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Tracing the boundaries of the Borough of Bovey Tracey from Saxon times to the present

Frances Billinge

The start of the Borough in 1260

Henry de Tracy, Lord of the Manor obtained a charter in or around 1260 which granted him permission to establish a Borough in Bovey.[1] This tells us two things. Firstly that there was a Lord of the Manor with manor lands, and secondly that Bovey was thought to be a good place to establish an official urban area. Although some boroughs at this time were positioned in new areas, it is probable that Bovey was already a trading area.

We know something about the land of Bovey Manor and its lords from the Domesday survey. Before 1066 the manor of 'Bovi' or 'Boui' had been held by Edric, but by the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 the manor was held by Geoffrey de Mowbray, the Bishop of Coutances, and it was in the Teignton (Teignbridge) Hundred. The Hundred was an administrative area in Saxon times. The manor included Edric's land together with the land of 15 theigns. Theigns were noblemen who held hereditary land. This additional land was Adoneboui (Little Bovey), Wermehel (Warmhill), Scobatora (Shaptor), Brungarstone (considered to be outlying land in what is now Widecombe in the Moor parish), Ailauesfort (Elsford), Oluelcia ((Woolleigh), Hauocmora (Hawkmoor), Harleia (Hatherleigh), and Polebroc (Pullabrook).[2] This is the start of our knowledge of the area which was included in the Manor of Bovey, but we do not know how much of a settlement this meant that there was in any part of the manor lands of Bovey at this time.

We next learn about developments in Bovey from a document of 23 October 1219, when the first known permission to hold a market in Bovey Tracey was granted to the Lord of the Manor Eva de Tracy.[3] It is thought that this market lapsed and the next grant was made on 18 July 1260 when Henry de Tracy, Lord of the Manor, was granted permission to hold markets and fairs.[4] It is around this time Henry de Tracy also obtained the charter to establish a Borough in Bovey Tracey. The establishment of markets and fairs and an urban centre was probably a development of activities which had already been in place for many years serving the local people.

Putting this in context with what was going on in the rest of Devon, from Domesday, and continuing until the middle of the 1300s, settlement in the whole of Devonshire was developing. There had been 4 boroughs in 1066 which were Exeter, Barnstaple, Totnes, and Lydford. Two hundred years later by 1238, the number of

boroughs had increased to 14. These were developing urban areas or new urban areas. Bovey Tracey became part of this increasing development and was one of the approximately 70 Devonshire boroughs by the middle of the 1300s.

Gaining the borough charter and granting of the markets and fairs was an important time for Bovey Tracey as the Lord of the Manor would have been speculating on the borough developing into a larger settlement. He expected to make more money from land rents than he did through agriculture.

The charter was official approval for trading developments, as well as changes in the usage and tenure of land and in local government. Inhabitants could now become freeholders, called burgesses, as they could buy burgage plots which were narrow strips of land facing onto the main streets where they would live and trade. The burgesses could also hold markets and fairs, and be part of the local government of the borough through the newly established Court Leet; the latter being separate from the Court Baron of the Manor. Apart from trading and property rights the burgesses had new powers which gave them important roles in the administration of justice in the borough and also the advantage of no longer needing to provide services to the Lord of the Manor. At the time when the borough was established there were forty burgesses in Bovey Tracey. This would suggest a population of 180, and so would have been one of the smaller boroughs in Devon at that time.[5] Because of the commercial aspects of a borough we can infer that its boundaries would be around the area where trade would occur, where people would be passing through, where a group of merchants and craftsmen would want to live in proximity to aid their commerce, and where markets and fairs could be held to maximum financial and social advantage. A borough is going to be in, or become, the centre of the population in the area.

The Borough boundary

Unfortunately Bovey Tracey's charter document does not give us a clear description of the exact land included within the borough. In this way it is dissimilar from many other borough charters of the time.

The borough charter, in the translation by Hugh Peskett states:

> I have granted for me and my heirs to all my burgesses of Bovey and their heirs that they may hold their bugage in fee and inheritance for ever to them and their heirs or to whomsoever they shall wish to give... rendering for each burgage yearly.... twelve pence.... I have granted the aforementioned burgesses that they may have common pasture for their horses and beasts and sheep in all my Heathfield which extends from the great bridge on Bovey river as far as Brimley in the southern part, and turbary... And if it shall... please me or my heirs to cultivate the said Heathfield or to set burgages [there], it shall be fully lawful for us... Moreover I wish that the said burgesses shall be housed on their burgages within the space of two years.[6]

This gives us an indication that the boundary of the borough went down to the bridge and that it might be extended in the following two years into the Heathfiield area which was pasture and turbary. The Tithe map apportionment of 1841 (Figure 1) shows that Heathfield was used as the description for most of the land in what is now the central part of the current town, and part of the Brimley and Heathfield areas of Bovey Tracey parish.[7]

Figure 1: Burgage Plots on Mary Street Bovey Tracey, Tithe Map 1841 (reproduced with kind permission of the Devon Record Office).

The early borough of Bovey Tracey would have taken into account existing land divisions within the manor which were more than likely Saxon in origin. These would have been integrated into a pattern of burgage plots, along with various residences and other buildings, extending back from the interlinking roads that served the local community, that is: Hind Street, Mary Street, East Street and the main street. Today many long, narrow field strips extend behind Mary Street and East Street, and those which were behind Fore Street (only a few still remain) and Hind Street can be seen on the Tithe Map 1841. These are considered to correspond to some of those original 1260 burgage plots (Figures 2 and 3).[8] The four roads in the centre form a roughly triangular shaped borough as supported by evidence in later documents.

Figure 2: Burgage Plot, Mary Street, Bovey Tracey 2012.

Figure 3: Burgage Plot, Mary Street, Bovey Tracey 2012.

Development of the Borough 1300s-1500s

Over the next three hundred years we still do not have evidence of the exact boundaries of the borough. We know from court rolls that by 1326 the number of

burgage plots in Bovey Tracey had increased by a third to sixty four burgesses.[9] This would suggest a borough population of approximately 288. This makes Bovey Tracey borough a reasonable size compared with others in Devon and Cornwall at that time as nearly half of the Devon and Cornwall boroughs of the 1300s had fewer than 200 inhabitants.[10] There was then a time of population loss and slow growth in England following the Black Death and many years of poor harvests.[11] The English population did not begin to expand again until the mid 1500s, so it is perhaps no surprise that from the Church Rate document of 1596 we find that Bovey Tracey borough had only increased by eleven more burgesses in two hundred and fifty years, making seventy five in all, which suggests a population of 375.[12] This does not necessarily mean the boundaries of the borough had increased as holdings could have been divided. What it tells us is that the borough was continuing and that the number of rate paying inhabitants was not reducing. This Church Rate lists each tenant of manor 'Land' and each burgess in the 'Borough'.

It is this Church Rate document which gives us our first tangible indication of the area of the borough at that time. Caution is needed when considering this document as a landholder might have property in both the land and the borough and only be listed for charges on one of the areas.

The Church Rate 1596 (see Appendix)

'Borough'
The borough included holdings directly on the four main streets as we know them today as well as on adjoining land.

- Mary Street: and holdings to the north - Atway tenement: Wises Meadow: Beare tenement, with Atway tenement being the last holding.
- High/Main Fore Street: including holdings to the south and west - Undertown was the land where the Riverside and Methodist church are now and the holdings went as far as Buck's Lane and Mannings Meadow; Tanmilles and Lymes were probably south of Bovey river bridge where the mill is located on the Tithe Map; the holdings went as far as Pludda South of the bridge.
- Hind Street: including the Portreeve Park below Atway; Southbrook Lane; Ffryers Meadows (later called German's fields also below Attway);
- East Street: Portreeve Park; with Trough Lane being the end of the borough at the top of the town.

However other holdings in the list have not yet been identified as they were described by the name of the landholder – Parishaws Close, Sperkes Barn and Meadows, Ducke Park, Stantor, West Bovey, Bovetown, Higher House, Mans House, Fflodder and Roll. Further research such as using clues in the 1844 and 1846

Church Rate together with the more comprehensive Tithe Apportionment of 1841 might eventually help us find the location of these holdings.[13]

'Land'

Land holdings in the manor formed a ring around the early borough and, as many of these can be identified today, this helps confirm the early borough boundary.

Development of the Borough 1600s-1700s

Later documents such as the records of the law court (Court Leet) and the Court Baron from 1654-1748 demonstrate how the borough was administered. One such is the Record of the Borough Law Court held at Thomas Dornian's house on 11 October 1686.[14] These documents tell us about the holders of office such as the portreeve, bailiff, constable, cryer, ale taster, scavenger and so on, but they do not indicate the boundaries of the borough.

It is the overseers of the poor accounts and rate of 1630 and 1653 and the rent records of the Manor and Borough of Bovey Tracey in the 1600s and 1700s which begin to give us a much clearer idea of where the boundaries were.[15] More burgesses were listed and the names of their holdings given and many of these correspond with areas we can still identify. These rent records continue to list rent payers by whether or not they lived in the borough.

Borough of Bovey Tracey Rentals 1753 (see Appendix)

One example is the 1753 Rentals record which shows that the borough continued to develop with there now being 105 burgesses, an increase of 30 in the two hundred years from 1596.[16] As might be expected most of the 29 borough areas/holdings mentioned in 1596 can be identified in 1735, although names changed and some holdings had been divided. The land behind Hind Street was in the ownership of more people, as was that between Mary Street and Atway. A comprehensive list of newly named holdings within the borough, some of which have not yet been located, can be seen in the Appendix. With regard to these as yet unlocated holdings, we do not know if they were within the earlier boundary or if they represented expansion at the edges.

However, looking at the manor land outside the borough we see that the main names for land holdings were very similar between 1596 and 1735, although some land had been sub-divided. This indicates that the borough boundary had not changed significantly since the early days, notwithstanding the uncertainty about some unidentified borough holdings, and some anomalies with the possibility that some borough holdings were listed under the 'land' owner, for example: 'Towns and four closes of land called Undertown'.

The list in the Appendix also indicates the new names for land holdings in the 1735 rent records compared with the 1596 church rate.

Further development and final days of the Borough in the 1800s

The same borough boundaries continued until just over half way through the 1800s. They are described in the Manor and Borough rent records, Bovey Tracey Plans maps, the Tithe Map of 1841, the Church Rate Book for 1846, the Census 1841-1861 enumeration districts, and the 1842 and 1843 Rate and Tax of the Parish of Bovey Tracey, all of which give a list of the borough properties.[17] Other documents such as the Portreeve Park Tithes of 1851 help to confirm these boundaries.[18]

In the 1841 Census Bovey Tracey was described as a parish in the Hundred of Teignbridge, referring back to the Saxon administrative division of land. This is the last time we see any formal reference to the Saxon Hundred. In this Census the area of residence within the town corresponds to the borough holdings list of 1735. This means that the triangle formed by Mary Street, East Street, Fore Street and Hind Street, and holdings behind them, continued to be the town centre.

The boundaries of the borough were obviously important to its inhabitants as reported in *The Western Times* on 1 May 1859. The article describes the annual Mayor's Monday procession of hundreds of pedestrians visiting these boundaries followed by a dinner. Similar processions were reported from 1853 to 1863.[19]

It is the enumeration districts of the 1871, 1881 and 1891 Census which show a development in the borough lands. By 1871 the 'whole of the town' extended south of the river Bovey and included St John's Cottages and all the houses on Bovey Heathfield. By 1881 and continuing into 1891 the 'whole town' enumeration district was from Crownley Lane to Cross Cottage, Station Gate, East Street, Mary Street, Hind Street, Fore Street, Station Road, Pludda, Townsend, Glendale, Turnpike, Heatheredge, Heathfield Terrace, St Mary's, Milverton, St Mary's View and more houses up to the Edgemoor. Clearly a far larger area than the original borough as it was now extending into parts of the 'Heathfield' and Brimley of charter description as lands of the manor in the thirteenth century. This was a time of population growth for the whole of the parish which had risen from 1,400 in 1810 to 2,100 by 1860, and 2,600 by the end of the century. These developments are also shown by the various Devonshire gazetteers and guides which put Bovey Tracey on the travellers' route.[20]

Local Government and Health Acts and the Land Tax assessment boundaries were changing the administration of local authorities in the latter part of the 1800s.[21] Bovey Tracey was still a borough, but changes were coming with the developments in sanitation legislation and democratic elections. By the time of the 1891 Census the Civil Parish of Bovey Tracey was part of the Newton Abbot Rural Sanitary Board. Following the 1894 Local Government Act the Borough of Bovey Tracey and the Manor lands became part of Newton Abbot Rural District. In 1896 Bovey Tracey Parish Council was established and the borough and its courts ceased as an entity of local government.[22]

Twentieth and twenty-first century – can we still find the Borough on the ground?

Following a further Local Government Act in 1974 the Bovey Tracey Town Council was formed and this was when the term town became the official local authority designation of the area. A memory of the borough is in field systems we can still see in the town. A good vantage point is at the top of the footpath from Bovey Bridge to Indio where you can look up to behind East Street and Mary Street and still see the outline of some of the burgage plots and also one of the Portreeve's parks. Those below Fore Street have now mainly been built on, but you can see where they were. You can also look left across to the land between Hind Street and the river and Southbrook to see where the borough extended. The other memory of the ancient borough is in the work of the Bovey Tracey Town Trust which continues to administer some charitable monies from the time of the Court Leet. We may no longer have the offices of portreeve and the cryer, the ale taster and the scavenger, but we do have a mayor, town councillors and churchwardens who continue some of the work of the Saxon borough.

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Appendix: Comparison between named holdings in the Borough and Land 1596 Church Rate and 1735 Borough Rentals

BOROUGH	
1596	1735
Pludde (Pludda)	(Part of the Land in 1735)
Mary Streete	Mary Street (included Pinns and Yeo
Marystreete	houses and Rack Park TM1553)
and Meadow, Mary Street	
and Hind Street Lane	
Sops House and Garden in the end of	

Mary Street.	
Hendestreete/ Hindestreet and Lane	Renstreet Lane fields included the Union Inn (TM1440 [Cromwell Arms]). Goswills (TM889, 890). Bulling meadow (TM889 behind Hind Street). Southbrook Lane
Ffryers Meadows (later German's field TM860)	
Sops Meadow (TM885, 886, behind Hind St)	Sopers Meadow and the Moor
East Street	Easton Street
High Street	
Hores House and Land*	
Hores Meadow*	
Jurdens House*	
Parishaws Close*	
Sperkes Barn and Meadowe*	
Sops Undertown (Undertown Barton TM 1224-1227)	
Ducke Parke	
Sops house and Meadowe at Bridge end (TM 1522, 1524 Bridge tenement)	
Close at Stantor*	
West hovey*	
Bovetown	
Higher House*	
Two Portreeve Parks (TM1403, 873)	
Tanmilles and Lymes (TM1836 Tan House. TM1214 Mill House)	
Wises Meadow (TM852, just before Atway)	
Mannings Meadow (TM1326 off East St)	Mannings Meadow
Bradleyford (TM1676, its position is likely to be Land)	
Mans House*	
Closes at Fflodder*	
Hores House Meadow*	
Way (Atway) tenement	Lower and Higher Attway/Higher Atway (TM851 before Atway on N side)
Way Parks	Roll Gate
Roll	
Beare tenement	
Barton Land	Bakers Meadow (TM933)
	Shaptor's Close (TM897)
	Head of Strentford Lane (likely to be in the Land. TM2609, 2405)
	Pitt Tenement Pump

Meeting House
Alms House (opposite the Dolphin TM1187)
Two fields near Furzeley Lane
Hill Road*
Drooling House*
Steer's field*
Bull Hill*
Mandons*
Julian Meadow*
Ringwell Meadow*
Reedgate Tenement*
Tappers Meadow*
Horse Down*
Racknaoch*
Hillhead*
Cockwell Cross*
House called Fryers*
House called Dunkirk*
House called Sopers*

LAND	
1596	1735
Parke	Parke
Hawkmore	Hawkmoor
Warmpitt	Warmpitt
Weeleameade	
Hatherley	Hatherly
Plumley	
Fforder	Forda
Wolley	Woolley
Subbrooke	Southbrook
Northcombe	Northcombe
Scobbetor	
Beare	Beara
Whitstone	Whitstone
Aller	Aller
Croundell	Lower Crowndell
Stickeweeke	Stickwick
Churchstile	Churchstile
Morehaies (TM2097-2101)	Moorhayes
Drake Lane	
Combe	Combe/ Combe Parkes/MiddleCombe/ Heigher Combe/Hatherdown Hill
	Northcombe

Cockleigh Park and Woodland	
Combe and Cley pkes	Combe and Clayland: Combe Parkes
Heale	Heal
Lower Cridiford	Lower Cridiford:
Higher Cridiford	Heigher Cridiford
Luscombe and Cley tenement	Lushcombe
Woodehousedowne	
Crowde	Crowda
Walweeke (Warwicks)	
Crowdell	Higher and Lower Crowndale
Dunley	Dunley
Littlebovey	Little Bovey
Bradley	
Weyford	Wifford
Laugaller	
Bremley	
Chapell	
Chorlebrook	Challabrook: Challabrook Moors
Ffyve Weeches	
Whisellwill	
Colehouse	Coalhouse
Owlacombe	Owlacombe
Yearner Wood	Yernor
Shute	Shute
Pullabrooke	Pullabrook and Mill
Great Salrudge	Soldridge/Little Soldridge
Cottage by the Mills and	Cottages and Orchards by the Mills
Chorlebrook More	
Westbovye	Westa Bovey
Wreyland	
Yeo	
Elsforde	Allisford
Bullaton	
Meadows by Jewes Bridge	
Ffoxes Meadows by Jewes Bridge	
(TM2219. 2220 Foyes meadow)	
Washeborne Meade	
Woodlande	
Culverhouse Combe.	
	Pludda (which was listed in the borough in 1596)
	Fairs and markets (not part of the church rate so not mentioned in the 1596 list)
	Warmhill in Hennock
	Bove Town and Half Pound Barn*

Smithay
Little Dear Parkes
Bradley Ford
Soldridge and Little Soldridge
Pound House*
Bux grounds Scotway alias Scotweare and Bough
Towns and four closes of land called Undertown

* Not yet identified
TM number refers to field numbers on Tithe Map

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Working class housing in Victorian Plymouth[1]: from slum to council house Part 1: slums and artisans' dwellings

Ann Bond

During the early years of the Victorian era, Plymouth came to be regarded as one of Britain's unhealthiest and most overcrowded towns. Typhus, scarlet fever, smallpox, and whooping cough were all both epidemic and endemic and overcrowding was commonplace. Entire families of sometimes ten of more occupied single rooms where they would live, eat and sleep.[2] The reason for the extreme overcrowding and consequent health problems can be traced to Plymouth's rapidly expanding population. Rapid population growth was a characteristic shared by many British towns during the nineteenth century. Not only did the population of the country increase significantly, but also rural to urban migration meant that a greater proportion of the population was concentrated in urban areas. The towns of the industrialising north and midlands, in particular, saw prodigious population growth, but these trends were also mirrored in many other towns throughout the country. Plymouth's population growth was driven, as elsewhere, by the apparently attractive wages of the town when compared with the low agricultural wages of Devon and Cornwall, but in addition many tin and copper mines in the surrounding districts were closing, forcing a search for alternative employment. There was also a sizeable Irish community, who were able to reach the town easily and cheaply on the steamers operating between Plymouth, and Belfast and Cork.

The town's population was recorded as being 16,040 in 1801. By 1851 it was 52,221.[3] Despite the population growth, house building failed to keep pace. Although the population had grown by more than thirty-six thousand, there were just 3,396 additional houses.[4] However, even this figure may be deceptive as the same building which had been counted as one house in 1801 may well have been counted as several houses in later censuses, as it became subdivided. What new working class house building that did take place was often infilling within courts, creating narrow, dark alleyways and courts that lacked ventilation and light.

The Health of Towns Association

When a local branch of the Heath of Towns Association (HTA) was formed in 1845, enquiries into the sanitary condition of the town revealed that overcrowding in the old central core of Plymouth had become extensive, and houses that had once been the homes of the affluent middle classes, who had since moved to the developing suburbs, were subdivided and multi-occupied.

