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John Cooke: engraver

Kit Batten

John Cooke is known for his maps of the Plymouth area, some plans of the breakwater and a small number of other works over a period from 1820 to 1845. However, John Cooke began his career as an engraver and publisher in London before moving to Plymouth about 1817.

Plymouth

The first guide book to the 'Three Towns' is generally regarded as *The picture of Plymouth* by Henry Woollcombe, published by Rees and Curtis and containing a map, *The Town of Plymouth Dock 1811*, signed by John Cooke as engraver. There is no reason to think Cooke was local as the book was also sold by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, well-known London publishers and booksellers. Although the guide in this form did not reappear, the text was the basis for the *Tourist's companion* (Granville & Son, Plymouth-Dock, 1823). Cooke's map is present and was issued again in subsequent editions of the *Companion*. What is very interesting, however, is that for the new issue above, the date (1811) was deleted and an address added to Cooke's signature: 'New Road Stonehouse Plymo'. This now linked John Cooke, the engraver of the 1811 map, with Plymouth.

Although the map above was not altered until 1823 we do have earlier work signed by Cooke with a Plymouth address: 'Falmouth Harbour taken from a chart drawn in ye reign of King Charles II' in Gilbert's *An historical survey of the County of Cornwall* (Plymouth Dock, J. Congdon, 1817); and a plan appeared in *Substance of a statement...concerning...a rail road from the Forest of Dartmoor to the Plymouth lime-quarries* (London, Harding, 1819) and presented to parliament by Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt of Dartmoor Prison fame. Both works are signed 'Engraved by John Cooke, Stonehouse, Plymo[uth]'.

A detailed map of the *Borough of Plymouth* was issued in 1820 with imprint: 'Pubd April 15, 1820, by Mrs E Nile, No. 48 Union St, Stonehouse'. There is a dedication to the Mayor, commonalty and inhabitants from John Cooke. In the same year the first edition of Cooke's *Plan of the Towns and Harbour of Plymouth, Stonehouse, Dock* also appeared. Cooke may have been active for Mrs Nile up to three years earlier: the *Borough* plan has a line below the imprint: 'Engraving & Copper-Plate Printing Office' and the premises are marked with an asterisk on Union Street. The *Plan* has a key for Dock (Plymouth Dock) and the Copper Plate Print. Off. is shown as reference 'h', again in Union Street. A further chart is known, *Chart of the Harbour of Plymouth - taken 1817*; although not signed it does have the imprint: 'The Copper Plate Engraving and Printing Office, New Road, Stonehouse.

Plymo[uth]'. Although a better executed plan of the Sound it does resemble the map of the area included with the *Interesting particulars* in 1821.

The *Interesting particulars, relative to that great national undertaking, the Breakwater* was printed for, and sold by J. Johns at Plymouth Dock and John Cooke of Union Street, Stonehouse in 1821. This contains two cartographic works: *Cooke's guide to Plymouth Sound and Breakwater*, a small map covering the Plymouth area with an extra plan below the bottom border - *Transverse section of the Breakwater* - with a note on the first stone being laid in 1812. The second work is another fairly detailed engraving of two plans of the proposed breakwater at Plymouth. Both map and plan bear Cooke's signature and Mrs Nile's imprint. Although the second plan has not been seen in any other works, the first map above was reissued in subsequent editions of the *Tourist's companion* (with title *New guide...*). Cooke is now firmly established in the Stonehouse district near Plymouth. Apart from these three maps with her imprint, all of them associated with John Cooke, no work by Mrs Nile is known.

Few other engraving works by Cooke have been discovered. Somers Cocks lists a J. Cooke only for a print of the *Royal Hotel and Plymouth Theatre*.¹ This was published and sold separately *circa* 1820. The only other entry - *Cooke, - (lith)* - refers to one illustration in an edition of *The tourist's companion* already mentioned. This edition appeared in 1828 and 1830 and included a small engraving of *Stoke Church, Devonport*, signed *A. Rae delt and Cooke Stonehouse*. In 1825 a curious broadside was published. This was a page of text, illustrated with an engraving showing a balloon landing in the sea between Stokehead and Yealm Point, near Plymouth, Devon. George and Margaret Graham attempted a balloon ascent from Stonehouse market in Plymouth on Monday 14 November 1825. Unfortunately the balloon was dragged seaward by the wind and came down in the sea only 14 minutes later. The balloon was lost, last seen rising from the waters and sailing out to France, never to be seen again. The single sheet was published in December 1825 by John Cooke of 48 Union Street, Stonehouse, that is, the address of Mrs Nile.

Cooke produced a number of other maps of the area: *The panorama of Plymouth* by Samuel Rowe and published in 1821 containing a *Map of the country twelve miles round Plymouth*. In 1823 the first edition of *Cookes Plymouth Breakwater showing view from above and transverse* was issued; and in 1824 *Cooke's chart of Plymouth Sound, and general guide to Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse*, complete with a dedication - 'Under the patronage of the Chamber of Commerce, Plymouth (and which is very similar to the *Chart...taken 1817*, above) - appeared. Both maps have Cooke's address as 48 Union Street. Cooke's *Stranger's guide and pocket plan of the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse* was published in *The traveller's directory, and stranger's guide to the Three Towns*, 1827. This also has a later state of *Cookes Plymouth Breakwater*. Both maps are priced individually, so were presumably on sale as single sheets.

John Cooke's most successful map was *The environs of Plymouth Devonport and Stone House*. The map was actually completed on four plates but

could be (and later was) assembled to form one map,² and was reissued by William Wood of Devonport from circa 1860 in various publications including issues of the *Three Towns almanack*. A letter from Cooke to the Mayor of Plymouth, Pridham, September 1828 has been preserved, and in it Cooke appeals for support³; signed by Cooke, it accompanied a sheet of proposals for a map that 'will be engraved on four plates, to adjoin each other, either to be fitted up as one, or formed into pages for the pocket or otherwise'. It would seem that Cooke did not receive his desired effect as the only copy known in four sheets has no dedication.⁴

Subsequent to 1828 only three more works are known: *Cooke's new plan of the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse*; a map of Dartmoor; and another breakwater plan. Although the plan is dated 1847 ('Pubd By John Bennett, London'), below Cooke's signature and address is – 'Map & chart engraver and geographer extraordinary to his late Majesty William IVth – in his 80th year of age'.

This is the fourth of Cooke's Plymouth publications to include reference to Admiralty work. The *Interesting particulars* noted his Admiralty association on its title page; *Cooke's chart* of 1824 notes Cooke as 'late engraver to the Admiralty'; and the Dartmoor map was engraved ... by 'John Cooke, engraver and geographer extraordinary to his late Majesty in his 75th year of age'.

London

John Cooke was the son of Ann and John Cooke of Fetter Lane.⁵ He was baptised 1 August 1765 at St Andrew in Holborn, London, three years before a brother, Stephen William. He was apprenticed to the bookbinder Mary Cooke, also of Fetter Lane on 7 September 1779, but he was turned over to William Wells, an engraver, of Fleet Street on 6 November 1787 'and to John Russell, by whom he was freed the same day', which points to some kind of special arrangement. Russell himself was a well-known engraver and it may be that his influence led Cooke in that direction. Between 1787 and 1812 John Cooke worked as an engraver from a number of different London addresses.

Cooke worked for D. Steel, Bowyer, Boydell, W. Walker, Hills and Mawman and also the very successful and well-respected William Faden; but he also found time to publish his own work and produced an atlas and a guide to drawing maps. The first recorded work signed by Cooke is a set of charts, *A new Mercator's chart of the coast of Ireland*, with dates from January 1790 and published in London by D. Steel, for whom he produced a set of engraved plates for *The elements and practice of rigging and seamanship* six years later.

Over the period 1790-1800 he worked on a number of quite impressive projects, completing two maps of the river Thames: one for *Boydell's rivers* (on two sheets), which was a copiously illustrated work; and another for Colquhoun's work on the commerce and police of that river. He completed two maps for Home's *Select views in Mysore* as well as a plan of St Petersburg for a translation of a popular guide to the city by Heinrich Storch, *Picture of St Petersburg*. In 1792, shortly after moving to Mill Hill, Cooke produced a map of

the road from London to Mill Hill and Barnet, and four years later a map of Hendon for William Faden.

Although he worked for others he was more than a jobbing engraver. The *Universal atlas* was published in 1802 and has nearly 30 attractive, circular maps, all by John Cooke and with imprints from August 1800 to January 1802. The imprints strongly suggest that Cooke was co-publisher.

Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808) was appointed the first Hydrographer to the Admiralty in 1795, and the first charts appeared in 1800 after a rolling press was purchased. John Cooke was engaged as (part-time) plan engraver. Apparently there was some sort of dispute and Cooke was sacked in 1804. Given Cooke's previous publication of an atlas he may have been disgruntled that he did not receive better recognition. During this period he also produced two works which he signed as 'Engraved by John Cooke, Engraver to the (Hon. Board of) Admiralty'. These were: *Improvements proposed ... between the Royal Exchange and Finchbury Square* and a map *Denmark, Holstein, Hamburg, Lübeck etc.*

Sometime after his admiralty work Cooke engraved maps for Abraham Rees' *Cyclopedia, or universal dictionary*. Cooke only produced three more maps before disappearing from the London scene, although he did publish a manual of geography. Of the 20 cartographic works identified as engraved by a John Cooke of either London or with no address, all of these can be assigned to a period up to 1812.⁶ These range from the Mercator's chart of the coast of Ireland to A general synopsis of geography, with the projection of maps and charts by John Cooke 'Late geographer to the Admiralty'. The Synopsis published in 1812 is a complete manual to the drawing of maps illustrated with 20 copper plates, most dated 1811, and signed by Cooke.

The first map to link John Cooke with Devon and more especially Plymouth was *A plan of the town of Plymouth Dock*. This map was 'Surveyed, drawn, and published by T. Richards', Totnes, Devon and published October 25, 1810, and was signed 'Engraved by John Cooke, London, late Engr. to the Admiralty'. This very detailed map had been commissioned by the St Aubyn family: a family associated with Devon and Cornwall and who still lease parts of St Michael's Mount, previously part of their property from 1660.

The clearest connection between the London and Plymouth engraver must be the similarities between the map executed for the St Aubyn family and the map included in the first Plymouth guide book. While of very different sizes,⁷ the engraver of the first must have exactly copied, at smaller scale, the original map. The first map has the address of Cooke and the reference to the Admiralty, and the guide book brings in the Plymouth address. The lack of an address in the first state of the guide book map suggests that Cooke moved to the westcountry during the period 1810-1817, the address being introduced for the completely new edition in 1823. Although there is no absolutely clear evidence, the two maps plus the various references to admiralty or majesty during both periods make it clear that this is one man.

John Cooke, now 70 (although ages were often rounded up or down), was registered as engraver in Union Lane (*sic*) in 1841. His family comprised of Eliza Cooke, 50, also an engraver, and John (20) and Charles Cooke (12), both chair-makers. The records show that while John junior and Charles were born in Devon, Eliza and John were not. It is tantalizing to think that if Eliza was also entered as an engraver, could this be the previous Mrs Nile? A marriage, or possibly remarriage (to a widow), and starting a new family at circa 30 years old would not be unthinkable. Nevertheless, it is known that John Cooke died 11 March, 1845 of apoplexy, and Eliza Ann Cooke died in the last quarter of 1851.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr Laurence Worms who provided all the information regarding birth, death and apprenticeships contained in this piece. This is a summary of an article which appeared in a magazine for map collectors, *MapForum*, in 2009, and my thanks to Ashley Baynton-Williams for the permission to allow a shorter version to be printed in a Devon publication. A full monograph will be lodged at both Exeter Westcountry Studies Library and the West Devon Record Office at Plymouth.

Notes and references

1. Somers Cocks (1977): see entries 1912, 2157 and SC 108.
2. Each plate has a piano key border on two sides and a plain two line border on the 'joining' sides.
3. 'To the Chief Magistrate I take the liberty to send you one of my Proposals, at the same time beg to ask the favor of your name, and patronage of the commonalty to be printed on the upper part of it being the wish of several gentlemen of the corporation, in consequence of which I have drawn up the enclosed proposal for your inspection and will be happy of the Honor of your acquiescence [*sic*] to the same, as the price of my subscription must be considered moderate, depending on the greater number to pay the expence, will be happy of the Name of any Gentlemen who may honor me in addition to those highly respected Gentlemen who have placed their names on my list'.
4. My thanks to the West Devon Record Office for making a copy of the letter and the proposal available.
5. I am indebted to Laurence Worms who provided the details here about John Cooke's birth and apprenticeship. John Cooke is entry 2001 in McKenzie (1978); Cooke's brother, Stephen, being entry 1995.
6. Not including multiple maps in one work.
7. While the earlier map is very large at 690 x 620 mm the guide book map is only 250 x 215 mm, but the similarity is startling.

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Kit Batten is a language trainer in Stuttgart, Germany. Together with Francis Bennett he wrote *The printed maps of Devon 1575-1837* (Devon Books, 1995) and *The Victorian maps of Devon* (Devon Books, 2000).

Barnstaple to Exeter – two hundred years ago

A. Brian George

Two hundred years ago a magistrate making his way from Barnstaple to Exeter for the Quarter Sessions would have taken a very different route from any that he would take today. In 1675 John Ogilby travelled via Chittlehampton and Chittlehamholt to Chumleigh, but by 1765 Benjamin Donn showed a route via Atherington, High Bickington and Burrington to Chumleigh and thence through Chawleigh, Morchard Bishop, New Buildings and Crediton to Exeter. These alternative routes are clearly depicted in Benjamin Donn's map of Devon of 1765 and in the original Ordnance Survey map of 1808.¹ It was not until 1831 that the present route along the river Taw valley to Crediton was constructed.

The journey by horse or carriage would have been very exacting with much of the mid-Devon routes at levels over 500 feet above sea level with sharp ascents and descents to cross rivers or streams, and the descents often as tricky as the ascents were laborious. The Chittlehamholt route required the crossing of the river Mole, and Head Bridge was reconstructed in 1813 by James Green, the county bridge surveyor appointed by the Quarter Sessions in 1808 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Head Bridge, the River Mole (SS 667 182).

The alternative route via High Bickington required two crossings of the river Taw, the first at Tawstock and the second at Colleton Mill, near Chumleigh. New Bridge, Tawstock (see Figure 2), was one of the first bridges that Green constructed, and Colleton Mill bridge was widened between 1815 and 1817 for highway traffic, emphasising the importance of that route as an alternative to the route over the river Mole. £300 was allowed in 1815 and a further £60 in 1817 for this work.



Figure 2: New Bridge, Tawstock, the River Taw (SS 570 280).

The undulations in these early routes were considerable (see Table 1).

Table 1: Heights in feet, Barnstaple to Chumleigh.

Via Chittlehamholt			Via High Bickington		
Barnstaple South St.	100		Barnstaple South St.	100	
		+150			-43
0.5 miles	250		Bishops Tawton	57	-20
		-150			
1 mile	100		Week	37	-7
		+481			
2 miles	581		Langham Lake	30	+55
		-162			
3.5 miles	419		Fishleigh Barton	85	+315
		+66			
Chittlehampton	485		Atherington	400	+86
		-85			
7 miles	400		High Bickington	486	

Table 1 (Continued)

		+125		+101
7.5 miles	525		587	
		+17		-69
Chittlehamholt	542		518	
		-178		=64
11 miles	364		582	
		-264		+31
Head Bridge	100		619	
		+400		-16
12 miles	500		603	
		-200		-82
13.5 miles	300		Nr Burrington	521
		+200		-370
Chumleigh	500			151
				+19
Total rises, 1,439 feet			Colleton Mill	170
				+330
			Chumleigh	500
			Total rises	937 feet

The High Bickington route, therefore, had a 500 feet advantage over the Chittlehamholt route, and their distances were much the same at about 15 and 14 miles respectively.

The remainder of the route to Crediton, has been described before from the Crediton direction. From Chumleigh one passed through Morchard Bishop and New Buildings to enter Crediton from the north, the rises being as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2: Chumleigh to Crediton.

Via Morchard Bishop

Chumleigh	500		South of Morchard	445	
		-260			+45
Savoury's	240		Oldborough	490	
		+350			-130
Labett's Cross	590		Knathorne	360	
		-141			+218
Handsford	449		New Buildings	578	
		+180			-361
Forches	629		Frogmire	217	
		-331			+139
Calves bridge	298		Forches Cross	358	
		+242			-194
Morchard Bishop	540		Crediton, Mill St.	164	
		-95			
South of Morchard	445				

Total rises, 1,174 feet.

In all, therefore, to travel from Barnstaple to Crediton via Chittlehamholt, the traveller had to climb a total of 2,613 feet, whereas if he or she came by High Burrington it was 2,111 feet.

Although the various Devon turnpike trusts had been established from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, there had been much for them to do to establish their maintenance systems and to bring the standards of road surfaces to a more satisfactory condition. By the turn of the century, however, trustees were considering the construction of new sections of road to improve travel by horse drawn coach. In 1819 James Green proposed the re-routing of 14 miles of the Exeter to Plymouth road for the three turnpike trusts involved, and these deviations, such as going over Haldon hill via the racecourse, were carried out. In 1820 he proposed a new route from Pocombe bridge to Tedburn St Mary for the Exeter Turnpike Trust that saved 390 feet of ascents, compared with the route via Whitestone, and established a maximum gradient of $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches to the yard (1 in 16). This work was constructed by the Exeter Trust's surveyor, William McAdam.

Perhaps, therefore, it was not surprising that after James Green had built a new bridge and weir at Eggesford to enable the magistrate the Hon. Newton Fellowes, later to become Lord Portsmouth, to access his home, in June 1825 the Exeter trustees were communicating with the Barnstaple trustees regarding the need to improve the roads from Exeter to Barnstaple. Mr Pascoe, a former assistant to Green at Braunton Marsh, and now surveyor for new works for the Exeter Trust, was employed to survey and report, which he did in September. The following March an important Act was obtained allowing the Exeter trustees to make new or diverted roads from Crediton to Barnstaple Cross, from Barnstaple Cross to Coplestone, and a new road from Coplestone to Colleton Mill to join the intended new road from Barnstaple.² In 1831 the intended new road from Coplestone to Colleton Mill was opened.

Three new bridges were required for the new road from Coplestone to Colleton Mill, and an advertisement for contractors was placed in the *Exeter Flying Post* by Mark Kennaway, the clerk to the turnpike trustees at Catherine Yard, Exeter. The bridges were over the river Yeo at Bury, over the mill leat near Bury Farm, and over the river Yeo near Lapford. In due course the trustees ordered that James Green should be paid £60, his charge for plans and specifications for bridges on the Eggesford road.



