

The Devon Historian

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
DAT	<i>Devonshire Association Transactions</i>
DCNQ	<i>Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries</i>
DCRS	Devon and Cornwall Record Society
DEI	Devon and Exeter Institution
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
DHC	Devon Heritage Centre
ECA	Exeter Cathedral Archive
NDRO	North Devon Record Office
PWDRO	Plymouth and West Devon Record Office
TDH	<i>The Devon Historian</i>
TNA	The National Archives

Foreword

The 2012 issue of *The Devon Historian* was the last to be published under the editorship of Dr Andrew Jackson, who carried out his editorial duties in addition to his heavy workload as a university lecturer. Andrew made a huge contribution to the Society during his eight year tenure, and his helpful approach and his attention to detail will be much missed. I am honoured to take his place as editor. *The Devon Historian* continues to develop as a more authoritative voice in Devon history, and the recent adoption of anonymous peer reviewing of articles will be helpful in this regard. The fact that we have no shortage of submissions is most encouraging. I hope readers will enjoy the interesting range of articles in the 2013 edition.

Jane Bliss, BA, MRes
Honorary Editor



A Tribute to Robin Stanes Sailor, Farmer, Historian, Teacher

PHILIPPE PLANEL

Robert Stanes, a man of many talents, and a central figure in the development of The Devon History Society, died on 19 January 2013 at his home in Exeter, aged 90. Chris Wakefield of the Ottery St Mary Heritage Society, recalls a placard which Robin made for a CND march in the 1960s, stating 'Historians Demand no End to History', and it was perhaps Robin's personal experience of global war that made him in turn farmer, historian and teacher.

Even in Robin's family background there was something that predisposed him not to follow the line of least resistance in life. Robin was born in India in 1922, into a family that had prospered under the Raj, while retaining strong religious and philanthropic values. At the age of 21, Robin's grandfather, Robert Stanes, founded what subsequently became the Stanes Higher Secondary School in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu province). Robin believed his grandfather was 'largely colour-blind',¹ and Robert was indeed concerned that Anglo-Indian children were rejected both by the English and by Indians. Robert himself had no objection to his eldest daughter Winifred marrying an Anglo-Indian.

At about the age of eight, Robin left his comfortable childhood in India for the uncertain rigours of an English preparatory school, followed by secondary education at Marlborough College. In 1941 he went up to Christ Church, Oxford to read History where he first met Clemency Geddes, whom he subsequently married in 1950. In the meantime, however, in July 1942, he joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and saw several years war service. This included two months as a rating in the corvette HMS *Rhododendron* on

one of the infamous Arctic Convoys (JW 51B), taking supplies in the darkness and bitter cold of winter to the Kola Inlet in Russia. Robin subsequently trained as a Fighter Direction Officer, first in two escort carriers in the Atlantic, and then in the cruiser HMS *Glasgow*, sent to the Far East as the war was ending. He was able to spend two leaves in the once-familiar surroundings of the Nilgiri Hills where he had spent the first few years of his life; the presence of a naval air station in Coimbatore enabling free flights from Trincomalee. Robin reckoned that he had passed through the Suez Canal fifteen times in his life.²

It was perhaps Robin's wartime experience that influenced his return to Oxford at the end of the war and his change of subject from History to Agriculture. In 1952, after working on farms in Gloucestershire and North Devon, he bought Scarswell Farm at Slapton, in the South Hams, a small mixed farm. His discovery of farming was accompanied by the discovery of an ancient historical landscape. He was: "fascinated by my new village with its two 'church' towers, its large fresh water lake by the sea, its three water mills, its Iron Age 'castle' and its delectable landscape. I felt compelled to find out about it."³

Robin was not entirely a conventional farmer – few other farmers in the South Hams would, for example, have named their entire herd of cows after Jane Austen characters. However, Robin was not unusual in a socio-economic sense. Many West Country farms were purchased in the years following the war by 'Up country Johnnies', local terminology referred to by William Morgan Williams in his rural sociological study of the West Country village of Ashworthy, (not the real name of the village). Indeed a miniature land boom resulted from this post-war invasion.⁴ Yet, the pages of William's study reveal that Robin was a far from typical 'Up Country Johnny'. Williams notes that the newcomers did not regard traditions, such as the shared 'threshing' meals as being of much value,⁵ and were resented for this attitude, whereas Robin writes, that on the contrary, "I feel privileged to have been at such a dinner."⁶

