately reflected the earlier tracks on high ground passing from village to village. To travel east from Hartland the main roadway passed through Woolfardisworthy, Parkham, Littleham into Bideford, where it could cross the river Torridge. To travel south the road passed through the hamlets of Philham, Tossbury and over the high moorland at Bursdon heading towards Morwenstow and Kilkhampton. A further high ground road linked the area by passing through Bradworthy and onto Holsworthy. The presence of large tracts of culm lands and wet moor made the older tracks more reliable passageways (Fig. 2).

From this broad description Hartland can be seen as a regional centre, and as such would have been well known in the north Devon area. This, combined with its position on a recognised road system, ensured it was a convenient calling point for a steady flow of travellers. Within the recorded events of either set of accounts, there are only a small number that refer to a traveller arriving or leaving by any means of transport - this being by horse. Walking would have been the most common way of travelling and therefore dependent on the physical abilities of each person. A day's walking distance between centres of aid would have to be aimed at. Combined with being able to walk are other variables, such as weather conditions, road state and no doubt in some cases harassment. Rather than assume that a standard mileage was a possible distance to be covered in a day, the ability of other suitable towns, villages, or churches to provide aid should be considered. The geography does help in only allowing an approximate 90° angle from Hartland within which to locate other habitations, and the relative sparseness of such makes selection in some respects obvious.

On the south and western radius are the towns of Kilkhampton, Stratton, Bradworthy and Holsworthy. The eastern radius has a substantial number of smaller village habitations that are all within walking range; Barnstaple, Torrington and Bideford, being large townships and regional centres, were possibly within a day's walk. The demands placed by travellers arriving and seeking aid must have laid a substantial burden on smaller communities, dependent on how their churches raised their income. It may have been mutually beneficial for all parties if the larger communities were the habitations that travellers headed for.

A traveller arriving in Hartland by sea would be less than a mile from the parish church and normally would have to pass the building on their way to other localities. Similarly a traveller arriving in the parish from the south would on ascending the moor at Bursdon see the tower of the church some seven miles away. The road system would have gently directed them towards the church rather than the town.[12] From the east the borough town would be the point of

arrival for a traveller, as the church is in an isolated hamlet two miles west of the town.

Would the location of the church and borough be reflected in the categories of traveller seeking aid? As the church was closest to the port it may be expected to see a greater number of mariners arriving at its doors? However, this is not substantiated in the tabulation except in possibly two isolated years until 1688 (Tab. 2).

Table 2: Totals of aid payments to mariners 1597-1706

Event	1597-1613	1614-1688 (core period)	1689-1706
Church	0	114	26
Borough		173	0

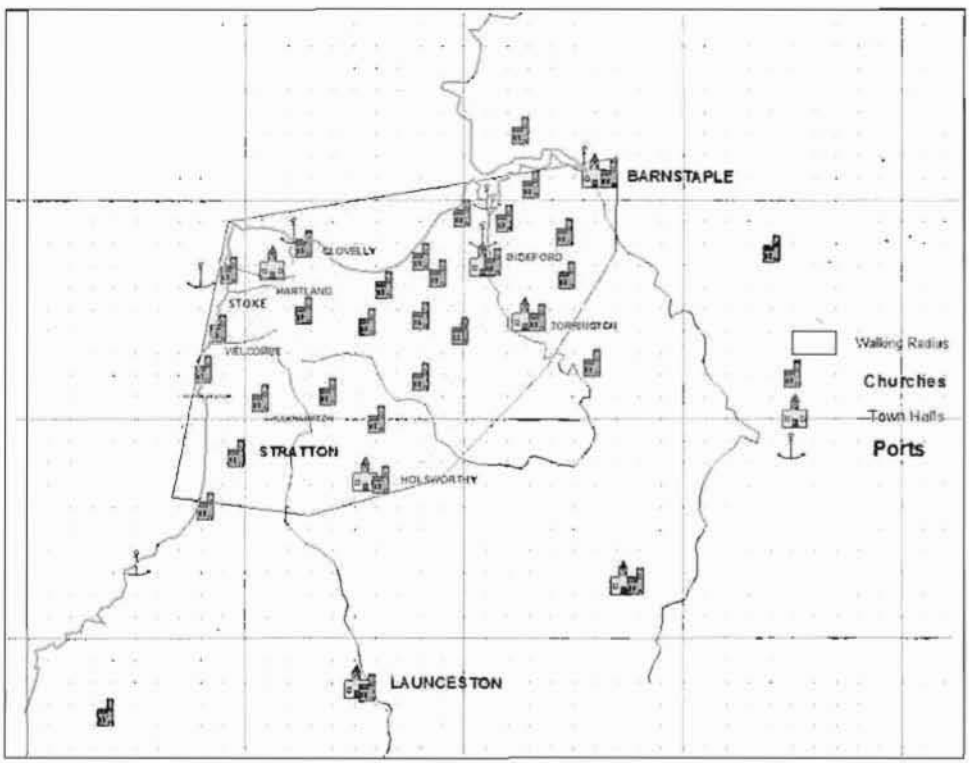

Figure 2: Approximate one day's walking radius from Hartland

A shift in emphasis from 1689 until 1706 saw an average of 3.2 mariners a year being given aid, as opposed to a rising average within 3 of the 25 year extractions of the core period: 1597-1633 of 0, 1634-58 of 0.21, and 1659-88 of 5.6, paid by the church authorities. If the increasing average, from 1688, would have been comparable in the lost borough accounts, this is not known. What is illustrated is that the close location of the port to the church is not a dominating

factor in the core period, as the borough consistently aided a greater number of mariners, possibly seeking a ship in a larger port (Tab. 3).

There are no contemporary accounts of the port of Hartland that could expand on the entries within either the church or the borough accounts. It would be undoubtedly the case that a proportion of the mariners given aid had a link with the local port. A second port located at Clovelly, three miles east of Hartland on the north coastline, as opposed to the exposed western coast at Hartland, can be shown to have worked in commercial conjunction with Hartland, depending upon weather and sea conditions, and there are specific entries in both church and borough accounts naming Clovelly as the source of some mariners seeking aid. Other named maritime locations are Falmouth, Penzance, Fowey and Padstow in Cornwall, while Bideford and Bristol are ports named east of Hartland.

A consistent annotation in the entries for mariners alludes to shipwrecks, 'having lost their ship...', and the southwest peninsula would have been a location for many of these events; to survive a wreck was not always due to good fortune and local assistance. The value of cargoes, salvage and flotsam became a deciding factor in assistance being forthcoming, and the law of possession was perverse in requiring no survivors before salvage rights could be claimed.[13]

Another category that can offer a further insight into the question of payments made to those in need is that of 'civilian travellers'. In both sets of accounts they are a named group. However, there is a difficulty in this being a strictly defined group of people. In recognising that all the separate classifications were actually travellers, then the use of a word to limit it to one type of person may be indicative of a generalisation used by the scribes. It is not possible to redefine enough entries to make the tabulation more accurate; it is a firmer argument to combine the categories of traveller and that of families as one unit. In most aspects they deal with civilians as opposed to people who have an occupational need to travel, that is mariners and soldiers. Either group involve large numbers of people, and combined they form the majority of events and totals of people receiving aid in Tables 4 and 5. The same argument could be used to include both the poor and those defined as Irish. The numbers classified as poor represent less than 5% of the suggested combined group. The Irish have a valid reason to be dealt with as an individual group, due to the religious turmoil over an extended period that resulted in persecution and property loss.[14]

Table 3: Totals of mariners receiving aid (5 year aggregation) 1597-1613, core period (1614-88), and 1689-1719

5 year aggregate	1597-1602	1603-07	1608-13	Totals
Church	0			0
Borough	0			0

5 year aggregate	1614-18	1619-23	1624-28	1629-33	1634-38	1639-43	1644-48	1649-53	1654-58	1659-63	1664-68	1669-73	1674-78	1679-83	1684-88	Totals
Church					2		3	1		1	2	9	23	18	55	114
Borough	4		3		1	2	4	2	5	21	20	25	33	27	26	173

5 year aggregate	1689-93	1694-98	1699-1703	1704-08	1709-13	1714-19	Totals
Church	14	12			1		27
Borough	0						0

Table 4: Totals of combined travellers and families 1597-1719

Event	1597-1613	1614-1688 (core period)	1689-1719
Church	0	356	744
Borough		331	0

Table 5: 5 year aggregates, totals of travellers and families, 1597-1613, 1614-88 (core period), 1689-1719

5 year aggregate	1597-1602	1603-07	1608-13	Totals
Church	0	0	0	0
Borough			0	0

5 year aggregate	1614-18	1619-23	1624-28	1629-33	1634-38	1639-43	1644-48	1649-53	1654-58	1659-63	1664-68	1669-73	1674-78	1679-83	1684-88
Church						6			2		71	42	63	57	115
Borough		1	2	13	3	30	42	2	8	18	35	21	68	31	57

Table 5 continued

5 year aggregate	1689-93	1694-98	1699-1703	1704-08	1709-13	1714-19	Totals
Church	270	451	0	1	10	12	744
Borough	0			0	0	0	0

Table 6a: Totals of travellers and families arriving with passes 1614-1688

5 year aggregate	1614-18	1619-23	1624-28	1629-33	1634-38	1639-43	1644-48	1649-53	1654-58	1659-63	1664-68	1669-73	1674-78	1679-83	1684-88
Borough events	15	21	37	20	21	28	26	9	10	37	35	48	63	37	78
Town: passes	1	4	2	2		4	2	2	3	21	7	19	53	27	30
Church events	2		3	7	11	4	1	15	2	6	22	20	34	36	80
Church: passes					1	2				3	16	8	15	33	74

The pattern of travellers arriving seeking aid followed that of mariners. The town paid out to larger numbers until the period 1664-68, when the tabulation shows a rising number of people paid from the church account. The climax was recorded in 1694-98, when an accumulation of 451 people passed through. This was equivalent to approximately one third of the resident population of Hartland parish at this time.[15] This is a reflection of national trends when it is accepted that large numbers were traversing the countryside. A change in the poor law eventually reduced this to a trickle, as can be dramatically illustrated in Table 5 for the period 1699-1703, after the introduction of new settlement requirements in 1697.[16]

Table 6b: Totals aided by gender

Account	Gender	Totals
Church	Female	66
Church	Male	216
Church	Mixed	55
Church	Un-stated	92
Borough	Female	44
Borough	Male	402
Borough	Mixed	4
Borough	Un-stated	18

The reason why people were travelling is as complex a subject as discovering their true parish of residence. The care of these people should have been the responsibility of the churchwardens, but at Hartland the borough also shouldered the payments, and the regional road system brought people into Hartland on what was probably a well known and used transit route.[17]

From the tabulation of events for travellers and families, Table 6a, it is the case that the borough was more inclined to make payments to people who had arrived without a pass: 36% of recipients of the borough had passes, whilst 62% were in possession of a pass at the church. The reason may be that the borough had at its disposal the hundred and parish constables, and methods of punishment for vagrants, beggars and travellers without due permission to travel. Within the full tabulation there are a number of official payments of which some cover the costs of dealing with vagrants and criminals. The whipping and ejection from the parish is recorded on several occasions, as well as the presentation before the justices and delivery to a jail.

Table 6b illustrates that the overwhelming majority of travellers were male, 618, as opposed to female, 110. Even allowing for the addition of mixed groups, this balance remains.

The compassion within the parish is shown in its dealing with people or their representatives who have arrived with a licence or brief to collect. This was a style of collection normally undertaken at the church service when the detail of the warrant was read and a collection made from the retiring congregation. The recording of payments to such people by both borough and church indicates that

these are payments in addition to the congregational collections and in some cases are quite substantial amounts.

From these illustrations it is clear that the borough was overall the majority paymaster and calling point for those seeking aid. The reasons why the local community chose this option of undertaking their fiscal responsibility may be one of local financial consideration first and of compassion second.

Although it is outside the scope of this paper it is worth exploring further the reason that people of some categories were itinerants. In very brief terms the Westcountry has long had a seafaring tradition and in the case of mariners passing through Hartland such a category would be expected. The local ports of Bideford and Barnstaple were major setting off places for troops going into Ireland and similarly were arrival points for refugees from Ireland. The sailors and soldiers may well have been sent on to other ports and ships further into Cornwall, or, opposite, towards Bristol. The Irish people landing here were at the start of their dispersal across Britain and indeed towards the Americas. The turmoil in Ireland had entered a particularly disruptive time during the period covered by this investigation. Severe persecution on religious grounds and the loss of land and property caused many to emigrate either by choice or forcibly.

The period up until 1697 had seen an increase in the number of people travelling around the countryside, partly due to the changes in agriculture and the rise of urban inhabitation. The poor laws sought to control the movement of these people by various means, especially by making their home parish responsible for their upkeep if they fell into hard times. The law imposed a system of rights of habitation within a parish for incomers, both monetary and on property rights. The rise in numbers eventually brought the change of 1697 that stemmed the flow severely and for a period saw few people travelling in the countryside, or at least claiming alms if doing so. The latter may be an additional group of people that then became titled vagrants or beggars, and were the most severely dealt with by punishments such as imprisonment and whipping before being returned to their home parish.

The period of the English civil war is within this investigation period. It would be expected to see a sharp increase in people asking aid, but the records do not show this. There are entries for soldiers passing through, particularly from various battles such as Stratton, Bristol, Barnstaple and Torrington, but the numbers as civilians was relatively small, maybe due to restrictions on travel or the need to be in an environment in which people felt safe such as with close family. There are a small number of references to foreigners: Dutch, Scottish, French and Italian. In the main these can all be associated with conflicts and could be people making there way home following a period of detention.

Table 7: Totals of payments by category, in pence (cols 0-30 = pence); church and borough

Category	Totals	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Brief	22	1	16	2		1	1				1											
Cornish	9		1	1	3	3		1														
Dutch	1		1																			
Family	104	13		20	11	11	10	12	4	4	3	6	5		2	2				1		
French	16		1	1	3	7	1	3														
Irish	113	11	16	11	15	16	8	10	8	4	2	5	3	1			1				1	
Italian	1		1																			
Official	20	5	5	4	3	2	1															
Pass	3		2		1																	
Poor	21		13	2	2	3	1															
Prisoner	11	1	9	1																		
Scottish	1						1															
Seaman	330	5	39	60	44	38	14	34	15	18	18	11	9	3	3	6	3	4	3	2		
Soldier	61	5	21	15	6	3	2	1			1							1		2		1
Traveller	203	12	33	38	15	23	7	12	8	14	11	4	9	3	1	5	2	2	1	2		
Welsh	2		1	1																		

The financial implications of paying out increasing sums in aid are reflected in the fiscal arrangements of both the church governors' and the portreeves' accounts. In raising its income the church depended on an annual rate, collected usually in two gathers. This was not the only rate collected in the parish, as there were often further assessments instigated at regional, county and national level, which in one year reached a strenuous 32 rates (£256). The popularity of having a rate demand placed on an occupier would be no more so then than now. The value of a rate was based on the property or estate, and in Hartland was a constant and stable figure through much of the period covered (see endnote 4). If the church governors saw an opportunity to negate any rise in the rate, would it not be an attractive proposition if they could attach part of such a demand, with agreement, onto the borough?

The borough had its main income stream from the revenue of the two annual fairs or markets. Although the income was a monetary collection it was not one that fell totally on the local population, especially not the property- or landholders. If, as can be illustrated from the borough accounts, the market was successful and formed a steady income flow, then the attraction of using this income to meet the parish responsibilities for aid may have been beneficial to all parties, including the general parishioners.