Figure 3: Newnham Bridge, the River Taw (SS 660 174).

Just as at the Crediton end, the road from Crediton to Barnstaple Cross was part of a route to Okehampton and the road from Barnstaple Cross to Coplestone was part of a route to Down St Mary and Bideford, so from the northern end, the road from Barnstaple to Fishleigh was part of the route to High Bickington and Chumleigh. These roads could therefore form part of the new route from Barnstaple to Crediton.

A specification for the Barnstaple Trust's new road from Colleton Mill, to communicate with the turnpike road at Fishleigh in the parish of Tawstock, was issued by the Trust's surveyor, Charles Bailey, on 28 November 1828.³ It contained drawings for the road in particular places and drawings by James Green for the two bridges required, one over the river Little Dart and the other at Newnham (see Figure 3). The total road from Barnstaple to Crediton was transformed by the improvements carried out by the turnpike trusts.

Table 3: Heights in feet of road from Barnstaple to Crediton after 1830.

Barnstaple, South St.	100	Colleton Mill	170
	-43		+48
Bishops Tawton	57	Chumleigh Cross	218
	-20		-39
Week	37	Little Dart Bridge	179
	-7		+166
Langham Lake	30	Coplestone	345
	+55		+55
Fishleigh Barton	85	Dulings	400

Table 3 (Continued)

		-5			-50
	90		Spence Combe	350	
		+3			+104
Umberleigh	87		Barnstaple Cross	454	
		+87			-290
Broadwood	134		Crediton, Mill St	164	
	125	-9			
		-17			
Portsmouth Sta.	108				
		+44			
	152				
		+18			
Colleton Mill	170		Total rises, 549 feet		

Now these total rises from Barnstaple to Crediton of the new route of 549 feet (see Table 3) compare with $937+1174 = 2111$ feet rises using the High Bickington and the Chumleigh routes. The overall distance might well have slightly increased by a mile or so because the new route followed the curves of the river Taw valley, but the saving in energy must have been considerable. The largely forgotten transformation of Devon's roads between 1800 and 1840 was not repeated until the advent of cars and heavy goods vehicles of the twentieth century.

Notes and references

1. The South West Highway Atlas for 1675 by Paul White (2005) shows the routes published by John Ogilby in his *Britannia* of 1675. A commemorative volume of a map by Benjamin Donn of the county of Devon in 1765 was reprinted by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society and the University of Exeter (1965; London: Lund Humphries). See also the old series Ordnance Survey Maps of England and Wales, Vol. II, Devon, Cornwall and West Somerset (1977; Lympne, Kent: Harry Margary).
2. The Exeter Turnpike Trust Act for the new road was 7 Geo. IV c 25 of 1826.
3. The Barnstaple Turnpike Trust Act for the new road was 7&8 Geo IV 14 of 1827.

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A. Brian George is a member of the Devon History Society. He is a civil engineer who was chief bridge engineer for Devon County Council before joining the Lord Chancellor's panel of independent inspectors for road enquiries in England and Wales. Since 1979 he has been a member of the panel for Historical Engineering Works of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

From Dumnonia to Devonshire

Nicholas Grant

The purpose of this paper is to trace the transition from the post-Roman British kingdom of Dumnonia to the Anglo-Saxon shire of Devon through the historical (and in some cases legendary) sources, and in particular to catalogue all references to Dumnonia in sources prior to c. 1150. These appear in an appendix to the paper.

In the Roman period, the area later to become Devon formed part of the Roman civitas or tribal area of the *Dumnonii*, with Exeter, *Isca Dumnoniorum*, the fortress of the Dumnonii, as its capital.¹ To the west, the civitas also included the area later to become Cornwall, but it is not known exactly how far its territory extended east of Exeter. The Dumnonii were bounded on the east by the civitas of the Durotriges, which is known to have included Ilchester in Somerset.² Prior to the Roman conquest, the boundaries between the Dumnonii and the Durotriges probably lay in the region of the Axe and Parrett rivers, if they were not the rivers themselves.³

Following the end of Roman authority in Britain in the early fifth century, native kingdoms re-emerged, although the process by which this happened is not at all clear. Gildas (appendix, ref. 1), writing in the mid-sixth century and one of the very few sources for this period, castigates the morals of five contemporary kings. The first of these is Constantine, the 'tyrant whelp of the filthy lioness of Dumnonia', who is guilty of frequent adultery, putting away his wife, parricide and sacrilege. Although Gildas does not provide any information about the geographical extent of Constantine's kingdom, Dumnonia was clearly the successor kingdom to the Roman civitas of the Dumnonii. Constantine is also named in later medieval Welsh genealogies purporting to record the royal line of the kingdom of Dumnonia.⁴ A number of other figures named in these genealogies also appear in later medieval traditional – they are not historical – materials. In addition to Constantine, they include Erbin, Geraint, and Cador or Cadwy, all of whom are associated, by the date of this material, with the area of south-western Britain. Some or all of these men may well have been kings of Dumnonia in the sixth and seventh centuries, but it is quite impossible to push this material any further and attempt to construct any kind of narrative history of the kingdom.⁵

From about this time, Anglo-Saxon sources represent Dumnonia as coming under increasing pressure from the West Saxon advance into the south-west of Britain. A number of attempts have been made to reconstruct the history of this period, and in particular the West Saxon conquest of the south-western peninsula: notably those of Alexander,⁶ Gower, Mawer and Stenton,⁷ Hoskins,⁸ Finberg,⁹ Porter¹⁰ and Todd.¹¹ These writers and others have reached

significantly different conclusions about how and when this conquest was achieved, although all are agreed it fell within the broad limits of the late sixth and the mid-ninth centuries.

According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, compiled in the later ninth century, the Anglo-Saxon kings of Wessex were extending the dominions of their kingdom to the west, and thus reducing the extent of the kingdom of Dumnonia, throughout the second half of the sixth century and the seventh century. We are hampered, however, by uncertainty over the locations of many of the battle-sites named in the Chronicle, and by suspicions over the accuracy of some of the early Chronicle entries. We should also not forget the fluid nature of warfare during this period, meaning that battles were not necessarily fought on the borders of kingdoms.¹² That said, the kings of Wessex are recorded in the Chronicle as capturing Bath, Cirencester, and Gloucester in 577, and winning victories at *Beandune* in 614, *Peomum* in 658, and *Posentesburh* in 661.¹³ *Beandun* has been identified as Bindon near Wareham, Dorset or Bindon near Axmouth, East Devon¹⁴ or Brean Down, Somerset.¹⁵ *Peomum* has been identified as Pensewood on the Somerset/Wiltshire border, Beacon Hill near Pinhoe near Exeter,¹⁶ or Penn Hill near Yeovil, Somerset.¹⁷ The Chronicle entry goes on to state that the Britons were driven to the *Pedridan*, which is certainly the river Parrett in Somerset, so the battle-site must have been somewhere to the east of this river. *Posentesburh* has been identified as Pontesbury, Shropshire (and thus as a battle against the Welsh) or more probably Posbury near Crediton, Devon.¹⁸

The first clear evidence that the West Saxons had reached East Devon is provided by the Life of St. Boniface by Willibald (c. 760). This records that Boniface attended a monastery in Exeter c. 685-90AD, at which the abbot bore the Anglo-Saxon name of Wulfhard.¹⁹ Furthermore, if we could accept later medieval tradition, Boniface was born at Crediton, which would mean West Saxon settlement had taken place north-west of Exeter by c. 675-80. Unfortunately this tradition is of doubtful veracity.²⁰ Nevertheless, some support for believing that the West Saxons had reached Exeter at least by the last quarter of the seventh century is provided by some eleventh century charters of St Mary's minster in Exeter. These are thought to represent reconstructions of much earlier charters destroyed in Viking raids at the beginning of the eleventh century. Three of the reconstructed charters bear the date 670, suggesting this might have traditionally been the date of the minster's foundation.²¹ The West Saxon king at that time, Cenwealh, is known to have granted lands to minsters at Glastonbury and Sherborne, so a contemporary foundation at Exeter is plausible.²²

In his poem *Carmen ecclesiasticum III* dating to perhaps c. 689-693, Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury and later bishop of Sherborne, refers to Centwine, king of Wessex (676-685) having fought three battles, each resulting in victory.²³ Although Centwine's opponents are not referred to, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records in 682 that Centwine drove the Britons 'as far as the sea'.²⁴ This seems likely to refer to wars in Devon and perhaps specifically to the

Irish sea off the north Devon coast or the English channel in south Devon. A later twelfth century writer, John of Worcester, specifically states that Centwine's victory was against the West Britons.²⁵

In the first quarter of the eighth century, there are a number of records of political and diplomatic activities involving the West Saxon king Ine (688-726) and a king of Dumnonia named Geraint.²⁶ Probably earliest in date is a letter from Aldhelm addressed to Geraint, 'the lord who guides the sceptre of the western kingdom', and more generally to the bishops of Dumnonia (appendix, ref. 2). This Geraint appears to be a different, later figure than the Geraint of the medieval genealogies and tradition referred to above. A later reference in the letter to 'your bishops' confirms that Dumnonia is identical with the 'western kingdom', but provides no specific information to allow us to identify the extent of the kingdom. Aldhelm's letter describes the differences in Easter practice between the Britons and the Saxons, and urges Geraint to instruct his bishops to follow Catholic, that is, Roman practice. Aldhelm is respectful of Geraint but critical of the British bishops and hints that their practices were heretical. The letter seems most likely to date to c. 700-706.

In a separate work, the *Carmen rhythmicum*, dating to perhaps c. 706-709/10, Aldhelm refers to a journey he had made to the west, proceeding through Cornwall and into Dumnonia, presumably returning to Malmesbury or Sherborne (appendix, ref. 3). Perhaps this visit was associated with diplomatic activity following up Aldhelm's letter to Geraint. This is a particularly interesting reference for two reasons. Firstly, it is the earliest record of the name of Cornwall (in the form *Cornubia*). Secondly, the term Dumnonia is apparently being used here to refer to an area east of, and separate from, Cornwall. Peter Beresford Ellis²⁷ has in fact argued that Cornwall was already a separate, independent kingdom in the sixth century rather than simply the western part of the wider kingdom of Dumnonia. He suggests that the Latin name *Cornubia* may have developed from an earlier Romano-British tribal name, the Cornovii, and points to later medieval traditions of British kings of Cornwall, including Tewdrig, Mark and Padernus. However, this is pushing inference much too far; it is not until the eighth century that we have clear evidence for the emergence of Cornwall as a regional successor kingdom to the former western kingdom of Dumnonia.

Also at about this time, Geraint may have made a grant of land to Aldhelm. Sherborne claimed to hold a now lost charter from a 'Gerontius rex' granting the monastery 5 hides at Maker by the Tamar, in Cornwall. This is undated but Grimmer²⁸ suggests that it dates to the period of Aldhelm's episcopate at Sherborne, 705-709/10. Another lost early eighth century charter of Ine to Glastonbury was thought by Finberg to refer to Lynher, by the river Tamar, thus indicating that Ine had in his gift parts of Cornwall at this date.²⁹ However, this has subsequently been refuted by Padel, who identified that the charter in fact refers to a place by the river Tone in Somerset.³⁰

Following Aldhelm's death in 709/10, relations broke down and in 710 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Ine with Nunna of Sussex went to war

against Geraint, referred to as king of the Britons.³¹ The outcome is not stated, although according to the later writer John of Worcester, Geraint was put to flight.³² No later references to Geraint appear in any surviving source. Furthermore, in Bede's *Ecclesiastical history of the English people* of 731, Bede notes that following Aldhelm's letter (which Bede calls a book), many Britons subject to the West Saxons adopted the correct Catholic practices.³³ As Aldhelm's letter had been addressed to Geraint's subjects, not those subject to the king of Wessex, this suggests that a large area formerly controlled by Geraint had subsequently come under West Saxon control.

There is other evidence to support the idea that the West Saxons had recently incorporated significant areas and populations of Britons into the West Saxon kingdom. The law code of Ine (dating to the early part of his reign, c. 688-694) provides for separate legal status for the Saxons and the Britons, who are referred to as *wealas* or foreigners. The Britons did have rights, and were assigned wergilds (the sum payable to the next of kin of a slain person, that is, the value of that life) and were able to give an oath in popular courts to make or deny an accusation. However, these values were less than those of the Saxons.³⁴ Grimmer³⁵ has convincingly argued that these provisions specifically addressed those Britons living in the western part of Wessex, including Devon, rather than the Britons of the eastern core of Wessex. The western Britons had only recently, and relatively rapidly, been conquered. The law codes recognise this distinctive and separate British element, but also stimulate the assimilation longer-term of the Britons into West Saxon society. The creation of the Sherborne bishopric in 705 may also have been in response to a recent expansion of the West Saxon kingdom. Prior to 705, one bishop at Winchester served the entire kingdom, but following the death of Haeddi, bishop of Winchester, the diocese was divided between Winchester and Sherborne. According to the twelfth-century historian William of Malmesbury, this was because the diocese had become over-large,³⁶ perhaps specifically because the area to the west under the dominion of Wessex had significantly expanded since 676 when Haeddi had become bishop of Winchester. However, there was also a more general movement at this time to break up large bishoprics into smaller dioceses.³⁷

In 722 the *Annales Cambriae* (compiled in the tenth century) record a British victory at a battle at *Hehil* among the Cornish.³⁸ This has been identified as Hayle, near Penzance or the Camel estuary, Cornwall,³⁹ or Hele, Jacobstow or Hele in the Culm valley.⁴⁰ Neither of these latter two locations are among the Cornish, however. The defeated opponents of the Britons must be the West Saxons, although this is not stated. It seems likely that as the West Saxons were now fighting in Cornwall, that the conquest of Devon had been completed. From the eighth century, Anglo-Saxon charters or records of lost charters confirm that areas of Devon were certainly under the control of the kings of Wessex. The earliest charters are dated to 729: firstly a lost charter granting land in Torridge, that is, the valley of the river Torridge, secondly an extant charter for the foundation of Crediton minster.⁴¹ Other lost charters of the later eighth century referred to grants of land in East Devon, which we know had been in Anglo-

Saxon hands for a century or more.⁴²

Wars against the Britons of the west, probably confined to Cornwall now, continued. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that king Cuthred fought against the Britons in 743 and 753,⁴³ although the first of these accounts may refer to the Britons of Wales, since Cuthred was fighting alongside the king of Mercia. King Cynewulf (757-786) is noted by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the annal for 757 as having frequently fought great battles against the Britons.⁴⁴ This is confirmed by a charter of Cynewulf of 774, to Wells, granted in expiation of his sins and of his regrettable harassing of the Cornish enemy.⁴⁵ Finally, in 825 (corrected from 823), the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records a battle at *Gafolforda*,⁴⁶ usually identified as Galford, near Lewtrenchard, Devon⁴⁷ between the Britons and the men of Devon (*Defnas*). Clearly by this time Devon had become a fully integrated part of the kingdom of Wessex. Indeed, in the ninth century we know the names of three West Saxon ealdormen (shire governors) of Devonshire: Ceorl (fl. 844-852x855), Odda (d. 878) and Æthelred (d. 899).⁴⁸ By contrast with the laws of Ine referred to earlier, the laws of Alfred (871-899) no longer mark a division between Saxons and Britons; all Alfred's subjects were simply West Saxons.⁴⁹

By the late ninth century then, the Saxon kingdom of Wessex had conquered all of the West Country except Cornwall from the native British. By this time Wessex had been organised into administrative units called 'shires', the forerunners of our modern counties, governed by ealdormen. The earliest record of the West Saxon shire system occurs in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, compiled c. 890 under the direction of king Alfred of Wessex. However, it is clear that the system was already fully formed and of some age by this date. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle first refers to the West Saxon shires, or the peoples of those shires, in entries from the mid-eighth century onwards: firstly Hampshire (757); then Wiltshire (802); Devon (823); Dorset (840); Somerset (848), and Berkshire (860).⁵⁰ Furthermore, charters from king Cynewulf and king Beorhtric's reigns, dating from the period 758-801, are signed by six or seven men given the varying titles *praefectus*, *dux*, *patricius*, *comitis*, and *princeps*.⁵¹ These could represent the governors of each shire making up the kingdom - Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and perhaps the Isle of Wight. The term ealdorman was not used in charters of this date; although for example ealdormen are referred to in the prologue to Ine's laws of the late seventh century,⁵² the term does not yet appear to have its specific late-ninth century meaning of 'shire governor' rather than simply 'governor of a district'. Thus if we can assume that, firstly, the Chronicle references accurately reflect the governance arrangements at the date of the entries, rather than the date of the Chronicle's compilation in c. 890, and that, secondly, the shire organisation was implemented simultaneously across Wessex, rather than in a piecemeal fashion, then the shire of Devon could date back to the mid-eighth century or a little earlier.