Perhaps the most extreme examples of overcrowding were to be found in New Street, which was found to have 598 people living in just twenty-three houses. Even with this average of twenty-six people to each house, greater extremes were concealed. One house was found to have seventy-five occupants as well as being the location of a dame school with a typical attendance of twenty children. Another house was occupied by ninety-one people.[5]

The HTA had been formed as a cross-party political pressure group in 1844 in response to Edwin Chadwick's infamous *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* with the central objective of agitating for public health and sanitary legislation. Its founder members and principal activists were mostly a group of evangelical aristocrats, and its aims were based around a strong Christian idealism. One of the leading members was Hugh Fortescue, Viscount Ebrington (later third Earl Fortescue) who was at the time Whig MP for Plymouth and after whom Ebrington Street is named. Ebrington was a friend of Chadwick, and like Chadwick had a keen interest in matters related to public health and sanitary reform, as well as other interests such as supporting free trade and the repeal of the corn laws.[6] Ebrington was amongst the group of HTA activists who were responsible for disseminating the sanitary idea throughout the country by means of the then popular method of the public lecture. He delivered a lecture at the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute in December 1845, and the text of his lecture was subsequently published under the title *Unhealthiness of Towns, Its Causes and Remedies*. Christian idealism and the moral crusade of sanitary reform were in evidence from the start with Ebrington's opening remarks that:

> We are met together to consider a subject in which we are all deeply interested, because the health, the tranquillity, nay the Christianity of the people of this country are nearly concerned in the sanitary condition of their towns.[7]

He also condemned the principle of *laissez-faire* which he declared to be a consequence of Voltaire's attack on the 'holiest truths of our Christian faith'.[8]
The lecture was addressed to an audience which included many of the town's prominent citizens, of whom a significant number were evangelicals, dissenters and Whigs. The lecture resulted in the formation of a local branch of the HTA, its joint presidents being Viscount Ebrington himself and the mayor, Thomas Bulteel. The committee consisted of a number of past and future mayors, ministers of religion, surgeons and leading members of the town's elite. The secretary to the newly formed local branch of the association was the Rev. William Odgers the minister of the Treville Street Unitarian Church. It was Odgers who was to lead the enquiries into the sanitary condition of the town, which established the true extent to which the central part of the town had become overcrowded, and he was to later comment that his work had resulted from a hope that 'some practical result should follow from his [Ebrington's] lecture'.[9] As well as quantifying the level of overcrowding, Odgers' enquiries made clear the squalid conditions of the housing stock itself. The average

number of occupants to each house was calculated to be in excess of nine people, whilst at the same time the average occupancy rates in both London and Liverpool were said to be seven people per house and in Manchester it was six. Odgers also found that more than five hundred houses were without a water closet or privy, 753 had no piped water, and entire courts had access to only one shared external stand pipe with the water only on for one hour a day. In some houses there was 'neither drain, water, nor privy; an open gutter running through the house'.[10]

Odgers' investigations were conducted during 1846 and presented to the local branch of the HTA in December of that year. Press reports on the lecture triggered a petition to the town's Improvement Commissioners demanding action. The full text of the investigations was also published in instalments in successive issues of the *Plymouth Health of Towns Advocate* during the following year and the full report was finally published in November 1847. The realisation of the overcrowded slum conditions in which much of the town's population was living caused shock amongst the better-off sections of the public, and the concerns raised were widely debated in the local newspapers but remained largely unaddressed by the town's Improvement Commissioners.

The Local Board of Health

Brayshay and Pointon have described the ensuing campaign for the town to adopt the Public Health Act of 1848, its eventual application in 1854 after a General Board of Health enquiry, and the formation of the Local Board of Health.[11] Brayshay has further discussed the actions of the newly formed local board and has suggested that by using permissive legislation in a skilful and innovative manner, the Plymouth Board was in the forefront of the reform of the urban environment.[12]

During the second half of the 1850s and the whole of the 1860s a clean-up of the town was underway. Roads were paved, water supplies were extended, roads and courts were widened to allow in light and ventilation, and a comprehensive sewerage scheme was completed. The local board was also quick to appoint its Inspector of Nuisances and an Assistant Inspector,[13] both of whom were immediately active in reporting nuisances. The Board was equally active in issuing abatement notices, and where the owners of property failed to comply would authorise the Committee of Works to carry out the necessary improvements to the property.[14]

Despite the zealous clean-up, many problems remained. In particular, overcrowding was often exacerbated when slum properties were demolished, as the population crowded into even fewer dwellings. When compulsory purchase powers were conferred on local boards in the Local Government Act of 1858, the Plymouth Board of Health began a programme of earmarking properties for purchase and demolition in order to continue with its programme of improvements. After much delay caused by a public enquiry and a visit by a Local Government Inspector, the first compulsory purchase, of some thirty-four properties, went ahead in 1861.[15] Further properties were compulsorily

purchased almost every year for the rest of the decade and continued into the 1870s. During this time it is apparent that many families – the tenants occupying these properties – were displaced as a result of the actions taken. Scant attention seems to have been given to their plight. There was, in any case, no mechanism by which alternative accommodation could be provided for them and there can be little doubt that the result was even greater overcrowding of adjacent courts and alleys, and, of course, the population was continuing to increase.

There had been a very small amount of charitable housing and a few employers provided some housing for their own staff. There had, however, been no activity in the style of the philanthropic individuals such as Miss Burdett-Coutts or the charitable housing foundations such as the Peabody Trust, based in the metropolis. In the main housing provision was left to private enterprise. Private developers though, did not aim to provide housing for the masses. All the same where new houses were built speculatively, they quickly became multi-occupied. An indication of the ongoing problems can be discerned from the diary of Miss Sarah Venn, one of the Plymouth Town Mission's lady missioners. As well as recording her missionary work, Miss Venn often described the living conditions of the poor families she met in the course of her work. On 15 December 1875, for example, she wrote:

> when I entered the room such a sight the poor woman suffering from Asma [*sic*] at times hardly able to speak to you. A daughter 19 years old in a decline only able to get up part of the day, one boy a sailor home on his three weeks leave, one at school, also a baby. In the room there was two beds or rather I should say a dirty mattress stuffed with straw on the girls bed the only covering was some old pieces of linsey on the other there was a blanket made of pieces sewed together which I should think some kind friend had given them, on the table was a broken teapot and some old china, everything in the room was in a dirty untidy state, the poor woman seems quite broken down in spirits, the man gets 14 shillings a week when he can work, at times drinks and is also a very violent temper.[16]

What Miss Venn describes indicates a family of six living in a single room with no running water and no sanitation and, with the exception of references to dung heaps in the streets it bears comparison with Elizabeth Gaskell's descriptions of Manchester in the 1840s.

Housing conditions throughout the country continued to be a national scandal but housing legislation was inadequate to tackle the problems of overcrowding, although in 1866 overcrowding was for the first time defined as a 'nuisance' under the Sanitary Act of that year. Further attempts to improve housing policy came with the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act of 1875 (the Cross Act). This act, like many others of the period, was permissive only, and in any case was only applicable to provincial towns with a population of over 200,000 and so had little practical relevance to the situation in places such as Plymouth, other than its ability to inform the local debates about local conditions.[17]

The town's first Medical Officer of Health, Dr Littlejohn, was appointed in February 1874, in response to the legal requirement to do so under the Public Health Act of 1872 and severe epidemics of both smallpox and diphtheria in the town.[18] The delay between that time and the actual appointment was due to abortive attempts to make a joint appointment with Devonport, which had formed a Local Board of Health in 1866 and with Stonehouse, which was operating as one of the newly created Sanitary Districts.[19] Along with the Sanitary Inspector, Dr Littlejohn immediately became active in reporting on a range of public health matters such as sanitation defects, water supplies and noxious manufactories, but also on incidences of overcrowding. By 1878 reports were coming in thick and fast. On one occasion eight people were reported to be occupying one room, although they had subsequently removed to three rooms, and at the next meeting it was reported that seventeen notices of overcrowding had been issued to the property owners concerned.[20] Eventually an assistant inspector had to be appointed in order to carry out house to house visitations in order to cope with the scale of the problem. Whilst such abatement notices required the property owners to remedy the nuisance, hardly any consideration seems to have been paid to the tenants who were displaced by enforcement actions, at least in the minutes of the Sanitary Committee.

Plymouth's housing conditions continued to be vilified in the local press, which began campaigning for an improvement in the living conditions of the working classes. The *Western Morning News* frequently highlighted the situation. The *Western Daily Mercury*, in particular, then took up the cause, and matters were brought to a head in November 1880 when the paper began a series of editorials describing 'the terrible overcrowding in some parts of Plymouth, and the misery consequent thereupon'.[21] The articles were compiled into a pamphlet and published under the title *Overcrowded Plymouth*. As had happened over thirty years earlier when public exposure of sanitary conditions led to public pressure to adopt the Public Health Act of 1848, so the furore caused by the public exposure of living conditions appears to have prompted a campaign to adopt the provisions of the 1868 Artizans' Dwellings Act (the Torrens Act) which, along with the Cross Act, had been amended in 1879. The Mayor, William Derry, investigated the possibility of doing so, but he discovered that the Act had been found to be impractical.[22]

Philanthropic activity and the construction of tenement blocks

This time, however, a number of wealthy individuals took matters into their own hands, and during the next two years a number of artisans' tenement blocks and working class lodgings were constructed. First off the mark were Messrs Harris, Bulteel and Co. of the Naval Bank, who, on 29 December 1880, received approval from the Special Works Committee to convert existing malt and store houses in Hoegate Street into artisans' dwellings. These consisted of dormitories each approximately eleven feet by nine feet with a day room to every three dormitories. Each floor had twenty-seven dormitories and nine day rooms as well as a water supply and sink. There were also ten women's WCs and ten

men's WCs and latrines, and a washhouse with eight washing troughs and a drying room.[23] Two years later, Harris, Bulteel and Co. went on the construct tenement blocks in Notte Street, which on the ground floor consisted of shops to the street frontage with living rooms and bedrooms and shared WCs and, on the upper floors, two and four-roomed tenements.[24]

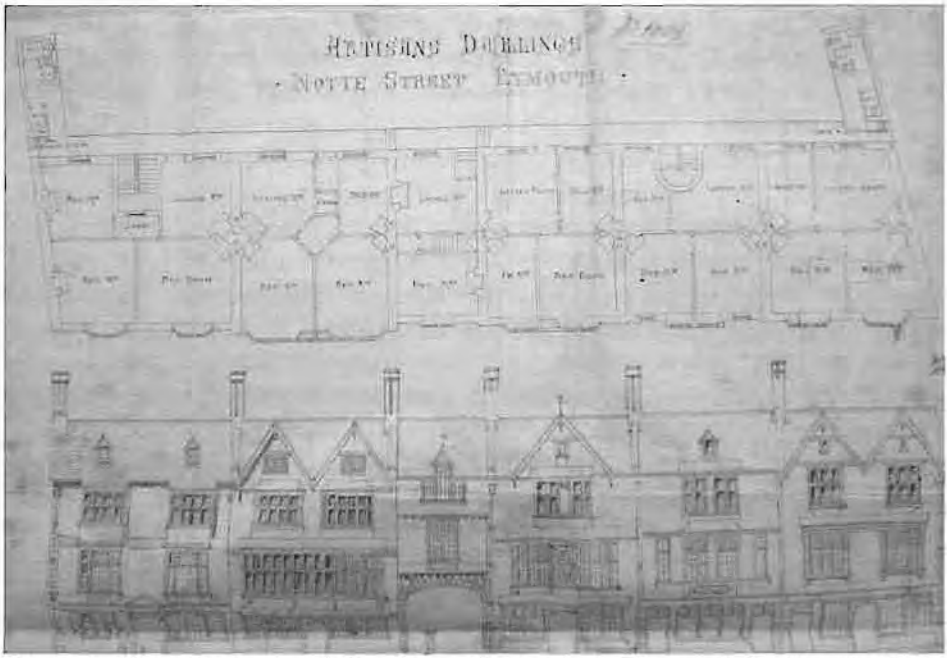

Figure 1: Plans for Artisans' Dwellings, Notte Street, Plymouth for Harris, Bulteel and Co. Architect Herbert Gribble (reproduced by permission of the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, PCC/60/1/3916).

Sir Edward Bates, Conservative MP for the town, together with Mr John Pethick, a well-known local builder and member of the Borough Council who later went on to serve a term of office as Mayor, constructed two blocks of tenement dwellings on sites purchased from the Sanitary Authority, which had been acquired under the powers of the Public Health Act.[25] The first block in St Andrew's Street, on the site of the present day Magistrates Court, consisted of four floors of fourteen rooms each, arranged as sixteen two-roomed tenements and eight three-roomed tenements. On each floor common offices consisted of a washhouse and covered drying area, two WCs for women and children and a WC and urinal for men.[26] The second block was to comprise thirty-two rooms arranged as two-roomed tenements with similar offices.[27]

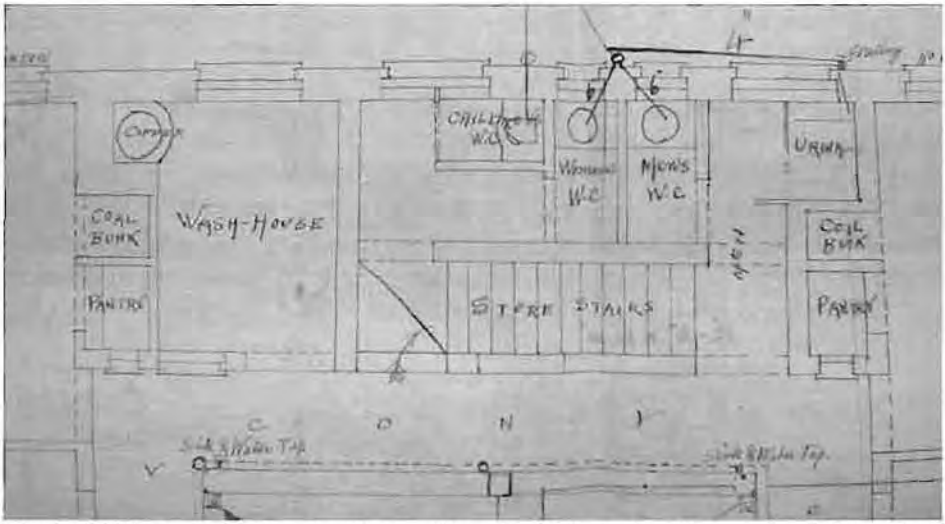

Figure 2: Plans for shared offices, New Dwellings for the Poor, Lower Lane Plymouth for Bates and Pethick. Architects Hine and Odgers (reproduced by permission of the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, PCC/60/1/3665).

Bates' venture into 'five per-cent philanthropy' may at first seem a strange move for someone known as 'Bully' Bates. Bates was a wealthy ship-owner whose habitual overloading of his ships resulted in the loss of many vessels and scandals which contributed to the introduction of the load, or Plimsoll, line. Bates lost at least three ships in 1874 due to overloading, resulting in the loss of eighty-seven lives.[28] His ships were also reported on several occasions as having cases of scurvy amongst the crew members and there were allegations of brutality and intimidation.[29] There was even an attempt to expel him from Parliament for bribing the electorate. However, Bates' motivation for his divergence into the philanthropic provision of working class housing becomes clearer in Pethick's speech at the ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone of the second of Bates' dwellings blocks. Pethick explained:

> these dwellings were to be erected entirely through their friend Sir Edward Bates... It was he who had found the money... he could only wish that half-a-dozen other gentlemen would equal Sir Edward Bates in his generosity and then they would have no occasion to adopt the Artizans' Dwellings Act, which he could assure them, was a very expensive Act. Houses of this kind, carried out by Act of Parliament, or by the Town Council, or by Poor Law Guardians, must be more costly than private enterprise, which would work far more beneficially and economically. A good many people in the town had spoken a great deal in times past of supporting such undertakings... But he would assure any gentleman that if he were to put down a thousand pounds in these buildings he would guarantee him five per cent interest, the rooms to be let at the rate of 1s. or 1s. 1d. per week, as was intended in this case. The buildings already finished in St Andrew's-street were filled, and the accommodation for the people who resided in them was all that could be desired, whilst, from an architectural point of view, he did not think they

were a disgrace to the town. He contrasted them with the expensive buildings erected by the School Board – buildings that were not more useful because they were highly decorated – and he hoped they would not elect a man to the Council who had been one of the greatest spendthrifts of the School Board.[30]

Pethick's reference to the forthcoming elections and the open hostility to the Artizans' Dwellings Act can leave little doubt that Bates was not solely motivated by the living conditions of his future tenants. Nevertheless, it is also true that he could have undoubtedly invested his money elsewhere in order to achieve a higher rate of return, and his tenants had better living conditions than might otherwise have been the case.

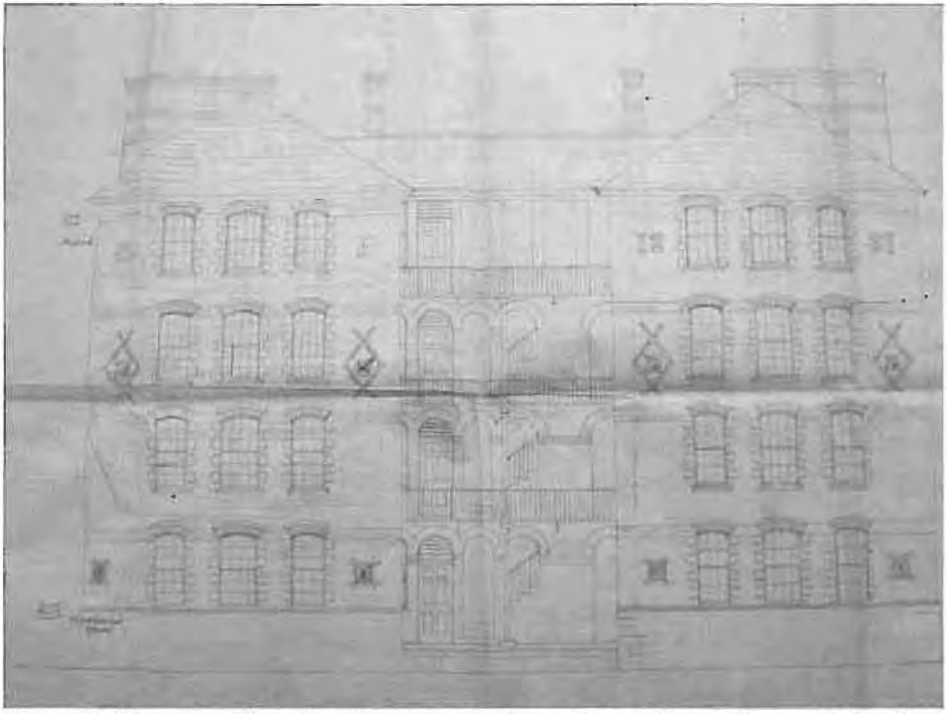

Figure 3: Elevation, New Dwellings for the Poor, Lower Lane Plymouth for Bates and Pethick. Architects Hine and Odgers (reproduced by permission of the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, PCC/60/1/3665).

The other major contributor to the artisans' dwellings movement in Plymouth was the Plymouth Workmen's Dwellings Company Limited. This company was set up in 1881 by leading members of the town's elite. The Chairman was Mr Charles Burnard, Mayor of Plymouth for 1881-82. Also on the board of directors was the current Mayor, Mr Francis Morrish; Mr Norrington, JP; local magistrate Capt. Inskip; surgeon Mr WJ Square; John Pethick and others.[31] Although it would still have been unthinkable for the borough itself to provide housing for the town's working population, this company was almost certainly viewed as an instrument of the town council. In

his annual report of 1881, the Medical Officer of Health for neighbouring East Stonehouse reported:

> Plymouth has formed a company for the erection of dwellings for the working classes. They hope to give the working man a comfortable and convenient dwelling at a moderate cost, and to pay the shareholders in the company a reasonable interest for their capital.[32]

The use of the term 'Plymouth' rather than referring to the company by its official title and the lack of any reference to any of the others within the town by then providing working class housing is significant. Furthermore the fact that Plymouth's Medical Officer of Health, Dr Greenway, was present at the laying of the foundation stone gives extra credence to this probability.