Historians are made, not born. For some the trigger may be a museum or an art gallery visit, or for others an inspiring teacher or the first sight of an original document in a record office. But for Robin, it was his daily experience of living in a historical landscape and witnessing traditions that were still sufficiently alive to convey meaning. He was aware that throughout recorded history, indeed until comparatively recently, the majority of the population had been engaged in agriculture and that agriculture was still important in industrial societies. Robin's history was predominantly rural, agricultural and landscape history. He felt privileged to be able to tap into this living tradition:

I was still just part of, and sharing in, the tail end of an ancient traditional way of life that was centuries – maybe millennia old . . . Farmers were still using horses, still making haystacks and corn ricks and thatching them, still cutting and laying hedges and making up banks, still milking by hand, often sitting beside a great fireplace on a settle to keep warm in winter and cooking on an open fire, still scalding milk to make clotted cream and killing a pig regularly to cure and salt for fat bacon, still making and drinking cider, cutting the ashen faggot at Christmas, going to bed by candlelight and drawing water from a well.⁷

Robin's interest in this tradition meant that his history was ultimately about people; he was interested in the historical landscape because it prompted questions about what people had done in it and to it, how they lived and what they aspired to. His interest in people did not stop short at people in the past. Robin was interested in people in general, a point that was made time and again during the tribute to him held in Payhembury Parish Hall on Saturday 26 January 2013.

An interest in people also meant an interest in the problems confronting modern society. Although Robin was against the nuclear arms race, he was nevertheless in favour of other things, especially education. Robin began teaching and lecturing before he gave up farming, initially at the request of Bob Pym the South Hams tutor for the Extra Mural Department of Exeter University, and eventually became a full-time history teacher at Exmouth Grammar School in the late 1960s. Robin told the present writer that he was one of the few members of staff to welcome the breaking down of the traditional secondary modern and grammar school divide. He fully subscribed to the comprehensive movement in education, as did several other World War combatants turned progressive educationalists such as Harry Ree and Francis Cammaerts. Coincidentally, Cammaerts also worked in education in Exmouth in the 1970s, as principal of Rolle College.⁸ There are Exmouth alumni who still remember Robin's teaching. Greg Finch writes:

It was Robin's approach to teaching history which fostered my great love of the subject when I was one of his A Level pupils at Exmouth School in the 1970s. It's the main reason I went on to study history at University and why I still have an active research interest today. For sixth formers studying the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, a potentially very dry and remote subject was brought to life when Robin brought in copies of documents for us to read. Seventeenth century handwriting! What a sense of achievement it was to unlock the words and the meaning of

these probate inventories of the possessions of ordinary people who had lived in Uffculme 350 years before. Here was a window into the lives of ordinary people who had lived in a place we had heard of not far away, rather than of politics in the distant royal court. This was real history to me, newly discovered history. Then he introduced us to the history that can be seen in the landscape, most memorably on a school field trip to the castles, hills, youth hostels – and pubs – of the Welsh border country. The long minibus journey was broken for refreshments after just fifteen miles at Culver House [Robin's home at Payhembury], typical of his and Clemency's hospitality. His commentary on historic landscape features in the hill country was accompanied by keen observations on the farming going on around us. I think his previous practical experience as a farmer kept his teaching firmly connected to the real world.⁹

From 1960 onwards, Robin, finding that there was no organisation devoted to Devon local history had also started moving down a road which led to the formation of the Standing Conference for Devon History, subsequently The Devon History Society. He undoubtedly played a key role in this process, however the only official accounts were recorded by Robin himself in three successive articles in the *Devon Historian*.¹⁰ In the second of the three articles referred to he writes: 'over the years the society changed its name to the tidier Devon History Society and, in this writer's view, rather lost one of its functions, which was to be a forum for other local history societies in the county.'¹¹ There is perhaps still something compelling about this argument in 2013. Robin also felt that *The Devon Historian* should appear twice a year, and that the journal would lose its accessibility if it became a more academic publication which was only produced annually. But in the event, *The Devon History Society Newsletter* has evolved to sustain the sharing of news of affiliated local history groups and to encourage further involvement.

Retirement in 1984 meant that Robin could spend even more time on local history. I first met Robin when I stumbled across some Whetstone mine leases in the Drewe of Broadhembury papers at the Devon Record Office, as it was then called. Mindful of Robin's important article on whetstone mining, I rang him from a call box and he arrived within the hour to view the leases! Robin subsequently published a note on the leases and was most gracious in his thanks.¹² He was also, as he was to everybody, very generous with his time and his knowledge. For example, he suggested that an unusually straight line on the map across the fields of Broadhembury parish might be worthy of study, and, as an adult education class at Cullompton proved, so it was. Tithe

map analysis revealed the line to be a tenurial fault-line with no tenant or landowner holdings straddling the line.