The Old English name for the shire in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was *Defenascire*.⁵³ This name reflects the area's Celtic origins, since it is made up of

the Old English folk-noun *Defnas* or *Defene* plus *scir* (=district), the former element meaning 'people of Devon' and derived ultimately from the Romano-British tribal name *Dumnonii*.⁵⁴ By contrast the shires of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset all took their names from particular central places, the towns or royal estates of Hamtun, Wilton, Somerton and Dorchester.⁵⁵ Duncan Probert has recently suggested that the form of Old English *Defena* suggests borrowing from either late sixth century primitive Welsh or the mid-eighth century primitive Cornish.⁵⁶ This latter date would accord well with the date proposed above for the formation of the shire. The memory of the people and kingdom of Dumnonia did not only survive in the new Anglo-Saxon shire name: the old British name itself persisted. At the same time as the Chronicle was compiled, the Welsh monk Asser was composing his biography of Alfred (appendix, ref. 5). Twice, in passages referring to events in 851 and 878, Asser refers to Devon, but not as a shire; instead he refers to Devon as *Domnonia*. Asser was a Welshman, writing in Latin for a Welsh audience, and he therefore used the old British name of the kingdom of which Devon was once a substantial part. In contrast, the slightly later chronicler Æthelweard⁵⁷ (late tenth century), also writing in Latin but for an English audience, uses the English form *Defennum* for Devon.⁵⁸

A sidelight is thrown on this development by the parallel emergence of the Breton kingdoms of Domnonia and Cornouaille, in the northern and south-western parts of the Breton peninsula. These names are the same as Dumnonia and Cornwall in south-western England. According to semi-legendary accounts, the Gallic province of Armorica was colonised by immigrants from south-western Britain from the late fourth and fifth centuries onwards. By the second half of the fifth century, there are references in contemporary accounts to the peninsula being settled by Britons, and by the late sixth century it was being referred to as Britannia.⁵⁹ However, the names of the kingdoms of Domnonia and Cornouaille are only found in later sources. Domnonia is first named in the Life of St. Samson, the composition date of which is much-debated, having been placed anywhere between the seventh and ninth centuries. More certainly, sources from the late ninth century onwards, notably the lives of the saints Winwalloe and Paul de Leon, refer to Domnonia and Cornubia or Cornouaille.⁶⁰ It is likely therefore that these names were formed not during the initial migration period of the fifth and sixth centuries, but as a result of later contacts between Brittany and south-western England, at a time when Dumnonia (by then meaning Devon) and Cornwall had become recognised as separate regions.⁶¹

But even this is not the end of the story, for the name of Dumnonia survived beyond the Anglo-Saxon period and into the early twelfth century, when it continued to be used by a number of Anglo-Norman historians writing in Latin. William of Malmesbury (appendix, refs. 7-9), John of Worcester (appendix, ref. 10) and Simeon of Durham (appendix, ref. 11), all writing in the period 1120-1140, still use the name Dumnonia to mean Devonshire. William furthermore implies that the name Devonshire had only recently superseded, or was still in the process of superseding the older name of Dumnonia. Indeed, the

contemporary chronicler Henry of Huntingdon⁶² (c. 1130), also writing in Latin, does use the English form *Dauenescyre* for Devon.⁶³

By the mid-twelfth century, Welsh records provide a new name for Devon and the south-western peninsula: Dyfnaint. This name is formed from old Welsh *dubno* + *naint*, meaning 'deep valleys'.⁶⁴ The name is used to mean specifically Devon in the Mabinogion tale Culhwch and Olwen,⁶⁵ and perhaps more generally for the south-western peninsula in the early Welsh poems Geraint ab Erbin⁶⁶ and The dialogue of Melwas and Gwenhwyvar,⁶⁷ and in poems by Gwynfardd Brycheiniog and Llywarch ap Llewellyn.⁶⁸

To summarise, the kingdom of Dumnonia emerged in the uncertain conditions of the fifth century and probably covered much of the whole of the south-western peninsula. For much of this period there are no historical sources, but later legendary material attests to the existence of a royal family line of kings of Dumnonia. As the West Saxons moved west into Somerset, Dorset and Devon, the area of the kingdom shrunk westwards. The kingdom of Dumnonia appears to have ceased to exist by the first quarter of the eighth century, following the Anglo-Saxon conquest of the core area of the kingdom, the later shire of Devon, between c. 660-720. The successor British kingdom of Cornwall emerged in the west of the peninsula, whilst by perhaps c. 750, the shire of Devon had been constituted by the West Saxon kings as part of their new shire administrative structure. The old British name of Dumnonia survived as an alternative name for Anglo-Saxon Devonshire, perhaps strongly amongst British speakers, and was still recognisable and meaningful to Anglo-Norman historians of the twelfth century.

Appendix: references to Dumnonia in sources prior to c. 1150

1. Gildas, *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*; c. 540-560.

Gildas⁶⁹ is one of the very few contemporary sources for sixth-century British history. His work includes a review of British history since the Roman Conquest, followed by a lengthy admonition against contemporary kings and clerics for their moral failings. Constantine of Dumnonia is one of five British kings criticised:

Britain has kings, but they are tyrants... they hang around the altars swearing oaths – then shortly afterwards scorn them... This unspeakable sin is not unknown to Constantine, tyrant whelp of the filthy lioness of *Damnonia* [Gildas goes on to accuse Constantine of crimes including murder, adultery, putting away his wife, parricide and sacrilege] (chapter 28).⁷⁰

Although Gildas does not provide any indication of the geographical extent of the kingdom, or how and when it came into being, the name alone confirms Dumnonia as the successor kingdom to the Roman *civitas* of the Dumnonii, or at least the most significant of a possible number of successor kingdoms to the *civitas*. The form *Damnonia* (a 'place of ruin') puns on the correct form

Dumnonia;⁷¹ this latter form is found in a lost manuscript of the *De excidio*.⁷²

2. Aldhelm, *Letter IV: to Geraint*; c. 700-706?

Aldhelm⁷³ was abbot of Malmesbury and later bishop of Sherborne. He had been instructed by a synod to write to Geraint, king of Dumnonia, concerning the Britons' failure to follow the orthodox dating of Easter and other Roman practices:

To the most glorious King Geraint, the lord who guides the sceptre of the western kingdom, whom I embrace with fraternal charity ... and likewise to all the bishops of God abiding throughout *Domnonia* ... We have heard and received report from the relation of diverse rumours that your bishops are not at all in harmony with the rule of the Catholic Faith according to the precepts of Scripture.⁷⁴

Dumnonia is here the 'western kingdom', presumably specifically in the sense of west of the kingdom of Wessex. By this time, Dumnonia probably consisted of only western Devon and Cornwall, the West Saxons having conquered much of eastern Devon. This letter was dated by Lapidge and Herren to c. 675,⁷⁵ which was followed by Grimmer,⁷⁶ but Abrams⁷⁷ suggests a date of c. 706. In a recent reassessment, Lapidge has now proposed that the letter cannot be dated more closely than between 682 and 706.⁷⁸ The end of this date range seems more plausible if it was part of the activity leading up to the war between Ine, king of Wessex and Geraint, in 710.

3. Aldhelm, *Carmen rhythmicum*; c. 706-709/10?

This poem concerns a mighty storm experienced by Aldhelm whilst travelling in the south-west. Aldhelm appears to have been travelling back from Cornwall through Devon, to Sherborne or Malmesbury:

When I had set out for nasty Domnoniam and was proceeding through Cornubiam [Cornwall] – which is devoid of any flowering vegetation or grasses in any abundance – the mighty elements and the chaotic masses (of the universe) were driven to collision under the fiery dome of the vaulted sky.⁷⁹

Here Aldhelm seems to regard Dumnonia as a separate region to the east of Cornwall, rather than a wider area including both Devon and Cornwall. The poem cannot be closely dated, but may be connected with diplomatic activity associated with Letter IV above.⁸⁰

4. Wrdisten, *Vita sancti Winwaloei*; second half of ninth century.

This is a Breton life of a sixth-century saint, and as with most hagiographical accounts is semi-legendary in character. This particular passage, about the emigration of Winwalloe's parents to Brittany, draws on Gildas:

The British King Catovius ... ruled over *Nomnia*, a country notorious for its sacrileges, unlawful feastings and adulteries. A pestilence was sent to avenge these

crimes, and to escape it Fracan [father of St. Winwalloe] crossed the British sea [to Brittany] (Book I, chapter 2).⁸¹

Nomnia is a corrupted form of *Dumnonia*, and Cato or Cador appears in the later mediaeval genealogies as a descendant of Constantine, perhaps living in the early seventh century. However, the account provides no further details about *Dumnonia* or where Winwalloe's family was believed to have lived.

5. Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi*; 893.

The Welshman Asser⁸² was the biographer of king Alfred of Wessex, and later bishop of Sherborne. In his biography of Alfred, which seems to have been aimed at a Welsh audience, Asser regularly uses British place-names in his work,⁸³ including in the following passages:

In the year of the Lord's Incarnation 851 ... Ceorl, ealdorman of *Domnanice*, fought with the men of *Domnanis* against the Vikings at the place called *Wiganbeorg* (chapter 3).⁸⁴

In the same year [878] the brother of Ivar and Halfdan ... came to *Domnaniam*; there ... he met an unhappy death with 1,200 men at *Cynuit* (chapter 54).⁸⁵

It is clear that Asser equated the region for which he used the British name *Dumnonia* with the Anglo-Saxon shire of Devonshire. In the contemporary Anglo-Saxon Chronicle record of these events in 851 and 878, the English shire-name *Defenascire* is used. Asser also refers to Cornwall (*Cornubia*) on three occasions.⁸⁶ It is evident he regarded *Domnonia* (Anglo-Saxon Devon) and *Cornubia* (still a semi-independent British kingdom) as separate geographical and/or tribal areas.

6. Charter of Egbert to three sisters; ninth century.

A charter of Egbert, king of Wessex, dated 833, refers to land inherited by Beornwyn at Dartington. *Domnoniam*.⁸⁷ However, the charter may later have been subject to some reworking, so the use of the term *Domnonia* for Devon may also be later.

7. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum Anglorum*; c. 1125.

William⁸⁸ was a Benedictine monk and a prolific and careful historian. In his works he makes numerous references to *Dumnonia*; these are listed at Refs. 7-9 below and collectively discussed at Ref. 9.

In the division of the bishopric of the West Saxons the acknowledged rule was that ... the bishop of Sherborne should have Wiltshire, Dorset, Berkshire, Somerset, *Domnoniensem* and Cornwall (Book II, chapter 79).⁸⁹

Athelm controlled Somerset, Eadwulf *Domnoniam*, and Athelstan Cornwall (Book

II, chapter 80).⁹⁰

Crediton ... is a small village in *Domnoniæ* (commonly called *Devenescire*) (Book II, chapter 94).⁹¹

There is in *Domnonia* a monastery on the River Tavy called Tavistock, which was begun by Ordgar, *comes Domnoniensem* (Book II, chapter 95).⁹²

8. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*; c. 1125.

In the year of our Lord's Incarnation 601 ... the king of *Domnoniæ* ... granted to the old church [of Glastonbury] ... the land called Yniswitrin (Book I, chapter 27).⁹³

The kings of the West Saxons ruled in ... *Domnonia*, now called *Devenescire*, and *Cornubia*, now Cornwall (Book I, chapter 100).⁹⁴

9. William of Malmesbury, *De antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie*; c. 1135.

In 601AD the king of *Domnoniæ* granted [5] cassates on the estate called Yniswitrin to the old church [of Glastonbury] on the petition of Abbot Worgret. I. Bishop Mawron wrote this charter. I. Worgret, abbot of that place, have subscribed. The age of the document prevents us knowing who that king was, yet it can be presumed that he was British because he referred to Glastonbury in his own tongue as Yniswitrin which, as we know, was the British name (Ch. 35).⁹⁵

The king of *Domnoniæ* gave 5 hides of land known as Yniswitrin [to Glastonbury] (chapter 69).⁹⁶

William's accounts confirm that the British name *Dumnonia* (*Domnonia*), originally the name of the much larger British kingdom, survived and was recognised as an alternative name for the Anglo-Saxon shire of Devon (*Devenescire*) from the eighth until the early twelfth century. *Gesta pontificum* I, 79 refers to the division of the West Saxon diocese into two bishoprics at Sherborne and Winchester in 705, and lists the shires covered by each bishopric (although the shires probably did not exist until later than this date). The next chapter (80) then refers to the later division in 909 of the two bishoprics into five, each covering a shire. In both cases William uses the term *Domnonia* without qualification, although it is clearly meant as synonymous with Devon. On two occasions (*Gesta pontificum* I, 94 and *Gesta regum* I, 100) William gives both names, and indicates that by the time he was writing *Devenescire* had superceded, or was in the process of superceding *Domnonia*. These two references both refer to the period of the Crediton bishopric, which was in existence between 909 and 1050. At *Gesta pontificum* II, 95 William refers to Ordgar, *comes Domnoniensem* starting to build a monastery at Tavistock in *Domnonia*, perhaps around 970. In contrast, at *Gesta regum* I, 157 William refers to Ordgar as *ducis Devenensium*, when discussing the marriage of

Ordgar's daughter Elfrida to king Edgar in 961. William also uses *Devenescire* at *Gesta regum* I, 165 in a passage referring to the Danish raids on Devon between 997-1003.

The references at *Gesta regum* I, 27 and *De Antiquitate* 35 and 69, to the king of Dumnonia granting land to the abbot of Glastonbury in 601, are of a different order. It is not clear whether the document that William saw actually gave the title of its donor, or whether William simply inferred this, but the latter seems more likely. At the very least, William clearly found it credible that in the early seventh century, a king of Dumnonia was in a position to grant land at Glastonbury itself, and therefore must have understood that in the early seventh century, Dumnonia covered a much wider area of western Britain rather than simply the area of Devon which William equated with Dumnonia in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

10. John of Worcester, *Chronicon ex chronicis*; composed c. 1118-1140.

Like William of Malmesbury, his contemporary and probable acquaintance, John⁹⁷ was a Benedictine monk and chronicler. In his work, John consistently refers to Devon using the forms *Domnanie* / *Domnaniam* / *Domnaniis* / *Domnaniensibus* throughout his work. The relevant annals are at 823, 851, 878, 894, 931, 964, 971, 972, 977, 981, 988, 997, 1001, 1003, 1013, 1016, 1017, 1046, 1052, 1067, 1068, 1135 and also in a list of the West Saxon bishops.⁹⁸ These references fall into three categories. Firstly, those for 851 and 878 derive from Asser. Secondly, in most of the other annals John is following the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle but replacing the English form *Defenascire* for Devon with Dumnonia. Finally, the annals for 964 and 971 refer to Ordgar as *ducis/dux Domnanie* and that for 997 refers to Ordgar's son Orduif as *Domnanie primatis*. These titles are not found in pre-Conquest records. Ordgar signs charters as minister (957-964) then dux (964-971), although Byrthferth's *Life of St. Oswald* (c.997-1002) does call him dux of the West Angles.⁹⁹ Orduif signs charters as simply minister between c. 975-1005.¹⁰⁰

11. Simeon of Durham, *Historia regum*; 1129.

Simeon¹⁰¹ was another Benedictine monk and chronicler contemporary with William and John. Simeon refers to Devon as Dumnonia in the form *Domnanie* under the annals for 851, 877, 964, 968, 971, 981, 997, 1001, 1003 and 1046.¹⁰² In all cases Simeon is following John of Worcester.

12. Forged charter of King Edgar to Crowland Abbey; twelfth century.

This charter, dated 966 but actually a later forgery, includes as a signatory Ordgar dux *Domnanie*.¹⁰³ There are no genuine pre-Conquest charters where Ordgar uses this title, and the author of the charter may therefore have drawn this detail from John of Worcester or William of Malmesbury's works.

13. Caradoc of Lancarfan, *Vita Gildas*; early twelfth century.

Caradoc¹⁰⁴ was author of largely legendary hagiographies of the Celtic saints

Gildas and Cadoc. In the first of those, he makes Gildas the mediator in a conflict between Arthur and Melvas, which arose as follows.

At the time when King Melvas was reigning in the summer country ... Glastonbury ... was besieged by the tyrant Arthur ... on account of his wife Gwenhwyfar, whom the aforesaid wicked king [Melvas] had violated and carried off ... he roused the armies of the whole of *Cornubiæ* [Cornwall] and *Dibneniæ*; war was prepared between the enemies (Ch. 10).¹⁰⁵

This particular story is also alluded to in medieval Welsh poems which use the medieval Welsh term *Dyfnaint* for Devon. Caradoc's account preserves the older term, although in a slightly corrupted form. Although the events are set in the sixth century when Dumnonia was a single kingdom covering a wide area of western Britain. Cornubia and Dumnonia are used here in their later sense as separate regions with Dumnonia equating to Devon only.

14. *Annals of St Neots*: first half of twelfth century.

This work, a version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, simply follows Asser's references for 851 and 878 which refer to Dumnonia.¹⁰⁶

15. *De situ Brecheniauc / Cognacio Brychan*: early twelfth century.

Charles Thomas¹⁰⁷ has argued that the 'Brychan documents', legendary accounts of the saintly family of Brychan, founder of the kingdom of Brycheiniog in south-central Wales, make reference to the kingdom of Dumnonia. According to these accounts, the grave of Brychan is on Ynys Brychan, next to *Mannia*, and three saints (Kynan, Run and Bethan) are associated with *Mannia / Manau / Manan* whilst a fourth, Berwin is associated with *Cornwallia / Cornubiam* (Cornwall). Thomas argues that *Mannia / Manau / Manan* are all corrupt forms of the name Dumnonia. Other writers have argued that *Mannia* should be identified with the Isle of Man, Angelsey, or an area of south-east Scotland.

Notes and references

1. Rivet and Smith (1979), pp. 342-3.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 392-3.
3. Cunliffe (1991), pp. 157, 162 and 180.
4. Bonedd y Saint nos. 26, 27, 73 and 76, in Bartrum (1966), pp. 58 and 65.
5. Pearce (1971); and Pearce (1978), pp. 139-44.
6. Alexander (1919-22).
7. Gover, Mawer and Stenton (1931-2), pp. xiii-xix.
8. Hoskins (1954), pp. 41-5; and *ibid.* (1960).
9. Finberg (1964a), pp. 95-115.
10. Porter (1967).
11. Todd (1987), pp. 267-75.
12. Alcock (1971), pp. 338-40.

13. Whitelock, Douglas and Tucker (1961), pp. 14, 16 and 21.
14. Hoskins (1960), pp. 8-10; and Todd, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-2.
15. Breeze (2004); and (2005b).
16. Hoskins (1960), pp. 15-16.
17. Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
18. Hoskins (1960), pp. 14; Todd, *op. cit.*, pp. 272; and Breeze (2005a).
19. Talbot (1954), p. 28 (chapter 1).
20. Orme (1992), pp. 116-7.
21. Hoskins (1960), p. 17.
22. Pearce (1978), p. 110.
23. Lapidge and Rosier (1985), p. 48.
24. Whitelock, Douglas and Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
25. Darlington, McGurk and Bray (1995), pp. 138-9. John (pp. 168-9 and 242-3) also states that the West Saxons were victorious in the campaign against Geraint in 710 and at the battle of Gafulford in 823, which is not stated in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. In all three cases where John supplies extra detail, it seems more likely that he was making inferences from the Chronicle account rather than drawing on a lost source.
26. Grimmer (2001).
27. Ellis (1993), pp. 71-3.
28. Grimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
29. Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-2.
30. Padel (1991), pp. 250-2.
31. Whitelock, Douglas and Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
32. Darlington, McGurk and Bray, *op. cit.*, p. 169. But see note 25.
33. Colgrave and Mynors (1969), p. 515 (Book V.18).
34. Whitelock (1955), pp. 364-72 (Laws 23.3, 24.2, 32, 33, 46.1, 54.2, 74, 74.1).
35. Grimmer (2007), pp. 108-11.
36. Preest (2002), p. 255 (Book 5.223).
37. Stenton (1971), pp. 134-6.
38. Morris (1980), p. 47.
39. Hoskins (1960), p. 19.
40. Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 273.
41. Hooke (1994), p. 86; Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England database (PASE), Sources, Charters, F1, S255; www.pase.ac.uk/content/about_database/charters.html [accessed 13/10/08].
42. Hooke, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-5. The places in East Devon are Culmstock, Culm Davy, and Uplyme.
43. Whitelock (1961), pp. 29-30.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
45. Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 117. PASE, Sources, Charters, S262 [accessed 13/10/08]. The charter is dated 766 but should perhaps be correctly dated to 774.
46. Whitelock (1961), p. 40.