The Workmen's Dwellings Co. obtained a site for development at Clare Place, Coxside in August and proceeded with some speed to submit plans and begin building work. Plans were drawn up by the architectural practice of Hine and Odgers and were approved on 3 September 1881.[33] At the ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone the following month of what was to become known as Clare Buildings, Mr Odgers described the buildings. They were to consist of four blocks of four storeys each and would accommodate ninety-six families. Each tenement would have a living room with a bed recess, a pantry, coal bunk and either one or two bedrooms. Living rooms were to be provided with cooking ranges and one bedroom was to have a grate. Shared offices would, as with other blocks of this type, include separate WCs for women and children, and for men; washhouses with water, coppers and tubs; drying areas; and taps for drinking water, sinks and dust shoots. The south-facing blocks would face, and have a good view of, the Sound, and the northern blocks would face garden land with 'many fine trees'. Landings, with strong iron railings, were to: 'afford a long stretch of playing ground for the children, a resting place for the aged in sunny weather, and a place for a quiet smoke after work is done'.[34]

Other speeches at the ceremony included one by the Mayor, in which he referred to the late Prince Albert's interest in model dwellings dating back to the Great Exhibition of 1851 and to the campaign by the *Western Daily Mercury* of the previous year which 'he had hardly a doubt led to the active promotion of the scheme'. Underneath the foundation stone were placed copies of the *Western Daily Mercury*, the *Western Morning News*, the pamphlet on 'Overcrowded Plymouth' and a list of shareholders in the company.[35]

The company issued a prospectus to raise capital of £50,000 in 10,000 shares of £5 each,[36] but much of this capital was never spent and for many years the dividend paid amounted to just three-and-a-half per-cent, although Mr Morrish, who had served a period as Chairman of the company, felt that it was 'very gratifying to reflect that from the first the undertaking had paid a fair amount of interest'.[37] At shareholders meetings there were some complaints about the expenditure on maintenance and repairs, which was attributed to the fact that the tenements were let to sometimes large families, and there was a

frequent turnover of tenants. Children were blamed for causing damage and in particular for breaking windows. However, one major shareholder commented that:

> the children were no doubt a nuisance, but if the children were not there he would look on the scheme as a failure. private landlords objected to let their houses to people with long families, and it was to provide dwellings suitable for the families of the poorer classes that the company was formed.[38]

The census of 1891 is the first opportunity to gain some sense of the people who actually lived in this new type of dwelling rather than those who campaigned or paid for them. At Clare Buildings, for example, of the ninety-six tenements, eight were unoccupied. The remaining eighty-eight were lived in by a range of working class occupants split roughly equally between skilled manual workers and their families, and labourers of various kinds. However what is clear is that many of the tenements quickly became overcrowded themselves. With an average of over six people per dwelling, some individual homes were occupied by ten or eleven people and one had fourteen occupants. In the main the dwellings were lived in by single families, although a significant minority had boarders, perhaps suggesting that even these 'affordable homes' were beyond the means of some unless lodgers were contributing to the rent.[39] Certainly, the discussions had at the Plymouth Workmen's Dwellings Co. annual meeting in 1887 suggested that the rents of the three-roomed tenements were difficult to afford, as these had a higher unoccupancy rate than the two-roomed.[40] At times up to fourteen of the ninety-six tenements were unoccupied.[41] There were also discussions about the amounts of rent arrears that had developed due to the depression in trade. Later on however the situation improved and there was full occupancy.[42]

The directors were also concerned about the moral improvement of their tenants and, at one time, offered a tenement rent-free to the Town Mission for one of their missioners to live in. This offer was declined and instead a tenement was provided free of charge to a police constable.[43] There were also discussions about providing a hall for the use of the tenants where meetings might be held for their moral and educational improvement in order to 'elevate their tastes and habits'.[44] A hall would further benefit in drawing the men of an evening 'away from other temptations'.[45]

At the annual shareholders meeting on 3 March 1887 Mr Morrish commented on his disappointment that only one fifth of the capital had been spent, and expressed concerns that the company had so far been unable to provide similar housing for the west-end dock labourers and artisans. It was pointed out that the company had been unable to find suitable land in the west-end but that efforts were continuing.[46] Efforts continued for a further two years to find suitable sites but no further developments were to take place, the company eventually placing its trust in the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 to address the continuing need.

Most of the artisans' dwellings constructed during this period were destroyed during the war time bombing of the city or the post war reconstruction. The exception was Clare Buildings which survived until the late 1960s,[47] before being demolished to make way for warehouses, one of which is the current home of the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office.

Figure 4: Clare Buildings, Clare Place, Coxside, Plymouth, photographed in 1965 (reproduced by kind permission of the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, 1479/34).

During a period of less than ten years, around half a dozen tenement blocks were constructed to provide homes for those variously described as 'the poor', the 'labouring classes' and 'artizans'. Whilst these homes undoubtedly provided a better standard of housing and better facilities than their occupants might otherwise have enjoyed, they housed hardly more than one hundred and fifty families. Many more families continued to endure poor quality housing, lack of basic amenities and overcrowded conditions. Writing in 1890, an early historian of Plymouth remarked on the housing stock and overcrowding in the town as follows:

> The past 20 years have been more fruitful. The Plymouth Improved Dwellings Association have built workmen's dwellings at Coxside: Sir Edward Bates and Mr John Pethick have erected blocks in St Andrew and Victoria Streets; Messrs Bulteel & Co. of the Naval Bank have by building and conversion provided extensive ranges of dwellings at the rear of the old house in Notte Street, which is made the

centre of a picturesque frontage designed by Mr Gribble. But there are still scores and hundreds of houses in which it is a shame and a disgrace that human beings should dwell; and not in all cases of ancient date.[48]

The quality of housing and overcrowding were to continue to be a cause of concern for many years to come. When in 1891 a new Medical Officer of Health was appointed, much of his attention was directed to this persistent problem. Dr Williams was to comment in his second annual report for the year 1892 that only Liverpool had a higher population density than Plymouth, and that within the town densities ranged from 20.9 persons per acre in St Jude to a shocking 207.2 persons per acre in Holy Trinity, the old central part of the town.[49] His hard hitting annual reports and his repeated official representations under the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act regarding properties that were found to be unfit for human habitation was to finally lead to the only kind of interventionist action which could seriously start to address the problems, that is the direct provision of working class housing by the Borough Council for its citizens. It is intended that this stage of the development of housing policy in Plymouth will be the subject of a future article.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the staff of the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office and the Plymouth Local Studies Library for their assistance during my research for this article.

Notes and references

1. The modern city of Plymouth comprises what were the three formerly separate towns of Plymouth, Devonport and East Stonehouse, which were united in 1914 as the Borough of Plymouth, as well as other areas such as Plympton and Plymstock, which have joined with Plymouth in more modern times. For the purpose of this article Plymouth refers to the town of Plymouth as it existed during the period under discussion.
2. Odgers 1847, pp. 29-31.
3. Brayshay and Pointon 1983, p. 165.
4. Rawlinson 1853, p. 33. Although Gill states that the housing stock increased by 1396 houses during the first half of the nineteenth century (Gill 1993, p. 229). Rawlinson's report states that there were 1782 houses in 1801 and that by the time of the 1851 census there were 5178, giving an increase of 3396.
5. Odgers 1847, p. 19.
6. HCG Matthew, 'Fortescue, Hugh, third Earl Fortescue (1818–1905)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004, at: http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33212 [accessed 4 April 2011].
7. Ebrington 1847, p. 2.
8. Ebrington, p. 34.
9. *The Inquirer*, 20 December 1884, p. 816.

10. Odgers, p. 19.
11. Brayshay and Pointon.
12. Brayshay 1989.
13. Plymouth and West Devon Record Office (PWDRO) 1622/1, Minutes of the Plymouth Local Board of Health, 17 November 1854.
14. PWDRO 1622/1, Minutes of the Plymouth Local Board of Health, 13 March 1855.
15. Brayshay, p. 120.
16. PWDRO 2102/11.
17. For an account of the legislation relating to housing policy during this period see Tarn 1973, pp. 67-81.
18. PWDRO 1648/105 Sanitary Committee Minutes 24 February 1874.
19. PWDRO 1648/105 Sanitary Committee Minutes 3 December 1872; 14 January 1873; 11 February 1873; 2 December 1873.
20. PWDRO 1648/105 Sanitary Committee Minutes 12 March 1878.
21. *Western Daily Mercury* (*W.D.M.*), 27 October 1881.
22. *W.D.M.*, 27 October 1881.
23. PWDRO PCC/60/1/3667.
24. PWDRO PCC/60/1/3916.
25. PWDRO PCC/60/1/597.
26. PWDRO PCC/60/1/597.
27. *W.D.M.*, 31 October 1881.
28. Peters, 1975, p. 107.
29. Peters, p. 125.
30. *W.D.M.*, 31 October 1881.
31. PWDRO Accession 3724 Foot Anstey collection.
32. PWDRO 1363/62 Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, East Stonehouse, 1881.
33. PWDRO PCC/45/1/2607.
34. *W.D.M.*, 27 October 1881.
35. *W.D.M.*, 27 October 1881.
36. PWDRO Accession 3724 Foot Anstey collection.
37. *W.D.M.*, 4 March 1887.
38. *W.D.M.*, 4 March 1887.
39. Information relating to the 1891 census has been taken from the online transcription available at http://www.freecen.org.uk/ [Accessed 17 and 18 March 2011]; The census references for Clare Buildings are Piece RG12/1730 Schedules 100 to 183 incl.
40. *W.D.M.*, 4 March 1887.
41. *W.D.M.*, 2 March 1888.
42. *W.D.M.*, 2 March 1888.
43. *W.D.M.*, 2 March 1888.
44. *W.D.M.*, 2 March 1888.
45. *W.D.M.*, 8 March 1889.
46. *W.D.M.*, 4 March 1887.

47. Clare Buildings was purchased by the Housing Committee of Plymouth City Council in 1951. At that time the maximum rent was 7/6 per week, and at these rents the owners had been unable to accumulate a fund to allow for improvements. The outside lavatories were still communal and there was no piped water supply to individual flats. The City Council spent £20,000 installing water to each property and separate, although still external, lavatories to each flat. There were still no bathrooms. By 1965 a decision had been made that the blocks were to be demolished within five years. The community spirit however was said to be too strong to be broken by the prospect of a sleek modern flat in another part of town and few wanted to leave.
48. Worth 1890, p. 370.
49. PWDRO 1363/1 Medical Officer of Health Annual Report 1893, p. 25.

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The NHS at Poltimore House

Julia Neville

Poltimore House, just outside Exeter's north-eastern boundary, has played many roles: a feudal seat, the setting for a civil war treaty, the country home of a nineteenth-century country gentleman, a twentieth-century school. One of its strangest roles, however, was one of the most recent. Between 1948 and 1974 ordinary men and women under that extraordinary service, the NHS, were admitted to the house as a hospital. Some were even born there. This article describes the NHS's relationship with Poltimore House. It shows how the NHS, struggling in its early years to cope with rising demand, limited hospital facilities and a difficult economic climate, was gradually drawn into the management of a stately home. It suggests that the mid-twentieth century history of Poltimore House has a contribution to make both to the history of the early years of the NHS and to the history of heritage management.

The principal source used in this article is the record maintained by the Exeter and Mid Devon Hospital Management Committee (HMC), which was responsible for local NHS hospital management between 1948 and 1974. The HMC papers contain the formal minutes of the HMC itself and of its various committees, but do not include any supporting papers, plans or files, and there are some periods for which even the minutes do not survive.[1] These documents have been supplemented by published material on the history of Poltimore House by R. Fortescue-Foulkes and J. Hemming, and on local hospitals by Russell, Harvey, and Knox and Gardner-Thorpe.

By the time the NHS was established, on 6 July 1948, Poltimore House was already in use as a private nursing home. In 1944 Lord Poltimore had sold the house, the park and the land around it to Messrs Charles Claridge and Co., timber merchants of The Quay in Exeter, who had probably recognised the value of the timber in the park for building materials to rebuild Britain's war-damaged cities. They were not interested in the house and its pleasure grounds and sold those on to a West Midlands accountant who, on 1 August 1945, sold them on to Dr R.K. Fortescue-Foulkes.[2]

Dr Richard Fortescue-Foulkes and his wife Mary, also a doctor, had recognized the need for extra maternity and surgical facilities in Exeter. They had first met in 1918 during their medical training and by 1945 had been in practice in Exeter for over 20 years as anaesthetists at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (RD&E). Richard Fortescue-Foulkes was also a general practitioner.[3] They were therefore well aware both of the general shortage of inpatient maternity services in Exeter even before the war and specifically of the loss of hospital beds that resulted from the damage to the former City Hospital during Exeter's blitz in April 1942.

Although there were several nursing homes in Exeter, what was different about Poltimore was that it was to be 'a modern nursing home', with a purpose-designed operating theatre. Dr R. Fortescue-Foulkes was proud of his creation of an up-to-date operating theatre suite, with theatre, anaesthetic room, sterilising room and an X-Ray room. The theatre was in what had once been the billiard room of the nineteenth-century house, and, earlier than that, probably the Tudor kitchen. It had terrazzo walls and an illuminated screen for viewing X-Ray photographs during operations above the fireplace, where the ventilation of the chimney could keep the glass screen cool.[4]

The ward accommodation was on two floors. On the ground floor were Bampfylde and Harvey Wards, in the large rooms on the south-west corner where the early twentieth-century ballroom and the earlier library had been. Upstairs was 'a maternity department with a delivery suite and nurseries, as well as seven private rooms and accommodation for ten patients in two wards.[5] The first patients were admitted on 8 November 1945.

Poltimore House Nursing Home

High-quality obstetric facilities were particularly welcome, as the RD&E had almost none, concentrating on difficult deliveries only and, until Mr Russell's appointment in 1946, with no specialist obstetrician.[6] Almost at once Devon County Council, which was responsible for maternity services for those who could not afford private care, contracted for the ten beds and this contract was taken over by the National Health Service in July 1948. The first baby was born on 7 January 1946, and altogether more than 1,400 babies were born at Poltimore before the maternity service closed in 1960.[7]

Although Poltimore Nursing Home's provision of maternity care was important to the NHS, it was the opportunity offered for surgery that proved unexpectedly valuable. The first operations at Poltimore House Nursing Home were undertaken by surgeons who, like the Foulkeses, practised in Exeter and held honorary appointments at the RD&E. It is reported that Mr Capener, an orthopaedic surgeon with an international reputation, even undertook some pioneering procedures there.[8] This was not the area in which Poltimore was to make its principal contribution to the NHS, however. Poltimore's major role over the 25 years between 1948 and 1974 was in helping the NHS tackle waiting lists for gynaecology and for relatively minor general surgical procedures.

It was only two months after the establishment of the NHS that Mr Norman Lock, a surgeon and medical member of the Exeter and Mid Devon HMC that ran local services under the South Western Regional Hospital Board (the RHB), and also a Director of Poltimore House Ltd, raised the question of the length of the waiting lists for treatment at the RD&E, which at that point stood at 1,500. He suggested that Poltimore Nursing Home could provide beds for ten long-term cases.[9]

Lock's thought seems to have been to use Poltimore House as a convalescent unit, perhaps prompted by the way in which the RD&E had long

used local cottage hospitals. The first suggested contract was for five years, but it was swiftly realised that there was a more general question of how accommodation in smaller hospitals could be used more effectively, and a twelve-month contract for the use of five beds was agreed.[10] These were taken up with great success by the gynaecologists, Mr Russell and Mr Jefferiss, who had joined Russell as the second consultant in 1948, with a regular weekly operating list.[11]

Although the gynaecologists were managing to tackle their own waiting list numbers, demand in other surgical specialties continued to rise. From 1,150 in September 1948 the waiting list rose to 2,150 in February 1950 and 3,397 in September 1951.[12] The gynaecologists' success prompted the Group Secretary to the HMC to suggest in July 1952 that Poltimore House Nursing Home could be used to tackle the waiting list for 'male cold surgical cases', non-urgent procedures such as hernias, haemorrhoids and varicose veins.[13] A mix of specialties within the quota of beds was agreed, but the RHB, which controlled the allocation of resources, was firm that no extra services would be funded, particularly as extra beds were to be provided at the City Hospital.[14]

Over the next eight years there were discussions within the NHS and with Dr Mary Foulkes about the most effective and affordable way in which the NHS could use Poltimore House. Mary Foulkes seems to have been infinitely tolerant of the different configurations and short-term contracts suggested; both perhaps out of the desire to help the NHS and because of the fall in demand for Poltimore's private beds once the NHS provided treatment free at the point of need. However, local consultants were wary of proposals for a complete lease of all the beds because they feared this would be likely to lose them the opportunity of beds in the redevelopment at the City Hospital, which was more convenient geographically.[15] By 1955 the gynaecologists had secured a firm commitment to a base on the City Hospital site with the planned consequence of complete withdrawal from Poltimore House.[16]

In 1954 the Foulkeses had reduced their maternity service, turning the unit into a more specialist one that accepted referrals from consultants only rather than from local GPs. Mary Foulkes pointed out that this would result in the release of a 4-bed ward, but there was no consensus about how this could help, particularly as the theatre was on the ground floor, the spare beds on the first floor and the house had no lift. But the numbers of NHS beds did increase, with the 1956 contract for 20 beds, 10 gynaecology and 10 general surgery, and, as pressure on the waiting lists continued, another five beds were taken on for general surgery.[17] In 1960, when the new obstetric and gynaecology facilities at the City Hospital opened, the maternity department at Poltimore House closed completely and the Foulkeses retired from their duties on site. In spite of the opening of the new department at what was now to be known as the RD&E (Heavitree), the gynaecologists, who had secured a third colleague and the anaesthetic cover for a further operating list, did not relinquish their beds at Poltimore.

Poltimore Hospital

Under the regime of the Foulkeses Poltimore House had been a nursing home registered with Devon County Council, the body responsible for inspecting its services. In 1962, however, the Foulkeses told the RHB that they proposed to retire completely and would be selling the home. The long-delayed new hospital for Exeter had still not received a firm start date and the RHB felt that the local flexibility that Poltimore provided was essential. They determined to seek the authority of the Minister of Health to purchase the home. The news met with mixed reaction at local level as the medical staff, who had not been consulted over the proposal, felt that such a commitment would be bound to mean further delay to the new Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.[18] They were however reassured on this by the RHB, and on 15 August 1962 the Minister of Health became the owner of Poltimore House and the 110 acres of land around it.[19]

From that date the house was to be called 'Poltimore Hospital', run on behalf of the Minister by the Exeter and Mid-Devon HMC. 'There are many teething difficulties to be overcome' said the first report to the Committee.[20] This referred particularly to issues of staffing, although there also proved to be a need to top up the equipment available in the theatre, the wards and the kitchens. The husband-and-wife team who had been resident medical officer and matron left at the end of August and the HMC needed both to appoint a resident Senior House Officer and to transfer a matron from one of the Tiverton hospitals, as well as to make arrangements for the unit's administrative and financial management. The staff who had been employed by the Foulkeses were all interviewed and expressed a willingness to stay, but there were unforeseen difficulties over the physiotherapist and the radiographer, who were self-employed and who were unwilling to work for NHS rates of pay. Cover for those services had to be arranged from within the NHS.

Staffing continued to be a major concern. Even in the time of the Foulkeses admissions had on at least one occasion been suspended because the Resident Medical Officer deemed the numbers of nurses inadequate to provide cover. Changing standards in the NHS meant that the opportunity for registrars (medical staff in training) to perform operations without a consultant immediately on hand were reduced. The HMC reminded the RHB that there could be major delays in trying to get from Exeter to Poltimore as this required travelling along the old A38, which was prone to traffic jams, particularly during the holiday season.[21]

The incorporation of the nursing home into the systems of the NHS brought many changes. Local suppliers of provisions were superseded by bigger contractors serving the whole group of hospitals. There were changes to be improve radiological safety provision and fire precautions. The Ministry agreed that the whole estate should be retained to maximise the value when the time came to sell. The HMC therefore maintained the lease of the walled garden as a market garden and the deer park and the rest of the grounds, let on agricultural tenancies. The efforts that had been made to grow vegetables on the ground

immediately in front of the main entrance were abandoned and a lease of the land to Pinhoe Cricket Club was contemplated.

The house was the bigger maintenance problem. From the very beginning the schedules of the Buildings, Maintenance and Supplies Committee show expenditure planned on resanding floors, renewing linoleum and carpets, and repainting. The biggest expenditure was on the roof. In 1965 the Group Engineer produced a structural survey of the building which described it as 'poor... particularly the roofing timber'.[22] The RHB agreed that urgent action was necessary and extensive roof repairs were undertaken. These included the lowering of the chimneys and the dismantling of the parapets.[23] The RHB also weather-proofed the roof using a process known as 'turnerising', covering the roof with layers of hessian matting and bitumen.[24]

When Poltimore Hospital was bought by the NHS it had contained 40 beds, the 25 already in use plus 15 private beds located on the first floor. The NHS had planned to continue to run the first-floor beds as private facilities, but this plan had to be radically changed after 1963 when the Nuffield Trust opened an independent hospital in Exeter, close to the planned new site for the new RD&E. Business at Poltimore Hospital, which it had been anticipated would increase, began to fall almost at once: by autumn 1963 bed occupancy was down to 60%.[25] Occupants of the private rooms also included three long-term residents, a married couple who had a bedroom and a sitting-room and a single person who had a bed sitting-room. None of these people needed specialist medical care and by the end of 1964 those who were paying the fees on their behalf (a charity in one case and a private individual in the other) complained that the charges, which the local NHS had no power to vary, were excessive. Their cases had to be referred to the Ministry.[26] Unfortunately there is a gap in the minutes at this point and the outcome is not known. From the lack of further reference to these people it is likely that they moved away.

Private bed numbers at Poltimore House were reduced to eight. A new nurses' sitting-room away from the ward areas was found and the former sitting-room, on the ground floor, was converted into a seven-bed ward.[27] This allowed a nucleus of beds to be created for a fifth surgeon and anaesthetist. This was important because the start of the new hospital had now been delayed at least until 1968.[28] The HMC scraped together the funds for the alterations and additional equipment required, and from the beginning of 1965 47 beds were in use at Poltimore: 22 for surgery, 10 for gynaecology, 8 general purpose and 7 private.[29] The Friends of Poltimore Hospital raised funds to help with the installation of a lift, which made the use of first-floor beds for surgical cases more feasible,[30] and more major surgical work appears to have been undertaken by 1967, when a case was made for additional physiotherapy staff to deal with daily pre and post-operative treatment.[31]

However, problems with the unit continued and grew. It was isolated and hard to staff once staff started to prefer not to live on site. There were times when the level of nursing staff was considered by at least one surgeon to be so inadequate that he cancelled his operating list. It was extremely expensive. This

was summarized for the HMC in 1972 when it was noted that the cost per inpatient week was £67.58 compared with that of the RD&E (Heavitree) which was only £56.48. The comment read:

> This is a large hospital within its class yet it consistently produces a very poor occupancy (56%). In addition it is burdened with heavy non-treatment costs because its premises and location are totally unsuitable... It has always presented a bad catering cost... and efforts to reduce this have never lasted.