Robin's published output, given that he was not a professional historian, was prodigious and ranged from the accessible and well-illustrated description of Devon's agricultural history that is *Old Farming Days: Life on the Land in Devon and Cornwall* or his *A History of Devon*,¹³ to the more academic *The Husbandry of Devon and Cornwall*.¹⁴ The latter publication brought together some of his articles, all based on original documents, and published in various journals such as the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, *Exeter Papers in Economic History*, *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries* and, of course, *The Devon Historian*. Robin was also interested in commemorating history on the ground and was instrumental in the commissioning and erection of plaques for W. G. Hoskins and Ernest Bevin, and for the stone commemorating the Battle of Fenny Bridges.

Although Robin wished to be remembered for his published output and its content, many who knew him will principally remember him for his passion for local history and his skill in communicating this to a wide range of audiences. He is survived by his widow, Clemency, his children and his grandchildren. Robin's coffin was inscribed with two logos – those of Exeter University and The Devon History Society. His grave is on the sloping ground above Payhembury Church.

NOTES

1. Robin Stanes, *Stanes History 1771–1964: City of London and South India* (Privately published: 2001).
2. Stanes family, Personal Communication.
3. Robin Stanes, 'The Origins of the Devon History Society', *TDH*, 77 (2008), 3–4.
4. William M. Williams, *A West Country Village: Ashworthy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 75.
5. Williams, *A West Country Village: Ashworthy*, 108.
6. Robin Stanes, *Old Farming Days* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2005), 7.
7. Stanes, *Old Farming Days*, 7.
8. Ray Jenkins, *A Pacifist at War: The life of Francis Cammaerts* (London: Hutchinson, 2009), 278.
9. Greg Finch, Personal Communication.
10. Robin Stanes, 'The Standing Conference for Devon History: The First Ten Years', *TDH*, 20 (1980), 2–3; Robin Stanes, 'The Devon History Society – Twenty-Five years', *TDH*, 50, 3; Robin Stanes, 'The Origins of the Devon History Society', 3–4.
11. Robin Stanes, 'The Devon History Society – Twenty-Five years'.

12. Robin Stanes, 'Leases for Whetstone Pits in Broadhembury', *DCNQ*, 38, part 8 (2000), 251–252.
13. Robin Stanes, *Old Farming Days; A History of Devon* (Phillimore: Chichester, 1986).
14. Robin Stanes, *The Husbandry of Devon and Cornwall* (Privately published, 2008).

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Athelstan and the Expulsion of the Britons from Exeter: Ethnic Cleansing or Rough Justice?

NICHOLAS GRANT

Ere boy, av ee erd bout Athelstan
An is ethnic clensen a Exeter
An wipen we 'filthy race' frum Debm?

So opens an emotive poem by the contemporary Cornish poet Pol Hodge, lamenting a young student's lack of knowledge of their local history.¹ The poem refers to one of the most contentious episodes in the early history of the South-West, the expulsion of the Celtic Britons from Exeter by Athelstan, King of Wessex and England in the tenth century. This event was recorded by the Norman historian William of Malmesbury some 200 years after it was believed to have occurred. So did it really happen? Rather than enter a broader debate over William's sources for Athelstan's reign, this single episode will be examined in an attempt to identify whether its details can be corroborated or least judged credible based on what we know of Athelstan and Exeter in the early-tenth century.

William of Malmesbury (c.1090–c.1142) was a historian and Benedictine monk, of mixed Norman and English parentage.² Two of his major works were the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, a history of England from 449, and the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, a church history of England from 597. William provides accounts of the Exeter episode in both books. In the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, completed c.1125–6, William reports:

[Athelstan] turned towards the Western Britons who are called Cornish, because they live in western Britain and look across aslant towards the horn of Gaul. They too were attacked vigorously and forced to leave Exeter, where they had lived until then on an equal footing with the English; and he fixed the boundary of their territory at the river Tamar, just as he had fixed the boundary of the Northern British at the river Wye. Having thus purged that city by sweeping out an infected race, he fortified it with towers and surrounded it with a wall of squared stone. And although the soil in those parts is thin and stony, producing with reluctance barren oats and for the most part empty ears without their grain, yet to judge by the splendour of the city, the wealth of the inhabitants, and the number of visiting strangers, every form of merchandise is so plentiful there that you would not search in vain for anything that would contribute in your view to a civilized life. Numerous reminders of Athelstan are to be seen both in the city and in the country round, of which the native gives a better account by word of mouth than I can with my pen.³

A similar, brief account is found in the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, completed around the same time.