47. Hoskins (1960), p. 20. Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 273.
48. PASE, Persons, Ceorl 2, Odda 1 and Odda 2. Æthelred 18 [accessed 13/10/08].
49. Whitelock (1955), pp. 372-80.
50. PASE, Locations, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Berkshire [accessed 13/10/08].
51. PASE, Sources, Charters, S261, S262, S263, S264, S268 and S269 [accessed 13/10/08].
52. Whitelock (1955), pp. 364-372, laws 8 and 39.
53. Devon or Devonshire is referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle annals for 823, 851, 878, 894, 897, 901, 961, 977, 981, 988, 997, 1001, 1017, 1046, 1051, 1052 and 1067; see Whitelock, 1961. *Defenascire* is also found in two charters of 996 and 1037x40. PASE, Sources, Charters, S877 and S1467 [accessed 13/10/08].
54. Watts, Insley and Gelling (2004), p. 186.
55. Brooks (2000), pp. 121-2.
56. Probert (2007), p. 240.
57. Wormald (2004a).
58. Campbell (1962), pp. 31, 42 and 43 (Books iii.4 and iv.3).
59. Chadwick (1969), pp. 194-6; and Snyder (2003), pp. 147-50.
60. Giot, Guignan and Merdrignac (2003), pp. 73 and 123-4.
61. Clear evidence of contacts between south-western England and Brittany in the eighth-ninth centuries is lacking, but for tenth-century contacts, see Pearce (1973), pp. 95-9.
62. Greenway (2004).
63. Greenway (1996), pp. 222-5 and 266-7 (Books iv.8 and iv.32).
64. Watts, Insley and Gelling (2004), p. 186.
65. Gantz (1976), pp. 145-6 and 173. Bromwich and Evans (1988), pp. 11 and 40 (lines 297, 313, 1167).
66. Sims-Williams (1991), p. 47.
67. Williams (1938), pp. 39-42; and Sims-Williams (1991), p. 59.
68. Anwyl (1909), pp. 82, 84, 88 and 91.
69. Kerlouégan (2004).
70. Winterbottom (1978), pp. 29 and 99.
71. Higham (1994), p. 176.
72. Jackson (1982), p. 30.
73. Lapidge (2004).
74. Lapidge and Herren (1979), pp. 155-60.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 141-3.
76. Grimmer (2001), p. 3.
77. Abrams (1991), p. 117.
78. Lapidge (2007), pp. 68-9.
79. Lapidge and Rosier (1985), p. 177.
80. Lapidge (2007), p. 69.

81. Doble (1962), p. 66.
82. Wormald (2004b).
83. Keynes and Lapidge (1983), pp. 56 and 250.
84. Stevenson (1959), p. 4; and Keynes and Lapidge (1983), p. 68.
85. Stevenson, *ibid.*, p. 43; and Keynes and Lapidge, *ibid.*, pp. 83-4.
86. At chapters 74, 81 and 102. Keynes and Lapidge, *ibid.*, pp. 89, 97 and 107.
87. PASE, Sources, Charters, S277; Anglo-Saxons.net, Charters, S277; <http://www.anglo-saxons.net> [accessed 28/11/08].
88. Thomson (2004).
89. Winterbottom and Thomson (2007), pp. 276-7.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 280-1.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 314-5.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-7.
93. Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom (1998), pp. 812-3.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7.
95. Scott (1981), pp. 88-9.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.
97. McGurk (2004).
98. Darlington, McGurk, and Bray, *op. cit.*
99. PASE, Persons, Ordgar 5 [accessed 13/10/08].
100. *Ibid.*, Persons, Ordwulf 4 [accessed 13/10/08].
101. Meehan (2004).
102. Arnold (1885).
103. PASE, Sources, Charters, S741; Anglo-Saxons.net, Charters, S741 [accessed 20/07/08].
104. Walker (2004).
105. Williams (1990).
106. Dumville and Lapidge (1985), pp. 42 and 77.
107. Thomas (1994), pp. 143, 151 and 155-6.

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Nicholas Grant has been studying Devon's history for over a quarter of a century. His articles on aspects of the history and archaeology of the early medieval period have been published in various academic journals, including the *Devon Historian*.

South Devon's 'Newfanlan men'

Marion Hardy

In 1714 the vicar of Brixham requested permission to build a gallery for want of sufficient seats in the church. 'especially in ye Fall of the years when our Newfoundland men return from Sea'.¹ Mr Stephen Rendell, in the nineteenth century, told Prowse that the people of south Devon reckoned the time by the church lectionary: 'Jan! the Parson be in Pruverbs, the Newfanlan men will soon be a coming whome'.²

Mr Rendell first went to Newfoundland in 1834, when hundreds of sturdy Devonshire lads went out every year to St John's, Torbay, Bay Bulls and other harbours. They were shipped usually for two summers and a winter. He thought that nearly every labouring man from Coffinswell had been a servant, that is, a fishing servant, in the seasonal Newfoundland trade.³

The 'Newfoundland men'

The term 'Newfoundland men' was applied chiefly to the fishing servants but also to migratory bye-boat keepers, those who owned one or more boats that were kept 'by' in Newfoundland. This article concentrates on the first of these, those 'common people' who went to Newfoundland every year according to the clergy of Dittisham and Tonnohum.⁴ These numerous fishing servants were employed by the bye-boat keepers, who were a sort of middle class of the trade, or the merchants, ship-owners and master mariners, some being all three, who organised the trade.

At first all of these people were away seasonally, but increasingly the merchants and ship-owners, if not active mariners, remained in Devon, relying on their master mariners and agents, in Newfoundland and on the continent, to conduct business on their behalf. The bye-boat keepers and the 'servants' operated seasonally in a direct or triangular trade from the late sixteenth into the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1850 Teignmouth 'ha[d] still a large trade with Newfoundland'.⁵ Much of the information used here comes from the settlement examinations from twenty-seven parishes.

Newfoundland men, other than the bye-boat keepers, may have been apprentices or have volunteered. Parish apprentices were not necessarily from coastal areas; nor were their masters. Andrew Grindon was a 'poor child' of Drewsteignton, on Dartmoor, who, in 1765, was apprenticed to Anthony Lovell of Hennock in the Teign valley to be instructed 'in the Art of the Newfoundland Fishery' until of the full age of twenty-four.⁶ However, John Sampson of South Bovey 'put himself apprentice unto M^{rs} In^o Newman & Co., merchants of Dartmouth, to learn the art of a mariner...four years'.⁷ West Teignmouth assigned some young people to mariner/traders, such as Gilbert Clapp.⁸ Some

were even apprenticed to masters in Newfoundland.⁹ Few others were obliged to go to Newfoundland, but Robert Perriton of West Alvington was to 'ship himself in some vessel employed in the Newfoundland Trade the following season', and his master was to pay the overseers 1s 6d a week toward the maintenance of his wife and family who he had deserted.¹⁰ Some ran away to go to sea. Joseph Kentisbeer, at about nineteen years, 'ran off from his said master and went to Newfoundland and tarried in Fortune Bay...for three years'. by which time his apprenticeship would have ended.¹¹

Most of 'ye common people' put themselves forward to be recruited by merchants, master mariners or their agents, but individual bye-boat keepers might recruit their own crews for the fishing boats. John Hill was hired by Edward Tree 'to go with him to Newfoundland to be master of his fishing voyage'.¹² Others appear to have been asked if they would like to go, like John Down, who, 'having an invitation to go to Newfoundland', had to have his labourer's contract altered for it to be possible.¹³

A number seem to have been recruited from within the home parishes of merchants and ship-owners, but 'Newton Bushell (part of Newton Abbot) and Poole (were) the principal marts where people (were) hired for this employ'.¹⁴ The Dartmouth Inn and, later, the Newfoundland Hotel (since demolished) were used for signing contracts, sealed with cider, beer or even 'Jamaica'.¹⁵ Farington described the process as he heard of it:

During the peace Sixteen Captains of Ships which sailed to Newfoundland have at one time resided with their families at this place (Newton Abbot)...Here at the Season appointed for hiring sailors...great numbers flocked for that purpose. Our Landlord said there have been 1200 sailors at one time assembled in the town, to be hired, and that those who had not made an engagement carried white rods in their hands...The terms were higher or lower according to the qualifications and experience which the Sailors might have...¹⁶

Occupations on going to Newfoundland, using partially rounded figures, were some 65% from farming and labouring, 16.5% scamen, 7% those with skills such as carpenter, blacksmith or cooper, and the remaining 11.5% came from backgrounds as diverse as hatter, butcher or potter.¹⁷ In 1623 it was recorded that 'there are few mariners in these parts but are husbandmen & in the winter time employ themselves in the common labours of the country'.¹⁸

Wages were possibly an attraction. An early Barnstaple contract was not very generous, especially as it forbade 'shares' to those on standing (season) wages.¹⁹ Share fishing was normal and some might bring home some of the dried fish, which could be imported free of duty if it was of the ship's own taking.²⁰ Mr Crews of Newton Abbot received payment in dried cod fish for boots and shoes sold to fishermen.²¹ However, other references to wages suggest better. In the 1770s a mariner might earn £15 to £22 per annum and, in the 1790s, Aaron Thomas gave a wage of £10 to £16 for a season.²² Holdsworth was noted for offering the best wages, but his high-handedness over sites in

Newfoundland was not fair to the local bye-boat keepers and regulations had to be made.

When men first entered the Newfoundland trade, ages ranged from nine to twenty-eight with a median of twenty-one. Half of the men were between eighteen and twenty-four. The double peaks, at twenty-one and twenty-four, reflect the ages at which apprenticeships ended after and before 1777/8. Among the youngest were apprentices, like the ten year old apprenticed to his uncle.²³ It seems that venturing into the Newfoundland trade was common following apprenticeship, but it was not limited to that. Ships' muster rolls suggest a higher average age, probably because it included a number who were 'regular' Newfoundland men and so older.²⁴

Philip Bond seems to have been a fairly typical short-term 'Newfoundland man'. A second son, he was baptised 8 October 1749 at Down St Mary, near Crediton. Before he was ten, he was bound apprentice by the parish overseers to Mary Wrayford, but she died *circa* 1759/60, and he continued on the estate with her tenant 'for about 5 years'. He then went to Chudleigh, Highweck, Tormoham and Combeinteignhead, before spending nearly two years in Ashcombe. Then Philip left, with consent, to go to Combeinteignhead where he started by the week but later agreed at £5 the year. In January 1770 he 'shipped himself for Newfoundland', so made another weekly agreement to stay with his master until he sailed in April. Philip did two seasons in Newfoundland and, after his return to Combeinteignhead in late 1771, aged twenty-two, he married Dorothy Nicholls 14 January 1772. A month later he was asking for parish assistance.²⁵ The sequence of events is typical, although he had moved around more than most before leaving for Newfoundland.

If the baptism is correct, all this occurred before his apprenticeship would have expired. A number of the examinations relate that a master or mistress died or failed in business, so that the young person was obliged to seek alternative arrangements. Others made the choice, like William Leaman, who was apprenticed to a tailor until twenty-one, but at eighteen went 'to sea in the Newfoundland trade'. He was in that 'service ever since', although a second version gives 'staid four years', returning at Christmas 1821.²⁶

The Newfoundland experience

Those who had committed to a contract might set out on fishing ships at any time after March 1st, either with a direct Newfoundland and return fishing voyage, or with the return via a market. During the eighteenth century fishing ships were replaced increasingly by sack ships, those carrying passengers and cargoes but not engaging directly in fishing, and, latterly, ships were often primarily for trade. These undertook a triangular voyage, with some making two trips between Newfoundland and the Iberian Peninsula, or beyond, before returning to Devon the following year.²⁷ Trading ships might leave as late as May.

Young Herbert Collard said that it took him two months to accomplish the basic sailing skills needed on board a schooner. These included learning how to

'box the compass, make fast the top-gallant sail, the main topmast staysail, the flying jib, the gaff topsail and a hundred and one other things'.²⁸ If a monthly-waged mariner failed in his duties, he might be prosecuted after the voyage; like Thomas Barter, who had been engaged at £1-7-6 a month, but 'wilfully neglected his duty of a marriner'.²⁹

The men on the ships that sailed early had to contend with possibly rough seas, the fogs of the Grand Banks and perhaps ice bergs. Diseases such as fever, scurvy, consumption, rheumatism and dysentery could be a problem.³⁰ If the men arrived safely at St John's or one of the outports (any harbour other than St John's) they would have seen the waterside lined by the wooden stages and flakes, as shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3.



Figure 1: St John's Town, view towards approximately east-north-east; part of map, 1728 (key: A - where the fort was; B - church; C - flakes; D - stages) (source: TNA, PRO WO78/307 (reproduced with kind permission of The National Archives)).



Figure 2: Stages at Durrell, Twillingate, Newfoundland (1991). These are the wooden jetties on to which the fish are landed.

If there had been no over-wintering men, one of the first tasks would be to make any repairs necessary for their use in the new season.

The main employments for the season were 'in the boats', catching the fish, or on land 'making' the fish, by preparing, salting and drying them. Yonge, in the seventeenth century, describes the processes much as they are shown in Figure 4. A boat's complement was five, three to catch the fish and two to save it. On return to the stage, the fish were thrown up using an iron prong. A boy took them to a table where the header worked, allowing the livers to go through a hole in the table to a tub, so that they could be used to make train oil, unrefined cod liver oil. The splitter prepared the fish for salting, before dropping them into a barrow to be taken to one side of the stage where boys laid them one on the other. The salter carried salt in a wooden shovel and used a brush to put it on the fish, which were layered into piles about three feet high. The quality of the finished product depended upon the skill of the salter.

The piles were left from three to ten days, before being washed by the boys and spread out to dry on the flakes. At night or in wet weather, the fish were piled into faggots. When ready the fish were put into small piles to 'sweat' out the salt and, when dry, in larger piles to await shipment (Figure 4).

*A Representation of the Fish Flakes, & Manner
of Drying Fish; in Newfoundland 1794.*



- 1 The Fish, placed in Racks.*
- 2 Laid on the Flakes, to dry.*
- 3 Being Dried: — are placed in Piles.*

Figure 3: Aaron Thomas, 'Drying Fish', 1794 (reproduced with kind permission of the Archives and Special Collections of Memorial University Newfoundland).

In later years women might help with the salting and serve as cooks for the crews.³¹ Now few flakes remain and the little drying that takes place is on a domestic scale, as in Figure 5.

A View of a Stage & also of the manner of Fishing for, Curing & Drying Cod at NEW FOUND LAND.
A. The Habit of the Fishermen. B. The Tine. C. The manner of Fishing. D. The Dressing of the Fish. E. The Trough into which they throw the Cod when Dressed. F. Salt Boxes. G. The manner of Carrying of Cod. H. The Cleansing of Cod. I. A Part or extract of Oyl from the Cod's Liver. K. Casks to receive the Water & Blood that comes from the Liver. L. Another Cask to receive the Oyl. M. The manner of Drying of Cod.

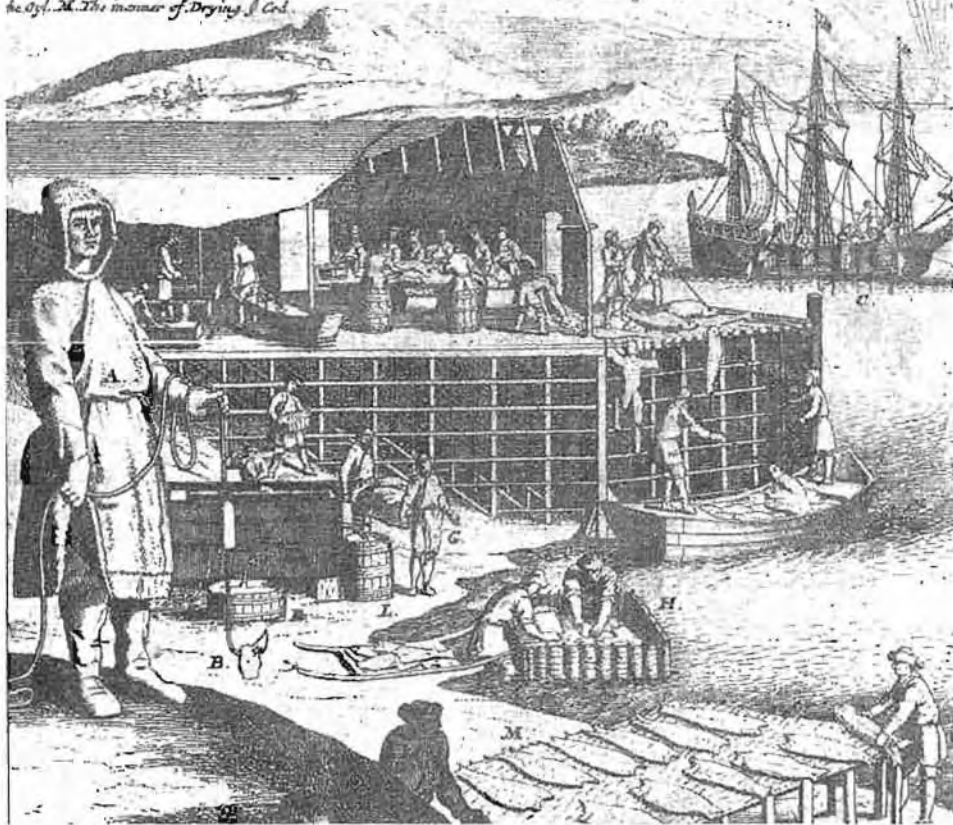


Figure 4: The manner of fishing for, curing and drying of cod at Newfoundland, as shown in an insert to a map of North America by Herman Moll 172-? (G 3300 1720 M6 MAP) (reproduced by courtesy of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University Newfoundland).

The people had to contend with the weather, which when fine and still brought out a kind of mosquito and blood-sucking flies.³² Towards the end of the season some fish might have to be 'green', that is wet salted, not dried. The quality dried fish were then 'merchantable', or fit for sale in Spain, Portugal or Italy, whereas the second class would be sold in the West Indies where barrels of molasses or rum might be purchased as part of the return cargo.