There were no real economies of scale to help cover costs. The need for expenditure on maintenance was endless. It never seemed possible to increase occupancy to the 80% level where the HMC would have liked to see it.[32]

In spite of the costs the question of keeping Poltimore Hospital open remained unresolved almost until the opening of the new RD&E, for which building work had at last started in 1970. The savings to be made by closure had been factored into the income needed to run the new unit. But the gynaecologists would not be benefitting from beds at the RD&E and feared the loss of their ten beds at Poltimore. The new Abortion Act had placed additional pressures on their workload, and they were clear that the loss of the ten beds they used for non-urgent cases would lead to unacceptably long waits for treatment. Much of 1972 and 1973 was spent in negotiating the future pattern of beds, and it was not until 1973 that it was finally acknowledged that Poltimore Hospital was to close. The senior nurse pressed for early closure so that the staff could move into the main hospital to help with staffing levels there, but it was only on 28 June 1974 that the last patients moved out and the hospital was closed. Even then the NHS had not finished spending on Poltimore House. A Parliamentary Question about the costs of maintaining redundant hospitals was raised on July 1976, two years after closure. This elicited the fact that Poltimore Hospital was still costing the NHS £2,000 per annum in maintenance.[33] The property was not finally sold until 1977.

The significance of Poltimore's NHS history

The use made by the NHS of the stately home at Poltimore is not without parallel. Even in Devon there was Flete, at Holbeton, which Lord Mildmay allowed local authorities to use as a maternity home during the war and then leased to the NHS until 1958. Other examples exist elsewhere, such as Highland Court in Kent and Ruddington Hall near Nottingham.[34] The contribution of the country house hospital to the Second World War has been studied by Robinson, who suggests that it was not as significant as in the First World War, but no such study exists of the relationship between the NHS and the country house.[35] This brief account of Poltimore House and the NHS suggests two particular aspects for such a study: the part played by the NHS in saving Britain's heritage of country houses, and the neglected appreciation in NHS histories of the role of local creative improvisation, particularly in the early years when the NHS was still becoming established.

The period after the Second World War was a time of great danger for the country house. In 1974 a celebrated exhibition, 'The Destruction of the English Country House', was held, which Patrick Cormack describes as a 'spine-chilling' experience. It drew attention to the 1,000 country houses destroyed over the last century, with approximately 250 lost since 1945.[36] At the same time John Cornforth identified 1,000 country houses in the UK of historic and architectural importance. He found that about a quarter of these were in what he called 'adaptive use', either converted as residential apartments (as Flete was) or as educational facilities (as at Dartington and Mamhead).[37] Although Cornforth does not seem to have considered hospital uses the Minister of Health had in fact become the owner of a considerable number of country houses, many of which have now been given a new lease of life for other purposes. The NHS, it may be considered, saved some of them from total destruction even though, as the experience of Poltimore House shows, it sometimes took liberties with the fabric and when selling the estate had little regard for any consideration of preserving the past.

Histories of the early NHS, from Webster's *The Health Services Since the War* to Rivett's on-line *From the Cradle to the Grave* tell its history from a national perspective and, for hospital services, focus on efforts to secure new-build general hospitals. Ham's early *Planning in the National Health Service*, which studied processes in the Yorkshire Region, makes more of an effort to illustrate local issues but generally from a regional perspective. There has been little written, however, about the way in which local NHS staff exercised their ingenuity to tackle the challenges of meeting rising expectations in the context of severely limited resources. The best description of those times in Exeter is that of Cantrell, quoted by Harvey, in which he remembers:

> they had an urgency to get on catching up with backlogs and making hospitals work. It wasn't political expediency that inspired them: they worked together in the hospital service which they saw as theirs, and for whose success they were responsible.[38]

Poltimore House, as Poltimore Nursing Home and as Poltimore Hospital, deserves its twentieth-century history both to be celebrated locally alongside the history of its original owners and to be used to inform a wider understanding of the 1950s and 1960s.

Notes and references

1. Exeter and Mid Devon Hospital Management Committee, Minutes and Papers, 1948-1974, are in the process of being catalogued at the Devon Record Office (DRO), and may be requested under DRO reference 6021. They cover the period July 1948 to March 1974, when the HMC was abolished. The periods for which minutes are missing are June 1949 to April 1950, September 1950 to June 1951, January to September 1964, July

1965 to March 1966, November 1966 to June 1967 and November 1967 to October 1970.

2. Deeds relating to the property of New Lodge, Poltimore, lent to the Poltimore Community and Landscape Project by Rosemary Pengilly.
3. G. Fortescue-Foulkes 1977, Letter, *British Medical Journal*, 6 August 1977, p. 388.
4. Fortescue-Foulkes 1971, pp. 8-12.
5. Fortescue Foulkes 1971, p. 14
6. Knox and Gardner-Thorpe 2008, p. 154.
7. Hemming 2005. Hemming, one of the Foulkes's daughters, gives a more detailed and intimate account of the work undertaken to establish and run the nursing home on pp. 62-72.
8. Hemming, p. 69.
9. HMC 8 September 1948, Minute 86.
10. HMC 24 November 1948, Minute 123; 26 January 1949, Minute 153.
11. HMC 26 January 1949, Minute 153.
12. HMC 9 February 1950, Minute 316; 26 September 1951, Executive & General Purposes Committee (E&GP) Minute 97.
13. HMC 30 July 1952 E&GP Minute 275.
14. HMC 29 October 1952, Minute 353.
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16. HMC 27 July 1955 Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) Minute 447.
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34. Plymouth Data (2011) 'Flete House Maternity Home, Holbeton', online at: http://www.plymouthdata.info/Hospitals-Flete%20House%20MH.htm (accessed 30 December 2011).
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37. Cornforth 1974, pp. 49-50.
38. In Harvey 1998, p. 32.

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George Rowe, Exonian lithographer: the Hastings years

Jenny Ridd

George Rowe, an Exeter man, became one of the nineteenth century's most prolific producers of topographical lithographs. His christening at St Sidwell's church on 3 July 1796 took place just 14 days before his father's print of Sidmouth was published, the first ever to be produced of that town (Figure 1). Joseph Rowe had married Elizabeth Ansell on 17 March 1794, their first son being Joseph Hyde Rowe, baptised on 5 March 1795.

SIDMOUTH.

Figure 1: Earliest print of Sidmouth in 1797, drawn by 'Mr Rowe'; probably G.R.'s father?

Joseph Rowe was an auctioneer and builder of Butcher's Row and Paris Street, Exeter,[1] and as such he would have transferred his draughtsman's precise skills to the preparation of his artwork. Presumably Joseph encouraged his son George, having recognised his inherited artistic talent from boyhood, for at 17 George came to the attention of Flindell's *Western Luminary*,[2] which noted that

there were two Exeter boys with potential, both distinguished for their 'excellence in drawing'.

The other boy was Samuel Cousins, who was four years younger than Rowe and a 'charity boy' at the Bluecoat School in Exeter. The *Luminary* refers to the 'juvenile genius' of both boys and continues 'the other boy, called Rowe, is under the notice of those friends who first patronised Cousins'.

Samuel Cousins' patron was Sir Thomas Acland of Killerton House, where today there are six Cousins' portraits of the Acland family and friends, given by the adult Cousins to the family in gratitude for the help he received in those early years.[3] It is not known whether they also offered Rowe their patronage, but Rowe must have received some type of artistic training, and Cousins went on to become an engraver. Other than this, nothing is known of Rowe's life before he was 27.

Rowe and Cousins were born into an age when printmaking was reaching its zenith and where an army of landscape artists embraced an enterprising world of topographical drawings, etchings, line and stipple engravings, mezzotints, acquatints and lithographs. English printmaking had lagged behind the Continent, for there had been no copyright protection here, so engravers had little incentive, knowing that their pictures would be copied immediately. When the Copyright Act of 1735 was introduced, the print trade began to expand steadily.

Rowe's introduction to this world coincided with the rediscovery of England's natural beauty by its populace, who were prevented from travelling to the Continent for their Grand Tours because of wars with France which began in the 1790s. 'Watering places' grew up along the coasts, turning fishing villages into seaside resorts and replacing in popularity the inland spas like Tunbridge Wells and Bath.

Devon, with its rolling hills, rich red soil, verdant vegetation, mild climate and stunningly beautiful scenery, became a popular haunt for the tourists, who naturally wanted pictorial souvenirs of their stay. The printing industry seized the day and grew to meet demand. Initially it was London based, but gradually printers and publishers moved into local areas and set up their businesses.

Little is known of Rowe's early years and little is recorded of his time in Hastings, whence he moved in 1822, aged 27,[4] but a series of strange coincidences motivated the author of this article to undertake research into those Hastings' years. She was not only born in Exeter, but attended Heavitree church where Rowe was married and is buried, and later owned 5 High Street, Hastings, where Rowe worked with George Wooll, creator of a Repository of Arts.[5]

Why Rowe chose to move to Hastings is unknown, but there were many artists competing for work in Exeter at that time. Also Rowe's father had died, perhaps creating a necessity for independent work, and Hastings was a seaside resort of rising importance, second only to Brighton. Rowe was a drawing master there, teaching pupils privately from his seafront dwelling at Roper's Cottage.

Figure 2: 'The Lovers' Seat', drawn by George Rowe and published by P.M. Powell at the Marine Library, Hastings, in 1823. Rowe left Exeter and worked for Powell before he worked for Wooll.

He began his first set of topographical views in 1822-1823, working with Peter Malaperte Powell, the owner of the Marine Library along the seafront from Roper's Cottage. Rowe produced *Twenty Six Views of Picturesque Scenery of Hastings and Its Vicinity* for Powell (see, for example, Figure 2), which Powell then sold, along with prints by Ackermann and fancy goods. Ackermann's Repository of Arts at Strand, London, provided a national hub for artists and printmakers.

Powell eventually over-extended himself and became bankrupt, but during his ascendancy a contender for business moved to Hastings, intent on capturing the market. George Wooll arrived in town on 1 March 1823, with his wife Sarah, from Huntingdon, an unspecific town which offered no furtherance to his career as a printmaker. With Hastings' rise in popularity, Wooll saw an excellent opportunity to extend his business, and so he rented, then purchased, the modest house at 5 High Street, Hastings, and advertised himself variously as a 'Carver and Gilder, Looking Glass Picture Frame Maker, Fancy Stationer, Print seller etc etc' (*sic*).[6]

In November 1823 he employed Augustine Aglio,[7] a well known and experienced Italian lithographer, who had been exhibiting at the Royal Academy for 20 years. Aglio kick-started Wooll's business with six views of Hastings, which remain unsurpassed in quality. All were printed by Charles Hullmandel

the pre-eminent London printer.[8] Aglio worked through November and December and by the end of the year had gone, leaving Wooll in desperate need of an artist. Rowe began work for Wooll sometime in January 1824.

Since Hastings' records concerning Wooll are more fulsome than those for Rowe, it is by following Wooll's progress that a deeper insight into Rowe's Hastings' years can be gained. The two years spent with Wooll influenced Rowe's future, established him as a prolific artist, allowed him to learn the printing process and the business component to running a Repository of Arts, which he himself later set up in Cheltenham in 1832.

Wooll and Rowe shared the same vision, scope and creativity, and both eventually sought a new life abroad. They had much in common, despite Wooll being nine years older. They were a dynamic duo with drive, and the combination of their skills made a healthy and impressive partnership. Both had a keen interest in topographical art and a joint ambition to make a good reputation for themselves.

Figure 3: 'Covehurst Cottage Near Hastings', drawn by George Rowe and published by Rowe and Wooll in partnership in 1825 from 5 High Street, Hastings

In less than two years of working together, Rowe's output was staggering. He produced at least 90 views of Sussex and Kent, including a set of 54 *Illustrations of Hastings and It's* [sic] *Vicinity*. These were drawn by Rowe and published by Wooll from 5 High Street (see, for example, Figure 3). The author has a copy which includes prints of St Leonards, not built until 1828. This copy

is *circa* 1830 and is evidence that Wooll and Rowe maintained the link between them long after Rowe returned to Exeter. He must have visited Wooll years later in order to have drawn the pictures, and still continued to return after he had set up his own business, for some later views are marked as printed by him in Cheltenham *circa* 1833, by which time Wooll's business had expanded and he had moved to larger premises at 43 High Street, Hastings.

Following his set of 54 prints, Rowe went further afield in Sussex to produce at least 32 views for a second set, *Illustrations of Hastings, Battle, Winchelsea, Pevensey, Eastbourne etc.* This was published by Wooll and Rowe in partnership, a mark of the trust which had developed between the men.

A further set of 32 of Rowe's views was published and printed by Wooll entitled *Illustrations of Watering Places on the South Coast of England,* which included views from St Leonards, Rye, Sandgate, Folkestone, Dover, Ramsgate, Margate, Walmer and Deal. Other than Wooll at 5 High Street, there were only three other stockists for this set – Ackermann in London, W. Batchelor in Dover, and C.H. Southall in St Leonards. Rowe was by now known to the best in the business, Rudolph Ackermann, and his work was being sold in London.

Figure 4: 'Hastings Castle' drawn and printed by George Rowe after 1832, when he left Exeter and set up a Repository of Arts in Cheltenham. The publisher George Wooll had also moved down the road to 43 High Street, Hastings. The two men had obviously maintained a correspondence.

At a later date Wooll published 14 pictures entitled *Rowe's Views of Hastings*. Rowe often made several different drawings of the same place which Wooll continued to use after Rowe's departure in 1826, such as with his first set and *Wooll's Guide to Hastings and St. Leonards* which contains prints by Rowe but was not published until 1831-2 (Figure 4).

Lithographs offer a historical legacy of Georgian townscapes, landscapes, architecture and people, so many of which are no longer extant today. They also reflected a way of life. Rowe captured Hastings the fishing village as well as Hastings the fashionable resort. His prints showed fisherman, fishing boats, net huts and horse-drawn winches hauling the boats ashore, as well as elegantly dressed men and women promenading, bath huts, fashionable hotels and splendid new buildings.

Rowe was, of course, a 'people watcher', and his prints involved scenes and characters from all walks of life. He drew fisherman, agricultural labourers, serving girls, lovers, parents and children, ladies and gentlemen, dogs and horses, and the elderly, all shown going about their daily business, gesturing, walking, fishing, shooting, carrying baskets, having a lover's tiff, patting a dog or just sitting. No wonder Rowe later named one of his daughters Vignette.

Tongue in cheek scenes added to the interest. Rowe drew Powell's Marine Library in his print *Hastings Parade*, in which he used bold letters spelling out 'POWELL' across a very modest building. Rowe showed himself sitting in a rowing boat offshore which has *'Rowe Hastings'* across the stern. He obviously enjoyed the pun.

In less than two years Rowe built up a huge portfolio for Wooll of well over 100 prints, which not only established their reputation, but also acted as an enticement for would-be tourists to Hastings.

By the end of 1825 Rowe's work for Wooll was mostly completed. He obviously had a hankering for his home county, for he left Hastings and returned to Devon, where he immediately began working for John Wallis at the Marine Circulating Library in Sidmouth on a series of *48 Views of Cottages and Scenery at Sidmouth*, an invaluable record of the many Gothic cottages and those in the cottage orné style. Regency buildings in Sidmouth many of which no longer exist.[6] It seems that the Rowe family must have known Sidmouth, for first the father and then the son produced artwork there. Sadly Joseph died before George had produced his first set of lithographs for Hastings, but no doubt he would have felt some paternal pride at his son's achievements.

George Rowe left one last mark on Hastings town's history. The Watch for 21 January 1826 recorded the following: 'About half past two o'clock, Mr. Rowe, Drawing Master, Mr. Bate, Druggist, Mr. Harman, Tailor, Mr. Breeds Junior and Mr. Diplock, Librarian, came out of the Anchor Inn and were abusive to the Watch and Mr. Daniel offered the Watch some rum, which they declined'. Rowe's friends obviously gave him a memorable send-off. It is interesting to note that, despite his growing reputation as the artist of several sets of prints, the local Watch still recorded him as the 'Drawing Master'.

Figure 5: George Rowe's grave in Heavitree churchyard, Exeter.

Conclusion

George Rowe married, moved to Cheltenham, had nine children and eventually went to Australia where he found no gold, but left the world a priceless legacy of pictures of the mine workings, which gained him prestige in the form of an exhibition in London and a medal from the Duke of Cambridge.[10] He returned to

Exeter in 1859 and died at 3 Midway Terrace, Heavitree, on 2 September 1864 (Figure 5).

George Wooll emigrated with his second wife and five children to St. Louis, USA, where he continued printmaking, became a naturalised citizen, and joined the Mechanics' Institute. This organisation met at the Courthouse, now a museum. By some bizarre coincidence, the author worked there in 1987, in the very room in which is archived a Mechanics' Institute document which contains a Wooll's signature that exactly matches his signature on the house deeds she owns for 5 High Street, Hastings from 1823. She knew nothing of Wooll at the time, only discovering the coincidence through more recent research.

Notes and references

1. West Country Studies Library, Directories for Exeter: 1791, 1796, 1816, 1822. Other primary sources consulted for this article include: Hastings Library, Art Gallery and Museum, County Record Office, Lewes, for prints, parish records, street lists, voters' lists, court records etc.; Huntingdonshire County Record Office for parish registers, censuses etc; Ridd/Marsden personal archive for collection of prints and deeds and unpublished copy of *The Rossetti House*, 2002, ch. 6: George Wooll, ch. 7: George Rowe.
2. Details of Rowe's early life appear in *George Row: Artist and Lithographer 1796-1864* by Dr Steven Blake, who based his information on: C.W. Marshall; JV Somers Cocks 1974, 'George Rowe, Artist and Lithographer 1796-1864', *Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries*; and on newspapers, directories, guide books and the prints themselves.
3. National Trust (2000) *Killerton House, Devon*, p. 8.
4. Dr Steven Blake, Keeper of Social History, Cheltenham, organised an exhibition in 1982 at the Art gallery and Museum, Cheltenham, and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, and wrote the catalogue (see note 2).
5. 5 High Street, Hastings, was famously visited in 1854 by Pre-Raphaelite artists Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal. For further reading see: Ridd 2008.
6. Private collection, Hastings, George Wooll's 1823 Trade Card.
7. Augustine Aglio settled in England in 1802 and had undertaken major projects in London such as the Opera House, Drury Lane Theatre, and the Pantheon. The name Aglio translates as 'garlic'.
8. Charles Hullmandel was a London-based draughtsman and printer from about 1822 to his death in 1850. He wrote the definitive work on lithography and experimented all his life, making it a quick, cost-effective process. Hullmandel was J.D. Hardin's teacher, who in turn taught Ruskin, who became patron to Rossetti.
9. Sidmouth Museum has a wonderful display in the upstairs gallery of some of the cottages drawn by George Rowe and lithographed by John Wallis.
10. Rowe's Australian pictures are held in the archives of Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, and the Cheltenham Museum and Art gallery.

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The Rector and the Revolution: the story of the Reverend Stephen Weston, Rector of Hempston Parva, Devon, and the French Revolution

Malcolm Ross

In the summer of 1906 the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924), Victorian polymath, hymn writer and rector of Lew Trenchard near Tavistock, Devon, was travelling in the Langedoc region of southern France. In his 'A Book of the Cevennes' published the following year, he describes a day spent in the little mountain town of Alais (Ales). There, he was impressed to find a bronze statue honouring the local eighteenth-century poet Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian (1755-1794), who was born in the neighbouring town of Sauve, and whose childhood home, the Château Florian, stood close by. B-G, it seems, possessed an edition of Florian's works (dated 1797, year III of the Republic), although at that time apparently unread: he decided to quiz the town's bookseller on the subject. He gives the following exchange:

> "The works of Florian! We have his statue in the place."
> "Yes; but that is the work of the sculptor Gaudez, not of Florian himself."
> "Les oeuvres de Florian – mais ..." The man looked puzzled. "He lived a very long time ago. What did he write?"
> "I fancy, fables."
> "Ah, monsieur, you mistake. That was La Fontaine."
> "There is an 'F' in each," said I, "as there is a river in Macedon, and there is also a river in Monmouth, and there is salmon in both." Of course, the allusion was lost on him.
> "I think his works have never been reprinted," said the bookseller. "I will tell my child to ask the schoolmaster."[1]

Back in Lew Trenchard he reads as much Florian as he can manage, including an eccentric novel in English, 'full of the most amusing blunders'. Before leaving the poet, B-G cannot resist quoting Florian's opinion of the English:

> *Ils dédaignent d'ouvrir les yeux sur le mérite, sur les qualities qui sont propres a chaque peuple; cette insouciance donne à leurs vertus un air d'orgeuil qui en diminue l'attrait.*[2]

On the evidence of B-G's own narrative, the poet's imputation would be hard to refute.