The suggestion that the payments made to travellers by the borough was a 'parish' fiscal decision can be explored by a comparison of the effects on the income and expenditure of both church and borough. The income of both organisations is detailed in Tables 8a and b. The expenditures are more complex and can be seen from their respective need to cover many aspects of the administration in the locality.

Expenditure for the churchwardens was the purchase of wine and breads for the sacraments and for a small number of years the cost of aid for the travellers. The 'Governors of Goods of the Church' held the responsibility for the fabric of the church and considerable sums were spent on its maintenance. There are various sums for such as church armour, legal expenses, administration costs such as Clerk, dog whipper, gatekeeper, the destruction of vermin of various types, in addition to the costs arising from their parish obligations such as the maintenance of roads and bridges.

Expenditure for the Portreeve would be costs of administering the borough, such as the attendance of the steward, court costs, food, drink and gloves for the fair-days, plus assorted costs of the labour for erecting and operating the market stalls. More general expenses for the maintenance of the highways and bridges, apparently only within the borough, included the costs of the supply of water via pumps and wells and the paving and cleansing of the streets. There are very few entries for any repairs of the borough houses, which would indicate that such were the responsibility of the tenants. The cost of repairs and improvements to the town hall and clock, the costs for bull baiting and the supply and repairs to the 'cucking stool' or tumbrel are regular entries: the latter is not for over use but a fine for the lack of care or supply of a means of punishment.

The operation of the financial accounts of the church's income[18] is difficult to equate to a full financial year due to the constant inability of the collectors to raise the full rate, which gave rise to 'arrearages' (*sic*). This incompleteness annually makes it difficult to form a view on the proportion of the annual income that was directed to cover aid to travellers. The expenses recorded being the actual years costs will be a better source on which to make a cost comparison of how the church finances managed what was a largely unpredictable expense.

The borough account was stable in its operation, recording actual receipts in the year they occurred and similarly the expenses for the given year. The income from the market or fair would have been collected on the day, giving little opportunity for non-payment. Although the Portreeves did have arrears on their account, this was from property rentals and some took many years to balance out. At the end of the year the account was balanced and the surplus or deficit transferred into the town stock.

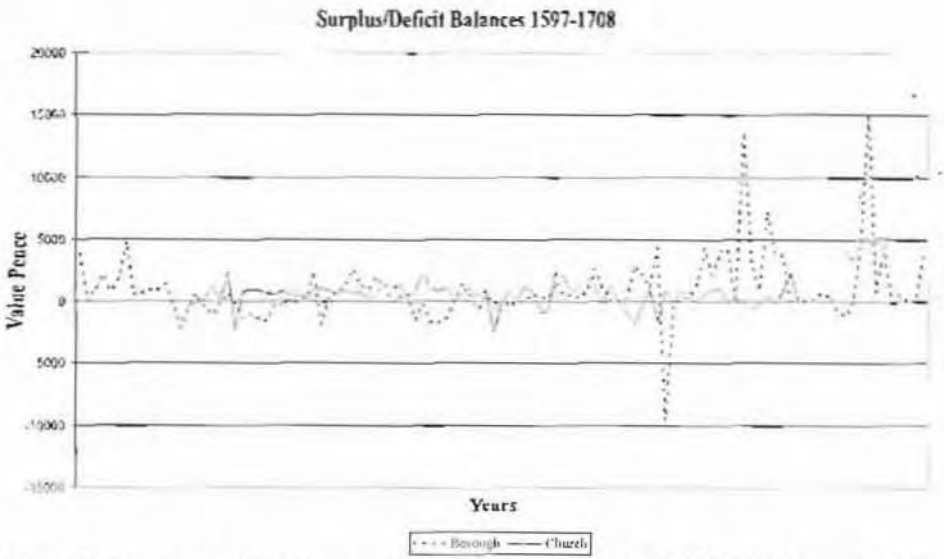

Figure 3: Surplus or deficit account of church and borough 1597-1706 (annually)

From the extraction shown in Tables 8a and b it can be seen that the income for the borough was relatively steady. Overall the borough made a surplus in twelve of the sixteen five-year aggregates, and in the remaining periods losses were not substantial. The church had a surplus in ten of the periods. It would appear from this that there was not an overwhelming financial requirement to use the borough finances to relieve any financial pressure on the church (see Fig. 3).

The payments made for aid as a percentage rose above 4% in only three of the sixteen periods in the borough and only once for the church, the overall averages being 0.03% and 0.6% respectively. On the cost of aid per person over the period, the borough gave an average of 2.9 pence and the church 3.7 pence.

The actual value of payments would appear to be totally arbitrary, no obvious method of calculation is apparent, indeed some amounts paid, in particular to groups, would hardly provide for minimum sustenance.[19] There are examples of specific aid whereby a householder is paid to supply effectively 'bed and breakfast' to a traveller. The sum paid in these cases is a greater amount than that paid direct to a traveller, thus the presumption must be that in the majority of cases the aid given was not sufficient to provide both shelter and food, for example: '1661: Paid John Rogers from quartering of four travellers which required us by the King's orders...44d...' [for 4 people] as opposed to '1627: Gave unto 4 poor people...4d...' [for 4 people].[20] This leaves a picture of travellers having to find shelter where it can be found, not a scenario to endear them to the population.

The results from the tabulations and analysis of the data indicate that the church and the borough each undertook their fiscal responsibilities, and that the apparent collaboration possibly only extended in dealing with travellers. In other respects it is possible to show instances, within both sets of accounts, where co-operation is lacking, especially in the church paying the borough ground rent for its properties within the borough boundaries.[21] This particular trade should give a balancing credit-debit entry within the accounts, but there are omissions on both sides. Therefore, this interpretation of collaboration could show a 'cosmetic' fiscal operation whereby the 'parish' is meeting its liability in the way that is cost effective to its residents, especially those faced with payments of rates, by offsetting costs on traders using the fair or market. What circumstances would allow such collaboration to take place?

Management of the parish was directed by a compact complexity of families of status covering a wide spectrum of interests. The majority of the manor land and borough holding was under the control of a steward on behalf of the four absentee landlords, the old monastic property had passed into the possession of a private owner. The day to day management involved a combination of the steward, church and borough officials. The twenty-four 'Governors of Goods of the Church' were mainly from agricultural backgrounds, whereas the borough would appear to have burgesses as its governing body. There was some cross-over, particularly in the churchwardens appointed, with the borough well represented. The succession of father to son is well recorded by the use of 'junior' appended to entries in both sets of accounts.

At the root of this governing group is an intricacy of marriages: very few of the families recorded in the accounts were not inter-married, often over many generations. New families entering the parish that had or achieved a status soon became part of the inter-relationships[22], and this situation continued well into the nineteenth century.

Table 8a: The church incomes and expenditures showing % effects of payments to travellers (5 year aggregates

Period ID	Period Years	Income (pence)	Expenditure (pence)	Balance	Surplus or deficit	Aid (pence)	People aided	% o incor
P 002	1597-1602	29428.5	19983.5	9445	P	12	2	0.04
P 003	1603-07	27955	20165.5	7789.5	P	58	47	0.207
P 004	1608-13	38852.5	40205	-1352.5	L	60	3	0.154
P 01	1614-18	45738.5	47962.5	-2224	L	66	3	0.144
P 02	1619-23	34294	38847.5	-4553.5	L	0	0	0.000
P 03	1624-28	32571	31110	1461	P	120	5	0.368
P 04	1629-33	43340	37079	6261	P	66	24	0.152
P 05	1634-38	44225	39554.5	4670.5	P	113	24	0.256
P 06	1639-43	26712	31207	-4495	L	64	23	0.240
P 07	1644-48	23098.5	22997	101.5	P	54	32	0.234
P 08	1649-53	15229	15732.5	-503.5	L	145	100	0.953
P 09	1654-58	30050.5	27279.5	2771	P	12	4	0.040
P 10	1659-63	27659	22621.5	5037.5	P	94	22	0.340
P 11	1664-68	34829.5	30412	4417.5	P	352	105	1.01
P 12	1669-73	62735.5	65105.5	-2370	L	323	93	0.515
P 13	1674-78	46916.5	38597	8319.5	P	408	105	0.870
P 14	1679-83	83986.5	58857	25129.5	P	461	119	0.549
P 15	1684-88	81728.5	65939	15789.5	P	1434	276	1.755
P 16	1689-93	29377	27619	1758	P	1623	390	5.525
P 17	1694-98	50394.5	32635.5	17759	P	2238	719	4.44
P 18	1699-1703	44534.5	39161.5	5373	P	0	0	0.000
P 19	1704-08	24503	20825.5	3677.5	P	24	2	0.098
	Total	878159	773897	104262		7727	2098	0.493
					Average cost per person 3.68d			

Table 8b: The borough incomes and expenditures showing % effects of payments to travellers (5 year aggregat

Period ID	Period Years	Income (pence)	Expenditure (pence)	Balance	Surplus or deficit	Aid (pence)	People aided	%
P 002	1597-1602	0	0	0	U	0	0	0.00
P 003	1603-07	0	0	0	U	0	0	0.00
P 004	1608-13	6884	6895.5	-11.5	L	0	0	0.00
P 01	1614-18	13108.5	10677	2431.5	P	130	19	0.99
P 02	1619-23	10695	6753.5	3941.5	P	97	55	0.90
P 03	1624-28	9342	5559.5	3782.5	P	256	140	2.74
P 04	1629-33	11170.75	7414.5	3756.25	P	84	56	0.75
P 05	1634-38	11453.5	6752.5	4701	P	102	83	0.89
P 06	1639-43	10828.5	5406.5	5422	P	121	107	1.11
P 07	1644-48	7709	4315.5	3393.5	P	168	131	2.17
P 08	1649-53	9636.5	10439	-802.5	L	58	38	0.60
P 09	1654-58	11729	8981	2748	P	51	25	0.43
P 10	1659-63	13303	6486	6817	P	210	86	1.57
P 11	1664-68	13812.5	15413	-1600.5	L	242	79	1.75
P 12	1669-73	9014	9217	-203	L	318	126	3.52
P 13	1674-78	9037	6485	2552	P	485	178	5.36
P 14	1679-83	9454	9152	302	P	425	86	4.49
P 15	1684-88	10287	6929	3358	P	1073	120	10.43
P 16	1689-93	0	0	0	U	0	0	0.00
P 17	1694-98	0	0	0	U	0	0	0.00
P 18	1699-1703	0	0	0	U	0	0	0.00
P 19	1704-08	0	0	0	U	0	0	0.00
	Total	167464.3	126876.5	40587.75		3820	1329	0.02
					Average cost per person 2.87d			

Table 9: Identified residences of officials named in accounts (Taken from the Church Seating Plan 1613[23])

Name	Official Position	Residence
Keene, Henry	Gov of Goods [1608-1611]	Philham [1628]
Bremmacombe, Ffrances	Church Warden' [1597]	Galsham [1628]
Cole, Richard	Church Warden' [1613]	Kernstone [1625+8]
Deyman, Lawrence	Gov of Goods [1600-1604]	Marcedon + Harton [1628]
Burden, Nicholas	Gov of Goods [1600-1604]	Harton + Galsham [1625+8]
Perce, John	Church Warden' [1611] [+ Gabriell Piers]	Lee [1628]
Luttrell, Nicholas	Gov of Goods [1608-1611]	Hartland Abbey or attached property
Husband, Marten	Church Warden' [1605/6]	Greenlake [1625]
Velly John gent	Gov of Goods [1612-1615]	Galsham Farm [1625]
Colwill, Thomas, gent	Gov of Goods [1604-1607]	Elmscott [1625+8]
Blagdon, William	Port Reeve	Milford [1625+8]
Yeo, Justinian	Port Reeve	Pitt[1625+8]
Bagelhole, William	Port Reeve	Harton [1628]
Deyman, William	Gov of Goods [1616-1620] + Petty Constable	Harton
Yeo, Charles	Gov of Goods [1616-1620] + Port Reeve	Harton [1625+8]
Blagdon, Peter	Gov of Goods [1600-1604]	Blagdon [1625+8]
Prust, Thomas	Gov of Goods [1600-1604]+ [1612-1615] + Church Warden' [1613]	Nateott [1625+8]
Tooker, Lawrence-wife	Gov of Goods [1608-1611] [husband]	Longfurlong [1625+8]
Prust, George	Gov of Goods [1604-1607]	Lutsford [1625+8]
Cleverdon, Robert	Gov of Goods [1604-1607] + Church Warden' [1600]	Titchberry [1628]
Hooper, William	Gov of Goods [1596-1599]	Highford [1625+8]

Table 9 continued

Name	Official Position	Residence
Docton, Thomas	Gov of Goods [1616-1620]	Welsford
Hamlyn, Anthony-wife	Church Warden' [1614] [+ Oliver Nicholls] [husband]	Trellick [1625+8]
Sherme, Simon	Gov of Goods [1612-1615] + Church Warden [1599]	Cheristow
Row, Frances	Gov of Goods [1608-1611] + Church Warden' [1598]	Hescott [1625+8]
Prust, Hugh	Gov of Goods [1612-1615]	Gorvin [1625+8]
Nicholl, Hugh	Gov of Goods [1604-1607]	Brownsham [1625+8]
Carwithy, John	Church Warden' [1607]	Longfurlong [1625+8]
Cornish, Hugh	Church Warden' [1597]	Natcott [1625+8]
Vine, Henry	Church Warden' [1597] [+ John Moyse]	Eddistone [1625+8]
Galsworthy, John	Church Warden' [1599] [+ William Dark]	Moore [1625+8]
Snow, William-wife	Church Warden' [1600] [husband]	Wellsford [1625] +Tosberry [1628]
Prust, John	Church Warden' [1601]	Elmscott [1625+8]
Heard, Henry	Church Warden' [1602]	Milford [1625+8]
Cann's, Leonard-wife	Church Warden' [1602] [husband]	Norton [1625+8]
Docton, Thomas	Church Warden' [1604]	Welsford
Atkin, William	Gov of Goods [1596-1599]	Blegberry [1625+8]
Downing, Thomas	Church Warden' [1605/6]	Milford [1625]
Crang, Richard	Port Reeve	Harton [1566] + [1625+8]
Dungey Thomas	Church Warden' [1607]	Thorry [1625+8]
Colwill, William	Church Warden' [1608]	Southole [1628]
Nicholl, John of Etson	Church Warden' [1608]	Etson
Nicholl, John	Church Warden' [1608]	Harton [1625+8]

Table 9 continued

Name	Official Position	Residence
May, Phillip	Church Warden' [1609] [+ Giles Shapley]	Netherton [1625+8]
Sherme, William	Church Warden' [1610]	Cheristow [1625+8]
Prust, William	Church Warden' [1610]	Emscott [1625+8]
Cornish, John	Church Warden' [1612]	Pitt [1625+8]
Blagdon John	Church Warden' [1612]	Blagdon [1625+8]
Seecombe, John Gent	Gov of Goods [1596-1599]	Gawlish [1566] + Fatlacott [1625+8
Perce, Robert	Church Warden' [1604]	Norton [1625+8]
Holman, John-wife	Church Warden' [1603] [+Barnabas Hatherly] [husband]	Unknown
Cooke, George	Church Warden' [1601]	Unknown
Yeo Richard	Gov of Goods [1596-1599]	Harton
May, Phillip	Church Warden' [1609] [+ Giles Shapley]	Netherton [1625+8]

It could be argued that Hartland presented a peculiarity in terms of the 'management' of the parish. The Dynham family, making their principal residence at Nutwell,[24] on the Exe estuary, had become absentee landlords for Hartland. The Abbat family, having purchased the dissolved religious house, did not exert as much in the way of influence as may be expected, especially in view of the deeply entrenched nature of other localised families, some of considerable wealth, such as the Prusts, Prideaux, Vellys, Arundels and Bouchiers. It is interesting to note that in the early period covered by this investigation the tenants of farms forming the landholding of the dissolved Abbey did not provide many of the people who occupied a position as an official (see Table 9). This could possibly reflect the system of land leases in operation, with three lifetimes being a standard form. Therefore, the tenants had not achieved the same status as those on property held under the Dynhams. This property was increasingly being sold off in portions to its tenants by the heirs of Lord Dynham; the 'new' owners achieving an increase in standing and therefore becoming eligible to hold office.