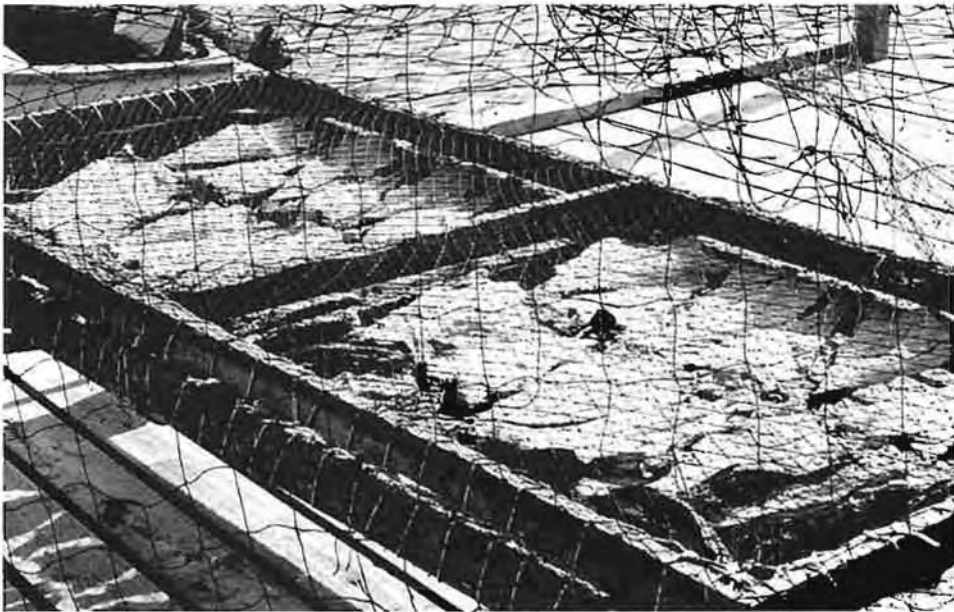


Figure 5: Twenty-first century fish drying for the home, here on netting, at Fleur de Lys, Newfoundland (2001). (There has been a fishing moratorium from 1992. Limited recreational fishing is permitted).

The fishing season ended in late August, so fishing-ships usually left by mid-September; but in the 1770s, for return voyages which were to call at a market, October 20 was a common date for the end or beginning of a contract.³³ For those who were contracted to remain over-winter in Newfoundland, who chose to or who were perhaps even obliged to do so if money paid had been ill-spent, there were, in addition to the winter climate, possible problems with their French rivals. Many lost their lives during the French and Indian attacks on Petty Harbour and St John's in November and December of 1696. Those at the fort in St John's (Figure 1) 'yielded upon articles' to the French, from whom they had a ship to bring them home to England. Over two hundred people made the crowded journey to Dartmouth, and Elias Bickford arrived home in Coffinswell 10 January 1697.³⁴

The homeward voyage, direct or indirect, could be more hazardous than the outward in some years, due to the possibilities of being captured by pirate or enemy ships. The only son of Thomas Suckas of Exmouth was aboard the *Dofine* of Topsham when it was taken in October 1677 by 'an Algierie man of Warr and carried into Algier...' He was detained in 'miserable captivity having at first £80 put on his redemption but now advanced to £120'.³⁵

This is related in one of sixteen documents of Devon quarter sessions, from 1679 to 1688, which contain the names of thirty men, fifteen of them in one petition. The petitions were submitted to request money towards the payment of ransoms, which ranged from £30 to £250 for a ship's captain. The fifteen were all aboard the *Blessing* of Dartmouth, taken in 1684. Mayor Edward Roope and

twelve others signed the petition from the relations, who, 'being utterly unable to procure their redemption...' implored that they be given '...ye accustomed bounty...'.³⁶ At least one had the good fortune to be redeemed by a merchant; others gave all that they had to return, impoverished, to England.³⁷

Sadly, some died in captivity. One desperate mother, on hearing of such a case, requested that the 'sum of fower pound towards the redemption of John Jope of Kenton...who is since deceased ... may be ordered by your worships to be employed for the redemption of her sonn'.³⁸ During conflicts with the French, ships might be taken and the men taken into France. Young John Sampson (above) was on his second voyage aboard a Newman ship when it was taken by the French, but he returned to England from France 'in a Cartell', a ship employed in an exchange of prisoners. Having returned to Bovey Tracey he did not go to sea again, but became a potter.³⁹

Home again

The 'Newfanlan' men who returned safely, at any time between October and February, still had the rest of the Devon winter ahead. Every man that traded from Paignton to Newfoundland 'at his Return home from sea is obliged to pay ye vicar 2s 6d'.⁴⁰ In the seventeenth century the men from Paignton and five other parishes had petitioned the Privy Council against the payment of 'unlawful demands of tithes', so perhaps other parishes still tithed their efforts.⁴¹

Richard Beer made seven voyages to Newfoundland and was then impressed into 'his Majesty's service', in which he served eight years or more before being legally discharged sometime before 1771. During the Napoleonic wars another who was impressed said that he had served in the navy eleven years prior to examination in 1815.⁴² (Newman's crews were given immunity from the press gangs from 19 February 1814).⁴³ Being impressed into the navy was the next stage in life for a number of them, since the navy regarded the Newfoundland trade as an excellent training ground for seamen.⁴⁴

Some appear to have chosen to join the navy. When bounties were offered this might have been tempting.⁴⁵ Others went into more general merchant shipping, but most appear to have returned to their previous occupations for the winter. For those without a trade, there might be the chance to earn by assisting with the cider production or the winter cabbage crop in the Paignton area. In 1724 Combeinteignhead had such a glut of apples that the pounding for cider did not end until 8 February following.⁴⁶ There might be other labouring opportunities, perhaps just road mending, but some did not manage to survive the winter without parish assistance. For those still in the Newfoundland trade, March had the most requests for parish assistance.⁴⁷

The men's seasonal movements and perhaps also the receipt of wages on return, influenced the time when they might marry or father a child. The parishes which were homes to 'Newfoundland men' appear to have had marked annual patterns of marriages, with almost all occurring from November to February; whereas in agricultural areas, the peaks were in February and April, with secondary ones in September and December. Baptisms also show a different

pattern. In the nineteenth century, though, the patterns appear to be less seasonal.⁴⁸ This suggests that they had been influenced by the then declining seasonal Newfoundland trade.

A ballad of Newfoundland Seaman implies that the men were not to be trusted and is written as a warning. A full reading shows that the girl had turned down an offer of marriage, so the seaman's guilt was debateable, in part.⁴⁹ The Newfoundland men seem not to have been so much worse than others, but the nature of the trade did give rise to some children born as a result of liaisons between married women left in Devon and other seamen in lodgings for the winter.⁵⁰ One bye-boat keeper took the widowed, then pregnant, keeper of his winter lodgings with him to Newfoundland, where they remained some seven years at least. By then there were several more children, and they were keeping an ale house as well as the fishing boat.⁵¹ However, on balance, the incidence of bastardy in the area appears to have been rather less than in the population as a whole.⁵² One wonders how many of those men who failed to return, having left a wife behind, 'married' again in Newfoundland.

Bye-boat keepers seem not to appear in settlement examinations. Evidence shows that some failed and remained 'very poor in Newfoundland or New England', or, like John Symonds, who had sold his land in Harberton, died in Newfoundland, leaving 'Bonds of Adventure' (loans) unpaid in England. One who returned was in prison, 'his effects not worth sixpence'.⁵³

Those with more capital, some bearing the title 'Mr', had a better starting point. Perhaps these were more likely to become successfully resident in Newfoundland, like the Halfyards who settled at Ochre Pit Cove, or Peter Winsor, from Denbury, who became a member of the House of Assembly.⁵⁴ Devon provided just over 35% of the English who settled in Newfoundland.⁵⁵

Being one of the 'Newfanlan' men', engaging in the 'Newfoundland service', or 'using the seas' could be a short term expedient or a long-term occupation. Robert Tolchard of East Ogwell made fishing trips for over forty-nine years and owned property in Torbay, Newfoundland.⁵⁶ Temporary migration might be contractual, intended or circumstantial, or result in permanent migration. The men faced many hazards, which might prove economically disastrous or even personally fatal. Some suffered misfortune, but, for others, being a 'Newfanlan' man was a beneficial form of temporary or longer term employment. It was a life-stage for a number of parish apprentices, and for others the trade was life-long, as for Joseph Perkins who 'ever used the seas till the day of his death...July last and that he hath not since his decease done any act to...gain settlement.'⁵⁷

Acknowledgements

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Marion Hardy is retired geography teacher. Historical research interests began when a Goldsmiths' Company's travel award was used to compare places in Newfoundland and on the Straits coast of Labrador as in 1891 with 1991. In Devon this led to research into the people engaged in the Newfoundland trade. A current investigation is into the 'fact or fiction' of the Mariners' Way.

Fear and loathing in mid-Devon: the troubled history of Dulford House

Philippe Planel

This story involves slavery, child cruelty and racism - the typical story of a mid-Devon stately home? The story starts at the point where it, or, more properly, what turns out to be only an episode of the story, 'hit' the newspapers. In June 1877, Captain Henry Walrond of Dulford House near Cullompton, took the witness stand in the probate court in London to contest his father, Bethell Walrond's, will, in which an estate worth £100,000 was left to a stranger; Henry claimed that his father had been of unsound mind.

Captain Walrond, an instructor in musketry and Captain of the Devon Militia, began with an account of his unusual childhood:

His first recollection carried him back to his boyhood in Nice, where 'Bob' the Testator's [his father's] favourite dog was ill, and chained to a leg of a table in a room he was not allowed to enter, and afterwards died. He recollected his sister Augusta dying at Frankfort and his father speaking of her as Augusta Cub and afterwards saying that Augusta's soul had gone into 'Bob', and that he had her eyes. Afterwards both their bodies were brought to Dulford, and kept in the crimson room till his death (*Newcastle Courant*, 15 June 1877).

A fuller account of the strange domestic appointments of Dulford House was subsequently revealed to the curious when all Bethell's goods and chattels were sold off in 1878. By this time the story had become international and readers of the *The New York Times* were able to read that:

The body of the deceased daughter was kept in his dressing room and his own room was fitted up with the view of familiarising him with death. He slept in a massive canopied oak bedstead, on the footboard of which there were three skulls of females fixed. Over each corner of the bed there was a black feather plume (6 October 1878).

Returning to Henry Walrond's witness statement, Henry next remembers traversing the Appenines on the way to Florence where his nurse proceeded to lose him, but he was eventually brought home by a priest. It was at this point that the family unit, comprised of Henry, his sister Harriet, his mother Lady Walrond and his father, seems to have disintegrated:

One evening his mother came into his room, wept over him, kissed him, and on the ensuing morning she and his sister had gone. The testator had previously in his hearing, demanded of Lady Janet jewellery, lace and other valuables which she was in the habit of wearing. The day his mother left the testator told him in much

excitement that he was very glad of it, and that they should never come back again (*Newcastle Courant*, 15 June 1877).

Bethell was never to see his wife and daughter again. The demand for valuables had perhaps been the last straw for Lady Janet (only daughter of the Earl of Rosslyn), who had clearly made an unfortunate marriage. Henry's mother thereafter often sent sweets and confectionary to him, but his father took them away from him, claiming they were poisoned. Henry now had to bear the full eccentricity, unpredictability and cruelty of his father on his own: he was nine when his mother left:

The testator, as a rule, treated witness with great kindness but frequently flogged him cruelly for no cause with a gutta pareba whip, which he previously heated in the fire to make the end thick; he also used to flog him with a whip of rhinoceros hide, stripping him naked and lacerating his skin cruelly. He threatened also to rub salt into the wounds. He used to teach him when very young to swear at his mother. He would set his dogs at him, and they frequently bit him. He thrashed him once most severely for looking at him; he would put him 'in Coventry', and talk to the dog which he always called 'Brother Tiskey' to try and induce him to break Coventry (*Newcastle Courant*, 15 June 1877).

Alongside cruelty there was also paranoia. Henry's father continually thought he was going to be arrested and avoided public places where possible. His behaviour was bizarre:

He used always to fondle dogs in the street, saying they would never bite him, but they often did... He used to call his visitors snobs and cads, and hide while his son had to show them over the house. He used to be an hour and a half brushing his hair night and morning, and during that time he used to ask the skulls if they had ever been as unhappy as he was. He had a delusion that he had killed a Spanish signora of title to get some pictures then in his possession. The witness saw the testator fire the field-piece at the house [a cannon which stood outside Dulford House], having shotted it while the men were at luncheon (*Newcastle Courant*, 15 June 1877).

The undereducated Henry was in constant fear of either being kidnapped or poisoned by his wicked mother, or beaten by his loving father.

Of course it was in Henry's interest to make out, in contesting the will, that his father was mad, bad and deluded, because £100,000 was at stake. However, it would be difficult to make such a story up. We must turn to *The Times* to give us the context of the case. Interestingly, the northern papers carried the 'awful' details, of which only a sample has been reproduced here, which *The Times* prefers to omit:

Mr Bethell Walrond, late of Dulford House, Columpton, in the County of Devon, died in May, 1876. He was born in 1801, and succeeded, at the age of 23 to the family estates on the death of his eldest brother. He was for some time an officer in the Life Guards, and in 1829 he intermarried with Lady Janet St Clair Erskine, only

daughter of the Earl of Rosslyn. In 1838 he and Lady Janet went abroad and they lived at various places on the continent until 1850, when they separated by agreement... In 1852 the testator returned to England and from that date until his death lived almost the life of a recluse at the family seat in Devonshire (*The Times*, 1 June 1877).

According to *The Times* Bethell was 'deeply attached to his son'. Everything, on the surface at least, only started to go down hill when Henry escaped his father's influence when he was entered as a gentleman commoner at Christ Church, Oxford:

At Oxford, however, Mr Henry Walrond did not realise the expectations of his father and in September, 1861, the testator had his name removed from the books of Christ Church. About this time also, the testator discovered that his son had become engaged to a Miss Maude Clarke, who lived with her mother and sister at Teignmouth.

Complete rupture came between father and son when Henry and Maude were married in November 1861, following an unsuccessful attempt by Bethell to prevent his son marrying anyone so 'vile and vulgar'. We can rejoice that Henry had not been so badly damaged by his childhood as to make it impossible for him contemplate marriage. Henry, from his new position of strength began a counterattack on his father, filing a bill in Chancery in 1862 to restrain his father from committing waste by cutting down timber on the estates. As in other matters relating to the case, the *Newcastle Courant* gives more piquant detail, suggesting Bethell acted out of pure spite:

In reference to injuring the witness's reversionary interest, the testator had cut the bark of some of the trees on the estate and on frequent occasions had bored holes in the trees and poured sulphuric acid into them (*Newcastle Courant*, 15 June 1877).

Bethell's will, executed in August 1868, began by revoking all previous wills, claiming that his entire family had deserted him and persecuted him with law suits 'rendering my life miserable'. Bethell had by then purchased all Henry's reversions and other interests, following his son's 'disgraceful marriage' (there was of course nothing in the least disgraceful about his son's wife or her family), hence he was free to dispose by will to those who had 'consoled' him: namely his 'dumb friends' (dogs) and the family of the Rev. John Forster Alleyne, the rector of the neighbouring parish. In a codicil of August 1875 he also turned against the Alleynes, who had allegedly neglected him in illness, and settled the estate on an Alleyne nephew.¹

The nine-day case ended when the Judge, Sir James Hannen, pronounced against the will and ordering costs to be paid from the estate,² leaving, presumably, a very disappointed Mr Forster McGeachey Alleyne.

Another view of this sad saga is afforded in the papers of the Cullompton firm of solicitors deposited at the Devon Record Office. There is a voluminous

correspondence relating to the dispute between Bethell and his son, but also relating to Lady Janet when she died in Frankfurt in 1883. Burrow can be followed on his journeys to Dulford House, often on a daily basis - one of the rare people to be granted admission past the high walls that are all that survives today (see Figure. 1); a 'Special letter and long conversation' is frequently recorded in Burrow's diary. This provincial solicitor can be less easily imagined setting out from Cullompton to Frankfurt with a bundle of papers to sign. In letters to the Walronds' London solicitors, Darley & Cumberland, he complains that Miss Walrond is a bad client and does not settle bills. Tragically it would seem that Henry and his sister were not able to get on with each other after the death of their parents: 'We attacked Henry Walrond's claim in respect of the diamonds which we succeeded in reducing from £400 to £120.00'; the same wretched diamonds no doubt that had provoked the family break up on the continent all those years before.



Figure 1: Walls to the park surrounding the site of Dulford House.

What is to be read into the Luxton sales catalogue of 1878, included in the Burrow correspondence, detailing the contents of Dulford House, including many personal effects, even children's toys (lot 59 of a total of 798 lots), armour, paintings, furniture and a library full of books? Why is everything being sold off in 1878 when it is known that Henry is in residence in 1881 (1881 census) along with 6 children, ranging from 4 to 17 years old, and 9 staff, including a governess. At least one picture from the house was sold at Christie's in London

between 12-13 July 1878 (a portrait of Barbara Villiers by Sir Peter Lily).⁴ It is not clear why this sale took place; did Henry simply want to empty the house of any memory of his father, but it is heartening to think that the house was now ringing with children's voices. Henry eventually became Lt Col. of the 4th Battalion Devonshire Regiment (1st Devon Militia).⁵

Dulford House did not long remain in the Walrond family. By the 1891 census Henry and his ever-growing family were living at 41 Ladbroke Grove, London, and the house was traversing another bizarre moment in its history.

The Walrond ancestry

Moving on from a case of child cruelty and sadism, the subject of slavery also features in the Walrond inheritance. Bethell belonged to one of the major branches of this important Devon family (also associated with Bradfield House - very close to Dulford House as it happens, but probably not a coincidence; and also to Bovey House, Beer).

The royalist Humphrey Walrond of Sea emigrated to Barbados after being taken captive twice in the Civil War (Bridgwater and Dartmouth). In 1653 Philip of Spain created him Count of Parma and Valderonda, presumably for some services rendered. This is worthy of note because it was one of the titles which he not always completely deluded Bethell claimed; another was the co-heirship of the Wells barony, concerning which Bethell petitioned the king in 1832 - this claim failed. The Walronds thrived in Barbados (with 340 acres of land, 18 white servants and 170 slaves in 1679). By the eighteenth century they had also become established in Antigua. It was Joseph Lyons Walrond of Antigua who re-established himself in England with his wife Caroline, daughter of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, in 1797. Money, presumably, was of no object. Worthy continues:

After the death of the last Earl of Montrath (Coote) who died in 1802, he [Joseph Lyons Walrond] purchased of that nobleman's executors a house which his lordship had built within the manor of Carswell cum Dulford, in the parish of Broadhembury, then known as 'Montrath House'. The necessary lands having been acquired from the Drewes of Grange, in the said parish, and this property has since been known as 'Dulford House'.⁶

Joseph Lyons Walrond, who had by now built up a very sizeable estate, as the 1841 Tithe map records show (see Figure 2), died in 1815. Bethell, his son, inherited the property on his mother's death - his elder brother did not attain his majority.