King Athelstan, having put the Britons to flight and brought Exeter under English control, was the first to fortify the city with towers and throw a wall of squared stone around it. This is such a vigorous centre for every sort of trade that you could ask for anything you might judge useful to man, and not be disappointed, though the barren and unkempt soil can scarce bring forth sterile oats, and the ears are generally empty of grain.⁴

William states that he found the material for his account of the reign of Athelstan in an ancient book written whilst Athelstan was still alive.⁵ The date, character and William's utility of this source have been much debated,⁶ but generally it has been accepted that William did possess a unique source for the life of Athelstan which may well have been of tenth-century date. The most recent commentator, Sarah Foot, agrees with this assessment, but concludes that William also adapted and embellished his sources.⁷ In the specific case of the Exeter passage, this embellishment very likely included the use of oral accounts provided by Exeter citizens.⁸

In William's account, the expulsion of the Britons at Exeter follows the

siege of the Vikings in York in 927, and precedes the marriage of Athelstan's sister Eadgyth to Otto, son of Henry I, King of the Romans in late 929 or 930.⁹ Athelstan visited Exeter on at least two occasions, probably more. Charters confirm Athelstan was at Exeter on 16 April 928 and on 9 November 932, and at Lifton in West Devon on 12 November 931, which could have involved stopping at Exeter *en route* from or to the heart of Wessex.¹⁰ His law code V Athelstan was also issued at Exeter, but cannot be closely dated.¹¹ Finally, Athelstan was remembered in the eleventh century as the refounder and benefactor of the minster at Exeter.¹²

Simply because we can put Athelstan in the right place at the right time does not in itself make the account credible, and William's account needs to be examined in more detail. Firstly, let us consider whether it is likely there were Britons in Exeter, and if so, whether they might be located within the city. There is nothing inherently improbable in an ethnically distinct and identifiable British community being present in Exeter in the early tenth century. There is clear evidence for such a group in the West Saxon town of Wareham in Dorset, where there are five surviving seventh to ninth century inscribed memorial stones recording the names of nine individuals of which four or five clearly have Brittonic names.¹³ Sheppard Frere (following W. G. Hoskins) thought that William's account was evidence for a continuous British presence in Exeter from the late Roman period to the tenth century, but this seems unlikely.¹⁴ The West Saxon kingdom had established control over the Exeter area by the last quarter of the seventh century,¹⁵ and it had been fully assimilated into the kingdom of Wessex for over 200 years by the reign of Athelstan.

Furthermore, the archaeological evidence for occupation of any kind in Exeter between the fifth century and the refounding of the town by King Alfred of Wessex in the late-ninth century is very limited. The forum and basilica area near to the later cathedral was used for a sub-Roman cemetery in the fifth century. This was succeeded (although it is far from certain the site was in continuous use) by the presumed cemetery of the Anglo-Saxon minster church of the late-seventh century, although only that minster's tenth-century successor has been identified, underneath the former St Mary Major church.¹⁶ Beyond this site there is no evidence of occupation continuity, rather pre-tenth-century dark soil deposits from sites elsewhere in the city may indicate abandonment.¹⁷ Imported Mediterranean pottery, found at other sites in south-west England, has not been identified at Exeter,¹⁸ and whilst a number of sixth century and later Byzantine coins have been found, they have been regarded as recent deposits or losses.¹⁹ The earliest medieval pottery from

the city belongs to the late-tenth century.²⁰ The Roman city was thus probably a partially deserted citadel prior to the late-ninth century, when a new street plan was laid out.

If the idea of a continuous presence of Britons from the late and post-Roman periods can be ruled out, a rather more conceivable idea is that a distinct community of Britons may have been attracted into the city by opportunities for commerce and trade, in the period immediately following Exeter's refoundation in the late-ninth century.²¹ However, there is no hard evidence for such a community comparable with that from Wareham.