This combination of circumstances had produced a parish that had become familiar to being administered by its own 'minor' gentry elite, and that through this system had developed a method of negating direct taxation where and when possible. The payments to itinerant travellers are an identifiable residue of such collaboration and an example of local fiscal prudence.

The transfer of a cost from farmer or burgess onto that of trader using the fair or market would no doubt be a welcome relief. The costs incurred by the trader, who may be from outside the parish, would be minimal and probably invisible, therefore raising no objection. In all this arrangement is a very neat piece of creative accounting to the advantage of the majority of the parishioners.

There are no other instances of this happening in other local parishes, accepting that the same set of circumstances arose in very few parishes within northern Devon or Cornwall. The existence of both an operational borough and a church system with extant account books, alongside a recognised transport route, is not common outside the primary administrative towns of Bideford, Barnstaple or Torrington. The accounts of the main towns are more complex and do not readily allow interrogation in the way that those of Hartland do. The importance of Barnstaple and Bideford as main sea trade ports eventually brought the demise of Hartland and its markets, although in various forms a market continued to exist until the mid-1950s.

Notes and references

1. Gytha, mother of King Harold, gave her manor of Nistenstok to twelve secular canons reputedly in thanksgiving for the life of her husband saved from shipwreck; Chope 1940, p. 19.
2. The manor of Nistenstok is considered to be the foundation lands of the Abbey at Hartland on its translation to an Augustinian house; Chope, p. 54.

3. The records of the Arundels of Cornwall are deposited in the Cornwall Records office, Truro, and open the discussion of the management of the Dynham lands following the division in 1501.
4. The rate collection at Hartland amounted to £16 for a penny rate and £8 for half penny. The number of rates per year varied up to a maximum of 32 in one year.
5. Locally the Rural Dean was identified within the account books as the 'Dene Rular'.
6. Hartland parish was divided into three areas known as 'gathers', north, west and middle. The boundaries of these areas were established in alignment with the primary river valleys of the parish and could be very ancient by their nature. See Hobbs 2008.
7. See Hobbs 2005, p. 124.
8. Other books of records of the same period, and kept at regular periods, show a different hand and certainly many shades of ink mix.
9. Harton Town Trust is a charitable organisation under the care of seven Trustees, and manages the 'residue' of the ancient borough and holds the borough archive.
10. Official responsibilities amounted to the payments to classes of people travelling within their employment on government service, and such people as being returned to the rightful parish of residency under the poor laws.
11. An example of the progression of the modern road system can be seen when comparing the 1809 Ordnance Survey map with the similar map of 1900, whereby a number of the older tracks are passed over in favour of upgraded roads that take fuller consideration of the use of wheeled transport.
12. The road entering into Hartland parish from the south crosses Bursdon Moor on its western edge, thus passing the high ground composed of wet moorlands and culm grasslands. This road may be a relic of earlier times when the habitation of Stoke, a veneration spot to St Nectan and the site of a religious foundation, was of more importance than the habitation of Harton. It thus reflected the existence of a more direct route.
13. Reference to this change is made by Rev. Stephen Hawker in his writings, and the compassion he tried to introduce in the locality for the victims of such incidents of shipwreck.
14. References to these events are alluded to in *Sir Thomas Stucley: Traitor extraordinary*, John Izon (1956, p. 17). Although not a full academic text on Ireland, as Stucley was closely linked to Hartland, it seemed an appropriate reference on the trend of events.
15. Wickes 1980 and Chope (undated research notes held by Hartland Digital Archive) each estimate the population of Hartland parish as around 1,500 in the mid-seventeenth century.

16. Under the Settlement Act of 1697 Strangers were allowed to settle in a new parish if they were armed with a certificate from their home parish guaranteeing to take them back if they became in need of poor relief. Paupers were to wear a capital P on their clothing followed by a letter indicating their home parish.
17. Christopher Tull (undated), Vicar of Rose Ash, Devon, wrote a short article to support a charity walk by his parishioners on the route of mariners passing through north Devon on route for Bristol.
18. The church account suffered constantly from under-collection at the gathers, with subsequent payments of the debt then recorded in the year it is paid. This is a reflection of the accounting style of the period where a modern profit and loss is not being recognised. The consequence is a fluctuating income flow that would need to be rebalanced to form a true reflection of the actual yearly income due. Therefore the calculation is made on monies received per year as recorded in the account books.
19. If some form of judgement was being made by the almoner it was not apparent, as some payments made to individuals far exceeded the amount paid to groups of 10 people. It may be that a form of public relations was in action, spreading the idea that large groups of itinerants would not be welcome in this parish and any payment reflected this - but this has to be conjecture as there is no supporting evidence of any system of allocating monies.
20. These two examples are typical of the difference in payments direct to a recipient and those paid to a third party for 'quartering'.
21. The church owned a farm called Troy and a holding called Colehouse within the borough on which a ground rent was payable. Both these properties and a third called Staddon were the subject of protracted enquiries at the Dissolution into the Abbot failing to disclose the full extent of the property of the Abbey. It was many years before these properties reappeared on the church books, ostensibly at the end of their fixed tenancy agreements?
22. Hobbs, 2005, p. 54.
23. Hobbs, .. pp. 71-122 explores the family connections of all the people seated within the church as indicated on the seating plan of 1613. The intermarriages of all families are exceptional, but those within the upper echelons are such that they form a consistent theme through the periods up until the mid-nineteenth century. At this point the disposal of lands and estates is such that many 'new' families also enter the parish and proceed to take up positions of authority, thus weakening the pre-existing dominant group and replacing it by a more fluid group of locally influential people.
24. Karen Jankulak 2000, pp. 167-171, gives a detailed breakdown of the Dynham family and its English/Brittany estates up until the 1501 division.

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Steve Hobbs is the originator of the Hartland Digital Archive, which was established in 2002 with support from the Tarka Millennium Fund. The project has an objective of making locally held archive records accessible. He is now

engaged with a number of digital and cataloguing projects, which include the archives of the Stucley and Bampfylde families, the North Devon Athenaeum, and shortly the archives held by the Clovelly estate (Rouse family). This article draws on work undertaken by Steve for the Distance Learning Advanced Diploma in Local History at Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education.

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The Devon County Pauper Lunatic Asylum, 1841–56

Dorothy Presswell

The asylum at Exminster was opened to receive patients from the Poor Law Unions within the administrative county of Devon in July 1845. It was transferred to the National Health Service in 1948 and closed in 1986. After its sale, the building complex was converted into modern day apartments by M. W.T. Architects, Exeter, Ltd. (now Kensington Taylor, Architects), and is now known as Devington Court.

In 1841 the Devon Midsummer Sessions recorded that:

> Whereas at the last General Quarter Sessions of the Peace held for this County it was ordered that public notice should be given in Trewman's *Exeter Flying Post* newspaper that the Justices at these Sessions would take into consideration the expediency of providing in and for this County a County Lunatic Asylum for the reception of insane persons. Ordered that one Rate be assessed at every quarter session in addition to the Rates ordered to be raised for the General Purpose of the county and applied towards the expenses of providing and erecting the said Asylum.[1]

At a meeting of the Visiting Justices duly convened by the Clerk of the Peace, it was resolved that the Committee proceed to the selection of a plan for the intended asylum. There were three plans submitted. Messrs Scott and Moffat, Mr Moseley and that of the Devonian architect Charles Fowler. It was proposed by Lord Courtenay and seconded by Sir E.S. Prideaux that the plan sent to the committee by Mr Charles Fowler be selected.[2]

On 20 July 1841 Fowler submitted three possible sites on offer, and the following month it was resolved that the land at Exminster offered by the Earl of Devon and Mrs Collins be purchased as a site for the proposed asylum at a cost not exceeding one hundred pounds an acre. John Drew was appointed Surveyor and William Debenham, the Clerk of Works. On the 24 February 1842 the tender by Messrs Harvey of £30,163 14s 0d was accepted. This tender bore no relation to the eventual cost of the asylum. There were constant additions as the years passed, resulting in a report dated 4 April 1845 that the total expenditure already incurred, and further required, to complete the building would be about £55,000, which included gas apparatus and other works. The cost for the provision for bedding, furniture and clothing before the asylum opened was estimated at £4,000.

What the architect proposed was pioneering in concept, moving away from the eighteenth-century Bedlams which housed the insane in dreary conditions that afforded an afternoon's outing for those local inhabitants who sought

entertainment. He undertook a considerable degree of research which resulted in him:

> conferring with many eminent persons engaged in conducting these establishments; as well as others who have devoted their particular attention to the subject; by which means I have collected much valuable information, at the same time evincing great diversity both of theory and practice.[3]

Figure 1: Right-hand lodge.

Fowler placed great emphasis on the authoritarian role of the asylum. He considered it of importance that the lodges and entrance gates should be 'of a plain but very substantial construction, consistent with the character of the establishment to which it leads' (see Fig. 1).[4]

The asylum was not built to be an integral part of Exminster village. The emphasis was on containment and supervision. It was a self-enclosed area to confine the patients housed there. There was, however, the compensation of a site with magnificent panoramic views across the Exe estuary. It was an enviable location, and living within a building that had been designed to flood the interior with natural light was a welcome improvement to the well being of a disadvantaged group in society.

The architect designed a building on the principles of the new model prison at Pentonville, as his objective was to provide for adequate supervision. A large, crescent shaped structure, giving access to wards leading off it like the spokes of a wheel (see Fig. 2) was fronted by an imposing administrative block (Fig. 3). The exterior of the wards had a bleak look in spite of the large windows, and the

appearance of these blocks was greatly enhanced by the addition of some bay windows later in the century.

Figure 2: One of the radiating wings.

Whilst Fowler's work concentrated on the principles of Pentonville prison, the energetic Dr John Charles Bucknill, the newly appointed governor of the asylum, based his administration on an existing asylum and there was a close association with the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum. On 7 August 1844 Dr Bucknill proposed to the committee that samples of furniture and a box containing a sample of every article of clothing in use at Hanwell Asylum, including those introduced as substitutes for personal restraint, should be obtained. 'The freightage to Topsham would be very trifling while the advantages and certainly the satisfaction would be great'.[5]

Staffing

The committee of visiting magistrates approved the proposed salaries and wages for the staff of the hospital and advertisements were placed in *The Times*, *Morning Chronicle* and Trewman's *Exeter Flying Post*. The governor was to be paid £400 p.a., the gardener and porter (a joint appointment at the time) £40 and the head male attendant £45 and a suit of clothes. It is of interest to observe that the head female attendant was paid at the lower rate of £30 per year and, furthermore, was not provided with any clothing. Whilst there were 12 male keepers paid at either £25 or £20 per year with a suit of clothes each, the 12 female keepers were paid at £14 or £10 per year without the provision of

clothing. A porter was paid £15 p.a. plus livery, a cook £20 and a laundress £20.[6]

Figure 3: The administrative block.

The issue of clothing for the female attendants had to be addressed within two months of the asylum's opening, when it was resolved that a gown be given to each of the female attendants in the refractory wards at an expense not exceeding twenty shillings each. In 1847 increasing numbers in the idiotic, refractory and melancholy wards resulted in a gratuity of £1 being paid to every attendant.

Admissions

Admission papers for the year 1845 comprised the Justice's Order for Reception in the Asylum with the necessary statement and medical certificate. Where appropriate, there were some Home Office warrants and Warrants under the Royal Sign Manual for the reception of the criminally insane.

It is clear from the evidence existing in the records that there was a strict formality in the approach to admitting those committed to the asylum. A printed form required information in regard to a number of questions relating to: supposed physical causes; supposed moral causes; whether the patient had endured much privation or domestic griefs, or had been a drunkard; whether sensible of, and attentive to, the calls of nature. A covering letter from the governor, Dr Bucknill, to those committing the patient stated that the proposed inmate would be admitted on any Monday or Thursday, between the hours of eleven and three o'clock only. It further advised that the patient must be sent within fourteen days of the date of the letter.

On the 1 July 1845 the minute book recorded that the asylum would be open for the reception of male patients on the 14th instant and for the reception of female patients on 28th instant, and on 5 August Dr Bucknill reported 20 male and 33 female patients admitted. Males with very few exceptions were in a quiet and comfortable condition and their bodily health good, but many of the females came to the establishment in a state of emaciation and weakness, three of them being very refractory and many very dirty.

The asylum admission book records many sad tales. Entry number 54, Mary Luscombe, aged 48, was admitted on August 6 1845. Her husband had been transported nine years previously, but another woman followed him generating a jealousy responsible for her melancholy. She had been in service, but became 'flighty' and garrulous talking much about the Queen and other great people. On admission she became low and weak, the doctor concluding that the illness had been brought on by the change of life. She died sixteen days after admission of 'general paralysis'. A shocking example occurred when Dr Bucknill reported that a lunatic called Charles Luxmore had been brought to the asylum from Lewtrenchard where he had been confined in a dark closet by his family for the last 12 years naked and manacled'. The Tavistock Union reported that it was their intention to bring a Bill of Indictment against John Yeo at the coming Assizes 'for the cruel treatment of the lunatic'.[7]

Causes of death during the early period of the asylum's existence are well recorded. There were many cases of phthisis (any disease that causes wasting of the body, especially pulmonary tuberculosis); some of cholera; and some of bronchitis, epilepsy, and the more vague diagnoses of general exhaustion, old age and decay, and of chronic insanity. There were two suicides.

For those patients who left the infirmary, they were discharged either as cured or on a month's trial. There were a few recorded as 'escaped'. Some who were discharged on trial were later readmitted. Criminal lunatics, when cured, could be discharged if considered of sound mind, and application made to the Secretary of State for discharge.

The minute book of the Visiting Justices to the Devon County Lunatic Asylum recorded monthly meetings to visit the wards and to receive reports for the previous month on admissions, discharges and deaths. There were applications from the Unions for their patients to be discharged and full details of accounts for tenders or bills for payment submitted by the treasurer for

authorisation. The appointment of staff and the general maintenance of the asylum together with administrative matters were meticulously recorded.