Today there are many questions that might be asked, such as: did the Walronds bring black servants back to England with them as other Devon families did? What were the Walrond slave estates like? When Jill and Ian Maxted were in Antigua in 2006 they furnished one or two details which convey the flavour of life on a Walrond slave estate; a petition, for example, of Theodore Walrond of Antigua Esq. 'seeking recompense for a negro slave Dick

who was condemned and executed for running away about 5-6 years previously'.⁷ A Walrond estate sugar plantation in Antigua is today under the care of the government as an historic site. It was with this tainted money that the green acres of the former medieval priory of Carswell cum Dulford were purchased. Such purchases, by returning planters, were no rare occurrence in Devon.

The colonies, and more banal, straight-forward racism and snobbery, feature in the next and final episode of the 'colourful' - no pun intended, history of Dulford house.



Figure 2: Plan view of Dulford House, 1841 Tithe map, detail (reproduced with kind permission of the Devon Record Office).

The amazing Abid of Hyderabad

The following, much shortened account, is taken from an unpublished paper of the above name written by Dr Omar Khalidi in the possession of the Devon historian Robin Stanes.

Dr Khalidi describes in considerable detail how an Armenian family established themselves in the Deccan in the mid-nineteenth century and how Abid entered the service of Mahbub Ali Pash, Nizam VI at the palace of Falaknuna. Abid's closeness to the Nizam is attested by several sources. Diamonds figure prominently in the ensuing complicated narrative in which legality and illegality seem perilously intertwined. The important fact is that Abid was rich enough to buy Dulford house in 1890, having purchased it from

the Boyles (who must have only just bought the place themselves from the Walronds) (see Figure 3 for the house in 1906). He arrived with his wife Annie Evans, daughter of a sergeant major, and, in the absence of a squire in the parish of Kentisbeare (which borders Broadhembury at Dulford), attempted to fulfil that function. The couple were to find that money alone could not buy the status of squire in Devon. Despite contributing two hymn-boards to the church in 1907 and other munificences, no one responded to the 'at home' invitations to Dulford House. The Rev. Chalk, a local historian, famously remembers Mrs Abid saying: 'Oh, Mr Chalk - those terrible boys! They've been throwing stones at our signpost and knocked the H off Oniton'. Abid furnished the grounds with imported cheetal (water deer), wild ducks and other exotic ducks, which must at least have been a refreshing change from the extensive dog cemetery established by Bethell Walrond. Abid owned the first car in the area, but would not let the open Rolls Royce out in case it rained on the leather seats. Abid's son Rex married Marie Kurz, a German woman, in Kentisbeare church in October 1913 which, given that Abid also had German staff, did not improve Abid's standing on the outbreak of war in 1914.



Figure 3: Plan view of Dulford House, prior to demolition three decades later; 1906 Ordnance Survey, 6", second series, detail (reproduced with kind permission of the Devon Record Office).

Abid built a mausoleum for Mrs Abid in the grounds, continuing the Dulford tradition of keeping corpses close at hand, into which he inadvertently locked

himself for two days. He remained undiscovered because he had decreed that no-one should go near this monument; history here repeats itself as farce.

Abid's wife died in 1922, and Abid became a second recluse at Dulford House, dying in 1925. Another poignant sale of contents followed - exotic dwarf trees knocked down to almost nothing and killed through over-watering. Kelly's directory of 1930 lists William Evans as the owner of Dulford House - presumably Rex had broken with his Armenian ancestry and taken his mother's name. The house was sold shortly afterwards and immediately demolished - dust to proverbial dust.

Notes and references

1. *The Times*, 1 June 1877.
2. *Newcastle Courant*, 15 June 1877.
3. Devon Record Office (DRO) Burrow: 56/10/Box 12.
4. See Hayes (1992).
5. Worthy (1896), p. 455.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 453-5.
7. The National Archives, Antigua, St John's ROE Book box 187, 188 (1740-49).

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Philippe Planel is currently Heritage Project Officer for the East Devon AONB. He has worked in Devon for a number of years as a teacher and lecturer as well as for bodies such as the Devon Record Office and English Heritage. His background before moving to Devon was in heritage interpretation, archaeology and oral history.

Mormon voices in Victorian Devon

Peter Vousden

Peter Christie's article 'Mormons in nineteenth-century North Devon' (in *The Devon Historian* 2009) sheds light on the subject of Mormon communities in Devon, but it only partially illuminates; as Christie admits, the North Devon Journal was decidedly anti-Mormon in its reporting and comment.¹ The press reporting of Mormon activity needs to be counterbalanced with authentic voices of contemporary Mormon witnesses. This article examines diaries and other records left by Mormons active in Victorian Devon and attempts to place them within the context of their environment, both in Devon and as immigrants arriving in America.

Nineteenth-century Britain was a religious hotbed that spawned many different religious groups. Just a few examples illustrate the point. Edward Irving, a Scottish Presbyterian minister who prophesied Christ's imminent return and millennial reign, was deprived of his ministry under accusations of heresy in 1833. The same year with a congregation of 800 he formed the Catholic Apostolic church. An Irish Anglican clergyman, J.N. Darby, formed an extreme evangelical group in Dublin in 1827, and moved it to Plymouth in 1830 where the followers took the title 'Plymouth Brethren'. Within twenty years differing opinions split the movement into Open Brethren and Extreme Brethren. Although never claiming to be a religious leader, Joanna Southcott, the self-styled Devon prophetess, made it known in 1814 that she was to bear a son of the most high God. Southcott had 14,000 followers. Nineteenth-century Britons were used to new religious ideas from the staid theologians at one end of the spectrum to the outlandish declarations of revelation at the other. There were a plethora of religious magazines and periodicals feeding the spiritual hunger of the reading public. The directory of magazines, reviews and periodicals at the British Newspaper Library for the year 1867 reveals 214 weekly or monthly religious magazines. Independent preachers were to be found all over the country, and it was not unusual for American preachers to tour Britain. The Mormon missionaries did not work in a spiritual vacuum, and it was not unusual for the spiritually restless to change their religion.²

George Harris was born in Ilfracombe on 7 December 1830, the youngest of six children to James and Eliza Harris. George, who converted to Mormonism, left a hand written autobiography that includes details of his father's religious restlessness that was typical of the age. James Harris, his son, writes:

experienced a famine not of bread, but of the word of life. The Established church had lost the spirit in the letter - the substance in the shadow; and there was then but one dissenting interest in the place - that of the independents, whom, though he

loved as friends, he could not recognize as members of the family to which he belonged. Their theological views (at that period especially) were so decidedly opposed to the apprehensions of truth which he had conceived, that he never seriously entertained the thought of uniting with them. Having endured his spiritual privations for a while, he at length (in conjunction with one or two others who were like minded) applied to the Methodist preacher residing at Barnstaple (about 11 miles distant) who occasionally visited the town, and preached to an increasing company the word of life.³

James Harris became a Methodist. It is unsurprising that his son as a young adult should experience a similar religious crisis. Although his father became a Sunday School superintendent with the Methodists and George tells that from the age of ten he attended many prayer meetings, by the time he was eighteen George was in a spiritual wilderness. He had become a merchant sailor and records:

During the summer of 1849 we put into Ilfracombe, under stress of weather, and as usual I went to Sunday Eve. meeting. Rev. Samuel Beard preached on the sheep and the goats, and I felt that I was the only Goat in the chapel.⁴

The minister accused George of backsliding and urged him to recommit to Methodism, but George was not moved. Several months later in Cardiff docks George shared his lunch with two Welsh dockers who were unloading his ship. They took the lunch and said 'God bless you'. George recorded his response:

The words seemed to go through one, and I said 'I wish he would'. They said, 'He shall make known to you the truths of the everlasting gospel'.⁵

They offered to preach to him but he had no time. His spiritual unease continued and he determined to meet Tobias Dalling, whom his father had converted to Methodism, but who had since embraced Mormonism and been ordained a Mormon elder.

Dalling lived in Newport and George records that he prayed his ship might visit the place:

On the 5th of September we arrived at Newport, Monmouthshire in answer to prayer, and the Dalling Boys, John and William came on board as I had to watch the ship: they commenced to preach Mormonism to me, and I tried my best to discuss the point with them: but I made a most miserable failure of it, and was convinced that they had more truth than I had ever heard. I asked leave to go on shore the next Eve, went to meeting, heard Elder Owen Harry preach, on Revelation, and was baptized after meeting, in the Canal, by Elder Tobias Dalling, on the 6th day of September 1849 being then 18 years 9 months old. I was confirmed by Elder Dalling at his house. Next day we bade adieu to the Saints in Newport, and with a few Latter Day Saint tracts: I commenced to investigate Mormonism, more fully. My first impression was that my dear Father would hail the news with pleasure, and

rejoice, so I wrote to him a long letter, telling him I had a testimony of the truth of Mormonism, and desiring him to investigate the passages of scripture I noted down.⁶

His father was not delighted at the news, but doubtless recalling his own religious crisis at a younger age and his decision to leave the Church of England he demurred from lecturing his son. Soon after his baptism George received information that his mother was seriously ill. Rather touchingly, George, who was now in Dublin, sped to his mother's side:

Hearing that my mother was practically sinking I left Dublin on 24 April 1850 by way of Plymouth by steamer and to Exeter by stage coach to Bristol by omnibus thence to Ilfracombe by foot.⁷

His mother was on her death bed but strong enough to impart advice to her son:

She admonished me to reflect and ask divine assistance before I embrace any other religion but the one she had always enjoyed.⁸

After his mother's demise, George developed his Mormon faith and recorded that on a voyage to Denmark he attended Mormon meetings in Copenhagen. He also declared his testimony of Mormonism to a congregation in Hull.⁹ George emigrated to the United States in 1852 where he crossed the plains to Utah before finally settling in Idaho.

Jesse Martin was a West Virginian who embraced Mormonism in Illinois and went with other Mormons to the pioneer settlements of Utah. In 1853 church leaders called him to England to work as a missionary. He was based much of his time in Bristol, but in the winter of 1856 he arrived in Devon. He recorded his journey thus:

Friday 5th December 1856. I went to Plymouth on the railroad, a distance of 128 Miles. Arrived at Plymouth at 7.30.¹⁰

Martin's diary is interesting because it often deals with the mundane, detailing how he travelled, that he had his boots mended, that he had a headache, that he took a bath in the public baths, and that he attended a pantomime and a circus in Bristol. One is not left with the impression that he was a religious fanatic carefully planning the nefarious activities that those who derided Mormonism claimed to be the norm. Also, as a foreigner, he shows interest in his new environment, and his diary stands as an authentic witness to conditions in Victorian Devon:

6th December 1856 Went to Devonport and took dinner with brother Stockdale.¹¹ Then went and saw brother Thomas Knight who is very sick with the quick consumption. I gave his wife 60 cents to help her. I don't think he will live long, he is very freely spitting up much blood.¹²

Martin described his work preaching and visiting with the Saints (from the outset of the movement people of the Church described themselves as Saints in the belief that ordinary followers of the New Testament Christian church thus designated themselves). People who were not baptised into the church were termed 'strangers':

Sunday 7 December 1856. I went to the council in the Plymouth branch then went to Devonport to preach to the saints and a large congregation of strangers. some few came to disrupt the meeting but we put them to silence but many was very attentive and I believe many will be baptised this winter.

Tuesday 23 December 1856. I met with the saints in meeting in Devonport branch. Elder Rod Kelly was with us just from Salt Lake Valley. He spoke for a short time. This town is his birth place and his parents living in Devonport. but are not saints. he was in the valley about three years and lived with Brigham Young most of the time.

Wednesday 24 December 1856 I was visiting the saints all day, met with the saints at Plymouth. Brothers Kelly, Schofield, and myself addressed the saints and had a good time.¹³

Martin's efforts were not without some success, because he recorded:

Tuesday December 16 1856. I stayed in Devonport all day and went to the seaside in the evening and baptised three children...we all went up to the saints meeting house and I confirmed them.¹⁴

Mormons do not practice infant baptism, and 8 years old is the youngest a person might receive the ordinance, which is a full immersion affair; so baptism in the sea in mid-December was certainly going to be bracing for both the candidate and the minister performing the baptism!

Martin was interested in his surroundings. In America he had lived in West Virginia and Illinois, areas of mountain and plain, and he apparently enjoyed the Devon coastline. He noted watching a winter storm, observing that the authorities raised flags on the sea shore to warn of the gales. He enjoyed an evening visit to see the lighthouse and the lanterns on ships in the harbour. With his friends he sang a few songs on the Hoe. He also took a trip to see the work on Isambard Kingdom Brunel's last masterpiece across the Tamar, which commenced in 1854 and was complete in 1859:

Thursday 18 December 1856. I went out to Saltash, 4 miles from Plymouth to see the great bridge that is being put across the river. Brother Joseph Schofield, sister Emma Rogers and Susan Ann Bennett came with me. we came back in a small steamer to Devonport.¹⁵

Martin's last full day in Devon was Christmas day 1856, which was celebrated in traditional style with a meal with a local Mormon member:

Went over to sister Rogers and had goose for Christmas dinner. This is the third Christmas I have spent in England.¹⁶

The next diary entry attests to the level of service offered by Victorian railways:

26 December 1856. Left Plymouth at half past two o'clock on the third class train to Bristol in company with elder Schofield. We had a very cold ride until half past nine p.m.¹⁷

With that seven hour train ride Jesse Martin bade farewell to Devon. For the next month he was sick with a fever, but recovered sufficiently to travel to Bath and Wales and then on to Liverpool where he joined British immigrants on board a ship bound for the USA. He was appointed a captain of a company of immigrants among whom were the Plymouth converts Susan Ann Bennett and members of the Rogers family.

Most of the Mormon leadership were self-educated men who laid a great emphasis on self improvement and education. The fact that so many kept detailed diaries and journals attests to their fondness for the written word. In 1840 the missionaries in England established their own newspaper called *The Latter day Saint Millennial Star*, which was published either weekly or monthly from 1840 until 1970. In its pages theology was discussed, reports received from various missionaries labouring in Britain and across Europe, the status of the church in America monitored, and comments on British society made. The missionaries who worked in Devon sent in reports. In 1853 work was going on in Plymouth, tracts being distributed, and three baptisms were performed. Also three persons travelled 64 miles to Plymouth to hear the gospel preached. Elder John Moyle, President of the Plymouth branch, crushed his hand working in a stone quarry, but was healed by priesthood blessing.¹⁸

Not all missionaries were entirely happy in Devon, and when unhappy they could be rather supercilious. John H. Kelson, recalling his missionary experiences, wrote to the *Millennial Star* in 1888:

In 1857 I was one of the many elders called to go out and break up new ground. The section assigned to me was an area of very weedy moral soil in North Devon with the town of Tiverton as a centre. I went there with only ten pence in my pocket and stayed three weeks without seeing or visiting a member of the church.¹⁹

Kelson had a more productive time in Plymouth, where he resided at 2 Norley Cottages, Norley.²⁰

In Britain the Mormon missionaries have always found more success amongst the working classes. This was certainly true in the nineteenth century, when ordinary workers in the great cities of the industrial revolution showed interest in the singular messengers from America. The folk who worked in the factories of the growing cities were units of production churning out the textiles and trinkets upon which the British Empire was built. The Mormon missionaries

were unpretentious and not finely attired. One reason that they appealed to ordinary folk was that they were prepared to engage the ordinary folk. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints operated (and operates) a lay ministry, and the male converts were offered priesthood responsibility and leadership opportunities (Elder is an ecclesiastical office, not a reference to age). Moreover, part of the Mormon message then was gathering to Zion in the western frontier of the United States.

British converts were certainly driven not only by pure religious conviction but by the prospect of land and a new life away from the urban grind of 'Dickensian' London or Manchester. In 1854 Manchester and London had combined Mormon congregations of 6,000 souls, whereas Cornwall, Devon and Somerset combined totalled a modest 224 members.

However, the allure of emigration extended to beautiful Devon. George Halliday, the senior missionary in the south west, wrote to the *Millennial Star* in 1861 noting that meeting rooms in Bristol and Devonport were crowded, and that:

hundreds of them will never be able to emigrate under their own means for their circumstances are such that they can barely exist here to say nothing of living. Their clothes are in pawn, their house rent unpaid, and their provision shop accounts increasing so that their distress is great, and with little or no work and low wages their prospects are gloomy indeed.²¹

One of the most remarkable aspects of Victorian Mormonism in Great Britain was the organisation and extent of emigration. It is estimated that 65,000 Britons emigrated as Mormon converts. In the decade of the 1850s 16,342 Mormon emigrants left Britain, with the 1860s registering 14,967.²² Significant numbers from Germany and Scandinavia also travelled to the USA as Mormon converts, the vast majority sailing from Liverpool. Non-Mormon witnesses approved of the levels of organisation in Mormon chartered ships. In 1854 a select committee of the House Commons interrogated the superintendent of Mormon emigration, and Monckton Mills MP reported to the committee:

no ships under the provisions of the Passengers Act could be depended upon for comfort and security in the same degree as those under Mormon administration. The ordinary immigrant is exposed to all the chances and misadventures of a heterogeneous, childish, mannerless crowd during the voyage, and to the merciless cupidity of land sharks the moment he has touched the opposite shore. But the Mormon ship is a family under strong and accepted discipline, with every provision for comfort, decorum and internal peace. On his arrival in the New World the wanderer is received into a confraternity which speeds him onwards with as little hardship and anxiety as the circumstances permit, and he passed on from friend to friend until he reaches the promised home.²³

One such immigrant was Mary Hughes, who was born in Plymouth in 1791. As a young teenager she left home with her sister and eventually settled and

married in Bath, where in 1844 she heard the message of Mormon missionaries and was baptised. One of her sons was also baptised, and he left for America in 1849. Mary emigrated to America in 1854, and, now a widow, married Dr Hughes in Salt Lake City, where she lived until her death in 1868.