The trail that led me to Florian and the Cévennes began only a few steps from my own front door, namely, in the thirteenth-century parish church of a

tiny Devon hamlet hidden away in the hills of the South Hams beside the river Dart. In the early summer of 1789, the Reverend Stephen Weston, Rector of Hempston Parva, accompanied by his young wife Penelope, left the village and sailed to Normandy. 'Classic' Weston, as he was to be dubbed by his future colleagues at the Royal Society, was then an aspiring literary figure himself. Born in Exeter in 1747, Weston was the son of the Cathedral Registrar and grandson of the Bishop, both also Stephen. He went to school at Blundells before moving on to Eton and Exeter College, Oxford. He took holy orders in 1777 and was inducted into the parish of Manhead, overlooking the Exe Estuary, in the same year. His life-long best friend was Charles Bamfylde of Poltimore House, Exeter. Weston married Penelope (née Tierney, of Mangotsfield in Gloucestershire) and was made Rector of Hempston Parva in 1785. He was a keen reader of Florian, whose works were by then beginning to be translated into English. It was the Reverend Weston's scheme to render his favourite Florian fable, *Le Tourtereau*, 'The Turtle Dove', into English rhyming couplets. This he accomplished in due course, and the poem was published by the Royal Printer to Louis XVI in Caen in 1789. The book appears in both French and English versions, printed side by side. In the original edition the author is given simply as M. de Florian – the work of the translator is left anonymous.[3]

Florian was born in 1755 in the little medieval hill town of Sauve in the Cévennes. His Spanish mother having died when he was 3 years old, he spent his childhood with his father and his younger brother in the rundown family chateau, the Château Florian. The rich and peaceful pastoral landscape of those early years left an indelible impression on his imagination and proved the single greatest inspiration not only of his work but of his life. The very much grander Châteaux de Sceaux (The Castle of the Seals), situated some 6 kilometres from the centre of Paris and principal seat of the duc de Penthièvre, became his home in maturity. Here he spent the best part of his life after joining the duc's household at the age of 13. The poet's famous uncle, the philosopher Voltaire, had used his influence with the 'bon duc', a member of Bourbon dynasty and reputedly the richest man in Europe, to rescue him from impoverished and isolated circumstances in the Languedoc and place him in more favourable ones. He trained for a military career and eventually joined the duc's personal troop of yeomanry as Chevalier de Florian. Although never resigning his commission - he commanded the National Guard of Sceaux during the first 3 years of the Revolution – Florian had long cherished the idea of a literary career. His earliest works were light comedies written for the stage but serious public recognition came with the publication of his pastoral romance *Estelle et Némourin* in 1788 and his collected *Fables* in 1792. He was elected to the Académie française in 1788 when he was only 33.

Sometime in 1789, the year chosen by the Westons for their trip to France (Weston had been a regular visitor), a decade of simmering social unrest finally erupted into violent revolution - with Paris as its burning hub. It seems clear that

the couple must have been in France to oversee the publication of *The Turtle-Dove*. On 17 June the newly formed National Assembly seized power from the crown: the nation was now sovereign unto itself rather than the King. With armed troops converging on Paris under orders from the King, on the 14 July the citizens rose up and attacked the notorious Bastille prison, the most hated symbol of royal tyranny, and thereafter fatally established themselves as the trustees of the Revolution. During August the Assembly launched The Rights of Man and the Citizen and passed new legislation severely damaging to the traditional interests of the aristocracy and the clergy. On 5-6 October the women of Paris marched on Versailles and escorted the royal family back to the capital, where they were forced to remain.

The impact of these extraordinary events upon the Rector of Hempston Pava and his wife can well be imagined. Whilst in France they would have had every opportunity to see much of what was going on in Paris and in the countryside with their own eyes. I have no firm evidence that they met the poet, but if they did, there would have been several residences available to them in Paris and in Normandy. At that period of the Revolution foreigners were pretty much ignored and left to go about their business unmolested. Being radical spirits themselves they would have watched developments with delight tempered by awe. Tragically, Penelope Weston died of consumption at Caen towards the end of the year. She had suffered from the disease for some time, and there must have been serious doubts as to the wisdom of such a trip in winter. Bad weather delayed the Channel crossing and it was some weeks before Weston was able to return his young wife's embalmed remains to her family home in Mangotsfield for burial.

Back in Devon, fired up by what he had witnessed in Paris and no doubt still grieving for his wife, with whom so recently he had shared the excitement and the hope of an imminent new order in Europe, Weston took the opportunity accorded him to preach revolution in the West Country.[4] To what extent talk of revolution was general about Totnes at the time is not certain, but, invited to preach at St Mary's church in the town on the occasion of the Episcopal visit of Bishop John Ross of Exeter in the spring of 1790, Weston seems to have had few qualms about laying into the *ancien régime* now in dire trouble in France. That there were many in Britain and Europe hoping that France's revolution would spill over national boundaries – even cross the Channel – is widely known of course. In Paris itself, a group of expatriate Brits, members of White's Club, were actively encouraging their fellow-countrymen to support the revolutionaries and indeed at one point, before being arrested and in some cases killed in the Terror, they petitioned the Assembly to 'liberate' their home country.

Weston chose for his text a powerful passage from Isaiah (XIV, 18-20) in which the desecration of the corpse of the tyrant of Babylon following his final overthrow is foretold with relish:

18. All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.
19. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch: and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.
20. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial.

Weston exhorts his Protestant congregation to be ready to defend their hard won freedoms against the wiles of the Roman interest, and warns unjust monarchs everywhere to prepare to face their people's implacable judgement. A curious feature of the sermon is its author's apparent recourse to subterfuge. For the first nine pages it reads like just another unexceptionable theological tract. Weston strains the reader's patience with a stream of fussy, textual discriminations in an apparent attempt to correct the generally accepted but in his view inaccurate translation of his text from the Hebrew. The sermon closes with yet more of the same. Sandwiched, advisedly one presumes, between these dusty obfuscations there's enough revolutionary fire however to warm the cockles of the lustiest radical's heart.

Weston must have been sure enough of his ground in dedicating his sermon to Mrs Kennicott of Totnes, widow of the town's famous Hebraic scholar, the Reverend Benjamin Kennicott (1718-1783). Publishing such radical stuff, even though encouraged to do so, was apparently something else. Weston's Revolution Sermon certainly attracted attention. He was already known to the President of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks, and his wife Dorothea. In his Letters from Paris 1891-92[5] Weston describes what looks very much like what might have been a spying mission. In the published version there is no indication of the identity of the recipient(s), but my guess is that he might have been reporting to Banks, who is known to have had others doing similar work for him in Paris at the time. Fast and reliable information about the momentous events in Paris and proceedings at the Assembly was at a premium all over Europe. Weston seems to have spent many hours following events as they unfolded in the new Legislative Assembly, but he also had informants at large in the city and made many excursions as an eye-witness himself. At the proclamation of the Republic in the summer of 1792 he was told that his life was in danger: he managed to provide himself with a passport and make his escape. Weston, sponsored by the Bishop of Exeter, was elected FRS at this time and this might well have been the way his friends found of recognising his services. But no further favours or opportunities for advancement seem to have followed. On his return to England he rather made himself scarce and returned to his parish work. Anti-revolutionary feeling in England was by then being actively promoted and expressed in aggressive legislation by the authorities. On the 15 July 1794, at the height of the Terror, Florian was arrested at his home in Sceaux on the direct orders of Robespierre, and conveyed to the notorious Port-Libre prison in Paris, pending execution.[6] At about the same time a mob of local *sans-coulottes* sacked and burned the castle, despite the poet's confidence that the philanthropic

reputation of his 'bon duc' would preserve them all. The family had already taken refuge at another of the duc's properties in Normandy, but Florian himself seemed strangely oblivious to the peril he was in. His life-long association with the aristocracy, his writing in support of moderation and a gradualist approach to political and social change, were used against him, and he was represented as pleading the Royalist cause. With the whole of the French aristocracy condemned and the literati suspect, why should he have been spared? As he ceaselessly complained, he had been deprived of his liberty with no explanation given and no formal accusation entered against him. His spirit and his health were broken by his month in prison awaiting the guillotine. When he was released a month later, after Robespierre himself fell, he retuned to Sceaux a sick man.

Something of the flavour of his last days is caught in letters written to his loyal friend, François Antoine de Boissy d'Anglas,[7] to whose constant pleading he owed his freedom. The friendship went back many years and was sustained by their shared interests as literary men. The fortunes of the two men under the Revolution could scarcely have been more different however. Where Florian was condemned as a traitor, Boissy d'Anglas was a statesman of the Revolution, holding high office and having considerable influence within the Legislative Assembly. The poet's last letter to his friend, written a few days before his death, carries his post-Revolutionary address, 'Sceaux-l'Unité', and the date, '13 fructidor' (31 August). He writes to ask a favour for a local man too sick to return to his military duties - and to say goodbye: '*J'ai cette fièvre en vous écrivant, et je n'en sens pas moins tout le plaisir de vous dire que je vous aime.*'[8] By all accounts Jean-Pierre was judged the sweetest and gentlest of men. That he was not more of a radical man of action was perhaps a fault, but his instincts were contemplative and perhaps all too thoroughly romantic. He seemed to take no heed of himself. His writings are playful, charming, often amusing and deeply felt. They are a joy and full of hope. He closes the controversial revised edition of his *roman pastoral* 'Estelle', published in 1792, with a clear sense of his own impending fate. As a plaque on the wall of Castle Florian says, his wish was to be buried in the pastures of his childhood, that his spirit had never left. He drafted his own epitaph:

Dans cette demeure tranquille
Repose notre bon ami:
Il vécu toujours à la ville,
Mais son coeur fut toujours ici.[9]

Florian, *le petit-fils de Voltaire*, died on 13 September 1794 from consumption. His ashes were interred in the churchyard at Sceaux. When the new cemetery was opened in the town, the people refused to allow Florian's remains to be disturbed: a bronze bust marks his grave. Few people know him as the writer of everyone's favourite French song, *Plaisir d'amour*. Today, if you are lucky enough to find them, his works are classed as fantasies and are most

likely to be stocked as children's books. Taken as an *oeuvre* however they are much more than that, and it is heartening to find a modest revival of interest not only in Florian but more generally in the poetry and language of the Langedoc. Every summer the citizens of Sceaux hold their Fête de Florian; an Institute named after the poet has been set up at the Municipal Library in the town for the collection and study of his works.

Weston remained Rector at Littlehempston until 1823. He never remarried and there were no children of his marriage with Penelope. He returned to France on several occasions once it was safe to do so, indeed was seen in Paris enjoying himself only a year before his death. His was a prodigiously active life: he is described in the National Dictionary of Biography as something of a dilettante. He seems to have remained close to both Joseph and Dorothea Banks, even after their move to Australia. He himself travelled all over the world, read many languages, published translations from the Chinese and the Persian, and numerous sermons and biblical exegeses. In 1811 he was asked to provide the first translation of the Greek inscription on the Rosetta Stone, recently appropriated for the British Museum from the French - an action that still rankles, as I discovered on a recent visit to Sceaux. From Littlehempston Weston retired to his London house in Portman Square, and it was there that he died in 1830. Davies Gilbert, the Cornish engineer, President of the Royal Society, wrote a brief obituary:

> The Reverend Stephen Weston will long be remembered for his learning, abilities, good nature, and for his eccentric compositions on various subjects, and in different languages. And for me at least, I may truly say, that it would gratify me to find a more permanent reputation secured for this excellent man by a collection being given to the public of his numerous Opuscula.[10]

Forty eight of his 'opuscula' are currently held at the British Library.

Acknowledgement

In memory of Malcolm Upham. Malcolm Upham (1922-2010) was a much loved, active member of the Littlehempston community for many years. He was a fine weaver, a considerable scholar of religious history and a devout Christian. It was Malcolm who suggested to me the research that gave rise to this paper. I have him to thank for reviving my love of France and all things French.

Notes and references

1. Baring-Gould 1907, p. 219.
2. 'They distain to admit the evidence of their own eyes as to the particular merits and qualities distinctive of other countrymen; this insouciance lends to their own virtues a taint of pride which rather diminishes their attractiveness'; Baring-Gould, p. 220.
3. Florian 1789; reproduction from British Library.
4. S Weston 1790, *Sermon on Isaiah*; photocopy made at the British Library.

5. Weston 1793.
6. Gourdin 2002, p. 372 ff.
7. Gourdin 2005, p. 536 ff.
8. Gourdin 2005, p. 538.
9. 'In this peaceful place
   Lies our friend ever dear:
   And though he left us for a space.
   His heart was always here'; Florian, 1816, p. 158.
10. Proceedings of The Royal Society 1831; copy in the Royal Society Library. London.

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Malcolm Ross retired after 30 years full-time teaching in the School of Education at the University of Exeter in 1997. His field of research and publication has been the Creative Arts in Education – publishing *Cultivating the Arts in Education and Therapy* in 2011. He continues to lecture and run workshops in the UK and abroad. The Story of Stephen Weston was performed with music by Mozart in Littlehempston Church on 24 June 2011.

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St George's Chapel, Windsor, and South Molton Parsonage in the sixteenth century

Jeremy Sims

A 'parsonage' has been defined as 'a parish church, endowed with a house, glebe, tithes, &c.; or a certain portion of lands, tithes and offerings, established by law, for the maintenance of a minister who hath the cure of souls'.[1] As such it would have been a valuable property: it consisted not only of the glebe but also the tithes of the parish, all of which at South Molton, according to a 1624 survey of the parish, amounted to somewhere in the region of four hundred pounds per annum.[2] From the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-nineteenth the parsonage of South Molton was the property of the Dean and Canons of 'the Free Chapel of St George within the King's Castle at Windsor', and this paper looks at the legal problems concerning the Chapel's ownership of the parsonage during the later decades of the sixteenth century - a story played out over many years and which involved some of the most powerful men of the realm in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

After the Reformation South Molton parsonage, with all its appurtenant lands and tithes, came into the hands of King Henry VIII and he granted it to Edward Seymour, then earl of Hertford, who would later become Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector during the earlier part of the reign of Edward VI. It is from the period of Edward VI's reign that the parsonage of South Molton first became the property of the Dean and Canons and from then the Chapel's long association with South Molton began. Having acquired the parsonage, the Duke of Somerset leased the property by a deed dated 31 July 1547 to one John Raves for a term of forty years and this lease was later assigned by Raves, at a date which is not now known, to a Thomas Clotworthy. Subsequently, on 4 August, 1547 Somerset entered into an arrangement with King Edward VI, his nephew, whereby this parsonage and others which he then held were to be exchanged for other land.[3] A few months later, on 7 October 1547,[4] King Edward VI then made a grant of South Molton parsonage by royal patent to the Dean and Canons of Windsor, subject to the forty-year lease already granted by the Duke of Somerset, in order to increase the endowment which the Chapel of St George needed to carry out its charitable functions.[5] However, not many years would elapse before legal problems arose and, indeed, the Dean and Canons' actual tenure of the parsonage would be challenged.

The conveyance by Edward VI of the property to the Dean and Canons was required by the Statute of Enrolments[6] to be enrolled within six months in one of the royal courts at Westminster.[7] A transcript of the deed was in fact duly enrolled[8], but in the Court of Augmentations[9] rather than, as would have been more usual, in Chancery or King's Bench or Common Pleas, but the enrolment

of the transcript was disregarded and the parsonage came to be considered as 'concealed land'. In May 1571, Henry Middlemore a Groom of the Privy Chamber, had been given the power 'to view, seek and try out' lands and goods of dissolved religious houses and chantries which had been concealed or withheld from the Crown, as well as recouping subsidies and similar payments which had been due from, but unpaid by, members of the clergy. Indeed, the inquiries, inconveniences and disputes which were caused by the many patentees of licences to hunt out concealed lands were a mounting source of grievance during Elizabeth I's reign.[10] Some idea of Middlemore's importance and seniority can be appreciated from the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other senior officers were required to give him all the information and assistance which he considered he needed in carrying out these duties. As reward for his services he was to be granted leases of thirty-one years of each of the properties which he found to have been concealed from the Crown, as well as half the goods which he found had been withheld and half the sums which he had found to have been unpaid by the clergy.[11] Given the fact that Middlemore was to be granted such leases of properties there was every incentive for him to declare properties to have been concealed. He was thus able to acquire a thirty-one year lease of the parsonage of South Molton parsonage as 'concealed land' on 3 November 1574,[12] and a matter of a few days later, on 15 November, he managed to acquire a grant of the property in fee simple from the Crown.[13]

Perhaps it was due to the uncertainty which surrounded the ownership of the parsonage after the purported grant to Henry Middlemore that the Dean and Canons had to institute proceedings in the court of Chancery at around this time to recover unpaid rent of £55 3s 4d *per annum*. Indeed, Thomas Clotworthy, who was the Dean and Canons' lessee, was summoned to appear before the Privy Council on 31 May 1575 concerning the arrears then due, a fact which is difficult to reconcile with the then recent purported grant of the parsonage by the Queen to Middlemore.[14] Because of defective drafting of the lease, the Dean and Canons found it necessary to bring an action in Chancery against the lessees of various parsonages, including that of South Molton in order to recover the arrears of rent due.[15] This Chancery action cannot be dated precisely, but it can be assigned to the time when Sir Nicholas Bacon was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal (1558-79), and was very probably in 1575, as this was the year Thomas Clotworthy was summoned to appear before the Privy Council, and it was also in that year he entered into a bond with the Dean and Canons for one hundred pounds for the payment of rent for South Molton parsonage, a likely result of the Chancery action.[16]

Henry Middlemore continued to claim the parsonage. He wrote to the Dean and Canons in September 1575, seeking to persuade them to give up their interest in the parsonage, but to no avail, and five years later he was again urging them to surrender the lands which Edward VI had 'pretended' to exchange with the Duke of Somerset.[17] He then sold his interest in it to Arthur Haeche, or Hatch, who claimed to have paid for it 'a verie greate somme of money', and after his death a deed was entered into, on 27 February 1590,[18] between, on the

one side, the Dean and Canons and, on the other, trustees for Arthur Hatch, Thomas's son, with a view to resolving the disputed ownership of the parsonage. By this deed, in consideration of a lump sum of £120 and an annual rent of £55 3s 4d the Dean and Canons agreed that those interested under the will of Thomas Hacche should hold the property. The parties further agreed that a bill should be presented at the next, or next but one, Parliament to settle the matter. In a statement which was probably prepared for submission to Parliament, the Dean and Canons contended that 'the said lease will be sufficient recompense of any sum of money which the said Thomas or [*his brother*] John Hatch have disbursed about the same'.[19]

A Bill was first introduced in the House of Commons on 22 November 1597, passed that House and was sent to the Lords on 3 December.[20] There, however, it encountered problems. There seems to have been a difference of opinion as to whether the transcript of the deed made between the Duke of Somerset and King Edward VI might or might not have constituted a sufficient enrolment.[21] On 8 December it was ordered that the parties concerned with the Bill should appear, by counsel, on the following Monday to present their cases. Furthermore, the interests of the Dean and Canons were obviously much in the minds of their lordships as they appointed Edward Drew, Queen's Serjeant and Member of Parliament for London, and the Attorney General, the renowned lawyer Sir Edward Coke, to 'inform themselves ... whether anything contained in the Bill may prejudice the Poor Knights of Windsor'. Following a hearing on 12 December the matter was referred to two Committees of the House. The composition of these Committees is an indication of the importance the Lords attached to this Bill, since the first Committee, which was composed of eight members, included both the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, and Lord Burghley, the Lord High Treasurer.[22] When the first Committee reported back to the House, Lord Burghley indicated that they were unhappy with the Bill, there being 'certain points that could not be well reformed', and to this end a new Bill already drafted by Sir Edward Coke along the lines agreed between the parties, was given its first and second readings; on 19 December it was passed, with some amendments proposed by the Committees.[23] It was subsequently passed by the Commons in January and received the royal assent the following month.[24]

The Act first of all recited the position of each of the parties. On the one hand were the Dean and Canons who 'needed to redeem their vexation' so that they might apply their resources towards assisting the poor knights rather than in law suits. On the other hand, the late Thomas Hatch had 'disbursed greate sommes of money' for the purchase of the parsonage. The gist of the operative part of the Act was that Arthur Hatch and his personal representatives and assigns were to hold the parsonage for one hundred and twenty years, but were to pay the Dean and Canons an annual rent of £55 3s 4d by half-yearly instalments. Failure to pay promptly would incur a penalty, with power for the Dean and Canons to enter the premises and distrain for sums due, while if the rent was at least a year in arrears there were powers of re-entry and forfeiture of

the lease. A further obligation of the lessee was to provide a minister for South Molton church, who had to be resident in the parish.[25]

The perseverance of the Dean and Canons in defending their title to the parsonage ultimately paid off and the parsonage remained in their ownership until 1867, when it passed, with other properties, to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.[26] The arrangement which was finally agreed and set out in the statute seems to have been carried out to mutual satisfaction, if not for the full one hundred and twenty years, at least until 1700. In that year a new lease of the parsonage was granted to John Hacche of Aller for a term of twenty-one years,[27] upon his surrender of the 1597 lease. The terms of this new lease varied in relatively minor respects from those of the earlier statutory lease and were to be followed in virtually every respect in all the leases of the parsonage which were to be granted over the next century and a half.