Poor Law Unions

The minute book detailed the commencement of the administrative process of transferring patients from the Poor Law Unions to the County Pauper Asylum. The response was slow in coming. Reluctant to incur the charges of maintaining their inmates elsewhere, the Guardians of the Unions in the county 'from which the Pauper Lunatics have not yet been sent to the Asylum' had their attention drawn to 'the compulsory clauses of the late Act [Statute 9 George IV cap 40] and the penalties for omitting to comply with them'.[8]

The early years in the life of the institution recorded the reluctance of the Poor Law Unions to maintain their paupers outside their respective workhouses. A letter from the Board of Guardians at the Totnes Union requesting the discharge of their 'harmless idiots and lunatics' is a good example[9], and within a year of opening its doors, the asylum received a letter from the Clerk to the Board of Guardians of the Torrington Union calling the attention of the Committee to the charge made on the parishes for the maintenance of paupers and, whilst it was hoped that the asylum would give every alleviation to the suffering inmates, it should be done within the least expense to the already over burthened (*sic*) public. The committee's response was to reassure that they were 'most anxious to enforce the strictest economy and to keep the weekly charge of maintenance at the lowest possible sum'.[10] The Poor Law Unions took every opportunity to criticise the asylum, such as the complaint made to the asylum by the Clerk to the Board of Guardians of the Honiton Union when Rosa Radford had been discharged 'having the itch'.[11]

But the complaints were not one sided. The asylum remonstrated with the Chairman of the Barnstaple Union informing him that patients from the union were usually left at Crediton, in the custody of a stranger, with directions to bring them on to the asylum, and that sometimes a man was entrusted with the care of a female patient. It was observed that it was most desirable that the Union Parish Officer only should be the conveying party. Dr Bucknill lost no opportunity in the endeavour to raise standards of care when he wrote to the Chairman of the Totnes Board of Guardians respecting the naked state in which Susan Martin, a lunatic pauper belonging to that Union, was brought to the asylum in a cart. The patient was under the care of Thomas Swinnerton from the Union who represented that the situation arose from the hardness of the parish officers who had refused decent clothing.[12]

The attention to the patients' physical well-being encompassed the decision for one hundred suits of men's clothing being ordered, although there was the prudent rider in the respective committee minute 'that six suits be first obtained from the Pentonville Prison as patterns for inspection'.[13] Tenders went out for 150 suits of clothing, and the successful one was awarded to Mr George Spark who charged 17s 6d per suit. The bills passed for payment in 1847 demonstrate the diversity of needs within the asylum. In October of that year £8 8s 5d was

paid to Peters for snuff and soda. £4 3s 0d to Gale for coffins and sawdust, 13s 8d for leeches from Holman and Ham and 2s 6d to Webber for a stethoscope.

Spiritual and recreational care

By the end of 1845 a non resident Chaplain to the Asylum had been appointed at a stipend of £150 a year and the governor was requested to provide two dozen Common Prayer Books for the use of the patients. The chaplain's role in the patients' spiritual care was fully detailed in the minutes of a meeting held in 1849, when his duties were fully defined. He was to conduct divine service every Sunday and daily prayers every morning. He was to acquaint himself with the peculiarities of character in the patients and report any observations made whilst in conversation with them. In his regular reports he had to detail the number of visits made to the asylum independent of any services conducted, and state the number of patients who had benefited from his religious communications. He was also to monitor whether patients of other religious persuasion than the Church of England had been visited by ministers of their own persuasion. By 1851 the chaplain was also responsible for the direction of the work of Mr Esworthy, the schoolmaster at Exminster, who was employed as a Reader in the wards at the remuneration of one shilling a night.

The minutes recorded the commencement of the recreational therapy undertaken for the inmates 'that three periodical papers (namely) *Illustrated London News, Pictorial Times* and *Punch* be obtained for the amusement of the patients', and Dr Bucknill was authorised to expend the sum of twenty pounds on books for their use.[14] By 1848 the periodicals were substantially increased, but it is doubtful whether all of them were for the benefit of the patients when one reads that further publications should include *Shairps London Magazine, Chambers Edinburgh Journal, Chambers Library for the Young* and the *Friendly Visitor*. In that same year a violincello and two flutes were purchased at an expense not exceeding £5. By 1849 the publications had been further increased to include *The Gardeners Chronicle* and *The Atheneum*.

Staff discipline

The committee had every intention that the staff should maintain high personal standards. Over the years there were reports to the committee resulting in dismissals or admonitions. Mr Walter, the house steward, had been frequently intoxicated and was insolent to the attendants, using violent and improper language. He was dismissed, to depart after his accounts had been audited by the finance committee. An attendant, James Westcott, gave away a pair of shoes belonging to the asylum to Jonathan Trotter Fry who had been a patient 12 months before. He was called in, severely reprimanded and discharged. Ann Newberry and Jane Cousens (two servants) were observed removing butter and cocoa. They were immediately discharged with no payment of wages, and when Mary Clift, an attendant, having by carelessness suffered Sarah Horn, a patient, to escape, the sum of 10s was deducted from her wages. Bazley, the baker, was admonished because he was partly responsible for Joseph Jarvis escaping whilst

under his supervision. Jarvis was recaptured at a cost of £2 5s 6d, and Bazley was informed that if it happened again he would be required to pay a portion of the expenses in recapturing the patient. It resulted in Bazley giving his notice to quit.

Health

In 1846 the cholera outbreak that had prevailed in Exeter and its neighbourhood struck with severity within the confines of the asylum. On 5 September a meeting of the Committee of Visitors was specially convened to consider the prevalence of English Cholera in the asylum. There had already been 12 deaths in the month of August, and at the time of the meeting 40 patients and some attendants had been stricken: the greatest sufferers being the aged, those suffering with disease of the chest or with palsy, and 'in that state of imbecility which prevents all reaction'. Dr Bucknill reported:

> With a view to checking its prevalence I have discontinued the use of vegetables by the patients and in lieu of potatoes I have substituted rice on the meat days and one third more paste on the pie days. During the last few days, the pastry has been made of equal quantities of maize and wheaten flour to lessen the expense of the augmented farinaceous diet. The gruel for breakfast and supper has been made according to the dietary with the addition of cayenne pepper – this condiment has also been added to the rice. In No 5 wards, male and female, containing the idiotic and weak patients, strong beer has been substituted for weak table beer which during close weather is liable to be too new or acid.[15]

Two visiting specialists, Dr Blackall and Mr Barnes, were at a loss to understand why the disease should show itself. The site was well chosen, the ventilation very good and the drains excellently managed. They also observed that the dietary was a good one and the bread and the beer, as well as the butter, excellent in their kind. The visitors' committee accepted the findings of Dr Blackall and Mr Barnes who concluded that within little more than 12 months:

> there are brought together nearly 230 patients coming from various quarters, many after very long confinement, others affected with bodily disease, or idiots, quite helpless and incapable of taking the least care of themselves. Should an epidemic occur in the house or be introduced to it, the effect on these debilitated habits will be proportionally great.[16]

Classification of patients

Social change occurred within the asylum in 1848 when it was resolved that a higher class of patient should be admitted and that 'two separate wings of the buildings be appropriated and fitted up for that purpose'.[17] After advertisements were placed in *The Times*, *The Daily News*, *The Lancet* and *Exeter Flying Post* such private patients were admitted, and it was estimated that after deductions for maintenance and staffing a total of 8 private patients would improve the hospital's income by £195 per week. Compared to the County pauper patients

who were, at that time, charged 8s shillings per week, and the Borough paupers charge (because they did not contribute to the County rate of taxation) of 11s 6d. this was of considerable financial benefit.

By 1849 there were 369 patients in the asylum, 210 female and 159 male. Two years later the 1851 Census throws further light upon those accommodated there. By then the numbers had risen to 428 patients with 31 resident staff. The oldest pauper patients were two unmarried women of 78 years; one had been a schoolmistress and the other a servant. The youngest was a child of nine years, the daughter of a tailor. Private patients were small in number, 5 male and 4 female. Of the men who were classified as private patients, occupations were listed as a retired chemist and druggist, a butcher, a licensed victualler, a baker and a farmer. The women were identified as being either gentlewomen or of independent means. In the asylum at that time was a small group of six criminal patients, four of them being identified as lunatics. The remaining 413 were all identified as pauper patients, with diverse occupations, many of the men from the extractive industries whilst many of the women (where their occupations had been identified) had been servants. One was listed a 'kept mistress'.[18]

By 1856 the asylum had within its walls 224 male and 272 female patients. So successful had it become that there was a temporary need for an over-flow house until the asylum premises could be extended. A house was taken for a lease of one year, at a rent of £100 p.a., at Trefuses Terrace, Exmouth, to accommodate the overflow of patients. On 5 August 29 female patients were transferred, enabling Plymouth Corporation to be informed that their patients could now be accommodated at the asylum from 10 August. Plymouth's request that the city's pauper patients be admitted to the Devon County Asylum signalled Devon's final acceptance of the institution's important role in the care of the mentally ill.

The records relating to the Devon County Pauper Lunatic Asylum for the years 1841-1856 are preserved in the Devon Record Office.[19] They prove that under the direction of a dedicated governor, Dr John Bucknill, the institution had become well established and was fulfilling its original concepts. The building continued to serve the county of Devon as a hospital for a further 130 years.

Notes and references

1. Devon Record Office (DRO) RO Q/S 116/1 County of Devon Quarter Sessions: records relating to lunatics and lunatic asylums.
2. DRO Q/S 147/1 Visiting Justices Minute Book 19 July 1841.
3. *Ibid.* Report by Charles Fowler on construction 19 October 1841.
4. DRO Q/S 147/1 17 May 1842.
5. *Ibid.* 7 August 1844.
6. *Ibid.* 3 December 1844.
7. *Ibid.* 6 May 1851.
8. *Ibid.* 23 August 1845.
9. *Ibid.* 10 July 1849.
10. *Ibid.* 31 March 1846.

11. *Ibid.* 4 August 1846.
12. *Ibid.*14 September 1852.
13. *Ibid.* 13 January 1846.
14. *Ibid.* 11 October 1845.
15. *Ibid.* 4 August 1846.
16. *Ibid.* 18 September 1846.
17. *Ibid.* 11 April 1848.
18. Census of population 1851, County Lunatic Asylum.
19. Other primary sources consulted for this article were: DRO 3769/A Exe Vale Hospital Exminster, Records of Administration (H2/1a Admission Papers (2-79) July–August 1845, H2/1b Admission Papers (80-211) August–December 1845, H9/1 Medical cases – admissions 37-540 August 1845 - July 1848, H46/1 Quarterly bills summary book December 1849 - June 1859; DRO DEVON Q/S 118/1 Register of persons admitted to asylums; DRO DEVON Q/S 147/1 Visiting Justices Minute Book 1841-1856.

Dorothy Presswell has now published her research relating to William Courtenay, ninth Earl of Devon (1768-1835), in *The exiled Earl: William Courtenay – fact and fiction* (2009, privately printed, available from the author at: 37 Redford Meadow, Kingsbridge, Devon, TQ7 1SH; £4.99 post free). This is a revisionist work based on the discovery of a folio of letters (1823-5) of the London lawyer John Wilkinson. Dorothy is now undertaking research on the cartoonists of the Second world war (see query, p.).

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The cost of living in Elizabethan Devon

John Roberts

Those of us who have lived long enough to see basic wages rise, in some cases, one hundred-fold in less than 50 years, may have a morbid interest in our own society and its historic endurance of inflation. But any method of matching living standards with those of a remote period will inevitably be unsatisfactory. For example, there is no way to compare the regular payments to chantry priests praying for souls in 1485 with the expense of wigs in 1785, the price of a high bicycle in 1885 and of a video-recorder today. To purchase a plurality for a clerk in Holy Orders cost an Exeter merchant, John Willoughby, £4 in October 1558; and a dispensation for a marriage cost him £5. Both had to be obtained from Rome with the aid of a London notary, plus another £5 that he paid for a further dispensation on 12 November.[1] Doubtless both these deals fell through when the young queen Elizabeth ascended the throne five days later. Thereafter, any such payments went only to the church courts inside England - and we know many of the charges in the diocesan courts in Devon. This led to a useful fall in some costs. Social patterns change, an expense once luxurious becomes quasi-essential, other charges become irrelevant; and the shift of expenditure from one item to another, over a period, distorts the whole pattern for later observers.

Nor does it even end there. We are wealthier beyond comparison with our ancestors. One computation has suggested that the middling-to-large medieval castle employed over 300 servants to achieve the work-load disposed of by a single modern housewife with electrical equipment at her beck. Yet one may wonder whether the satisfaction achieved by the housewife with her vacuum-cleaner switched off and on is at all comparable with that of the lady of the castle at whose nod the staff of domestics scurried and curtsied. Those flunkeys were expensive. In 1580 when Sir John Gilbert of Greenway and Mr. Edward Yarde of Bradley visited Dartmouth 'with their retinue about the muster' the meal paid for by the Mayor cost the borough £2 4s 8d[2] - at a time when a fair-sized repast could probably be bought there for 6d.

The only way to get a satisfactory idea of a standard of living is in its own terms, and what follows is an attempt to give this for Elizabethan Devon. No statistics are available, but, fortunately, relevant documents offer a general picture, and, supplemented by other information, much can be discovered or inferred. The cost of living rose during the queen's reign, most of all during the final decade, but many charges and costs were still fixed by tradition and the indication which these give may suffice for our purposes. Dr. W.G. Hoskins reckoned that before industrialization the average spending on food and drink took around 90% of income for the mass of people. Since one harvest in four might be below average, the people were very vulnerable to fluctuations in

prices and therefore the cost of living varied considerably, if not every year, certainly over short periods, sometimes months, sometimes years. And of course the proportion of the population who, for a variety of reasons, lived partly or wholly outside the market economy was much greater than today.

In 1595 two proclamations were approved in Exeter, within a day or so of each other.[3] They fixed the wages respectively for the city and for the county of Devon. Promulgated by the magistrates of the city and the county, they were broadly the same and in places identical. But there were certain significant differences which give some clues to economic differentiation and raise questions.

Labourers were expected to make do with less money during the winter months. Daily maximum weekly wages in *summer* would include 4d for victuals. Assuming a six-day week and a married worker with children, the average young family would then have to subsist on 2s per week for food and the same amount for all other expenses. In *wintertime* only 1s 6d would be paid in wages for each. Some idea of the cost of food for a child may be glimpsed: at Ashburton in 1562, for the upkeep of an orphan whose relatives contributed to his income, his guardian received 14s each quarter.

At corn harvest-time Devonshire mowers were to be paid 2s 6d for basic wages, plus 2s 6d for victuals. The higher rates had two probable causes. Despite the extra food provided at harvest-time, the long hours and hard work required more foodstuffs in the family meals; and competition for workers would inevitably put on pressure and tend to raise rates.

In 1594 the Devon justices set the yearly rate for a bailiff or servant of 'the best sort', capable of directing the work of others, at 60s 4d, with apparel, or 73s 8d without. A man servant of the third-best sort, or a plain labourer in husbandry, at 40s, (probably with apparel); and a woman servant of the best sort able to take charge of malting, brewing and baking at 16s 8d with apparel or 23s 4d without.[4]

One Devon yeoman, William Honiwell, who employed a workman in 1596, allowed 6d a day for his diet. In August 1598 the average day's wages that he paid to a reaping man were 12d and to a woman reaping was about 6d or 7d. A manservant (no doubt a domestic with board provided) was engaged for 54s 4d for the whole of 1599.[5]

Although the Privy Council allowed the Spanish prisoners in Devon in 1588 only 4d *per diem* the Mayor of Dartmouth may have raised it: but the 5d he required to have reimbursed included pay for their guards.[6] Between the issue and reissue of the city assessment, the monthly rates for seamen serving on the merchant coasters against the Spanish Armada in 1588 was 14s.[7] There the total cost of wages and victuals was estimated as 23s 4d per month for each man.