Another Devonshire Mormon emigrant was Mary Ann Edds, who was born 4 December 1825 in what Utah records only describe as Bishop, Devonshire. Perhaps Cheriton Bishop or Morchard Bishop? Ann married a fellow Devonian called Thomas Skinner, and together they listened to and believed Mormon missionaries and were baptised. They emigrated on a ship to New Orleans and then by riverboat up the Mississippi to Illinois where the overland trek westward was to commence. Tragically Thomas and the two children were struck down with a fatal fever at Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Mary, who was pregnant with her third child, gave birth and made the trek with a hand cart company. In Utah she married a Dr Charles Hopkins and had four more children. The baby, a boy, that she took on the trek survived. Mary died in 1903.

Another English immigrant succinctly described his family experience under the leadership of Jesse Martin, mentioned previously in this article, who had lived and preached in Plymouth:

My parents and four children sailed from Liverpool in the ship George Washington about the 26th day of March and made the trip to Boston in 22 days. I was not sea sick. On landing we at once took a train through Albany, New York; Buffalo, Cleveland, Chicago, Rock Island, and to Iowa City, Iowa. We camped out without shelter for about ten days or two weeks when we got wagons and cattle and started crossing the plains, next stopping at Florence, Nebraska. We then renewed our outfit and went on to Salt Lake. This letter is too brief to explain the details of that trip, and I expect to write more in my journal about it. We arrived in Salt Lake City about noon on Saturday the 12th day of September, 1857, having been nearly six months without ever having slept in a bed or house. On that day I ate a piece of watermelon and I liked it. I have not changed in that regard.²⁴

Young Mr Booth's account failed to mention cattle stampedes, thunderstorms, meeting Indians, wagons overturning and four people dying on the overland journey. Jesse Martin, erstwhile Plymouth missionary and the captain of Booth's company, continued to pioneer new settlements in Utah before passing away aged 83 in 1908.

The last Devonian Mormon voice to hear from is a lively if discordant one. William Jarman, from Exeter, had been a Plymouth Brethren follower but was excluded from their society. He embraced Mormonism, went to Utah, fell out of favour with Mormon authorities, was excommunicated from the church, and returned to England as an anti-Mormon agitator. During the 1880s and 1890s Jarman toured England and Wales speaking at public meetings, disturbing Mormon meetings and challenging Mormon missionaries to debate. In 1884 he was in Devonport and Cornwall disturbing Mormon meetings, telling how he had come from Exeter, had been in Salt Lake City and was now determined to rid England of every Mormon minister.²⁵ His style was confrontational.

inflammatory and often leaned toward violence. He was summoned to court in Swansea in 1888 accused of inciting others to violence against David Williams, a Mormon elder. Jarman referred to Mormons as murderers and blackguards, and said to Williams 'Your days are numbered'. He published Williams' address, and informed crowds who came to listen to him that the Mormons must be driven out. The court heard that crowds of up to 300 men assembled outside Williams' house, breaking windows and threatening violence. The local newspaper reported a lot of noise from Jarman's supporters in the public gallery during the trial, which the magistrate had to silence several times. Jarman was found guilty and bound over to keep the peace for three months upon a sum of £100. The magistrate, Mr J. Coke Fowler, said 'the people of England and Wales have a right to worship in their own way - whether they are Jews, Turks, Persians or Mormons'.²⁶

A few months previously in Sheffield, Jarman's supporters had attacked the Mormon speaker who was then saved by a police officer. In Leeds in 1896 Jarman threatened a Mormon supporter with a knife. Jarman's Devonian ex-wife, Mrs Maria Bidgood Ford, a native of Chudleigh but now living in America, wrote to the editor of the *Devon Evening Express* in an attempt to shed some light upon her former husband's temperament. She said that once in Devon and three times in the USA Jarman had threatened to kill her, on the last occasion he had locked all the doors of their home, armed himself with a dagger, a pistol and a six shooter and held her captive for half an hour, declaring his intent to kill her. Mrs Ford claimed Jarman was a murderer in mind if not in deed.²⁷ She maintained the Mormons were fine people and people in England should not be fooled by a bad man she had once had the misfortune to marry. Maria wrote to the *Barnsley Independent* four years later verifying that Jarman had been an inmate of the Pauper Lunatic Asylum, from which his Mormon opponents claimed he had escaped.²⁸ They found it convenient to dismiss so vocal an opponent as an escaped lunatic. Whether escaped or discharged, William Jarman admitted he had been an inmate of the asylum, and it seems that the poor man struggled with mental illness. Wherever he went in Britain decrying Mormons Jarman caused a stir, and focused more attention upon the Mormon community than they would otherwise have received. Members of the public could listen to Jarman, read about his antics, and then make up their own minds. It was not uncommon for people to embrace Mormonism after dismissing Jarman's rants as ludicrous. An impartial witness from the *Dover Observer* attended a Jarman anti-Mormon meeting and concluded:

The general tenor of the whole address was of so coarse a nature that the feeling uppermost in ones mind...was one of disgust at the whole proceedings.²⁹

The Mormon voices from Victorian Devon belonged to real people engaged in activities, both mundane and extraordinary. Even the mundane, or one could say especially the mundane, shed an illuminating light upon Victorian society. Emigration to America and trekking westward in wagon trains seems rather

more exotic, and some of those who made the journey did speak with Devonian accents.

Notes and references

1. Christie (2009).
2. See Chadwick (1971).
3. Brigham Young University Library (BYUL), digital collections, Trails of hope: overland diaries and letters 1846 -1849; Autobiography of George Harris, p. 8.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
10. BYUL, digital collection, Trails of hope: overland diaries and letters; Jesse Bigler Martin diary.
11. Michael Stockdale, a local Mormon, lived at 21, Church Street, Stoke.
12. BYUL, Jesse Bigler Martin diary.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Millennial Star*, 24 September and 22 October 1853.
19. *Millennial Star*, 15 October 1888, p. 669.
20. Elizabeth Wyatt, a local Mormon, lived at 6, Norley Cottages.
21. *Millennial Star*, 2 March 1861, p. 142.
22. Richard L. Jenson (1987) 'The British gathering to Zion', in Bloxham, Moss and Porter, p. 198.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 178. See also Chadwick (1974) vol. 1, p. 437: 'In that age the Mormon shipping office held high place for efficient transport amid the insanitary reek of most emigrant shipping'.
24. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, History Department, Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Jesse B Martin Company 1857, Diary of John Booth.
25. *Millennial Star*, 28 January 1884, p. 50.
26. *The Herald of Wales*, 22 September 1888.
27. *Millennial Star*, 31 December 1883, p. 840.
28. *Barnsley Independent*, 14 August 1887.
29. *Dover Observer*, 30 October 1897.

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Peter Vousden holds a BSc from the University of Bradford and a MA from the University of London. He has a special interest in British Mormon history and has contributed articles in journals in Britain and the USA. He lives in Teignmouth with his wife and four children.

Book reviews

Michael Connors (2008) *John Hawley: merchant, mayor and burgess, Dartmouth*: Richard Webb; 168 pp., 8 colour; 70 illustrations, 21 in colour; 5 maps; ISBN 978-0-9536361-8-1; £14.99.

The south-west of England possesses three magnificent harbours and each may claim its times of greatness. Plymouth revels in stories of Francis Drake; and despite the Killigrews, Falmouth, with its flotillas of cargo-container ships now filling its haven, may be living in its most important era. But Dartmouth, whatever its later renown, can look back to medieval fame with one of its seaman immortalized by Geoffrey Chaucer. John Hawley was surely the man he had most in mind and despite the near impossibility of our discovering domestic or more personal detail he emerges here as a dominant leader of his local community.

Dr Connors sets the scene of a 'commercial marketplace, naval dockyard and front-line armed camp': Dartmouth of Hawley's life. Running the borough was certainly no sinecure and that aspect is very well handled. But he has already set the scene by a proficient survey of the world John Hawley was born into. Dartmouth was an interesting borough that left a mass of excellent records which provide the possibility of a more complete account than most towns of that date can manage. Unlike many boroughs in later years it was still independent and not under the sway of the local gentry.

Hawley – 'pirate' or privateer? Drake was seen equally ambivalently. As much as we today are in a transitional time when international and world law are struggling to displace national laws in dealing with global issues, so the fifteenth century was equally beset. Their problems were to adjust declining feudal laws and customs to fit the evolving nation(-state)s in France and England. Thus the seamen who were subjects of European rulers had to accommodate themselves to the erratic political and military meanderings of their lords; and they could often advantage themselves by using the gaps and failings of conflicting laws and philosophies. An admirably careful discussion of rights, wrongs, moralities and law here illuminates these problems.

John Hawley's influence and usefulness to successive governments of Richard II and Henry IV made him rich and powerful beyond his fellows as he rose above the likely scope of the generality of provincial merchants. Awarded royal appointments for customs and similar financial matters, he was also entrusted with far wider patents to act for the royal administration. His continued success in such work is attested by typical troubles – including one brief spell in the Tower – that led to no serious loss of favour.

Dartmouth's neighbours across the Channel were always of close concern to medieval mariners. They had to rely completely upon knowledge of coastal feature, which the sailing capacity of their 'cogs' and lack of navigational

instruments made inevitable. The name of one shipman, Smale, struck me personally for in Torquay during the Second World War I went out with a local girl of the name; and having one ancestral line dating to pre-revolutionary Brittany made Hawley's routing of Breton invaders was of particular interest.

But this work does not rely upon such adventitious aids to win attention. It is fully illustrated, although the type-face and design may at times seem fussy. It is crisp, well-written and informative on all the aspects one needs for understanding.

Although the author disclaims knowledge of medieval Latin or early English script, the mass of transcribed and translated Dartmouth and national archives in print and used suggests that is no problem. He has used the local historians such as J.J. Alexander, Percy Russell, Hugh Watkin and Edward Windeatt to best effect.

Bibliography, index and references indicate thoroughness and attention to detail that inspire confidence: perhaps one omission is Ian Friel *The Good Ship* (1995) which fully discusses ships in England between 1200 to 1540. Thus this work proves to be a notable addition to the history of Dartmouth, medieval Devon and of the south-west and so is most welcome.

John Roberts

Geoff Elliot (2007) *Colyton at war*, Colyton: Colyton History Society; 151 pp., ISBN 978-0-9556743-0-3, £8.99.

If ever history has the ability to touch us it is through oral history, and this collection of Colyton wartime memories is no exception. Here is the fine grain of individual histories which collective histories and top-down histories so often fail to capture. From the well-treated German prisoner of war working on a local farm to the young servant who was the house's sole survivor of a German bombing raid, the war itself is ever-present. The testimonies contain information that would otherwise be lost: we know so little, for example, about how the Taunton Stopline pillboxes in the Axe valley were built or, in the case of Alan Board's experience, how pillboxes had to be built and then rebuilt when they were badly built. Some testimonies were nearly lost: sadly, Muriel Turl died only four days after her interview.

The book is easy to navigate. A map of the town helps reconstruct the busy centre of Colyton which at the time boasted 40 shops, whilst photographs help situate some of the testimonies. Short biographical notes close each account.

Reviewers have an irritating habit of expecting a book to be something other than what it sets out to be, and if this book sets out to do no more than bring a particular time and place to life it certainly succeeds. As a history book, and particularly as an oral history book, it does have a few shortcomings. It is not clear whether these interviews have been edited and, if so, following what criteria. Sean Day-Lewis, in his interview, quotes from his poet father's autobiography and poems, giving the date of the edition and publication dates - rather unusual for an interview transcript. However, the Colyton History Society website (<http://www.colytonhistory.co.uk/>) also offers for sale a set of 4 DVDs,

which may answer these points as well as adding the timbre of human voices to the mix. It would also be useful to know how the interviewees were selected and in what conditions the interviews were conducted. The present reviewer recalls that some at least of the interviews took place in an anti-chamber to the 2005 Colyton at War exhibition. The public were invited to come in and listen. This is a tough way for an older person to be interviewed and it is a testimony to the interviewees how much they were prepared to reveal about their hopes and fears in such a public interview.

None of the above points affect the pleasure of reading these personal stories, all rooted in the local landscape. Taking an oral history project from interviews to publication is no mean task, and we are fortunate in Devon that these histories are emerging; see for example the excellent volume on the fruit and flower growers of the Tamar Valley: *Sovereigns, Madams and Double Whites* (Tamar Valley AONB 2004). Several local history societies in Devon have also conducted interviews, but are perhaps too modest about their potential, not all of these interviews have been transcribed. The way forward lies perhaps with camcorder interviews, now ongoing in three East Devon projects (the Neroche Project, the Branscombe Project and the East Devon AONB Parishscapes Project), and there are no doubt others elsewhere. Camcording confers many advantages: the camera lens can follow the pointing finger when interviewees are on site explaining a landscape or other features; the transcriber can watch the lips where a voice is indistinct and work out who is talking in group interviews; hand and eye movement lend emphasis to the speaker.

The Colyton volume serves as a reminder that, although many conventional archives detail the life and circumstances of ordinary people, with the inevitable bias towards the poor, the insane, the sick or the criminal, only oral history give ordinary people their own voice. The Colyton testimonies are by local people not just about them.

Philippe Planel

Barbara Farquharson and John Torrance (2009) *The shooting at Branscombe Old Pits: a nineteenth-century Devon mystery*, Branscombe: The Branscombe Project; i-iv, 217 pp., drawings by Cory Lyons, softcover; ISBN 9780955564437; £7.50 + £2.50 p. and p., from The Branscombe Project, PO Box 51, Seaton, Devon, EX12 9AF.

On September 8th, 1883, the villagers of Branscombe (then a rather more populous place than now) were shocked to hear of the violent death of John Perryman, shot as he was making his way home from his work as a farm labourer. Perryman was the 67-year-old, highly respected superintendent of the local Wesleyan Sunday school, and no-one in Branscombe could believe that he had been deliberately murdered. Opinion was divided between those who thought that he had been accidentally shot by a poacher and those who held that he had been mistaken for someone else (pp. 40-3). After a brief and fairly superficial investigation by the police, William Dean Dowell, a recently returned native of the village in his early thirties, was accused of the crime. However, the

Magistrates Court in Honiton dismissed the case for lack of evidence, although the prolonged inquest eventually returned a verdict of 'wilful murder against some person or persons unknown' (p. 129). Although Dowell left the court a free man, he found it increasingly difficult to remain in Branscombe, not only because of the murder, but also because his radical views (he had been an active trade-unionist) were unpopular among the largely conservative village, while his relationship with the daughter of the local innkeeper which resulted in her becoming pregnant did little to endear him to the locals. A bitter man, he left Branscombe for good in September 1884 and worked in London until his death in 1930.

This well-researched, clearly written and attractively illustrated book has been published by two former academics as part of the Branscombe Project (www.branscombeproject.org.uk), and it follows the twists and turns of this intriguing story using all the documentary evidence available. This includes the local newspapers, which covered the case in detail, reporting almost verbatim the proceedings of the magistrates' and coroner's courts; William Dowell's own account of the events, which his trade union published as a pamphlet in London, in which he not only repudiates all the charges but also makes 'a sweeping indictment of late nineteenth-century rural poverty, landlordism and social inequality' (p. 2); local records, which are extensively mined to supply social background to the event as well as establishing the complex family history of the main protagonists; and finally, family letters and oral recollections.

In addition to narrating the story lucidly, the authors also offer a good deal of background information on the social, economic, religious and political conditions in late Victorian Branscombe, highlighting among many other issues, the Skeleton Army (p. 52, note 1), used by local brewers to attack teetotal organisations like the Salvation Army, effigy burning (chapter 16) and the 1885 general election (chapter 15 and appendix C), although it would have been helpful if the judicial and police procedural aspects of the case had also been put in a wider context.

This book is not only a good who-done-it (with a plausible solution offered by the authors as to the real culprit), but also an interesting study of an East Devon village which sheds a great deal of light on social and economic conditions at the end of the nineteenth century.

Paul Auchterlonie

Iain Fraser (2008) *The Palk family of Haldon House and Torquay*, Newton Abbot: Sylverwood Publishing; 135 pages, 92 illustrations in colour and b/w, softback; ISBN 0-9545121-4-6; £7.95.

It was while writing a history of his home village of Hennock that Iain Fraser discovered that the Palk family had been very influential in the local area, so he decided to find out more. The result of his research is 'The Palk Family', which he claims is the first book to deal in detail with these relatively unknown Devon landowners.

The 'father' of the Palk dynasty was Robert Palk (1717-1798), who was born just outside Ashburton to a prosperous farming family. A pupil at Ashburton Grammar School, he was sponsored by his godfather to attend Wadham College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1739. He decided to enter the church and after a brief period as a curate in two Cornish parishes he went to London in 1741. It was there that he became naval chaplain to Admiral Edward Boscawen and was sent to India, but he little knew how important this posting was to be to his future fortunes.

At that time the East India Company held sway in India and Palk swiftly made progress, so much so that he renounced his religious vows in 1761 and married Anne Vansittart, the daughter of a wealthy family. Palk was appointed Governor of Madras in 1763 and by then had already amassed considerable wealth, mainly as a result of trading in diamonds, coral, cloth, spices and opium. He left India in 1767 and eventually made his home first at Torwood Grange in Torquay and then at Haldon House, becoming a major landowner in the process. Palk was MP for Ashburton and for Wareham between 1767 and 1787. He was made a baronet by King George III in 1782 and died at Haldon House in 1798.

At this point there is a chapter devoted to describing in detail Palk's acquisition of Haldon House and the surrounding land in 1769 for £10,000. The new owner set about improving his property, adding two extra wings to the house and laying out pleasure grounds and gardens. The fine paintings, china and books acquired by the Palks over the years are also discussed in this chapter, aided by some excellent illustrations. Lawrence Castle (Haldon Belvedere) is also the subject of a brief chapter and the next contains a short biography of Palk's great friend in India, General Stringer Lawrence. The author then moves on to discuss each successive heir, but it is downhill all the way for the family fortunes as none was ever able to match the achievements of Sir Robert.

Sir Robert's son, the 2nd baronet, Sir Lawrence Palk (d.1813), was an MP from 1787 to 1812, but his main interests were farming and improving the gardens of his estate, although he did finance the building of an inner pier to provide a breakwater at Torquay, a move which signalled the beginning of the town's development. However, he was not very good with money so cash reserves declined and many properties had to be mortgaged. His son, Sir Lawrence Vaughan Palk, the 3rd baronet, (d.1860), made a bad financial situation worse by being an inveterate gambler and spendthrift who had to flee to France in 1846 for fear of being imprisoned for debt!

A more energetic Palk was the 4th baronet and 1st Lord Haldon, who was MP for South Devon from 1854 to 1868 and then for East Devon until 1880. He was an active parliamentarian and, Fraser claims, he 'championed the causes of the agricultural community and promoted the education and social welfare of the working classes.' He built the new harbour in Torquay and financed the Teign Valley railway line, but he neglected his estates and lived mainly in Torquay, enjoying his hobby of yachting.