Notes and references

1. Giles Jacob (1811) *Law Dictionary*, vol. v, p. 104.
2. St. George's Chapel Archives, Windsor (SGC), CC.120349, although a Parliamentary survey in 1650 put its value at only £308 4s 4d a year: *ibid.* A survey of local men in 1713 put the net value of the glebe alone at £199 19s 1d: SGC, CC 118847, 'A True and Perfect Terrier and Survey ... of South Molton', 1713. The members of this jury were John Thorne and William Pyncombe (both described in the survey as gentlemen), William Kerslake and Christopher Blackmore (yeomen), all of South Molton, and Henry Smith (also a yeoman) of North Molton.
3. *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward VI*, vol. I, pp. 119, 148*f.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
5. By the Chapel's foundation charter in 1352, the Dean and Canons were to maintain twenty-six poor knights who had seen distinguished service but who had fallen into poverty, but in fact there seem never to have been more than about three in residence there at any one time, so Henry VIII by his will made a further endowment to St George's Chapel in order that they might maintain thirteen such poor knights: Dalton 1957, p. xviii.
6. 27 Henry VIII, c. 16.
7. Or before the *Custos Rotulorum* - the officer having custody of the records of the peace in a county - and two Justices of the Peace of the county where the land was situated.
8. SGC II.J.23, Statement of case of the Dean and Canons of Windsor.
9. The court established by Henry VIII to deal with issues pertaining to dissolved monasteries and other religious houses.
10. Kitching 1974, pp. 63, 70, 73*ff.*
11. *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Elizabeth I*, vol. V, p. 167.
12. *Ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 234.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
14. *Acts of the Privy Council*, vol. 8 (1571-75), pp. 393*f.*

15. The National Archives, C 3/188/83 Chancery pleadings – *Dean and Canons of Windsor* v. *Pomrey and others*. The action also involved unpaid rent of other properties in Devon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Breconshire.
16. SGC. XV.2.163, Bond – Thomas Clotworthy and the Dean and Canons of Windsor.
17. SGC XI.C.10 and XI.C.11.
18. SGC, XV.5.2, Leases by the Dean and Canons of Windsor of South Molton Parsonage.
19. According to a statement of the 'State and case of the Dean and canons of Windsor touching the Rectory of South Molton', SGC II.J.23.
20. Sir Simonds d'Ewes (1682) *The Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Elizabeth*, London, p. 566.
21. *State Papers, Domestic, Edward VI & Elizabeth (1595-97)*, London, 1869, pp. 543*f*.
22. The full personnel of the Committees was, of the first: Archbishop Whitgift, Lord Burghley, Earl of Nottingham (Lord High Admiral), Earl of Northumberland, Earl of Shrewsbury, Earl of Southampton, Bishop of Winchester and Bishop of Hereford; of the second, Bishop of Norwich, Lord Cobham (Lord Chamberlain), Lord Zouch, Lord Delawarr, Lord Mountjoye, Lord Sheffield, Lord North and Lord Buckhurst.
23. *Journal of the House of Lords*, vol. 2, pp. 207-24.
24. D'Ewes, pp. 551-66.
25. Private Act 39 Eliz. I, c. 9; St George's Chapel archives, II. J. 24.
26. *London Gazette*, 28 June 1867.
27. The maximum period allowed by the statute 13 Eliz. I, c.10 for properties of this description.

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Branscombe 1280-1340: An East Devon Manor before the Black Death

John Torrance

Introduction

The East Devon village of Branscombe enters history as a possession of King Alfred, later given by his grandson Æthelstan to the minster which he refounded at Exeter.[1] By Domesday the Bishop of Exeter held the manor of Branscombe 'for the canons' sustenance', and in 1148 Bishop Chichester gave it to the canons outright.[2] Manor and parish coincided, so the Dean and Chapter, that is the canons in their corporate capacity, were lords of the manor and patrons of the benefice. Like all their manors, Branscombe was farmed out to one of the canons for life, to be its steward (*firmarius*) and other canons came in pairs on visitations from Exeter to report on its temporal and spiritual health. Documentation of the manor in the cathedral archives is sparse, but fullest between 1280 and 1340, and this article seeks to describe its administration and organisation at that time. A second article, to follow, will show how elements of the manor - demesne, free tenancies and villein holdings - fitted into the Branscombe landscape.[3]

Visitors, stewards and vicars

Five of the documents used here are visitation reports. Canons Richard de Brendesworth and William de Tytlings came to Branscombe in 1281 while touring the cathedral's manors to draw up 'extents' or valuations for the stewards of the cathedral's exchequer.[4] As in all the canons' visitations, an *'Inquisicio'* was conducted by questioning a sworn jury of tenants. In July 1301, Sub-dean John de Uphaven and Canon Robert Oldland inspected all the cathedral's holdings in East Devon, and Uphaven returned to Branscombe with Canon Ralph Germeyn for a second visitation in May 1307.[5] In March 1318 the manor was visited by Canons Richard de Coleton and Thomas de Henton,[6] and in July 1330 by Canons William de Nassyntone, better known as William Nassington, and John de Eysi.[7] The last two returned in the summer of 1339 'to hear and determine various disputes' between steward and tenants, and drew up a sworn 'rental and custumal' (*rentale et custimarium*) to define the holdings, rents, services and entitlements of each household. This is the only detailed medieval survey of the manor.[8]

The canons who acted as stewards of Branscombe at the time of these visitations were Thomas de Herteford, a canon from 1275; Roger de Derteford, a canon from 1269;[9] Henry de Somerset, Chancellor and then Dean from 1302 to his death in 1306;[10] James de Berkeley, a younger son of Lord Berkeley and grandson of the Earl of Derby, briefly Bishop of Exeter for a year before he died

in 1327;[11] Richard de Clare, previously Dean of Wimborne and a canon since 1322; and William de Penerich, a canon since 1333, who died before December 1340.[12] The canons lived around the cathedral close in Exeter, whence presumably the steward would ride over to Branscombe to preside at the manor court. In his absence, the demesne farm was run by a bailiff, a seneschal looked after finance[13] and rents were collected by reeves.

The Dean and Chapter treated their stewardships as perquisites, as was recognised by Canon Milles, describing Branscombe around 1750:

> they have a tradition y^{t} y^{e} Dean of Exeter used to live here and probably so he might in former times when it was y^{e} custom of y^{e} church of Exeter to divide y^{e} mannors belonging to them, each taking one or more to his use.[14]

What this meant might be indicated by the extents of 1281, which give for each manor one figure for fixed rents and another for total annual value. The fixed rents from the tenants, totalling £29 8s 11d *p.a.* at Branscombe (nearly £15,000 at today's values) were probably remitted to Exeter.[15] The total annual value of £21 2s 10d (over £10,000 today) may have represented the agricultural product of the demesne and profit from the manorial court. If so, the steward would presumably have pocketed the balance of this after paying for the upkeep of the estate, and visitation reports show that if he failed in this he was liable for penalties, or his heirs for damages.[16] But the Dean and Chapter also claimed a tithe (tenth) of the produce of the demesne farm as well as a tithe of the tenants' cereal crops, which amounted to another £22; tithes on the tenants' other produce supported the vicar.

One of the visitors' tasks was to inspect the church and its furnishings. The twelfth century church had been enlarged in the 1260s during the episcopacy of Bishop Walter Bronescomb, whose name suggests a connection with Branscombe. By 1281 the roof and chancel windows were in need of attention, but by 1301 the fabric was satisfactory except for broken or missing windows in the tower. The first floor of the tower had formerly been the home of a resident priest, but after a long vacancy the living was upgraded in 1269 with the appointment of a vicar, Lawrence of Sidbury, and provision of a vicarage with glebe land at La Forde.[17] In 1307 his successor, Thomas Faiteoul, was reported to have provided a new psalter and organ-music and to be well thought of by the parishioners, who said he preached from the heart, visited the sick and performed his duties diligently. He died in May 1318, just after the visitation that year.[18]

His successor, Walter Lovecoke of Exeter, managed to get the chancel rebuilt in 1324, the cost of £99 7s 10d being borne by the twelve canons,[19] and the 1330 visitation found the church much better appointed than before. Although Lovecock had been dismissed in 1328 for scornfully tearing to pieces the Bishop's Vicar General's seal, he was absolved and continued in office until 1362.[20] His survival of the Black Death is remarkable, given that clergy were

more likely than most to die from visiting victims: perhaps he was less conscientious in this respect than Faitcoul.[21]

Canons, stewards and vicars wielded secular and religious power over or in the manor, but what of the manor itself?

The tenants: numbers

The custumal of 1339 divided the tenants into three classes. First came eight free tenants holding 'by hereditary right'. They paid rent but were virtually freeholders, owing only 'suit of court' and a death duty or 'heriot' of the best draught animal, with an extra year's rent payable by their heirs as a 'relief' or entry fine to secure inheritance. The second category, 'tenants in villeinage' or *'nativi'* who held their land 'in bondage' for rent and labour services, numbered 75. The third consisted of 7 *'cotarii'*, cottagers who paid rent and owed some labour.

These 90 named tenants were heads of households, and there would have been other households not listed. Some free tenants would have had sub-tenants or dependent households of workers, and the bailiff and some of his *'ministri'* or other full-time demesne employees might have had families, so there could have been at least a hundred households in the village. A list of tenants is 'not as a rule a reliable guide to population', but one suggested multiplier is 3.5 persons per household, which would yield a hypothetical population of some 350.[22] Branscombe was probably a fairly populous village and, at about 4.5 square miles, a modest-sized country manor.

The tenants: holdings and rents

Land measures in the 1339 custumal are in carucates and ferlings, with acres for small additional holdings. A ferling was one-sixteenth of a carucate: these were fiscal units based on land productivity and might vary in area, although a carucate or ploughland - land which could be ploughed in one season with eight oxen - is often reckoned at 120 acres. In Branscombe there is some reason to treat it as 140 acres;[23] so a ferling would be either 7.5 or 8.75 acres.

Whereas cottagers held only a cottage and 'curtilage', a small plot or garden, the standard villein holding (53 out of the 75) was a 'messuage' (a house, perhaps with yard and outbuildings) and one ferling of land. The model entry in the custumal, used as a point of reference for most of the others, states that 'John Slade holds one ferling of land in bondage, and renders annually five shillings and sixpence and one farthing in quarterly payments'.[24] A few villeins held only half a ferling, some held one and a half, or one with a small extra acreage, and some held more, but none more than two and a half ferlings - 18.5 or 22 acres at most.

These holdings were small. On many manors the biggest holdings were virgates (four ferlings, usually reckoned as 30 acres) and half-virgates were common. It has been estimated that a 30-acre holding, given medieval farming methods and reasonable harvests, and allowing for 10 acres to lie fallow each year, could carry grain and livestock to support an extended peasant family, with

a surplus for sale or exchange. Families with smaller holdings might need to work for wages or ply a village trade, and might often go hungry. [25] Despite this, 44 of the 75 villeins named in the custumal were well enough off to be assessed for the Devon lay subsidy of 1332. The tax was levied on movables, mainly livestock and crops, valued at more than 10s after deduction of subsistence and rent and services due to the manor.[26] Sixteen of the 44 were assessed at more than 20d, fourteen at 12d or less. Oppressive as this burden must have been, the figures do not suggest destitution, but rather a spread of wealth, with one or two prosperous villeins being assessed at 3s.

The fourteenth century followed two hundred years of demographic growth, but this may not be the reason for the villein holdings being so small. The pattern of single-ferling holdings looks too uniform to have resulted from natural subdivision, although in twenty-five cases (a third of the villein holdings) tenants with the same surname were listed in sequence, rather as if larger holdings had been divided in families. This was customary in some manors, resisted in others, and cannot be ruled out here. But if a *general* subdivision had been imposed, it was before 1307, when the visitation report mentioned labour services due from 'whoever holds a ferling of land'. The pattern may have been long established.[27]

In contrast, the free tenants' holdings and rents were diverse. Richard de Brankescombe (otherwise Braunscomb or Branscombe: the last spelling will be used in what follows) bore the most conspicuous name and paid the most rent: £2 11s 10d for his own house with two ferlings and for three other houses with two, one a half, and one ferling respectively. Then in descending order there were rents of £1 11s 8d for a house and five ferlings; 13s 4d for a house and one ferling, with a 'tenement' elsewhere; 6s 1d for a 'tenement'; and 4s 8d for a house and land adjacent. There were two large but cheap holdings, of two carucates for 14s 2d *p.a.* and of one carucate and one ferling for 10s *p.a.* and the smallest was a house with an adjacent close for 12d. The particularities of these free holdings will be examined in the second article.

The total acreage of free holdings is uncertain. Those whose size was specified in the custumal add up to some 538 acres, but four were unspecified. A guesstimate, taking some account of the size of freeholds which succeeded them on the 1840 tithe map, might be about 660 acres. In 1339 the annual rent from free holdings was £6 12s 10d, and from villeins £22 7s 11d. With 14s from cottagers, this made a total of £29 14s 9d, in line with the £29 8s 11d for the sum of fixed rents in the 1281 extent.

The burdens of villeinage: labour services

As with rent, the 1339 custumal defined the labour services due from John atte Slade and related other villeins' obligations to this model entry. Holders of one ferling of land owed the manor fixed amounts of specific labour, and holders of less or more than one ferling owed the same kinds of labour *pro rata*. The manor reserved the right to a cash payment instead of labour, so each labour service was given a value, to be demanded at the steward's discretion.

Those who had oxen and a plough had to plough on the demesne farm twice, for winter and spring sowings, receiving nothing in return, or else pay 6d. and 6d was demanded instead of work from those without oxen or plough. Each with his neighbours (*i.e.* as one of a team) had to mow, turn, stack and carry the hay from the eleven acres of demesne meadow, or pay 2d. At harvest, each with his neighbours had to reap 'with a sickle' for four half-days, either from soon after sunrise to midday or from midday to shortly before sunset (at the discretion of the bailiff) one and a half acres of wheat, barley or oats, without payment, or else pay 6d per half-acre, as the steward chose. If they reaped for two days, they were to be fed with bread made from wheat and barley, with herrings or pilchards and lettuce and pulse soup, and given sufficient ale or cider to drink. A fine of twopence was payable for any of the four days they did not reap. They also had to make two trips bringing in the demesne crops at harvest in whatever waggon or cart they owned, and help stack it in the barn *(grangia)*, or else pay 2d. They had to thresh the demesne crops, when the next year's seed was separated, receiving nothing, or else pay 18d instead, at the steward's choice.

A villein was also required to carry goods 'twice a year between Axe and Exe' or else pay 2d. A journey from 'the barton' - the demesne farm - to either the Axe or the Exe counted as 'one carriage', as did the journey back, so 'twice a year between Axe and Exe' meant two round trips. A packhorse load should contain 4 bushels of wheat, barley, rye, beans or peas, or 6 bushels of oats or malt. Victuals or a halfpenny would be supplied for each journey.

Villeins might also be required to fetch a millstone from 'Dymyngton' (probably Dinnington near Crewkerne)[28] when needed for 'the lord's mill', and the value of this work to the manor was the annual rent for one and a quarter ferlings (6s 10d). Presumably the villeins collectively would be fined this sum if none was willing to go, and the same sum was due to the manor if the mill leat was not kept in repair. The custumal did not insist that villeins grind their own corn at the lord's mill, but an 1820 digest of the custom of the manor stated that 'the customary tenants (*i.e.* copyholders) ought not to grind their corn [away] from the customary mill', so it may nevertheless have been part of medieval custom.[29]

If these obligations are compared with those mentioned in earlier visitation reports, one aim of the 1339 custumal appears to be to entrench economies made by previous stewards. In two earlier reports the villeins complained that those performing their two plough-services were no longer fed at the steward's table, as had been the custom until Roger de Derteford's time, and now the custumal made it clear that they should receive nothing. In 1301 the villeins complained that after haymaking they no longer received three sheep from the steward's fold and three cheeses from his dairy for a common feast, as had been the custom until Thomas de Herteforde's time, and this is left unmentioned in the custumal. The custumal was also silent on Henry de Somerset's practice, reported in 1307, of charging 3d instead of 6d for not ploughing if villeins without ploughs harrowed instead.

The 1281 extent reported the price at which seed-corn was sold to the villeins after threshing as £6 10s 6d, and Thomas de Hertforde charged 10 marks and 40 pence (£6 6s 8d). Henry de Somerset temporarily reduced this to 5 marks (£3 6s 8d) after the tenants petitioned the Chapter; the reduction was granted year-by-year, and the villeins appealed for a permanent reduction in 1307. This probably reflected lower yields due to climate change, for these years saw the beginning of the 400-year-long cooling now known as the Little Ice Age. Lower temperatures, storms and heavy rainfall shortened the growing season and spoiled crops, and famine became a perennial threat, realised throughout northern Europe in the Great Famine of 1315-19.[30] The cartulary of Newenham Abbey near Axminster records that in East Devon food prices soared and human and animal diseases were rife.[31] Conditions had improved somewhat by 1325, and in 1330 the villeins complained that James de Berkeley had reverted to charging 10 marks for seed-corn.

The labour-services are revealing in other ways. The carrying duties indicate a disposable surplus of cereals, though not the proportions in which different crops were grown. Taking produce to Exeter suggests that Branscombe might still have been used directly 'for the canons' sustenance', as in Domesday, but carriage to the Axe points to sales at markets and fairs in Colyton or Axminster.[32]

A striking feature of these labour services is that they include no week-work, but only seasonal work - ploughing, haymaking, reaping, threshing, etc. (often called 'boonwork' (*precarium*) although the custumal used this term only for harvesting)[33] - and irregular services like carrying. On many manors the villeins owed several days' labour each week, as dictated by the bailiff, in addition to boonwork, and this was the chief burden.[34] No week-work meant that villeins had more time to work on their holdings. Moreover, services were defined by tasks, not by the number of persons per household who had to work, which may have allowed flexibility in family labour budgets.

These considerations might make the manorial regime at Branscombe look relatively benign, but they need to be set alongside the small size of the villeins' holdings, which afforded only a meagre subsistence at best. This suggests one answer to the question of how the manor could be run at all without week-work - namely, by employing villeins or members of their households for wages. Payments in lieu of labour service and other fines would have contributed to a wages fund to pay for work on the demesne farm, whether for the building and maintenance to which the visitation reports bear witness, or for more regular work such as herding, manuring, sowing, weeding, sawing, fencing, hedging and ditching, thatching, milking, cooking, basket-making, etc. - the many jobs for which other manors' accounts show regular wage-payments. And given the large number of villeins, the bailiff might have exchanged labour owed by some of them for labour of other kinds, especially if they had useful skills.

Members of poor villein households might also have worked for free tenants or richer villeins. There were other sources of income too - quarrying, for example, took place at Branscombe in this period. The fact that reapers were

entitled to receive herrings and pilchards (which visited Lyme Bay in shoals until the early twentieth century) might imply that some were fishermen, whether working for the manor or on their own account - unless, of course, fish was bought from local ports and salted.[35] Moreover, the record of villein holdings, the lord's legal basis for extracting surplus labour, was from the villeins' standpoint a framework for an internal trade in land-use. No doubt, as in other manors, by renting, letting or sharing land, some could farm on a larger scale or pursue other callings. Money circulated in the village, and some householders may have kept alehouses or bakeries.

Consideration of wage-labour on the demesne farm would be incomplete without mentioning the seven cottagers. The labour services they owed were light: a day of haymaking and a day at harvest. They may have been old or infirm, but they still had to eat and to earn money to pay their 2s *p.a.* rent, so they too might have been employed on the demesne farm. Two of them were women, who might have worked in the dairy, sewed or cleaned.

The burdens of villeinage: administrative duties

The custumal required villeins to help run the manor by acting as reeve (*prepositus*) for a year if chosen. The office carried significant rewards: reeves were exempt from the year's rent and services on one ferling of land, and received one ferling's annual rent when they finished. They ate at 'the lord's table' at harvest-time, between Lammas (August 1st) and Michaelmas, or received 7d a day instead; they also received hay, fodder and pasture for one animal for the year, and an allowance for doing the steward's business at markets and fairs.

In some manors the reeve was an all-powerful officer with many opportunities to profit, like Chaucer's reeve.[36] His work, involving rent-collection, supervision of labour services, business transactions in the neighbourhood and other responsibilities, was generally considered onerous, but at Branscombe it may have been shared. The 1307 visitation report refers to six reeves, apparently in office together, an unusual but not unknown number for one manor.[37] Reeves were probably chosen from the villeins with larger holdings, for a reeve was held to account and might incur losses. In 1301 the jury complained that certain reeves, however careful their accounting, had suffered losses which they suspected were due to the steward taking into his own hands two ferlings of land paying 13s a year, while the reeves remained obliged to render a fixed amount of rent. With six posts to fill and constraints on eligibility, the office would come round often, unless, as happened elsewhere, some men were elected year after year.

A villein was also bound to act as a tithingman (*decemarius*) if chosen. All unfree males of twelve and over were enrolled in 'tithings' for purposes of law and order, and each tithing had its tithingman, or constable, elected annually. Tithings were divisions of the 'frankpledge', part of the civil or royal administration of the vill and the hundred, but in Branscombe, as elsewhere, this was absorbed into the manorial system as a franchise of the Dean and Chapter.[38]

Tithingmen were not excused rent but were exempt from services except for ploughing and two days of harvest-work, when they would come after breakfast, oversee the work, and receive a meal afterwards, like the reeves; they also worked as stackers (*tassatores*) in the hay-barn and would be fed then also. Being fed was a privilege in a poor village, and a sign of status.