Seamen in Dartmouth were paid at Armada time at the rate of 10s per week inclusive, that is, the new rate of 1585.[8] In 1543-4 some local men called for defence in East Devon had been ordered to receive 4d per day, but as they did not get paid properly this may have been considered a high figure.[9] When, in 1572, a neighbouring local gentleman, Sir Arthur Champernown, had proposed

that 500 local foot-soldiers would volunteer for the queen's service, he suggested that they should be paid 8d per day.[10]

The payments made by Dartmouth for the borough's two vessels serving for six weeks against the Armada also illustrate craft differentials. Aboard ship a cooper received 2s 6d weekly, the purser not quite 3s. The master gunner got less than 3s 6d but the master carpenter nearly 4s. The pilot was paid 5s per week and the Master received over 11s weekly.[11] At the end of the '90s, Sir Ferdinand Gorges, as commander of Plymouth Fort, requested that his men be paid at the daily rates of 2s for a lieutenant, 1s for a gentleman porter and for a gunner, and 8d for each soldier.[12] On the 1596 Cadiz expedition that sailed from the port, foot soldiers were paid only 2d per day,[13] but must have been victualled in addition; and, no doubt, expected plunder at the sacking of the town.

Fees paid for more professional services likewise varied greatly. Thomas Saunder, parish clerk of Ashburton, received a stipend of £8 pa, an income of just over 3s per week, but one must assume that he also received payments for various tasks, official and unofficial, performed in the course of his duties. In the same parish George Dabernon, a local attorney who for 20 years compiled the accounts, regularly charged 6s 8d for that task, and in 1571 or 2 he was paid 3s 4d for making the statutory account of the collection for the poor,[14] the daily fee then being charged by an Exeter apothecary for attending on a patient.[15] At Milton Abbas in 1588 the parish expended 2s for the making of a copy of its muster-book. When Dartmouth required secretarial help in the same year the borough paid 2s 'to Sir John Gylbert's man for writing a letter'.[16]

Other services could, of course, also vary greatly in cost, and this is particularly evident with transport charges. In 1567-8 two men at Kilmington were paid 2s for watch and ward with a prisoner for one day and one night. They were paid a further 3s to take him to Exeter (his supper on route cost 3d). The fees to enter him in prison cost 3d and two penny loaves were also purchased for him; plus 1d for a quart of cider. For the three nights that he was watched by different men they were each paid 2d.[17]

The variations in carriage charges must in part have depended upon whether the journey was being necessarily undertaken or whether specially performed for the purpose. In 1560 the cost for two men's harness to the parish of Morebath in Somerset (on the edge of Exmoor) was £3, but its carriage to London from Exeter cost only 2s, doubtless by the regular highway carrier.[18] From Exeter to Holcombe, a mere 25 miles, the charge was 12d. But in 1570 when the Constable of Bampton Hundred brought back harness from London - presumably the whole distance - he was paid 7s, and 12d was the charge to take a corselet to Exeter.[19] In queen Mary's time 8d was paid to provide a horse for the journey from Ashburton to Exeter, a distance of some 15 miles, but in the next reign the standard rate of payment for anyone riding there on the borough's business seems to have been 16d.[20]

Payments for goods and services are one side of the coin; prices are the other. There are very many references to prices of all sorts during the reign and they are no less complicated to fit into patterns. It may be helpful to start with an

earlier list, which is fuller than most from the queen's reign. When Tavistock Abbey was dissolved in 1536 the following charges of the officials concerned were listed:[21]

Half a salmon 7d or 8d
Oysters (mid-November) 4d per 100
down to (March) 2d " "
a veal 2d, 3d, or 4d lb
mutton 22d-26d
pig (pork) 5s ½d to 8d
chickens 1d each
capons 6d-8d
Cinammon ½d oz
Raisins 1s ½d oz
Almonds 3d oz
Cheese ½d lb
Salt (bushel) 9d or 10d
Figs 1d lb
Pepper 11s ½d
Ginger 2d oz
Cloves, mace 5s ½d oz

Nearly fifty years later, a Somerset merchant, writing to John Trevelyan, on the border of Devon, quoted another series of prices:

sugar 18d lb
ginger 2s lb
mace 8d oz
clove 6d oz
'Graynes' 16d lb
aniseeds 8d lb
liquorice 4d lb
damask prunes 3d lb
raisins 2s ½d lb
currants 4s ½d

But he concluded with a flourish that 'Anything else you want shall be at your commandment'.[22] Ginger and raisins, at least, seem to have gone down in price: perhaps by then available in quantity.

For the last four years of the century, a series of expenses of our Devon yeoman give some figures.[23] In London it cost him 5s to have his watch mended and a purse to hold it cost 4d for the velvet, 4d for the ribbon and 2d for having it made. A pair of shoes cost 2s 2d, but another two pairs which he had edged with velvet each cost 2s 8d. Two knives cost him 8d apiece. He also bought 30 gold buttons for a hat-band at 5d each. The workman whom he employed was allowed 6d a day for his diet. Again in London he paid 6d for a quire and a half of paper.

Other miscellaneous payments that he made, this time in Devon, included:

1 lb twine to cord his peas 10d
1 pr of shoes 2s

Fine wool per lb 20s ½d
fleeces (black 9lb) per lb 10d
20[?] Pairs of gloves 4d
Gold ring 8s
7 hogsheads of lime 24s
4 steers at Tavistock [av. price] £1 2s
(One additional) £1 6s
Shoulder of veal 7d
3 cheeses 11d
Breast of veal 7d

Notes on prices paid for sea-victuals by government purchasers in 26 Eliz. and ten years later showed that from 20s a quarter of wheat (that is 28 lb) doubled in price to 40s. A barrel of butter was also up, from 40s to £4, and a wey

of cheese had almost doubled, from 28s to 55s. A tun of beer cost only half as much again as formerly - from 24s to 35s, but the casks to contain it had doubled in price, and stock fish and ling had risen between 50 and 80% in price. Clearly the increasing demands for provisioning had played a part, but also apparent is a rise in the cost of labour. Victuals for the ships fighting against the Armada included beer at 10s 6d a hogshead (gallon), butter at 4d per lb; a hogshead of peas cost 3s 8d, candles were 5d a lb, and tallow 6s 8d a stone.[24] When rye was selling at locally at 9s a bushel, the city rulers of Exeter made a contract to buy 3600 bushels at half this price and then sell it at 5s 4d a bushel.[25]

In 1596 the queen's messenger, travelling 700 miles in the West and taking ten days, received £8, that is, 16s for approximately 70 miles and an overnight stay, but no doubt he was accompanied by servants, who had to be paid for. At Ashburton, where the Dean of Exeter held the court of the Peculiar (jurisdiction), the parish paid in 1568-9 several of the items of expenditure, 4s 4d to Robert Chafe to keep the court and 8d for 'Gunston for his horsemeat.' The dinner that they gave him cost 3s 6d for fish, 3s for bread, butter and so forth, 3s 3d for wine, sugar and ale, and 18d for 'small raisins, egges and spices'.[26]

Miscellaneous payments are frequently met with: the snag is to make them meaningful. At Kilmington a football (probably an animal bladder) cost 4d: surprisingly, considering the treatment usually given during a game, there was a note 'it remaineth'.[27] At Ashburton in 1560-1 a small pin cost 2s ½d, a lock for the church-house door 6d, and a tin bottle to carry wine for the church cost 12d. A porpoise cast up on the sea-shore at Alvington in 1563, although already putrid, was valued at 12d.[28] A few years later John Broucke was paid for 'making' (that is writing out) the Ten Commandments in the church.[29] In 1593, 300 fleeces of wool from Kenne were sold for £30, which averages out at 2s apiece.[30]

The cost of firearms was less relevant to daily life but guns, for example, were also used for hunting, legally or otherwise. In 1597 Chagford parish paid 12d for two flask leathers (to hold powder), 8d for 2lb of lead and 4d for 2 lb of match. Two years later 3d was paid for a bullet bag, plus 2s 10d for a pike-staff and for fitting the head upon it.[31]

Some payments are more difficult to evaluate, being even more diverse and complex. When a man was hanged at Plymouth in 1577, 7s 6d was paid for the gallows, the charge for carrying the ladder was 4d and the hangman received 3s 4d.[32] In 1592 the stock in trade of a tanner at Chudleigh amounted to £138 in value.[33] Various men were paid for making a new stile at Milton Abbas in 1588. One received for one day's work and two others respectively 11d and 2s for three days apiece.[34] At Chagford in 1564 a tailor was paid 4s for making three coats and three pairs of breeches, although another received only 3s 10s for making four coats and the same number of breeches. At Ashburton in 1562 a tailor received 18d for four pairs.[35] Twelve years later 2s was paid for leather to mend the harness, most of this being for carriage of the materials and on completion.[36] Even taxes may be mentioned. To avoid the trouble of having non-standard length cloths unfolded, in 1586 merchants of Lyme and Topsham agreed to pay

2s 6d on each shipped.[37] At Plymouth the town was granted 12d from the customs upon every hogshead of pilchards (or 18d if shipped by an alien).[38] Negotiations on such remission were likely to take place wherever the town could exert some influence.[39]

Although the incomes of the gentry were so much larger than others, their expenses were also much greater.[40] As is pointed out in a useful discussion,[41] comparing historical price-levels, a gentleman or a nobleman would expect to pay much more for an article identical to one bought by a plebian.[42] But other things were more strikingly different. William Lante, an Exeter merchant, in 1569 left £182 when he died intestate, and his executors decided to lay out £35 on the funeral.[43] Such luxuries are beyond computation. Similarly, in his will, Sir Gawen Carew decreed a tomb for himself and his wife to be erected in Exeter Cathedral at a cost of £40.[44]

Books, of course, were expensive. A bookseller's list survives at Exeter for items sold (although this is in 1619). One old copy of the works of Galen (the early medieval physician) was going for 25s, two copies of the local bishop, John Jewel, cost 12s apiece, one copy of the Scriptures in Hebrew cost 6s and a church bible 30s. A history of Venice was priced at 7s and Bodin's *De Republica* 4s.[45] But associated costs probably varied as much as in the supposedly free and competitive market of 1993 when two shops in a large seaside village could on the same day quote the varying sums of £70 and £32 for the similar framing of a 15 square foot painting!

What conclusions may one draw? It seems that one might feed and clothe oneself and live not too badly in Devonshire for between 2s 6d and 3s 6d per week at the start of the reign. This figure rose, very slowly at first, until the last decade and then more sharply, when the figures are more likely to run from 5s to 7s 6d. A substantial meal would cost from 4d to 8d, and although only one of these was eaten each day it could be afforded solely at the expense of other things. The 'middling sort' might live after this fashion, as craftsmen, small traders, petty officials, curates, perhaps as younger sons of yeomen, or as subordinates of several kinds. So a minimum income of £12-£15 in 1558 or £25-£30 by the end of the reign would be necessary for them.

We have a comparison of interest for Exeter in Professor MacCaffrey's discussions. He mentions the mayor's cook receiving £8 a year with livery; the schoolmaster getting £30, but that no cleric in the city received more than £20. His suggestion of £100, that is about £2 per week, as the lower limit of income for prosperous city merchants seems to fit the years around 1600. He mentions comparable figures for smaller Devonshire gentry in the early seventeenth century enjoying about between £50 and £100 a year from their estate,[46] that is only £1 or £2 per week, but these of course would have a good deal of non-monetary income. The labourers were very much poorer; the landed gentry very much richer than the middling sort.

It may be worth mentioning for readers accustomed to a credit card society, that the costs of borrowing are usually high, if not prohibitive, in an era of inflation that to anyone with memories of the 1970s does not look extreme.

Security still came with possession of property, a hedge against inflation and the furnisher of many commodities otherwise expensive. Figures cannot easily explain these. The 3s 4d picked up by a prosperous lawyer for half a dozen words of advice could supply board and lodging for half a week for his stable-boy or a week's wages for a labourer on one of his farms. Nevertheless, 3s 4d could also represent a number of substantial meals, even in 1600, and we may thus keep that in mind at a time when it will, as a sixth of a pound, not even buy one small glass of beer in a tavern. In a few years it will probably not buy a box of matches, which in 1585 were not available - at any price.

The startling variations possible, however, may be illustrated by a personal reminiscence. Late in 1945, living in London, a friend introduced me to a small working-class eating house in Chelsea or Fulham where we were served with a simple but not inadequate mid-day meal for 8d, at a time when elsewhere, even with government subsidies for staple foods, it would have cost over double that sum. 8d was the price Dr Johnson had paid (including one penny for the waiter) in the late eighteenth century for a substantial dinner. *Chacun a son gout!*

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John Roberts is a professor emeritus of International Administration of New

England College. He is author of *Devon and the Armada* (1988), *World Citizenship and Mundialism* (1999) and a dozen pamphlets on world affairs; six articles in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* since 1956; and short or long notes in every issue of *Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries* over the past two decades and more. He has three children, wife and four grand-children.

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The Ayshford community (formerly known as Ayshford Street)[1]

Charles Scott-Fox

From the bridge that crosses the Grand Western Canal at Ayshford the visitor can easily see the full extent of the hamlet that once encompassed more than two dozen households and was known as Ayshford Street, but now, excluding Aysbford Court and its modern Home Farm bungalow, just consists of Ayshford House, a farm and four farm cottages. Benjamin Donn's map of Devonshire in 1765 (Fig. 1) shows 'Ashford' to the north-east of Sampford Peverell on the western side of the River Lyner.

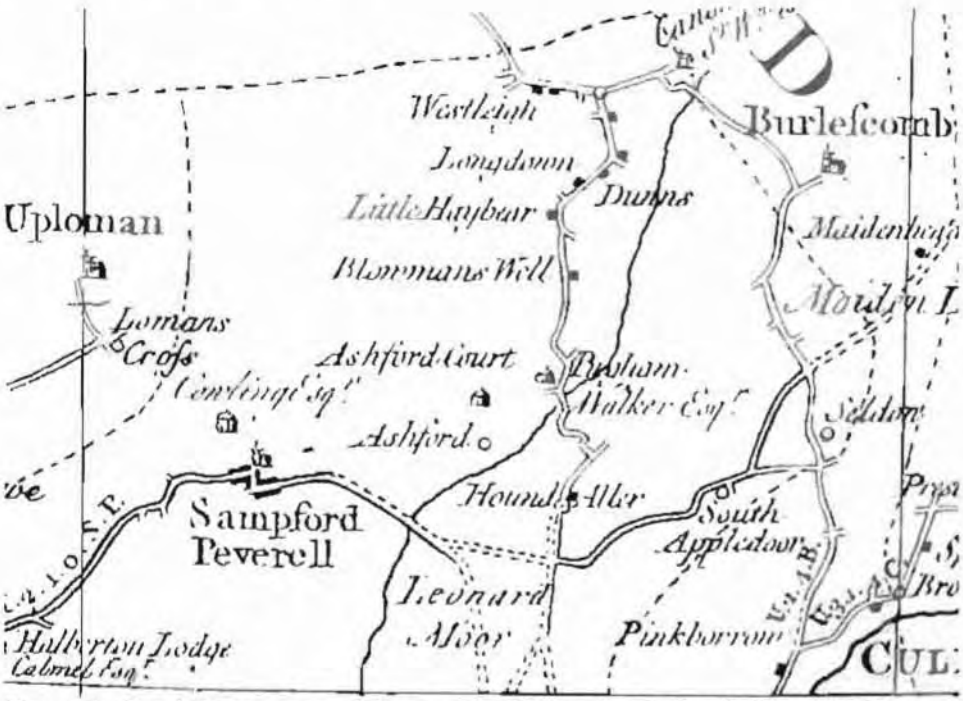

Figure 1: Detail from a map of the county of Devon by Benjamin Donn (1765).