The beginning of the end came in 1891 when Sir Lawrence Hesketh Palk, the 2nd Lord Haldon, (d.1903) was declared bankrupt and forced to sell off

Haldon House, together with all the pictures and furniture it contained. The final curtain fell at the end of World War Two when both titles became extinct.

It is tempting to suggest that the rise and fall of the Palk family fits one of several theoretical models in the debate about the apparent decline in the wealth and influence of the English landed elite over the course of the last two centuries put forward by historians such as Martin Wiener, W.D. Rubinstein and F.M.L. Thompson. This suggests that the wealth produced by the entrepreneurial energy of the founder of a family dynasty was often squandered by their public-school educated sons and heirs, whose 'country gentleman' lifestyle led to the gradual disappearance of the inherited house, land and investments, leaving the family as 'distressed gentfolk'. The author has not attempted to place his narrative into this wider historical discussion, so that the main strength of this somewhat disjointed book is the account of Sir Robert's rise and rise through endeavour and opportunism and for that alone it is worth reading!

Mitzi Auchterlonie

Helen Harris (2009) *The Grand Western Canal, a brief history*, Newton Abbot: Forest Publishing, Peninsula Press; 48 pp., 31 maps and photographs, softcover; ISBN 978 1 872640 58 7; £3.99

Generally regarded as the standard work on the subject, Helen Harris's first edition of *The Grand Western Canal* was published in 1973. The second edition, which provided an update on restoration development, came out in 1996. The fine quality of her research was evident in the notes and acknowledgements she made to her helpers. Both editions are now out of print and the author has written this abridged version to provide quicker reading, whilst still retaining the vital historical facts.

In this latest work, the author has vastly reduced the text, yet has produced a comprehensive description of the history of the construction of two separate but adjacent lengths of canal, one in Devon and the other in Somerset by two different civil engineers during a period of thirty years. The text is supported by delightful photographs and clear maps and plans.

The author describes how in 1769 a route for an inland waterway to connect the north and south coasts of England's south-west peninsula had been proposed by James Brindley. By 1807 John Rennie had been consulted and in April 1810 a 2½ mile length at the summit of James Brindley's route near the county boundary was commenced with a 9 mile branch to Tiverton. Undoubtedly the need at that time for lime to condition the soil was uppermost in people's minds and extensive limestone deposits were available on this route.

However, apart from limestone for lime and for roadstone, trade on the canal fell short of expectations and the need for completion of the canal to Taunton became apparent. The increase of altitude of 262ft from Taunton to the county boundary presented difficulties, but, in 1830, James Green proposed just one inclined plane and seven perpendicular lifts to carry 8-ton boats and work soon

commenced to join with the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, and this was completed in 1838.

These were the first working boat lifts in Britain and the author has taken the trouble to reproduce the three drawings from Green's paper in the Transactions of the Institution of Civil Engineers, 1838, and she notes that the site of the Nynhead lift near Wellington is now being restored. The Bristol and Exeter Railway was completed to Exeter in 1844, with a branch to Tiverton in 1848, and as so often elsewhere, took trade from the canal

A century of twilight is described, but while the Somerset length of the canal has now almost disappeared, the British Waterways Board has handed over the Devon portion of the Canal to the Devon County Council and it is now maintained as a Devon Country Park. The towpaths are well looked after and many parking areas for visitors are signposted. In May 2008 the Inland Waterways Association held a successful two-day National Trailboat Festival when over 3500 people and 38 boats attended near Tiverton.

This excellent volume should therefore be widely available at tourist centres in and around the county because the fewer pages and many maps and photographs give residents and visitors alike such an authentic and detailed description of an industrial archaeological treasure.

Brian George

Elizabeth Neill (2008) *Fragile fortunes: the origins of a great British merchant family*, Wellington: Ryelands (Halsgrove); xii + 441 pp., 41 illustrations plus pedigrees and map, softback; ISBN 9781906551025; £14.99.

This book records the financial and personal vicissitudes of the Gibbs family from the time it settled in Clyst St George as tenant farmers in around 1570 to the middle years of the nineteenth century when it included some of the richest and most influential merchants in England and was able to afford a large mansion (Tyntesfield). Those who have heard the writer speak on her topic will guess correctly that this book is not a dull affair crammed with commercial statistics. Instead, it has been likened to the *Forsyte Saga*.

Although earlier and later members of the family are well-covered by the writer and are by no means insignificant, it is hoped that what follows will suffice to give a flavour of the work. George Abraham Gibbs (1718-94), a descendent of the Gibbs who arrived in Clyst St George in the sixteenth century became a successful Exeter surgeon. He was a strong-minded man who, although showing his children little affection, was determined that his sons have fruitful careers. Of these, Vicary became a leading lawyer and was made Attorney General in 1800. George was apprenticed to a Bristol merchant and became a respected trader of that city. He was noted also for his role in opposing the abolition of slavery. Antony (*sic*) served his commercial apprenticeship in Spain. Similarly, Abraham, the son of George Abraham's half brother, John (1725-74) went to Italy. He was to become a friend of Lord Nelson and the Hamiltons. Emma Hamilton was particularly close and, despite concern from

some of the family, took Abraham's daughter, Mary, under her wing. Abraham was charged with overseeing Nelson's Sicilian property. Accusations of mismanagement were to lead to shame and suicide. It was Antony, however, who caused the family most anxiety. Even during his childhood, they were concerned about his somewhat overoptimistic, if not cavalier, attitude. As they had feared, his business acumen proved to be virtually non-existent. In the end, he bankrupted both himself and his father, who had invested heavily in Antony's ventures. It was largely due to the generosity of Vicary and George that the extended family was able to survive. Another noted benefactor was Lyle Gibbs, the son of John Gibbs. He was to estimate that over some fifty years he had spent £250-300 annually on supporting the family of his brother, William. Far from being grateful, William resented Lyle's success and his dependency on him. He may also have resented the fondness Lyle showed toward William's wife Susanna. From time to time William abandoned Susanna, and when at home would be violent and abusive.

Susanna was not the only female of the family to suffer. Antony's wife, 'Dolly' must have regretted rejecting Vicary in favour of his brother, another Abraham, and then turning to Antony after the death of her fiancé. As well as Antony's impecunious state and her troublesome pregnancies after his infrequent returns from overseas, she suffered from a number of physical ailments and as a result became dependent on laudanum. 'Betsy', the difficult and high-spirited sister of John Lyle, was devastated when her family broke off her relationship with an American fraudster. Eventually, however, she married happily. As a final example - there could be many more - Mary Gibbs' hopes of marrying her cousin were thwarted by her family. She did eventually marry, but this proved to be an unhappy relationship due to disputes over her inheritance, and hence dowry.

This is a well-written book that this short review possibly does insufficient justice to. It is also a well-researched work, the writer drawing on primary sources from Italy, Devon, Dorset, Leicestershire, London, Bristol and Nottingham. These are clearly set out and followed by an extensive bibliography. *Fragile Fortunes* can be thoroughly recommended, and is of more than local interest.

S. Bhanji

Julia Neville (2010) *Exeter and the trams 1882–1931*, Exeter: Exeter Civic Society; 124 pp. excluding bibliography and index, 110 photographs, plans and diagrams, softback; ISBN 978-0-9544343-1-1; £11.99.

The history of transport in Exeter has been documented in various books, journals and papers, but specific publications on the Exeter Tramways have, until now, rested with Perkins' *Exeter and Taunton Tramways* (1994) and Sambourne's *Exeter – A Century of Public Transport* (1976). To that can now be added this splendid publication from author Julia Neville, produced by Peter Caspar for the Exeter Civic Society.

The book comprises 124 pages, including a Foreword, and is packed with fascinating information, including over one hundred photographs and diagrams. As far as the reviewer is aware, Julia Neville is not a dedicated tram enthusiasts, but the presentation of this book would make it appear so. There is a considerable amount of technical detail, but set out in such a way as to make it readable, not just boring statistics and technical data.

The reader is first taken back to early Victorian Exeter, providing a backdrop of how transport evolved in the city. Horses and carriages on dirt track roads, the setting up of Turnpike Trusts (providing and maintaining a better road system), the arrival of the railway to the South West, the ingenuity of Isambard Brunel, and then on to the tram system. The passing of an Act of Parliament in 1881, 'for making tramways in the county of Devon to be called Exeter Tramways', enabled the city's tramways to commence – at first with horses, but after 1905 by electrical power. It is not easy to research the horse-drawn trams, as few details are available, and, sadly, pictures of the first (single deck) trams are non-existent. Nevertheless, the author has accurately recorded what she could find regarding this form of transport.

April 4th 1905, saw Exeter's then Mayor, Councillor Edwin Perry, driving the first electric tram from Guildhall to the Paris Street depot. Twenty-six years later, Perry (then an Alderman, and chairman of the Transport Committee) drove the last tram from Heavitree to the depot, as electric trams gave way to motorised omnibuses. Between those years a fascinating story is told, with chapters relating to personnel involved in operating the trams, detailed descriptions of the actual vehicles, how the tram system spread as demand increased and how trams made life easier for the public travelling around the city. Readers are also told how the First World War caused severe problems, with most staff being male and thus required for War service.

Little anecdotes make it an enjoyable read, such as the youth who placed small detonators (used as fog signals by the railway) on the tram track in Blackboy Road, causing panic amongst the passengers when the detonators went off as the tramcar passed over them! Wonderful!

The book includes some fascinating, nostalgic photographs, with many adding suitable touches to the story: charabancs taking Tramways staff on an outing; sections of track being re-used as buttresses on a building at Exeter's Quay; employee Jack Tucker in his first Tramways uniform; and a most unusual photograph of a conductor collecting fares inside a tram. There are also photographs of two headstones in Exeter's Higher Cemetery in memory of Albert Wotton and Mary Findlay. An employee of Exeter Tramways, Wotton, died aged just nineteen, and his headstone has a delightful carving of a tramcar with the inscription *Peace, Perfect Peace*. Mary Findlay died in the much-reported accident (one of, apparently, several involving tramcars) in Fore Street in March 1917, when a tramcar ran out of control. Coincidentally, her headstone also has the same inscription.

Criticism is always easy, but if any can be made with this publication, it is minor. For instance, the page numbering starts with the title page, and includes

the contents, foreword and acknowledgments. That makes the story start on page nine, which is slightly unusual. The reviewer was disappointed with the index, for it is not, unfortunately, complete. If there is an index, then it should be comprehensive. Mention is made within the text of many important subjects such as Brunel, Turnpike Trusts, Exeter Electric Light Company, section pillars, Dick Kerr & Co., etc. – but not included in the index.

Dick Passmore

Dorothy Presswell (2009) *The exiled Earl: William Courtenay – fact and fiction*, privately published; 57pp.; no ISBN. £4.99, free p. nd p. Available from the author at 37 Redford Meadow, Kingsbridge, Devon, TQ7 1SH.

The discovery of public and private papers, or their release at record offices and other repositories, often give rise to new and welcome reinterpretations of the past. Explanations can be revised and lives can be rehabilitated. A historian who has proven to be adept at employing newly-uncovered papers to shed fresh light on aspects of Devon and wider history is Dorothy Presswell. Readers of *The Devon Historian* will be familiar with her research, with recent articles covering, among other things, the architect Charles Fowler, Powderham Castle and the asylum at Exminster. Ms Presswell's work has made valuable use of archives at Powderham Castle and elsewhere.

Dorothy Presswell's latest publication, *The exiled Earl*, examines a body of correspondence relating to the work of John Wilkinson of Lincoln's Inn, lawyer for the third Viscount Courtenay, later ninth Earl of Devon. The stories of excess and deviance that have surrounded the third Viscount, in part deriving from an association with William Beckford and what became known as the 'Powderham scandal', are tempered by Presswell's research on the Wilkinson letters. Courtenay, during a long exile in France, is revealed exercising a fuller interest in the management of his Devon and Irish estates, and showing much kindness and generosity to employees and dependents. Equally the book highlights the role of the talented John Wilkinson in securing the survival and sustainability of the Courtenay estates.

The author declares that 'this is not an academic biography'. This is somewhat a relief, for the writer is freed to adopt a style that skips and, in places, races along in an engaging and compelling manner. The author's partiality and personality peeps through at times, yes, but this is not inappropriate in a book and story that is so much about partiality and personalities. In fact readers of a reflective disposition will find their partialities dawned out also. Presswell touches on grand stages and great events, in Britain, France and Ireland, but it is personalities that are allowed to come to the fore. The book tells of the development of theatrical entertainment at Powderham by the third Viscount. Indeed the book is structured a little akin to a dramatic script, with sections focusing on the principal players - Courtenay, Wilkinson, and others - and the main stage sets, including Powderham, Grovesnor Square and the Chateau de Draveil.

If not 'academic', the work has scholarly underpinnings. The narrative regularly opens up space for quotations from and interpretations of correspondence, newspaper reports and legal documents. This rehabilitative account finds both credibility and colour in its close reading of what is quite an illuminating set of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century documents.

Andrew J.H. Jackson

Gerry Woodcock (2009) *Tavistock's yesterdays 18*, privately printed; 96 pages, 39 illustrations, softback, no ISBN; £4.95.

One cannot but marvel at the way in which Gerry Woodcock comes up each year with his new collection of short, or longer, episodes relating to Tavistock's history, and presents them in his own readable and engaging style.

Researched mainly in Devon Record Office, past issues of *Tavistock Times Gazette*, and the Tavistock Subscription Library, the subjects are wide-ranging. Of particular interest to this reader was the first section: 'Coaching days', relating to transport serving the town between the 1760s and 1860s. Also enlightening was the study entitled 'Some changes in the employment patterns 1750-1850', including comparative figures for various occupations during those years. The chapter entitled 'Fire!' gives an account of the development of the town's fire service from 1823, when the parish council, after much deliberation, declined the offer of a Plymouth gentleman who had a fire engine for sale at £20. A serious fire in the town a few years later, however, changed local minds, and as a result Tavistock had its first fire engine in 1837. Various designs evolved in the following years but it was not until the 1920s that horse-draught was replaced by motorised.

Amongst other sections is a slightly longer one which complements the writer's earlier accounts of the history of Tavistock School (now College), the establishment at which he was Head of the History Department for twenty-nine years.

Helen Harris

Gerry Woodcock (2010) *Tavistock's yesterdays 19*, privately published; 96 pages, 31 illustrations, softback, no ISBN.

The 2010 edition of Gerry Woodcock's *Tavistock's Yesterdays* (the nineteenth) is, in the opinion of this – its 'regular reviewer', the best so far. The former history master, for whom Tavistock has been home for over forty years, spends much of his retirement in continued research and writing, particularly in matters involving the town, and the recent issue of thirteen chapters of varied subjects is both entertaining and informative.

Longest chapter in the newest collection is entitled 'The Abbots of Tavistock'. Here the author lists and provides such biographical details as are available relating to each of the thirty-nine abbots of Tavistock Abbey from its founding in 974 until demise by Henry VIII on 1539. Information is gathered from several named sources. Also of special interest is the section on 'The William Morris connection', which focuses on the very fine stained glass

window in Tavistock Parish Church designed by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, and records Morris's family connection with the Gill family who were leading bankers and merchants in the town.

'Wire, lines, and letters' gives an engaging account of telegraphic and postal evolution and history in Tavistock. More thought provoking than its title suggests, 'Fings ain't wot they used t'be' comprises a series of extracts from *The Tavistock Gazette* and other sources from the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries which illustrate examples of bad behaviour of those days, mainly among the town's younger people, involving violence and destructive activities. One wonders how it is that in these modern times of greater affluence and supposed enlightenment, the town still has to cope with so many occurrences of bad manners, vandalism and even violence.

This small book is one which makes the reader, on finishing one chapter, eager to proceed to the next.

Helen Harris

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*.

Queries

Andrew Jackson writes:

The Westcountry Studies Library has been running a 'Location? Location? Location?' series. Unidentified images can be seen on the local studies website: www.devon.gov.uk/localstudies. You might like to consider the picture below, currently titled 'Small horse carriage at Torquay'. If you have any information on this picture, please get in touch with anne.howard@devon.gov.uk at the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter. The editor would like to express his thanks to the Katherine Dunhill of the WSL, now recently retired, whose idea it was to reproduce unidentified images in *The Devon Historian*. These images have supplied the front cover illustration for the journal since vol. 75 (2007).



Correction

Andrew Jackson writes:

In Charles Scott-Fox, 'The Ayshford community (formerly known as Ayshford Street)', *The Devon Historian*, vol. 78, pp. 67-7, the final print version of a graph reproduced in an inadequate resolution. With apologies to the author, the figure is reproduced here.

AYSHFORD - POPULATION 1066-2006

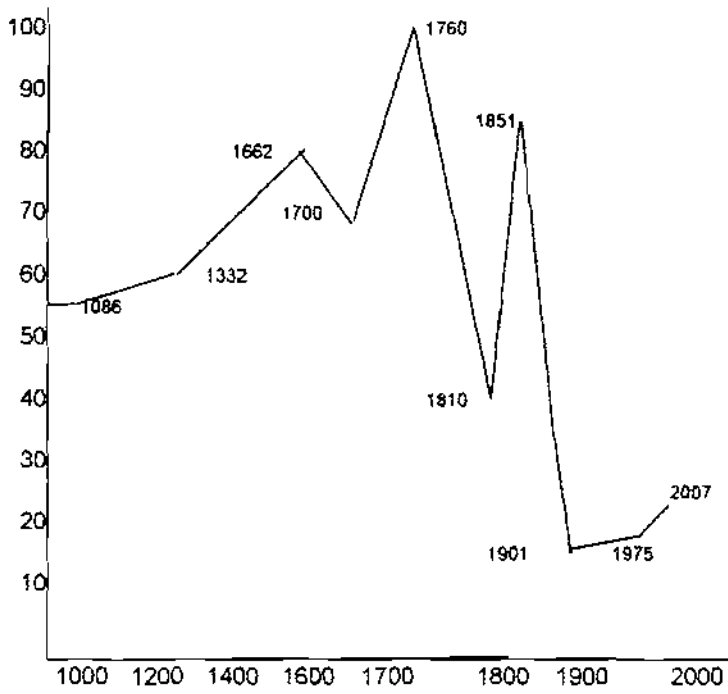


Figure 2: The estimated population of Ayshford Street 1066-2006.

The Devon Historian

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 Grosseteste University College Lincoln, Lincoln, LN1 3DY, or via andrew.jackson@bishopp.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.

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