Succession to villein holdings

The custumal also laid down rules for transferring or succeeding to holdings. When an unfree tenant died the holding reverted to the manor, together with a 'heriot' of the best animal.[39] A 'relief' or entry fine was payable by the next holder, usually the heir, for the right to occupy; but a tenant's widow, if she remained single, might continue the tenancy on the same terms without paying a relief.[40] The 1281 extent stated that if a tenant's *wife* died the manor could claim the best of her animals, but this was not mentioned in 1339. Possibly it was one of the issues which led to the custumal being drawn up.

Holdings were only to be transferred when vacated by death, and in 1339 it was stated that by a special concession of the Dean and Chapter, the steward might then sell vacant tenements for two lives if desired. If, as the wording suggests, this was a new concession, it was one of the most significant items in the custumal, marking an important stage in the development of copyhold tenures.[41] Later, a third life could be bought in reversion, and these arrangements were to foster the growth of a class of yeoman farmers in centuries to come. It seems likely that issues of succession to tenure may have lain behind the settlement of 1339.

Rights of common

The villein's ferling was his license to claim rights of common in the manor. The custumal ignored these rights, and the visitation reports contain only slight clues, but one passage in the 1307 report is suggestive:

> And they [the jurymen] say on matters relating to [Henry de Somerset's] executors ... that although by custom the pasture should be kept open until the middle of March, eighteen cowherds were warned off it fifteen days before that time, at a cost to the deceased of 18*d*, because a cow can be overwintered in these parts for 6*d*.... [but] the heifers *[bovicili]* were not harmed in any way because they could be fed quite well on the forage which the executors had in hand, as six reeves had already proved on oath. And they say that the shepherds have stated on oath that no sheep died for lack of pasture, as none of the common pasture was denied them. And that the draught animals [*affri*] did not suffer from lack of pasture, for at that time of year they are not turned out to grass; if any of them were out of condition it was because they [their owners] had sold their hay.

It is not clear whose animals are being referred to here, but the eighteen cowherds must be villeins guarding their cattle; the demesne farm would hardly have employed so many. They were probably on fallow land, where cattle

grazed until it was time to destock for the spring sowing, and since their early removal was a cost to the steward, it was demesne land.

A right of common would have allowed villeins' cattle to graze freely over villein land, over strip fields for example, which they would fertilize. This passage seems to imply the opposite: *jus faldae*, a lord of the manor's right to overwinter villeins' cattle on his own arable, which would benefit to the tune of 6d per cow.[42] This could be the more easily exacted because the demesne was a large continuous tract of land; had Branscombe been a manor whose demesne land lay in strips among villeins' strips, the lord's right would have been hard to impose.

It is uncertain whether *boviculi* were heifers or young oxen. But the fact that the reeves swore they were unharmed suggests they might have been reeves' animals stalled at the demesne farm, because receiving fodder for one animal was part of a reeve's emolument. The sheep were probably the demesne flock, but they were grazing a 'common pasture', which they would have shared with villeins' and freemen's flocks. The reference to draught animals[43] seems to include those owned by villeins - among them, those who might have imprudently or in desperation sold their hay.

The common sheep pasture would have been on high ground outside the village, probably round the northern perimeter, separated by the straggling line of the highway from the commons beyond, which belonged to Colyton. In general, it was the 'commons and waste' lying above or beyond the village fields that would have been of most value to villeins, to the extent that they were allowed to use it as grazing or to obtain timber and firewood, sand, marl, bracken for animal litter, etc. - and all the more so, given the small size of their holdings.

Conclusions

What has emerged from this study? First, some insight into how the Exeter canons governed their manors in the high Middle Ages. Secondly, the custumal of 1339 provides a detailed account of the tenantry, free and unfree, of an East Devon village, and of their labour obligations to the manor, including some curious details such as the procurement of millstones from Somerset. Features such as the standard one-ferling holding, the absence of week-work, and the apparent election of six reeves each year, might usefully be compared with other manors. The custumal also suggests an origin for the sale of copyholds for two lives, an important aspect of the early modern village economy. And there is some evidence of the impact of climatic deterioration on agriculture.

The quality of life for villeins in Branscombe was probably deteriorating too, as elsewhere in this period. Their complaints to visiting canons expressed a nostalgia for times when stewards had reputedly been more generous, although in bad years the Dean and Chapter did respond to their appeals by halving the price of seed-corn. No doubt Branscombe, like other manors, had a chronic history of disputes, and the custumal may contain a few concessions over issues

surrounding death-duties and succession of tenure. The canons may have been seeking compromise as well as discipline and economy.

The coming and going of ecclesiastical dignitaries, and the absence of a castle with armed retainers, must have imparted a civilian, even churchy, ethos to the village. A final clause in the custumal which relegates 'other matters' to decision by the manor court or to the steward's discretion gives 'sons becoming priests' as an example where 'nothing ought to be done without the lord's permission'. While this may have served to keep younger sons at home and available for work,[44] it also provided an opportunity to recruit bright boys for the church. Unfortunately the sources say nothing about church festivals, sports or the lighthearted sides of village life.

Notes and references

1. Æthelstan's charter (probably of 932) did not survive the Viking sack of Exeter in 1003. Keynes and Lapidge 2004, p. 175; Orme 2009, pp. 8-10.
2. *Domesday Book*, 1, p. 284. Oliver 1861, pp. 17 and 410-11.
3. I am grateful to Jean Birrell, Barbara Farquharson, Peter Herring, Christopher Holdsworth, Philippe Planel and Sam Turner, for reading and making many valuable comments on drafts of these two articles; also to Angela Doughty and Ellie Jones of Exeter Cathedral Archives and Susan Laithwaite of the Devon Record Office for locating and translating documents.
4. Exeter Cathedral, Dean and Chapter Archives (DC) 3672a. Translation by R. Bass in the cathedral archives.
5. Their reports in Latin are in Bishop Stapledon's register, Hingeston-Randolph 1892, pp. 193-6. An English paraphrase is in Hingeston-Randolph 1890. Their circuit of the cathedral's Devon holdings in 1301 is described in Orme 2009, pp. 84-7. John de Uphaven (d. 1318) was sub-dean and penitentiary of Exeter Cathedral but relieved of his duties in 1317, suffering from dementia. Hingeston-Randolph 1892, pp. 153, 210, 396. Oliver 1861, p. 295. Canon Robert Oldland died before 17 February 1308. Lepine and Orme 2003, p. 93. Ralph Germeyn (d. 1316), was executor for Bishop Quivil (d. 1291), Archdeacon of Barnstaple, and precentor at Exeter from 1308.
6. DC 2850. Translation by R. Bass in the cathedral archives. Richard de Coleton (d. 1335) was precentor at Exeter. He was executor for Bishop Stapledon (d. 1326) and Dean 1327-1335. Thomas de Henton was Treasurer of Exeter cathedral 1310-1329, when he joined the Priory of Barlinch. Le Neve 1964, p. 10.
7. The report in Latin is in Bishop Grandisson's register. Hingeston-Randolph 1894-1899, part I, p. 574. William Nassington (d. 1354) was Chancellor at Exeter in 1332, and in 1346 Chancellor at York. He wrote a long religious poem, *Speculum Vitae*, and Matthew Sullivan in *ODNB* calls him an establishment figure *par excellence*. John de Eysi became a canon in 1335

and died before June 1347. Hingeston Randolph 1894-99, pp. 523, 857 and *passim;* Le Neve 1964, p. 29.

8. DC 3683. Morshead's MS Latin transcription is in the Branscombe 'scrapboook' at the Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter.
9. Hingeston-Randolph 1889, p. 138.
10. He died in December 1306, not December 1307, as stated in Hingeston-Randolph 1892, p. 210 and Oliver 1861, p. 274, probably following Le Neve 1854, 1, p. 385. See Lepine and Orme 2003, p. 106. Orme's account (ch. 22) of the executors' inventory of Andrew Kilkenny, Henry de Somerset's predecessor as Dean, illustrates the wealth of such senior clerics.
11. Hingeston-Randolph 1894-99 1, p. viii. Bishop James' tomb in the cathedral received a stream of public offerings for the cathedral building fund. Erskine 1983, p. xii.
12. Le Neve 1964, 26, 29. In 1341 the cathedral accounts noted 'outgoings of the court held during the vacancy at Branscombe after the death of W. Penery (*sic*)'. Erskine 1983, p. 266.
13. Tenants complained in 1330 that the steward's *seneschallus* assessed fines in the manor court without employing a valuer.
14. Bodleian MS.Top Devon, C.8.
15. The extent estimated the fixed annual rent at £30 6s 3d 'from which the lord has taken 18s 4d into lordship'. DC 3762A, trans. R. Bass.
16. 'In non-monastic cathedrals the members of the chapter were often assigned individual properties as prebends, from which they drew rents for their support.' Faith 1997, p. 182.
17. Hingeston-Randolph 1889, pp. 35, 338; Butters 1950, p. 16.
18. Hingeston-Randolph 1892, p. 193.
19. DC 1324, transcribed R. Bass.
20. Hingeston-Randolph 1894-99, 1, pp. 37, 357. He may have belonged to the Exeter merchant family of that name. Philip Lovecok, elected mayor ten times, 'was probably the richest man in Exeter' in the early fourteenth century. Kowaleski 1993, p. 21.
21. Three successive vicars of Colyton died in the Black Death.
22. Postan 1973, pp. 144, 189.
23. The reasons are set out in Torrance (forthcoming).
24. Parts of a penny will be omitted henceforth.
25. Bennett 1937, pp. 89, 95.
26. Erskine 1969, p. 45.
27. 'Some kind of systematic settlement must underlie one of the most striking characteristics of the peasant tenantry as it appears in the manorial surveys of the twelfth century: its regularity': Faith 1997, p. 218.
28. Dinnington has no suitable stone. Martin Watts suggests it was a distribution point for Welsh millstones from Penallt, imported at Bridgwater, which were common in medieval Devon. Dinnington is on the

Fosseway, near its junction with the London Way at Ilchester, to which Welsh millstones could be brought up the rivers Parrett and Yeo. (Cf. the iron fair at nearby Lopen, patronised by Exeter cathedral. Erskine 1983, 2, p. xvii.) That this Dinnington is meant and not two similarly named places is confirmed by the requirement that villeins fetching a millstone must pay a halfpenny to the *herdoresyene* (ferryman?) at Colyton, for Colyton is not on the way to the other places. (Curiously, a William of Dynyngton appears at Branscombe in the 1327 lay subsidy roll).

29. Devon Record Office (DRO) 1037M/E 2/1.
30. Tuchman 1987, p. 24.
31. Davidson 1834, pp. 67-8. But the visitation in March 1318 reported nothing exceptional at Branscombe.
32. Kowaleski 1995, pp. 360, 362, 368. For the economic conservatism of some ecclesiastical estates, content to consume food deliveries rather than exploit manors for profit, see Faith 1997, p. 186.
33. Faith 1997, p. 112.
34. Bailey 2002, p. 30.
35. The 1281 extent did not mention tithes of fish at Branscombe, as it did in other places.
36. Chaucer 1908, p. 15.
37. Bennett 1937, pp. 167, 172. He cites the manor of Waltham as a rare case of six reeves.
38. In 1258 the manor of Branscombe, represented by Thomas de Hertford, had won a reduction in the number of men required to serve at the hundred court in Colyton, from 21 to 5 on 3 lawdays, perhaps a sign of increased autonomy in civil and criminal matters. *Devon Feet of Fines* 1912, 1, p. 312, no. 614. There was apparently a prison in Branscombe in 1248. *Pleas of the Crown at Exeter*, 33 Henry III, 1248-9.
39. The 1281 report stated that a heriot of one good beast was payable to the vicar, as well as to the lord of the manor. No doubt this remained in force in 1339.
40. Seven heads of villein households were women, probably widows, in 1339.
41. A copyhold was land held according to the custom of the manor, when services had been commuted to a money payment. Tenure was certified by a 'copy' of the entry in the manorial court record.
42. Bennett 1937, p. 77.
43. Hingeston-Randolph (1890), paraphrasing this passage, rendered *boviculi* as heifers and *affri* as farm horses, but oxen were the usual draught animals at Branscombe until the late 19th century. The *boviculi* might have been young oxen.
44. Jean Birrell's suggestion, in personal communication.

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Book reviews

Harold Fox (2012) *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands: Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages*, Exeter: UEP; 291 pp., 37 illus., 22 col. pl., paperback, ISBN 978 0 85989 865 2, RRP £30

Dartmoor is a vast and fascinating topic, but for those of us who study its past, the richness of the evidence can make it too tempting to focus our investigations solely on the upland, ignoring its Devonshire context and the wider role it played in the development of rural practices in the British countryside. Not so Harold Fox who, in this new volume, has contextualised Dartmoor within the medieval farming, pastoral and socio-economic systems of Devon as a whole.

Through years of painstaking archival research, Fox has tackled for the first time the importance of transhumance, which is defined by the author as 'the seasonal transfer of grazing animals to different pastures'. Although it has long been known that lowland parishes of Devon had grazing rights on upland Dartmoor, knowledge of the topic has been somewhat vague until now. Fox has provided the detail on how transhumance actually developed, illustrated by several case studies. Although a simple concept, he argues that this was a crucial element in the development of pastoralism and settlement on Dartmoor in the pre-Conquest period and was influential in the evolution of the landscape we are familiar with today.

Transhumance is divisible into personal and impersonal forms: the former involved Devon's early lowland farmers seasonally migrating their own stock to the uplands to exploit summer pasture, during which period they themselves resided on the upland, albeit in temporary accommodation. It was their association with the places they used on the moor through this process, which led to permanent settlement there. Place name evidence of pre-conquest settlements and hamlets has convinced Fox that this was taking place at least by the later Anglo-Saxon period. Following the establishment of upland settlement, lowland farmers were able to leave their stock in the hands of the new upland colonists for a fee and so the concept of impersonal transhumance was also born, to develop in the later medieval period and continue to the present day. What is particularly remarkable about this discussion is the case studies that Fox presents, providing convincing evidence for the early migrations from lowland parishes not previously known in this context. Fox also argues that transhumance had a profound influence on the human landscape still detectable today, including the outline form of the border parishes and the existence of the forest itself as a central 'hub'. He also questions current thinking on the origins of the ancient tenements, some of which he suggests may be much earlier than previously believed, though he admits that this relies solely on the interpretation of place name evidence.

The level of scholarship is, of course, impeccable with fine threads of information, drawn from a variety of often incomplete sources and place-name evidence, woven to form a convincing thesis, sometimes requiring quite complex explanation as to how the author has arrived at his conclusions. To present this material within a digestible narrative for the non-specialist reader would have presented a challenge to many historians but Fox, as always, manages to keep the text interesting throughout and in places quite lyrical. Useful schematic map diagrams help clarify some of the concepts and a series of colour plates show places mentioned. Nevertheless, this is not an entry-level read and some knowledge of the landscape and past literature on Dartmoor's history would be useful for the casual reader to fully appreciate the impact of the new material. For those who research the history and landscape of Dartmoor, particularly the medieval period, the work represents a shift in perceptions as to how the medieval upland economy and society functioned and will provide fresh stimulus with regards the investigation of its early medieval occupation.

The sadly early death of Harold Fox aged 62 in 2008, saw the text of this work almost completed but far from ready for publication. However, a group of his immediate colleagues at Leicester University, who realised the importance of the research, were determined that it should see the light of day and it is to the immense credit of editors Matthew Tompkins and Chris Dyer, who have brought together the loose ends, that this book has been published to the high standard achieved.

Harold Fox was certainly one of the most significant historical geographers to take on the study of medieval Devon in the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st. He published numerous papers and books on a variety of themes, always his own original research bringing much new information and fresh interpretation to his topics. It is saddening to realise that this will be the last such book by this important author.

Phil Newman

Tom Greeves and Phil Newman (2011) *The Great Courts of Devon Tinners 1510 and 1710*, Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group; 57 pp. booklet; ISBN 978-0-9529442-1-8, £5.95

This booklet is a compilation based on two papers presented to the Dartmoor Tin Working Research Group and the Chagford History Society on 24th September 2010 to commemorate the 300th and 500th anniversaries of Great Courts held at Crockern Tor, Devon.

Great Courts were infrequent but momentous occasions only 14 have been recorded between 1474 & 1786. At these gatherings tinners passed statutes, which formed the basis for administration, of the Dartmoor tin industry.Tom Greeves paper deals with the court held in the year of 1510, while Phil Newman describes the previously unknown record of a Great Court held in 1710. These two papers explore the context of these events based on original documentation and links are made to Tom and Phil's own research about tinners and tin workings on Dartmoor.

Dartmoor produced as much as 56 tons of tin per annum mid-15th century rising to 145tons around 1500 and peaked at 280tons in 1521.The Great Courts were not judicial courts where people were tried for misdemeanours, but were parliaments for the enactment of statutes. The 1510 parliament began by affirming that all previous statutes were void, and then went on to set out 37 separate new ones. There were twelve men of the jury at the 'law day' Penalties for not abiding by these laws ranged from forfeitures of tin to £5 to £40 fines and possible gaol at Lydford Castle.

It was lawful for anyone to dig anywhere in Devon, where tin may be found and to carry water to the works. Jurates are listed for the four Stannary Courts of Ashburton, Tavistock, Plympton and Chagford. Tom Greeves gives details of some of the early tinners, where they lived and some of their exploits:- John and Richard Hext from Brimpts arrived at Ashburton with a piece of tin weighing 150lbs in June 1511. There is also the story of of Richard Strode MP for Plympton, who brought to the attention of Westminster the state of silting of the Plym Estuary from the excessive workings of the tin miners. As a tinner himself, he was brought before the Stannary Court and fined £40 in each of the four tin courts. Failing to pay he was arrested and imprisoned in Lydford Gaol.

Phil Newman's Paper entitled 'Abundance of Booths, Good Victuals and Drink' The Crockern Tor Great Court of Devon Tinners April 1710 and its 18th century context. This event had gone unrecorded and may have remained in obscurity if the British Library had not decided to digitize their newspaper collections, and make them accessible on the internet.

The paper covers three main topics:- The Great Court of 1710 itself, Other Great Courts of the 18th century and The status of the Devon tin industry in early 1700s.The newspaper report of April 1710 in the Daily Courant describes how the members of the four stannary towns met for the Great Court at Crockern Tor, but due to the very bad weather they adjourned to Tavistock, where they remained for the duration of the parliament. The main issue seems to have been the reduction of price per hundredweight by 5 shillings. There was hope that the price would rise again, when the peace came, to £3 8s per hundredweight.

This is the only personal account of the goings on at a Devon Stannary Court that exists. It gives a marvellous insight into the times and the courts significance. Much wine seems to have been drunk to help proceedings along. The article concludes by saying 'that had it been fine weather at Crockern Tor there may have been upwards of 10 to 12,000 people come for the ceremony and an abundance of booths, good victuals and drink would be bought and sold, and nothing was wanting to make a fine show'.

The final meeting of the Devon Stannaries took place in Moretonhampstead in 1786. The Crockern Tor experience was by passed and the whole event was held indoors. By this time the tin industry in Devon was in decline and had long been overtaken by that of Cornwall.

The combining of these two papers in this booklet gives a wonderful insight into the power and significance of the Stannary Courts and brings us up to date on the latest findings of the Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group.

Hazel Harvey (2011) *The Story of Exeter*, Andover: Phillimore; 230 pp., 173 illustrations, hardback; ISBN 9781860776786, £20.

Hazel Harvey's earlier history of Exeter, *Exeter Past*, published in 1996, has been a book to which I have often turned for reference. *The Story of Exeter* incorporates the text and pictures of the earlier book in an extended and updated version. The revision is welcome, even though the new book is less visually pleasing, with fainter text and smaller pictures, because it has enabled Harvey to incorporate 'new' histories. Since 1996 Exeter has lived more history, and more of its history has been discovered or published. Harvey incorporates new material from all these sources, including the building of the new mosque; the finds from the Princesshay excavations, and material from her own published history of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

To produce a history of so long-lived a city is a tricky task. It requires the integration of the broad sweep of the centuries with the history of individual 'themes' such as the woollen trade, and the history of Exeter's various communities, geographical and institutional. At every turn there are questions. How much space should be allotted to the medieval or the modern? Should the history of Heavitree be 'in' or 'out'? Is it right to give more space to the history of the hospital than to those of the corporation or the cathedral? Harvey's solutions do not always make for smooth reading. The text can switch abruptly between topics, or bring one history up to date and then jump back through centuries to start another.It must be acknowledged, however, that it is virtually impossible to get such a structure 'right'. Unfortunately the 6-page index is not full enough always to direct the enquirer to the relevant information. The history of the university, for example, is indexed only in relation to its charter in 1955, although it also appears in the text in connection with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, the development of the Streatham campus, and in J.K. Rowling's connection with Exeter.