Stated by Polwhele at the turn of the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries as having 'one large street, in which live some serge-makers, but the trade is at present not very considerable',[2] the rapid decline in the rural population created by the industrial revolution destroyed communities like Ayshford, often leaving little evidence of their existence. Only three houses shown in the Tithe survey of 1839 still exist: Ayshford Cottage (renamed Ayshford House in 1890), Bowdens

(renamed Lower Ayshford Farm in the 1930s) and Lower Ayshford Dairy (now known by its seventeenth-century name as Locks Cottage). The foundations of some of the more substantial buildings can still be seen or have been converted into farm sheds, but most of those cottages, being built of cob with thatched roofs, have disappeared without trace.

Ayshford as a community has existed since Saxon times, providing the manor with its villeins and serfs, but like the houses they lived in, they left no evidence of their individual existence. Domesday records that the Ayshford manor was supported by '4 villans, 7 bordars and 3 serfs', suggesting that in Norman times the hamlet consisted of at least fourteen cottages. Its successor, conducted during the reigns of Henry III and Edward I, was Testa de Nevill, but this survey gives no figures for the population as it was only required to provide the names of those responsible for paying the Crown's fee.[3] The most complete mediaeval survey of the population was provided by a series of Lay Subsidies conducted between 1290 and 1334 (Edward I, Edward II and Edward III); these were used to pay for parliamentary expenses, such as Edward III's campaign against Scotland in 1327. Although some individuals and groups were excluded, as were those deemed to have possessions worth less than six shillings (£81.50), these returns provide a valuable insight into the distribution of wealth, and the location of an estimated two-thirds of the population. The most complete surviving record for Devon was for 1332[4], which included a separate listing for the manor of Ayshford in the Hundred of Halberton.[5] For this subsidy John de Ayshford was assessed for a payment of 18d (£21), and his ten manorial tenants[6] were required to provide a further 138d (£161). Unfortunately, these Lay Subsidies were the last surveys to identify individual manors within the parish of Burlescombe. All subsequent surveys, including the Devon Subsidy Roll 1524-7, Subsidy Roll 1581, Protestation Return 1641-42 and Hearth Tax 1674,[7] only provide lists of names that can be placed within the parish by supporting evidence from other sources.

After a gap of nearly two centuries, from 1332 to the Subsidy Roll of 1525, it is hardly surprising that the sole family name that can positively be identified is that of Nicholas Ayshford (1485-1557), though two households in the Burlescombe parish list have the surname Trykhay that could well be descended from Thomas Trechere. The Ayshford Sanford archive includes a large number of tenancy records, including one three-life lease[8], granted by Nicholas Ayshford (1507-1585) in September 1579 to John Rewe for Ayshford Meade, and another for the same property granted by his grandson, Henry Ayshford (1576-1650), in February 1619 to Thomas Markes a weaver,[9] but it is not until 1662 that the population of the village can be confidently assessed. Following the death of Henry Ayshford (1640-1662), an Ayshford Manorial Roll was compiled with a full list of the 16 three-life tenants and their ages;[10] when the bailiff and other Ayshford Court domestic staff are taken into account, there must have been a minimum of twenty households, giving a total population, including children, of at least eighty. Of particular interest is the extent to which this group of working men and women moved from place to place, for only John Webber and William

Courton, of the eligible men from this list of 1662 (aged at least 39), had signed the Burlescombe Protestation return in 1641. Martin Hellyar (alias Knowles), who had been granted the lease of a house in the village and 8.5 acres in April 1637, joined the Ayshford signatories in 1641, but gave up the tenancy and so was not included in the roll of 1662. Twelve years later, when the Hearth Tax of 1674 was compiled, seven of those sixteen tenancies had been retained: namely Edward Bowerman (Bowderman), Richard Bowdon (Bowden), Humphrey Garnsey, William Courtney (Courton), Jonathon Webber, George Alford and John Atkins (pauper), with Thomas Courton, who had been given a copyhold labour tenement in May 1642.[11]

It seems likely that the Webbers came to the village in the early part of the seventeenth century, when Nicholas Webber was appointed as Reeve for the manor by Roger Ayshford (1534-1611);[12] the property with its surrounding meadows, which was at the lower end of the village, being known as Webbers until the late eighteenth century. The other property to retain the name of its builder was Bowdens. Humphrey Bowdon, clothworker, came to the village around 1650, receiving a lease from Henry Ayshford (1576-1650) for a messuage in the middle of the street; renewed by his son Richard in 1668, it remained in the Bowden family for 99 years until around 1750, when it was taken on by John Broom. The Bowden association was acknowledged by Fursdon: 'Bowden named after Richard Bowden or his father lived there' in 1670. Paid rate of 3 pence and 1 penny for his close in 23rd year of reign of Charles II [By Act of Parliament Charles II's reign was deemed to have started in 1649 following the death of his father Charles I]'.[13]

By the end of the seventeenth century Ayshford Street consisted of around a dozen properties, with leases granted between 1681 and 1704 to tenants with a wide variety of employment: Thomas Bowerman joiner, Richard Shepherd weaver, Richard Bowden clothworker, Charles Alford woolcomber, Richard Garnsey cordwainer, Richard Hellyar and Thomas Rowe smallholders. Their individual rentals varied from 2s 6d (£30) to over £9 (£1.140), according to the amount of land they took on and whether they were committed to 7 or more days work on the estate.[14] Over the next 50 years the population of the village started to expand again. William Sanford, and his son William, built five new cottages in the village, the first of which was leased to Elizabeth Evans in January 1705; three were taken on by Thomas Woolcott, woolcomber, in March 1716 and the last by John Evans in May 1727.[15] A water grist-mill and its holding ponds was built on the slope below the chapel, at about the same time, and Francis Shallis, miller, was given a cottage and messuage in the village. In 1726 John Garnsey was given authority to convert one of the village barns to a tan-house, and to create a tan-yard on the adjacent plot for a peppercorn rent.[16]

By 1750, when John Broom sergemaker took over the lease for Bowdens, Ayshford Street had already gained a reputation for work in the wool trade. In 1751 Broom obtained cover from Sun Fire Insurance to insure his 'workhouse, warehouse and stable under one roof, stone cob and thatched for £100; household goods and stock therein for £300', which had all been moved to

'Bowdens in Ayshford Street'. Three years later in 1754 his business had expanded, with an additional property called Blacklands 'all stone cob and thatched', requiring his cover to be increased to £600. The location of Blacklands was not stated in the policy, but was presumably in Kentisbeare, for in 1760 he took on a second house in the street (Ayshford) for his woolcomber and an 'additional' property in Kentisbeare, increasing his cover to £800.[17]

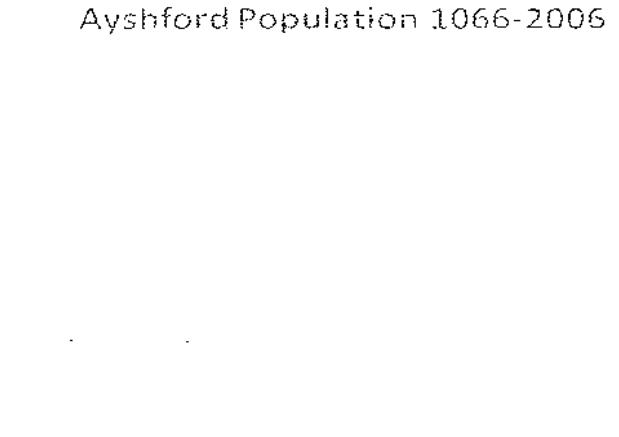

Figure 2: The estimated population of Ayshford Street 1066-2006.

Unfortunately this period of relative prosperity was short-lived, for the introduction of industrial machinery in the new mills in Tiverton and Uffculme made home-weaving progressively less profitable. According to Polwhele, by the end of the eighteenth century the sergemaker's trade in Ayshford Street was in decline. Fifty years later, the 1841 and 1851 census returns show that it had disappeared completely. The village population, which had peaked at about a hundred in 1760 with over twenty families living in the 'street', declined to a dozen houses and cottages (Fig. 2).

Agricultural labourers were still needed by the manor, and there were other trades that maintained a reasonable level of employment in the village; with the arrival of the 'navvies' in 1811, to build the Grand Western Canal, at least the Red Ball 'beerhouse' must have been a thriving establishment for a few years. The village lost two cottages in the path of the canal and the road to Ayshford Court was diverted, but otherwise the shape of the village was unaffected. The last of the holding ponds feeding the grist-mill beside the chapel was retained, allowing the mill to continue operating for another 50 years; in 1860 this pond was filled in and the mill replaced by a new water mill that formed part of the Court's outer courtyard.

Between 1810 and 1840 the number of occupied dwellings continued to fall, so, by the year of the first detailed census in 1841, there were 11 empty properties with only 25 adults and 12 children in the whole of the village, which included Ayshford Court's tenant farmer Nathaniel Cook, his wife Sarah, and

their domestic and farm staff. Nathaniel Cook had become the tenant in 1834, when he was 26, taking over from John Hodges, with a rental payment of £449 (£3,220).[18] He would remain at the Court for the rest of his life; he died in 1878 when the lease was taken on by his son, William. From this low point in 1841 there was a rapid recovery: within ten years every house in the 'street' was occupied, the population had more than doubled, reaching 86 in 1851, and Edward Ayshford Sanford was investing in new cottages for three of his tenants. The majority were still agricultural labourers, but three were described in the census return as 'gent' or of 'independent means', and there were three tradesmen, Simon Hitchcock a cordwainer (boot- and shoe-maker), Robert Hutchings the estate miller and Thomas Hurford a lime brewer.[19] After 1861 the number of properties and the population slowly declined, so that to day all that remains of the original 'street' are Ayshford House (Ayshford Cottage), Lower Ayshford Farm (Bowdens) and Locks Cottage (Lower Ayshford Dairy). All of the old cob and thatch cottages have disappeared, though some of their remains can still be identified. The population reached its lowest point at the end of the nineteenth century, the 1901 census recording just six inhabited properties in Ayshford, with 16 adults and children. There was little change over the succeeding seventy years, except for a temporary unrecorded 'spike' between 1941 and 1945, when, it is understood, three or four families were billeted in Ayshford Court and Ayshford House. By 1975, with one new farm bungalow built, there were seven occupied dwellings and a total population of eighteen. Today, a further two properties brings the total to nine, providing accommodation for nineteen adults and six children.

The only published maps that provide any details of Ayshford's 'street', prior to publication in 1841 of the 1839 Tithe Commissioner's survey, are the Grand Western Canal Company's survey by Robert Whitworth in 1769 (superimposed with the original canal route for submission to Parliament for the Navigation Act of 1796), a new Canal Company plan, produced in 1810 (superimposed with the amended route for the canal as part of their submission to Parliament for the Navigation Act of 1811), and a far less detailed Ordnance Surveyor's drawing published in 1801.[20] None, of these three maps, can be said to give more than a rough outline of the properties that made up the 'street'. However, a conveyance produced in 1811 for William Ayshford Sanford, listing all relevant properties in his Ayshford and Burlescombe estate that were to be acquired by the Canal Company, was recently discovered in the Devon Record Office by the Chairman of the Sampford Peverell Society. This conveyance was accompanied by an estate map (Fig. 3), superimposed with the route of the canal. It will be seen that this map, which has been annotated with the names of individual properties, shows Ayshford Court, the chapel and all cottages and buildings in the 'street'. As the plan of the Court includes all those barns known to have been completed prior to 1750, but omits the mid-eighteenth century addition of the rebuilt Gatehouse and southern side of the outer courtyard, and also shows the chapel with its 5-bell cupola, which was removed in the mid to

late eighteenth century, this map is most probably based on an estate survey produced around 1760, which no longer survives.

Figure 3: Ayshford estate map (*c.* 1760) superimposed with the amended route of the Grand Western Canal, attached to a Conveyance of 1811 for a 'transfer of Ayshford Sanford land and property to the Canal Company'.

At the head of the village, between the track leading into the chapel yard and the old road to the Court, the Red Ball was a well-established beer or ale-house, run on a part-time basis, or by an 'alewife', though the earliest record of a beer-houseman or innkeeper is in the 1841 Census, when Richard and Mary Hewett held the lease. The ale-house served a vital communal role in virtually every community, however small, and larger villages had several; Westleigh at this time had two, the White Ball and the Horse and Jockey, as well as a rather more up-market establishment, the Farmer's Hotel. The foundations of the Red Ball, which ceased trading in about 1860, together with its adjacent cottage, Broomfields, can still be seen in the grounds of Ayshford House, as can the remains of the cobbled road that once led past the front doors of these properties. It seems likely that Ayshford House was built around 1760 by William Sanford, for his agent, on the foundations of an older cottage, at the same time as major improvements were being undertaken to the Ayshford Court farm buildings. As the Court was then permanently occupied by farm tenants, Ayshford House was used to provide accommodation for a succession of Ayshford Sanford agents, and then for private tenants until sold, with the rest of the Ayshford Court farm estate, to Charles Home-Smith in 1938; he sold it on as a private property in

1939. Having a late Georgian appearance, successive owners had always considered the house to be early nineteenth century, but recent renovations exposed construction techniques that established the earlier date. Typically, costs had been kept to a minimum by using second-hand materials, from adjacent redundant cottages, and pieces of Tudor and seventeenth-century timbers were found to have been used by the builders. They also incorporated an adjacent seventeenth-century cottage as an annexe, to serve as its kitchen, retaining the original fireplace and mantel and two pine doors. The house, which was known as Ayshford Cottage until about 1890, was extended into land bordering the new road in the nineteenth century, to provide modern sanitation and additional accommodation.

The two semi-detached stone and brick houses, on the opposite side of the road and immediately beneath the canal bridge, now known as Ayshford Cottages, were built by Edward Ayshford Sanford prior to 1860, probably as replacements for the Dairy House and Mow Barton cottages that were destroyed when the canal was built and two 'street' cottages, known as Brickman's,[21] that used to exist in the field below them. The original stone footbridge, which crossed the roadside stream and led to Mow Barton, was inadvertently destroyed by the District Council when undertaking flood prevention measures in the 1990s. Although much modified, Lower Ayshford Farm, formerly Bowdens, is the oldest surviving house in the 'street'. As previously mentioned, it was identified by Fursdon in 1670 as the property of Richard Bowden, or his father, both of whom were living there in 1662: their absence from the Protestation list of 1641 implies that the land on which Bowdens was built was probably leased from Henry Ayshford (1640-1662) around the time of the Restoration. The lease of the property was originally made out for a tenement and about 4 acres of orchard and meadow (Bowden's Mead). It remained as a business premises until the mid-nineteenth century, when Nathaniel Cook at Ayshford Court was farming 338 acres, mostly above the canal, and Will James of Sampford Peverell acquired Bowdens with around 70 acres below the canal. According to the 1851 and 1861 census returns, he never lived in the village, and the house was occupied by farm labourers. He appears to have given up his lease in the late 1860s, for, since 1871 Bowdens has been known as Lower Ayshford Farm, being run as a traditional dairy farm until the end of the twentieth century. Little remains of Linhay Barton on the opposite side of the road except for two walls of a cattle shed that recently lost its roof and is scheduled to be replaced.

After Lower Ayshford Farm, with its engineering works and new bungalow, the road continues on its original track towards Holbrook, with nothing to show for the six cottages known as Woolcotts, Perrys, Pitt Close and Webbers, to Lock's Cottage. The origin of this name cannot be determined, as only one lease, to Thomas Rowe of Sampford Peverell in March 1687,[22] refers to this tenement by that name. The 1839 Tithe Survey includes Lock's Orchard, but the farmhouse itself has been known as (Lower) Ayshford Dairy for generations, with tenant farmers working between 30 and 90 acres of pasture between the road and the River Lyner. Both Lock's Cottage and its dairy house, converted

into a small cottage in 2001 and known as Swallows, almost certainly have much older origins or foundations, but there is now nothing visible that remains of interest. In the early twentieth century, when John Merrey held the lease of Ayshford Court, and James Parr, dairyman, gave up his tenancy of Locks, the Ayshford Court farm estate was divided: 232 acres was retained by Ayshford Court and 168 acres was given to Lower Ayshford Farm. In 1939, John Merrey's son Frank Merrey, acquired Ayshford Court and its home farm from Charles Home-Smith. Some thirty years later, the Court and its home farm were separated, and in 1978 the remainder of the Ayshford Barton estate, Lower Ayshford Farm and Lock's cottage, was sold by Home-Smith to his sitting tenants.

With both Ayshford Court and Lower Ayshford farms having new agricultural tied houses, and the dairy house conversion at Lock's Cottage, there are now nine families living in the village, and its population has been somewhat restored. However, with 19 adults and only six children of school age, the balance between old and young in 2008 is markedly different from earlier times. Further expansion is highly unlikely, as Ayshford is not a community earmarked for development by the District Council, unless the old Court barns can be converted. Nevertheless, this small community, which has retained its identity for well over a thousand years, seems set to continue for many generations to come. In time, those magnificent oaks that frame the visitor's view of this historic Court and its chapel from the Grand Western Canal will be lost, but the buildings, and the families that live in this ancient community, seem certain to remain.

Notes and references

1. This article is taken from *Ayshford's heritage* written and published by Charles Scott-Fox (2008) for the charity Friends of Friendless Churches, pp. 39-49.
2. Polwhele 1793-1806, vol. 2, p. 367.
3. Testa de Nevill lists the name of Agnes Ayshford for Ayshford and William de Clavill for Burlescombe and Boehill. See the Devon section of the Tax Roll of "Testa de Nevill" transcribed by Whale 1898, which, it is stated, relates to the end of the reign of Edward I (1272-1307).
4. The Devonshire Lay Subsidy of 1332, transcribed by Erskine (1969).
5. Although Ayshford is in Burlescombe parish it is properly placed in the Halberton Hundred but for most returns it is included with Burlescombe in the Bampton Hundred.
6. The Ayshford tenants were Walter Colman, Thomas Trecchere, Simon Breghe, Thomas le Heir, Adam atte Wille, Thomas le Hurt, Roger atte More, Stephen Maister, Laurence Hore and John Hake. The majority were assessed for a minimum payment of 8d (£9) indicating 'villein' or 'bordar' status but Thomas le Hurt assessed for 2s 4d (£61), Roger atte More for 2s (£56) and Thomas Trecchere for 20d (£23) were tradesmen living in the village whose

stock were taken into account. The figures here in brackets here and elsewhere in the article give today's monetary values; see Officer and Williamson 2008.

7. Howard 1973; and Stoate 1979, 1982 and 1988.
8. Mediaeval tenancies were tied to three names. In addition to his own the prospective tenant would choose two persons who could continue the tenancy after his death. These would usually be his wife and eldest son or daughter. During the life of any of these three the lease could be renewed by the payment of 'heriot' for a maximum of 99 years. On the death of the last life, unless heriot had been paid for three new lives, the tenancy would immediately revert to the landlord, irrespective of who was living there or for how long, and the occupants would be thrown out on the street.
9. Somerset Record Office (SRO) DD/SF/2/70/7 and 70/14, Sanford Estate documents.
10. James Bowdman (60), James Bowdman jun. (30); George Alford (45) and widow; Elizabeth Shopway (67), John Shopway (70); John Webber (80) and wife (69), Edward Webber (35); William Courton (42), brother John Courton (40); John Courton (58), Joanna Courton (54), James Courton (38); Richard Bowden (35), Mary Bowden; Margaret Garraby (64), Mary Haynes (25); Humphrey Garnsey (40), Mary Garnsey (45); Johanna Webber (75) and daughter (45); William Holby (47); Edward Bowderman (40), Martin Bowderman (38), Emmanuel Bowderman (15); Thomas Courton and widow by Heriot to Richard (18), Mary (20) and Abigale (18); John Atkins (48), Mary Atkins (22); Robert Turner (53); Jeffrey Edwards (62), John Edwards (30).
11. Stoate 1982, Burlescombe parish, pp. 39 and 44. The names given in (brackets) are alternative spellings for individuals listed in the manorial roll of 1662.
12. Nicholas Webber submitted the Ayshford Manor accounts as Reeve in 1610.
13. Fursdon 1926-27.
14. SRO DD/SF/2/70/8, 70/9, 70/51, 70/63, Sanford Estate documents.
15. SRO DD/SF/2/70/66, Sanford Estate documents.
16. SRO DD/SF/2/70/71, Sanford Estate documents.
17. Sun Fire Insurance Co. Records 1726-1770; included in Sanford MSS (SRO). A field known as Blacklands is shown on the 1839 Tithe map below the Sampford Peverell-Westleigh road, but no dwelling existed at that time.
18. SRO DD/SF/2/70/86, Sanford Estate documents.
19. Ancestry; Family tree, genealogy and census records (2008) 'Devon 1841-1901 census returns – Burlescombe parish', online at: www.ancestry.co.uk.
20. Copies of the Grand Western Canal Company's original and amended routes of the canal and the Ordnance Survey's Surveyors' 3 inch drawings 1801 sheet 41 Part 1 together with the 1839 Tithe Commissioners' survey

published 1841 and the Conveyance of Ayshford Sanford land in Devon to the Canal Company are held by the Devon Record Office.

21. Part of a wall from the Dairy House can be seen in the canal bank near the gate in the small field opposite Ayshford House, but nothing remains of Mow Barton or Brickman's cottages.
22. SRO DD/SF/2/70/32 Sanford Estate documents.

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Charles Scott-Fox is the eldest son of the eminent archaeologist Sir Cyril Fox, whose biography he wrote in 2002 (published by Oxbow Books), and Lady Aileen Fox. He served in the Royal Navy 1952-1985, and for 13 years was a partner in a family business that ran the Hell Bay Hotel in the Isles of Scilly. His interest now lies in the history of Devon buildings, and their family association, writing and publishing books on Exeter Prison, Bickham House and Sampford Peverell (ed.). He is a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute.

The Devon Historian, vol. 78, 2009, pp. 79-88.

Book reviews

Martin Bodman (2008) *Devon Leather An outline history of a lost industry: nineteenth-century tanners and tanneries*, Tiverton: Leat Press; 165 pp., nearly 200 illustrations, softback; ISBN 978-0-9548758-1-7; available from the author at 25 Chaffinch Drive, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 1UJ, £19.00 plus £3.00 p. and p.

Some readers of *The Devon Historian* will know of Martin Bodman as a particularly industrious industrial archaeologist who in 2003 produced a 336-page survey of the evidence for watermills and other water-powered sites in the county. This currently exists only as an interim draft, deposited in selected libraries. During his research he became aware of a gap in the market for works on tanneries, and this present work fills that gap extremely well. It provides a gazetteer of 103 sites, with nearly twice that number of illustrations, mostly photographs and redrawn large-scale Ordnance Survey maps, but including some family trees revealing dynasties of tanners, who despite their noxious working environment enjoyed a high status in their day. Such a work is particularly appropriate in the county which supports the UK's last surviving oak-bark tannery, at Colyton, and as far as I can tell the research, which covers a longer period than the title suggests, has been exhaustive.

The part I found most intriguing was the distribution map of nineteenth-century tanneries, although closer inspection suggests that five tanneries have been omitted and Plympton misplaced. But this does not affect the overall distribution, which shows a marked concentration just north-west and north-east of Exeter and a scarcity towards the north and south extremities of the county, which I have tended to look on as "cattle country". One thinks of John Leland's sixteenth-century observation that the country between Bideford and Hartland was "very good for broode of catelle", but by the nineteenth century Hartland provided the only tannery within a twelve-mile radius. On reflection, cattle were relatively mobile, and the distribution evidently relates to the centres of beef consumption rather than production.

Another page provides details of ten parishes with nineteenth-century tanneries whose have sites yet to be located. This is followed by a list of more than fifty parishes, seemingly not indexed, which are believed to have had earlier tanneries, the earliest date given being 1382 for Matford (which was not actually a parish). To this list could be added Clayhidon and Yarcombe, where the published 1332 lay subsidy reveals were taxed Roger and John le Tannere respectively. All this should suggest to landscape archaeologists that the county may contain at least 60 unidentified tannery sites. It would certainly be interesting to know how the medieval sites compared with those in the Victorian heyday of the trade.

However, there are aspects of the book's presentation that the purists will balk at. I feel it would have benefited from the services of a copy editor since in some respects the production is non-standard: notably the absence of italics for published titles and the use of only two points for an ellipsis, while the presence of a space between the full stop and the endnote cue occasionally means that the latter starts the next line. Also the index seems less than user-friendly with those parishes with tanneries being collected under the letter 'T'. But overall, this comes close to being a very good book indeed, and is one that merits close attention from the 'Devon Book of the Year' panel.
A.G. Collings

Graham Hobbins (2008) *Plymouth's Civic Centre* (No. 10 in the New Series Publications), The Old Plymouth Society; 46 pp., b/w and colour photographs and drawings, softcover; obtainable from Gloria Dixon of the Old Plymouth Society on 01752 227992, £3.75 inc. p. and p.
When it was announced in June 2007 that Plymouth's Civic Centre had been listed Grade 2 there was an outcry against the move from the local press and public. Tall concrete blocks such as the Civic Centre have long been discredited and blamed for all that seemed to go wrong with public architecture in the 1950s and 60s.

English Heritage defended their decision to recommend the building for listing with the assertion that it was one of the most important civic centre buildings of the 1950s in the country. 'In addition to its technical architectural merits, the building symbolises the energy of Britain emerging after the devastation of World War II and shows the hope and aspirations of that newly confident Plymouth. We do believe that it is a building to be proud of, and a striking testimony to the spirit which guided the re-building of the City.' The response from many of the residents who went online to express their views was very different. One comment said bluntly: 'The building is simply ugly. It needs to be altered drastically or removed totally. So what if it has some interesting building materials? The thing is an eye sore, plain and simple.'

In his meticulously researched booklet for the Old Plymouth Society Graham Hobbins has attempted, with a great deal of success, to explain to his readers why he is so enthusiastic about a building which so many have little time for. He tells the history of the Civic Centre, from its conception in the 1943 'Plan for Plymouth', its planning and construction in the late 1950s, through to the official opening by The Queen in July 1962. He describes the vision which the city architect Hector Stirling had for the reconstruction of Plymouth's municipal buildings: 'The basic conception of this scheme is the grouping of a large number of public buildings in such a manner to give a feeling of spaciousness and vitality at a focal point in the city centre, and to present to the moving eye of the viewer a continuously interesting series of visual compositions both in height and depth'. Stirling, who was overworked and could not devote enough time to the project, was succeeded by Geoffrey Jellicoe in

1957, and it was he who interpreted Stirling's idea and saw it through to the opening of the building in 1962.

Perhaps the most interesting part of Graham Hobbins' booklet is the description of the carefully thought-out detail of the interior design of the Civic Centre. The Council Chamber has specially made chairs and tables of Burma teak, while on the walls are oil paintings of the heraldic and historical symbols of the city of Plymouth by Hans Tisdall. In the members' entrance hall there is a mural by Mary Adshead which shows important natural phenomena and historical events related to Plymouth and in an adjoining room there are curtains depicting the 'Pheasant Moon' designed by Tisdall. Hobbins has unearthed other fascinating details about the building; for example, few probably know that the Civic Centre pioneered the use of the P.A.B.X.4 telephone system or that it was one of the few buildings of the period which used a 'Thermal Storage Plant' for its heating requirements.

A considerable part of the booklet is devoted to the exterior surroundings of the building, which has an equally interesting history. Stirling's original proposal was for a 'civic precinct', which would be pedestrianised and combine all the proposed civic buildings (not all of which were built) into one whole. The 'Great Square', as it came to be called, is made up of rectangular planes of water, grass and paving raised at different levels to echo the design of the Civic Centre buildings. A planned sculpture was thought too controversial by the City Council and was never completed. The 'Great Square' was listed on the national landscape register at Grade 2 in 1999.

At the end of the booklet Graham Hobbins adds his own views on the architectural importance of the Civic Centre and the controversy surrounding the Grade 2 listing in 2007. He is passionate about the building and his enthusiasm makes this reviewer determined to return to Plymouth to look with a fresh eye at some of the features which are so well described. This extensively illustrated booklet is highly recommended to all who are interested in Plymouth's post-war history, the concept behind its re-birth and the value of its architecture and design.

Mitzi Auchterlonie

Nicholas Orme (2008) *The pilgrim's guide to Devon's churches*. Exeter: Cloister Books; 186 pp., profusely illustrated with colour photographs, semi-hardback; ISBN 9780955896200; £7.99

This work is a well-planned and compact guide to Devon's 618 Church of England churches. As well as a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury and an introduction by the Bishop of Exeter it finds space for information on the history of Exeter Cathedral by the Dean and two chapters by Professor Nicholas Orme, one on the development of the county's churches over two thousand years, the other a helpful guide to understanding the interior of churches. Suggestions for further reading are included.

In the gazetteer the county is divided into ten colour coded areas, each with a map and the churches alphabetically arranged for quick reference. Each church

has a colour photograph and single paragraph description, many of which provide a surprising amount of information. There is a good index and a glossary. This is a most useful little guide for anyone interested in exploring some of Devon's churches, still a central part of our heritage.
Elizabeth Maycock

Dick Passmore (2008) *Power to the city: The history of the Exeter Electric L & Power Station, Haven Road, Exeter*, Exeter: Little Silver Publications; 126 pp. plus introduction and index, various b/w and colour illustrations, softback; ISBN 0954447255; £7.50.

The author will be known to many readers through his involvement with the Exeter Local History Society and through his well-received book, published in 2002, on Exeter's Theatre Royal.

Before concentrating on the arrival of electric lighting in Exeter the author begins with a useful general account of the harnessing of electricity for industrial and domestic use, concentrating on the development of the incandescent light bulb. Thanks to the tenacity of Henry George Massingham overcoming vested interest and vacillation on the part of the city council, the Exeter Electric Light Co. was set up in 1889 and generators installed in premises, the Rockfield Works, in New North Road. The venture soon ran into financial problems, and after much soul-searching the company was purchased by the Exeter City Council and renamed the City of Exeter Electric Co. As the demand for electricity increased the Rockfield Works proved inadequate and, after much consideration of other sites, the company's offices and equipment moved in 1904 to newly built premises in Haven Road.

Designed by the architect Donald Cameron, the Haven Road power station was regarded as among the finest of its type. The exterior and interior of the building are lovingly described along with the equipment it housed. The author includes also a chapter on its role in the setting up of Exeter's electric tram service. Although nationalisation in 1947 led to the closure of many smaller electricity generating centres, that in Haven Road continued in operation until 1960. The building then served a variety of purposes until being finally vacated in 1997. What follows is a sorry story of abandonment, neglect and vandalism. Nevertheless, the author ends on a note of hope. The premises are being redeveloped and apartments are now built on the south side. On the other hand, proposals to turn the main building into a function room, art gallery and small hotel and restaurant have yet to reach fruition. Whatever is to happen, the author provides an invaluable historical and pictorial record of one of Exeter's more attractive twentieth-century buildings.