Harvey's book shapes how I look at Exeter. It brings events, stories and people to mind as I travel around. There may be quibbles experts would raise over particular topics, but this should not diminish our appreciation of the resource it offers. What I do regret is the lack of discussion of the uniqueness of Exeter particularly over the last three centuries. We can gain an understanding of Exeter's role in England's woollen trade, or its place in the tensions of civil wars, but once we plunge into Georgian Exeter that sense of perspective is overwhelmed by detail. There is a story to be told, perhaps about how the city dealt with the loss the prosperity based for so long on the woollen trade, exploited its position as an administrative, ecclesiastical and communications centre for the county, and most recently embraced an emphasis on a knowledge-based economy, heritage tourism and shopping. This book provides the material for such an analysis; it does not draw it out.

The Story of Exeter is a treasure house for anyone with an interest in Exeter's history, but, *pace*author and publisher, it is not 'the story of Exeter'. It

is the splendid story of thousands of Exonians and the way they individually and collectively shaped the cityscape we see.
Julia Neville

Andrew Jones (2010) *Victorian North Devon: A Social History*, published by the author; 529 pp., 3 figures, softback, No ISBN; £15.

Several of the more traditional features of village life – church fetes, the Anglican harvest festival and carol service, the wheezing church harmonium and the Parish Council - originated in the Victorian period. Inoffensive and often unnoticed they might be today but they were part of changes that caused no small amount of tension in isolated rural communities. These changes are explored in intimate detail in this substantial work by Reverend Dr Andrew Jones, the priest in charge of several parishes on the southern fringe of Exmoor. While his subtitle might imply a comprehensive study of social change in the district, the author makes clear that his work mainly tackles changes in the Victorian Church of England and its clergy and their impact on the traditional community. It is based on the parish of Rose Ash but draws widely on the experiences of other parts of north Devon. To accomplish this he has undertaken a formidable amount of primary research, not just within the county and national archives, but ranging between privately held material still in the area and the collected sermons of Rose Ash's rector, the Revd J.H.L.Southcomb, at Yale University. The copious footnotes and bibliography give a good indication of sources available to other researchers. This vast range of material has been mined to produce a detailed study that is elegantly written, with many keen observations of rural community life, then and now. Here is the timeless parade of village personalities, their clashes and trivial incidents carefully nurtured into lowering and enduring grudges. Here too are the period pieces, such as the Throwleigh school board faced with the unfortunate necessity of removing a highly competent and much appreciated school teacher because it was discovered -horror of horrors- that she had absconded some years earlier with a married man in Cambridgeshire.

Dr. Jones' central argument is that the energetic reforming zeal of the Victorian Church, intent on modernising and standardising religious observance, ran into the stubborn resilience of deep rooted customary practices and beliefs. Music, for example, had been in the hands of the village, rustic tunes played by the band in the church gallery. Restoration of the fabric swept all this away, putting the incumbent in charge with *his* hymn book and *his* organist at the new harmonium. In this and other changes to the church routine, the educated and largely industrious Anglican clerics only isolated themselves still further from the lives of the rural poor. Meanwhile, the Wesleyans and Bible Christians were on the defensive, in a constant search for money to maintain their stark chapels and thinly spread pastors in the face of falling population.

This is a narrative history. The author's themes are argued and supported by many detailed examples, which are articulated well, and scrupulously referenced. How representative these examples are at any one time, and the degree of change observed over the Victorian period, is less easy to discern.

Insofar as they relate to Dr. Jones' core interest in the cultural history of the countryside, and the changing interaction between traditional rural society and the Victorian Church, objective measurement is arguably difficult. When it comes to commentary on the key aspects of the broader social context – rural depopulation and the exit of the young and energetic, agricultural change and depression, the arrival of the railways - the illustrative examples are also well selected and conjure up an impression of how it might have seemed at the time, but it is difficult to assess the overall degree of impact, and simple tables showing how population levels, age and class structure, farm sizes and prices changed through time, would have helped. However, in the light of the vast amount of research undertaken and deployed in such an accomplished manner, this is a minor drawback especially as it relates to topics peripheral to the author's main theme. Despite the rudimentary maps and the absence of photographs, it is of obvious appeal to those with a local interest in Rose Ash and its vicinity, and more widely to anyone interested in the course of cultural change in the Victorian countryside, in Devon and elsewhere.
Greg Finch

Laura Quigley (2011) *The Devil Comes to Dartmoor: The Haunting True Story of Mary Howard, Devon's 'Demon Bride'*, Stroud: The History Press; softback, 207pp. b/w illustrations; ISBN 9780752461113, £9.99.

There are very few Devon women of the seventeenth century whose lives are as well known as that of Mary Howard. Born Mary Fitz in 1596 into a wealthy family who held land in Devon, Cornwall, and Kent, Mary Howard had a dramatic early life, having already been a ward of court and a widow twice over by the time she was sixteen. In 1612, she married for the third time, becoming the wife of Sir Charles Howard, the fourth son of the Earl of Suffolk, but the marriage was not a success, and in 1619 she was granted a legal separation from her husband, who subsequently left the country and died in 1622. During her separation from Sir Charles, Mary Howard seems to have formed a close relationship with George Cutteford (or Cuttford), the son of a Plymouth sailor, who, having qualified as an attorney, became Mary Howard's steward in the 1620s and was probably the father of her son, George Howard, who was born in 1622. In 1628, Mary Howard married again, this time the handsome, argumentative and violent Sir Richard Grenville, and this marriage was as unhappy as her previous experiences, since by 1632 she had applied for another judicial separation, after which she became embroiled in a series of lawsuits against Sir Richard as she tried to prevent him from obtaining control of her property. When the Civil War broke out, Sir Richard, who had served the King with distinction in Ireland in the 1630s, surprisingly joined the Roundhead army in 1643, only to switch sides a year later in favour of the Royalist cause. Sir Richard subsequently fought with determination and courage for the King in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, becoming by 1645 the self-styled 'King's General in the West', as well as appropriating his wife's estates and having George Cutteford committed to jail. However, the defeat of the King's army at

Great Torrington in February 1646 forced Sir Richard into exile abroad, where he died in 1659. As for Mary Howard, she survived the Civil War, regaining control of her estates in 1646, although the war was not so kind to George Cutteford, who died in 1645, shortly after his release from jail. Mary Howard seems to have lived more quietly during the rest of her life, staying mainly in her house at Fitzford near Tavistock with her son, George Howard, to whom she made over her property in 1664. However, after he died without an heir in 1671, and three days before her own death that year, she willed the bulk of her goods and estates to her cousin, Sir William Courtenay of Powderham.

The primary sources for Mary Howard's eventful life are relatively abundant, since she seems to have been almost constantly involved with the law, as a ward of court, as a wife and as an active litigant against aggrieved husbands and disputatious tenants. In addition, many of the letters written by her to George Cutteford in the 1630s and 1640s survived in Sackville College, where they had been deposited by George Cutteford's grandson John, who became warden of the College in 1677. Given this wealth of material, it is not surprising that historians have made good use of it, notably Mrs. G.H. Radford, who wrote a groundbreaking article, 'Lady Howard of Fitzford' in the 1890 volume of the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, and Amos Miller, who published a meticulous and well-researched biography of Sir Richard Grenville in 1979 (London: Phillimore), which exploited the papers of the Court of Wards to offer fresh information of Mary Howard's relationship with Sir Richard Grenville and with her children (including George Howard).

Despite its rather sensationalist title, professional writer Laura Quigley has given us another very readable biography of Mary Howard, which makes full use of both Radford and Miller (but sadly not of Mary Howard's surviving letters to George Cutteford which seem not to have survived the transfer of the Sackville College archives to the West Sussex Record Office – see p. 109, note 6). The bulk of her narrative faithfully follows the lines of her predecessors, although this is not to say that she does not adduce additional information or offer alternative interpretations. For example, on pp. 90-92, Quigley corrects Miller, by correctly identifying the Edward Courtenay with whom Sir Richard Grenville was in dispute, while, on p. 155, Quigley disagrees with Radford and Miller's view that George Cutteford's death was due to jail fever, but ascribes it to 'the hands of Richard Grenville and men hired for that purpose'. In addition, the author uses the interesting device of inserting factual historical interludes at various points in the narrative to add context – for example, there are substantial glosses on people and families who played a part in Mary Howard's life ('The Courtenays of Okehampton', 'The Howards of Saffron Walden', 'The Maynards', 'Edward Sackville, Earl of Dorset') or on the social background to the period ('Women and marriage in the seventeenth century', 'Illicit liaisons', 'The rituals of childbirth', 'Women in court'). However, Quigley's greatest contribution to our knowledge of Mary Howard's life and times is the way in which she has interwoven into her biography information about the Cutteford family (and, to a lesser extent, about the Maynards and the Courtenays as well).

Given the exiguous nature of data about most inhabitants of seventeenth-century England outside the circles of the court and the landed gentry, Laura Quigley has had to dig deep into the local archives in order to clarify the relationship between Mary Howard and her steward and his family. On the other hand, there is occasionally, perhaps, an over-imaginative reconstruction of attitudes and opinions (for example, on pp. 47, 56 and 60), and on one instance the author herself admits that her deductions are 'speculation, based on circumstantial evidence' (p. 175 – is there any concrete evidence that George Cutteford was confined to Lydford Gaol?). There are also some errors of fact (p. 23 - Powderham Castle is not 'in Exmouth'; p. 26 - Henry II was a Plantagenet not a 'Norman'; p. 43 - the conventional spelling of the battle is St Quentin not 'St Quinton' and Sir William Courtenay died over a month after the battle; p. 78 - Van Dyck is now the conventional spelling not 'Van Dyke'; p. 108 – 'ton' should be spelled tun = barrel), and sadly, no index. In general, however, this is an entertaining, straightforward retelling of Mary Howard's life, following very much in the footsteps of Radford and Miller, but adding useful background information, and, in particular, important primary data on the Cuttefords and on how the lives of their family were entwined with that of one of Devon's best known women of the seventeenth century.
Paul Auchterlonie.

Rosemary Smith and Harland Walshaw (2011) *The Houses of Lympstone*, Lympstone Historic Houses Group; 104 pp., over 50 photographs, hardback; ISBN 978 1 903998 96 0, £8.50.

When reviewing a local history book, the reviewer should bear in mind that such works are more often written out of passion rather than profit. That is to say hardly any author gains much financial reward due to limited interest and circulation. My view, having reviewed a number of books, is that one searches for the nuggets of gold which can usually be found and are the foundation for a favourable review. In *The Houses of Lympstone* there are no gold nuggets. The book is solid gold from the first to the last chapter. Firstly, this is born out of the marriage of two great talents. Rosemary Smith as author conveys her great knowledge of the subject in an engaging manner. Harland Walshaw is an expert on architectural photography, with whose delightful pictures the book is peppered. Secondly, is the subject itself: Lympstone. This enchanting village, rich in history and fine architecture makes a wonderful basis for a work of this kind. Small wonder that Peter Beecham as Designation Director for English Heritage was more than happy to write the *Foreword* and lay emphasis on the importance of this book as a vital record. There is a logical and informative progression throughout the book. The introduction deals with the landscape, then the building materials available down through the centuries including the pebbles from local pebble beds that are also known as *Budliegh Buns*! With stone coming from as far away as Dorset, there is also an explanation regarding methods of transport.

In the chapters that follow the journey begins on Lympstone Common, crossing the A376, where a cattle market used to be held on what is now the car park of the Saddler's Arms, then down the long approach to the village centre. Along the way there are many treats including detailed descriptions of not only the architecture of the properties (external and internal), but who lived in them and what business they were engaged in. On page 23 there is a picture of the gable end of *Ventnor* which still bears the legend: *Taylor Military Outfitter*, one of the many businesses that used to thrive in the village. At the end of each chapter there are useful notes. Why were pineapples popular as finials, particularly on gateposts during the reign of Charles II? What romantic connection did Eden Phillpotts have with Lympstone? These questions are answered in the notes at the end of chapter 7. Trees, walls and the construction of paths and courtyards all get a mention. At the end of the book there is a useful map giving locations for some of the houses, from which you can readily work out the location of the rest from the book. This is followed by a helpful glossary. This book inspired me to visit Lympstone. I've been there several times over the years, but never fully appreciated it until reading *The Houses of Lympstone*. As a postscript the author added *A Final View* in which she expresses fears for the future of the village. These include the expansion of Exmouth and the pressure to build more houses in the parish. We should all be concerned. Lympstone, its buildings and its people are very special. There is almost something mythical about the place. Driving away from Lympstone I wondered if I would ever see it again or whether it is East Devon's version of Brigadoon.
Roger Brien

Myrtle Ternstrom (2010) *The Lords of Lundy*, privately published; 235pp., numerous illustrations, softback; ISBN 0 950 6177 9 2; £12.99, can be obtained from M.S. Ternstrom, 6, Queensholme, Pittville Circus Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2QE.

This first comprehensive account of the history of Lundy, is the considerable achievement of Dr Myrtle Ternstrom BEM. She has been visiting the island eleven miles north of Hartland Point for sixty years, and the present book is the major outcome of her researches, though she has written other books about Lundy previously.

Dr Ternstrom begins her book with a full account of prehistoric Lundy, pulling together the extensive archaeological work done by The National Trust since they acquired it in 1969, and here one finds full references at the end of the chapter leading the reader to all the original sources, a splendidly disciplined arrangement followed throughout the book.

Pre-history leads to the medieval period and the ownership of the Marisco family. Here the author admits a difficulty in identifying individuals. She is on more secure ground when she states that Henry III granted permission in 1223 for William de Marisco to take mangonels – stone-throwing devices – to Lundy for defence purposes, though the castle, named after the Mariscos, may not have been the location of these machines.

There followed, from about 1330 for 500 years, a period when a series of absentee titled gentry had nominal ownership of the island. There were outbreaks of piracy and privateering, then the island was briefly occupied by Turkish pirates in 1625, and the French attempted to land three years later, but were repulsed. There was probably a continuous occupation of farming tenants on the island, but they seem to have been responsible for their own defence.

The modern era of Lundy's story may be said to have begun in 1836 with the purchase of the island by William Hudson Heaven. When he bought Lundy 'it was basically a farm, with a dilapidated castle, a farmhouse, and the (1820) lighthouse, but without a church, a shop and a school' as the author writes.

Heaven wanted a country seat, and the fact that it was exempt from taxes made it more desirable. He became the first owner to be resident on the island since a brief period by Sir John Borlase Warren in the 1770s (whose picture appears on the cover).

Dr Ternstrom now has more records with which to tell her story as an extensive archive of papers exists, and she recounts a fascinating tale. Millcombe (The Villa) was built first, then the farm buildings were renovated and accommodation provided for the farm workers. There was, too, the constant maintenance required of the beach road, and lastly the church was consecrated in 1897. The Heavens tried to make money by opening quarries on the east side and exporting the stone, but the enterprise failed. The Heaven dynasty ended in 1918 with the sale of the island to Augustus Christie, followed seven years later by its sale to Martin Coles Harman. The Harmans managed to hold on to Lundy until 1969, much of the time with the on-island support of of Felix Gade, but when eventually it was put up for sale once more Mr Jack Hayward generously gave £150,000 towards the purchase price and this enabled the National Trust to buy the island. Lastly, The Landmark Trust undertook a sixty-year lease to take over the management of Lundy, which has secured its viability into the future.

This is a fine book, telling a rounded story in compelling fashion, and we should be grateful to Dr Ternstrom for writing and publishing it. It is unfortunate that she does not appear to have been able to acquire a professional publisher. There is no index or contents page, and the necessary preliminaries are printed on a separate sheet stuck to the inside front cover.

Brian Le Messurier

E.H.T. Whitten (2009) *Bonehill – Evolution of a Dartmoor Hamlet*, Wellington: Ryelands, 128pp., more than 50 figures and tables, hardback, ISBN 978-1-906551-15-5, £19.99.

Bonehill is a picturesque Dartmoor hamlet in the East Webburn valley a short distance upstream from Widecombe-in-the-Moor. Dr. Whitten's objective for this attractively produced and illustrated volume, published by an imprint of Halsgrove Press, was to undertake a detailed study of a small area rather than to embrace Dartmoor as a whole. A geologist by training, he has clearly exercised the same meticulous approach to gathering evidence for his study of Bonehill as required by his professional career.

The work is laid out chronologically. Although brief mentions are made of earlier periods, it effectively commences with a detailed examination of the Domesday evidence. This section draws mainly on Maitland's work on Domesday Book nationally from over a century ago, highlighting one of the main reservations about this book as a whole: despite the intention to focus on Bonehill, much of it is generic. As the work proceeds through the medieval and early modern periods we are presented with broad statements about Dartmoor as a whole, mostly repeating material available elsewhere. A great love of antique maps comes across strongly, and many are reproduced very well in colour, but medieval maps of Britain and even, curiously, a small extract of a sixteenth century map of Brazil published in Germany, are of no relevance to the intended focus on Bonehill. We are also presented with dislocating references to Donegal strip farming and the way land deeds were described in the Bahamas until the 1980s.

This is a great shame, for the opportunity to explore the origins and development of a small upland Dartmoor community over the centuries has not been taken. The author has, for example, studied the extensive manor court rolls covering the early modern period. They are merely used in passing, however, to speculate on the possible sequence and timing of changes in manorial lordship. Much more could have been drawn from them to portray the residents and their use of the land, and thereby get closer to the actual evolution of Bonehill as a settlement. We are told of an 'elaborate leat system in Yonder Meadow and Little Meadow'. Perhaps it supplied a mill nearby, or was constructed to control drainage from the higher ground to spare the hamlet, or associated with tin workings. We are not told, and it is left as one of a multitude of disconnected and sometimes random facts. The buildings themselves are described, with due acknowledgement of the survey work of Elizabeth Gawne and Jenny Sanders published in their Early Dartmoor Farmhouses (1998), although their caution regarding the dating of Lower Bonehill is translated here more than once to the rather more certain if oddly worded 'late mid-16th century'.

The book will have some appeal to residents and those interested in the Widecombe area, and the sequence of facts it contains might assist others in considering how and why the hamlet developed as it did. It concludes with a digression on the colourful and eccentric 'Lady Drake', a Widecombe resident during Victorian times. But as with much that precedes this episode, this is of limited relevance to Bonehill's history.

Greg Finch

Gerry Woodcock (2012) *Tavistock's Yesterdays 21*, privately published; 96 pp., 53 illustrations, softback, no ISBN; £4.95, obtainable locally.

Gerry Woodcock's annual edition of this engaging series (now number 21) has appeared and is as informative and entertaining as ever, with its 23 pieces relating to episodes in Tavistock's history. Aware that a town's history derives largely from the lives and eccentricities of its people, and its familiar locations, the author gains his material from assiduous research in record offices, and

archives that include those of the *Tavistock Gazette*, as well as from personal contacts. The resulting stories are told in delightful plain English and provide means for local inhabitants and others to become acquainted with many hidden and fascinating features of the town.
Helen Harris

The Devon Historian, vol. 81, 2012, pp. 93-4.

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

The Hon. Editor writes:
The front cover features a cropped version of an unidentified image (EC4365) from the 'Location, Location, Location' pages of the Westcountry Studies Library. Any information on the content of the image would be gratefully received by staff of the library, via: westcountry.library@devon.gov. uk. The uncropped image is below, and at: http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/culturehertitage/libraries/localstudies/whereindevon.htm.

Information

This is the final edition of the journal under the editorship of Andrew Jackson. Dr Jackson would like to express his thanks to those who have supported him in this work over the last eight years: Helen Harris, his predecessor as editor; officers of the committee of the Society: Sadru Bhanji and Mitzi Auchterlonie, as reviews editors; the many authors of articles and reviews; staff of the Westcountry Studies Library and Devon Record Office; and Bartlett Printing.

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 Grossteste University College Lincoln, Lincoln, LN1 3DY, or via andrew.jackson@bishopg.ac.uk.

Books for review should be sent to Dr Mitzi Auchterlonie, 41, Broadway, Exeter, EX2 9 LU (m.m.auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk), who will invite the services of a reviewer. It is not the policy of the Society to receive unsolicited reviews.

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

Notes for contributors

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

It is preferred that articles are word-processed using single line spacing and page margins of 2cm, and submitted electronically in Word format by email or disk, as typed hardcopy, or in clear handwriting. Authors should ensure that the journal's style is adhered to on such matters as the restrained use of capital letters, initial single inverted commas, and the writing of the dates thus: 1 July 2005. Endnote referencing should be used, and a corresponding list of notes and references at the end should give details of primary sources used, and indicate where books and other articles have been quoted, paraphrased or derived from. Bibliographies are required to list all books and journal articles that have been quoted, paraphrased, cited, or in some way have informed the content of the article. The format of references and bibliographies in this volume of the journal can be followed. Illustrative material can be submitted electronically in most formats, or as a good quality print or photocopy. Where relevant it is the responsibility of authors to ensure that copyright holders have granted formal permission for the reproduction of images. For further information on conventions see www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk.

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

Back issues

Current and back issues of *The Devon Historian* are available from Mr Gerald Quinn, 6 Old Paignton Road, Torquay, TQ2 6UY. Members may purchase available back issues at £3 each including postage and, when ordering, should state the issue number(s) or publication date(s) of the journal(s) required. Mr Quinn is always glad to receive copies of earlier numbers of *The Devon Historian* in good condition.

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Articles

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