This is well written work on a little-studied aspect of Exeter's history. The author draws on a variety of sources, including minutes of the Exeter City Council Electricity Committee and the journal, *The Electrician*. The illustrations are clear and pertinent; a number being provided from what to the reviewer is a little-known archive held by the South Western Electricity Historical Society.

This is a book that will appeal to local, industrial and social historians, and deserves a wide readership.
S. Bhanji

Charles Scott-Fox (2008) *Ayshford's heritage: Court, chapel and community*, London: Friends of Friendless Churches (St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry, London, EC4V 5HB); 54 pp., 46 colour illustrations, softback; ISBN 9780954701345.

This new book is very well produced and is illustrated with good quality photographs and printed on high grade paper. It is well written by Charles Scott-Fox, the eldest son of the eminent archaeologists Sir Cyril Fox and Lady Aileen Fox.

The book tells the story of Ayshford, a small hamlet to be found half way between the mid-Devon villages of Sampford Peverell and Westleigh. Today this hamlet consists of a small number of properties, but it was a substantial manorial holding in the Domesday records going back to Saxon times. This book provides the reader or visitor with an insight into its origins and the community established by the Ayshford family.

In medieval times Ayshford Court was described as one of the finest houses in the west of England, but a declining founding family fortune and no direct lineal descent reduced its importance as a family seat. For the past 150 years the building has been a farmhouse with the original estate of about 400 acres of land apparently intact. By the late 1970s all of the land, apart from the chapel field, had been sold as two separate farms. The house is now occupied as a private dwelling.

The earliest written record of a chapel at Ayshford is to be found in the register of Canonsleigh Priory in 1282. After the Dissolution, the Ayshford family may have taken on the responsibility for paying the priest's stipend and maintenance of the chapel. The present Grade 1 listed building is almost certainly on the site of the original chapel, although lack of documentary evidence and extensive restoration over the past 500 years make it difficult to establish this beyond doubt. Ayshford Chapel is larger than most domestic chapels but there is no evidence that it was used for anything other than routine services, baptisms and marriages. Funerals and burials took place at the parish church at Burlescombe.

The chapel is built of Westleigh stone with Beer stone details and volcanic stone buttresses under a Delabole slate roof. There are eleven pews in the nave and two in the chancel. There are three Perpendicular windows on both the north and south sides and similar three-light windows above the altar. The chapel is normally kept locked but is open to visitors for four days at the beginning of September each year. At other times visitors may request the key at Ayshford Court Farm nearby.

The book has 46 colour illustrations and also contains a useful bibliography and Ayshford inheritance and family tree. It provides a history of the community established by the Ayshford family and an insight into the origins of the

buildings that remain to be seen. All in all, the book is a valuable addition to any local historian's bookshelf as well as being a useful guide to the visitor. It can be well recommended.
Neil Macaulay

Robin Stanes, Andrew Jewell and Richard Bass (2008) *The husbandry of Devon and Cornwall*, privately printed; 165 pp., b/w illustrations, softback; ISBN 9780956042101; £8.50 including p. and p.; available from the author at Deep End, Deepdene Park, Exeter, EX2 4PH.
In July 2009 a conference was held in Leicester entitled 'Local history in Britain after Hoskins'. The event marked the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of W.G. Hoskins' *Local history in England*. Speakers remarked upon the great influence of this volume. Through three editions Hoskins came to inspire many to take up the pursuit of local history. One who came to be so inspired was Robin Stanes. Indeed Stanes dedicates his recent book, *The husbandry of Devon and Cornwall*, to Hoskins (as well as to the late Harold Fox and other historians of Devon). The author also goes on to acknowledge the considerable importance of the work of Hoskins for him.

The Leicester conference observed as well how Hoskins appreciated and encouraged the input of those who, from a great range of professional backgrounds, could bring their specialist knowledge and expertise to the practice of local history. Stanes, as one time farmer, has sought to make such a contribution with this publication. He commences *The husbandry of Devon and Cornwall* with, tellingly: 'I bought Searswell Farm in Slapton in South Devon in 1952'.

The husbandry of Devon and Cornwall is a production to be welcomed as much as was the revision and reissue in 2004 of his *The old farm* (originally published in 1990; see J.F. Shepherd, 2008, 'Robin Stanes (2004) *Old farming days - life on the land in Devon and Cornwall*, review', *The Devon Historian*, vol. 76, pp. 35-36). *The husbandry of Devon and Cornwall* brings together a series of essays published elsewhere over a period of forty years: 'The husbandry of Devon and Cornwall' (Stanes, in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, forthcoming 2010); '"A Georgicall account of Devon and Cornwalle", 1667 by Samuel Colepresse' (Stanes, ed., in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 1964); 'Devon agriculture in the mid-eighteenth century: the evidence of the Milles enquiries' (Stanes, in *Exeter papers in economic history*, 1969); 'Landlord and tenant and husbandry convenants in eighteenth century Devon' (Stanes, in *Exeter papers in economic history*, 1981); 'Uffculme husbandry' (Stanes, in *A peculiar parish: a Devon town from Tudor times*, 1997); 'Some cultivation techniques in the south-west of England' (Andrew Jewell, in *Exeter papers in economic history*, 1981); 'The Devonshire hedgebank' (Stanes and Richard Bass, in *Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries*, vols 122 and 124); and 'Oliver Cromwell and Devonshire farming (Stanes, in *The Devon Historian*, vol. 77, 2007).

This compilation allows readers to follow through important themes that are perhaps less prominent or as well interconnected when the individual essays are read in isolation. One such theme, and arguably the most important, is the distinctiveness and significance of the husbandry of Devon. At times this attracted much praise, seeming to appear unique and advanced; at other times it brought disdain, apparently alternative to and behind the progressive practice to be found elsewhere in the country. Stanes explores understandings and misunderstandings. He traces back the long history of Devonshire husbandry, and explains its important legacy in modern farming techniques - notably in the form of ley cultivation. A second prominent theme that runs through this collection of essays concerns historical methods. The papers are the results of rewarding research into the diversity of sources available to the agricultural historian and the local historian of farming: contemporary writings, leases, wills and probate inventories, artefacts (tools and machinery), photographs, oral history, as well as the evidence 'in the field'.

The compilation as a whole looks back, celebrating that forty years of work, while also succeeding in achieving contemporary relevance. It is retrospective in that in takes readers back to an essential phase in the development of local history when progressive economic history enriched practice; a time of measuring, comparing and evaluating, and of endeavouring to unravel the complexities of causes and effects – in this case in the study of agricultural change. However, the essays also have a timeless quality, for they help in our interpretation of the cultural landscape of Devon in the present. The work of Stanes, with that of Jewell and Bass, and also like that of Hoskins and Fox, assists us in comprehending the rural landscape that lies before us today.

Stanes does not idealise or sentimentalise, but there is evidently a sense of respect – of one farmer towards farmers of long ago - that runs through his research. Stanes' work is a very knowledgeable appreciation of the farmer's craft. Furthermore, it is an acknowledgement of that craft's sophisticated and sensitive attuning to the environment of the county of Devon, in its past and its present.

Andrew J.H. Jackson

Gerry Woodcock (2008) *Tavistock a history*, Chichester: Phillimore; 132 pp., 154 illustrations incl. 7 maps, hardback; ISBN 9781860775000; £15.99.

This latest book by Tavistock's most prolific writer of local works is both a well-presented fount of historical information and a delight to read. The author, many of whose previous publications have been reviewed in earlier editions of this journal, was formerly head of history and of sixth form at Tavistock College, and in 2007 received the title of Honoured Burgess of the town of Tavistock. The book, therefore, presents in professional style a comprehensive account of the town's history, and at the same time conveys a feeling of its atmosphere.

While Bronze Age people are known to have inhabited the nearby upland of Dartmoor, and relics of lower-level Celtic presence survive, it was probably the

advance of the Saxons that initiated the first small settlement here on the banks of the Tavy. This was followed by the establishment from 976 of the great Benedictine abbey, and the age in which the monastery exercised great influence over the town until the Reformation of 1539. Following this the abbey lands passed to the Russell family – the earls and later dukes of Bedford – for a second period of patronage which lasted until the early twentieth century. During these two eras Tavistock developed as a market town, and as a centre of the woollen and mining industries. Its involvement with tinning is seen in its past designation as a Stannary Town, while profits from the later copper mining provided influence for the present attractiveness of the town centre's lay-out and buildings.

The account is brought fully up to date with developments and changes in the most recent years, so that, besides being a valued and very readable record of Tavistock's history, it is also a useful source of reference regarding more modern events.

Helen Harris

Gerry Woodcock (2008) *Tavistock's Yesterdays 17*, privately printed; 96 pages, 19 illustrations, softback, no ISBN; £4.95.

Once again, Tavistock people have benefited from the research of Gerry Woodcock into episodes of the town's history, and his ability to recount them in a clear and interesting way, without any sense of dryness.

In this, the seventeenth annual edition of his *Tavistock's Yesterdays*, there are just eight chapters, some quite short. The longest by far deals with the extreme overcrowding of living accommodation and lack of proper sanitation in the town during the late first half of the nineteenth century, and of four occasions when matters were raised with the stewards of the Duke of Bedford, the major landowner. Reports and correspondence from material held in the Devon Record Office are reproduced in full, with linking text by the author, giving a graphic account of appalling conditions, and eventual improvement. It is hard to believe that such squalor prevailed here – as doubtless in some other Devon towns – less than two centuries ago. Although industrial developments and building skills had reached a high degree of sophistication, plumbing was surprisingly a 'late developer'.

Helen Harris

Books received

Noted below are books not subject to a full published review. These include publications sent to the Society for information, or ones containing some information on Devon but insufficient to receive a full review in this journal.

Henry Buckton (2008) *The lost villages*, London: I.B. Taurus; 256 pp.,

illustrated, hardback; ISBN 978-1-84511-671-2; £20.00.
See sections on Hallsands and Morwellham.

Barbara M. H. Carbonell and Mary Wauton (2002) ***Thirteen Centuries in Bow*** **alias** ***Nymet Tracey with Broadnymet Devon,*** **Bow and District Historical Society, 58 pp., illustrated, softcover; no ISBN; £4.95; available from Reeves House, Bow, Devon EX17 6EN.**

1st Take, ***Friendly invasion,*** **DVD; £14.95; available from either www.1st-take.com or 01454 321614.**
See Neil Macaulay (2007) '**Henry Buckton (2006)** ***Friendly invasion: memories of Operation Bolero***', **review,** ***The Devon Historian,*** **vol. 75, pp. 32-3.**

The Devon Historian, vol. 78, 2009, pp. 89-92.

Correspondence from members and other information

The Hon. Editor is pleased to receive correspondence on Devon history from members and non-members. Information relating to previous articles, research projects and other historical material is welcome. Where appropriate notes, queries and notices received may be referred to the editor of the newsletter, *Devon History News*.

Notes

Katherine Dunhill writes:
Many of you will remember this picture which featured on the cover of the last issue of the Devon Historian. It was one of the mystery images the Westcountry Studies Library used in their 2008 'Location? Location? Location?' promotion in which they asked members of the public to help solve some of the unidentified pictures lurking in the library's collections.

This picture of a small boat moored on the river bank with a simple cottage and lime kilns on the further bank attracted more interest than any other. Was it Noss

Mayo? Wear Giffard? On the Teign somewhere? Perhaps Bow creek north of Cornworthy? Could it be on the river Torridge upstream from Bideford? The Erne estuary? Bantham? Kingsteignton perhaps? All very helpful indeed, but tricky to confirm. Although staff in the library worked hard to find pictures which might corroborate these suggestions, they drew a blank.

However, thanks to Ann Lidstone, the secretary of the Kingsbridge Local History Society, and her grandson, Duncan, the mystery is now solved. When her copy of the Devon Historian arrived, she immediately recognised the spot as Rose Cottage on the Kingsbridge Estuary, in the parish of Dodbrooke. With help from her grandson she was able to take an up-to-date photograph of the place, which showed Rose Cottage with the lime kilns still standing beside it. Not surprisingly, the current owners were delighted to see the historic picture of their home.

In this photograph you can see the cottage, glimpsed through the trees on the opposite bank. The lime kilns are now garages and boat-stores.

John Roberts writes:
Richard Whidbourne's ('The Spanish Armada: Drake and thee five hulks', *The Devon Historian,* vol. 77, pp. 67-74) discussion of the relations between Francis Drake and the Lord Admiral raises an interesting question: why did the Admiral seemingly have no difficulty in accepting what has looked like a lame excuse for abandoning his station in the fleet?

Before the course of research for my book on the Armada (1988, *Devon and the Armada*, Gooday Publishers; ISBN 1870568125), Howard seemed something of an colourless and ineffective aristocrat. Reading his letters of the year gave a different impression. As recorded in the chapter 'Plymouth Ho!' he came across as an enthusiastic, if amateur, seaman, and his deferring to Drake appeared as a natural response and recognition of the sailor's grasp of their situation. The picture for me was one of an elderly man positively rejuvenated by the prospect of action in a post that usually kept him, when working, signing papers or attending meetings.

Drake was certainly a man for 'cutting corners', but his initial dowsing of the stern lantern was probably justifiable (and perhaps justified), even if his failure to return his ship to its station afterwards may have been questionable. But he suffered no ill consequences, which may have been all he wanted.

Queries

Katherine Dunhill writes:
The Westcountry Studies Library will be running a new 'Location? Location? Location?' promotion of mystery pictures in Exeter Central Library for a month from 21 September this year.

You will be able to see all the pictures on the local studies website: www.devon.gov.uk/localstudies, but, in the meantime, you might like to whet your appetite with this picture from the collections. Unfortunately, the original glass plate negative is a little the worse for wear. If you know where this street is, please get in touch with staff at the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter (01392-384216, Westcountry.library@devon.gov.uk).

Dorothy Presswell writes:
I am undertaking research on the cartoonists of the Second world war, in particular their interpretation of political and social issues. I am having trouble locating the wartime issues of the magazine *Lilliput*, and would greatly appreciate any information of sources available. Please write to: 37 Redford Meadows, Kingsbridge, Devon, TQ7 1SH.

The format of the Journal and new submissions

At the 2007 AGM of the Society it was decided that the existing *The Devon Historian* would be replaced for a trial period by a substantially larger annual volume. This is in order to raise the profile of the journal and to accommodate the greater number of articles being submitted. Apart from greater freedom over length, the criteria by which articles are accepted will not change. These can be found at the back of the current journal and in fuller detail on the website at: http://devonhistorysociety.blogspot.com/search/label/journal.

Contributions - short and long - are still welcomed from the amateur and the professional, the member and the non-member. Some information normally published in the journal, such as notices on the work and programmes of local history societies or from record offices and other repositories, will be transferred to the more appropriate context of the new Society newsletter, *Devon History News*.

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Correspondence for the Hon. Editor and contributions for publication in the Society's journal should be sent to Dr Andrew Jackson, the Hon. Editor, at Bishop Grossteste University College Lincoln, Lincoln, LN1 3DY, or via andrew.jackson@bishopg.ac.uk.

Books for review should be sent to Dr Mitzi Auchterlonie (m.m.auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk) at 17 Croft Chase, Exeter, Devon, EX4 1TB, 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 printed in full.

It is preferred that articles are word-processed using single line spacing and page margins of 2cm, and submitted electronically in Word format by email or disk, 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. Endnote referencing should be used, 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. For further information on conventions see www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk.

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 Gerald Quinn, 6 Old Paignton Road, Torquay, TQ2 6UY. 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 Quinn is always glad to receive copies of earlier numbers of *The Devon Historian* in good condition.

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Articles:

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