An early and imaginative attempt to locate the notional British quarter in Exeter was made by Thomas Kerlake in the nineteenth century. Kerlake suggested that a group of six medieval parishes in the northern part of the area within the city walls around the North Gate, made up the former British quarter, mainly on the strength of their church dedications. The six parishes were St Petrock and St Kerrian (certainly Celtic saints), St Pancras (a Roman martyr), St Paul (identified by Kerlake as the Breton saint St Paul de Leon rather than the Apostle Paul), Allhallows, Goldsmith Street, and St Mary Arches. Kerlake argues that there are duplicate dedications to Allhallows and St Mary within the city walls, and these must represent churches for the separate British and Saxon communities.²² This ingenious suggestion was not challenged until a century later, when Susan Pearce showed that the dedications to Petroc and Kerrian were likely to have originated during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. During this period the Exeter bishopric had close connections with Bodmin and Perranzabuloe in Cornwall, the cult centres of Petroc and Piran (with whom Kerrian was identified).²³ This view received strong support from Nicholas Orme in his study of Devon church dedications.²⁴ Susan Pearce conceded that the church of St Paul might refer to St Paul de Leon, who was believed to have visited the South-West, but this seems unlikely given the lack of any evidence for veneration of St Paul de Leon in Exeter.²⁵ However, the cathedral did hold relics of St Paul the Apostle from the tenth century, and this is the likely inspiration for the dedication.²⁶ Having removed Petroc, Kerrian and Paul from the equation, there is nothing particularly Celtic about the remaining three dedications, although the theory continues to resurface from time to time in popular accounts.

Meanwhile in a different approach W. G. Hoskins suggested that the medieval street known as 'Britayne', now Bartholomew Street, in Allhallows' parish, marked the British quarter.²⁷ However, the authors of *The Place-Names of Devon* had previously suggested that the street, which is first recorded c.1250, may owe its name to a later settlement of Bretons, which

can be paralleled by the fourteenth-century 'Little Britain' in London.²⁸ This remains the more likely explanation for the street name.

More recently, David Hill has suggested that the Burghal Hidage, the document which lists the burhs or fortified places that formed the West Saxon defensive system set up by King Alfred between c.880–892, provides a clue to the notional British quarter.²⁹ The Burghal Hidage dates to between 911 and 919 and gives the names of the West Saxon burhs and the number of hides allotted to each burh for their maintenance and defence.³⁰ It also states that each hide ought to supply one man, and that four men were needed to hold each perch, and it is therefore possible to calculate the total theoretical garrison and to equate that with known defensive circuits of burhs.³¹ David Hill has championed the view that close correlations can generally be identified between theoretical lengths and actual circuits where these survive.³² However, the Burghal Hidage figure for the length of Exeter's fortifications is too small (734 hides giving a wall length of 923 metres) for a complete circuit of the Roman walls (at least 2,316 metres). David Hill therefore proposed that the Anglo-Saxon burh at Exeter had initially only occupied part of the walled area, perhaps Rougemont Hill, with the rest occupied by the Britons.³³ He finds further support for this idea in a charter of 928³⁴ which refers to Exeter as an *arce* (fortress), and in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reference to Exeter in 877 as a *fæsten* (fortress, stronghold). It is suggested that it was only following the expulsion of the Britons that Athelstan occupied and then fortified the whole area enclosed by the city walls.³⁵

This view has come under some criticism, however. Ian Burrow,³⁶ John Allan, Christopher Henderson, and Robert Higham,³⁷ and Nicholas Brooks³⁸ have all suggested that the explanation for the mismatch between the theoretical Burghal Hidage length and the actual walled length is simply that provision was made only for those parts of the Exeter wall circuit which lacked strong natural defences. Nicholas Brooks develops this point further, pointing out that the combined hidage of Devon and Cornwall at Domesday of 1,534 hides, is the same as the hidage assigned to the four burhs of Devon (Exeter, Lydford, Pilton near Barnstaple, and Halwell near Totnes) in the Burghal Hidage. Therefore it appears that the hidage assessment at Exeter was restricted by the existing hundred and shire based assessments of eastern and central Devon, rather than directly linked to the wall length.³⁹

Why might Athelstan feel the need to 'purge' the city of the 'infected race' of Britons?⁴⁰ It is most unlikely that this represents Athelstan's own view of the Britons. Recent study of William of Malmesbury's works has drawn attention to his low opinion of the Celts; he thought they were inferior and barbarian compared to the civilised English and French.⁴¹ Kirsten Fenton collects some

twelve separate references in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and the *Gesta Pontificum* to the Irish, Scots, Welsh and Bretons as barbarians or which make other derogatory references to Celtic peoples. One of these, describing the Scots and Cumbrian Britons as barbarians, appears earlier in the same chapter of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* as that describing the expulsion of the Britons from Exeter.⁴² It seems clear that we should see the reference to the expulsion of the 'infected' Britons as a further manifestation of William's disparaging view of the Celtic peoples.⁴³ Furthermore, two other references make it clear that William regarded one of the marks of the civilisation of the English and French was that they lived in cities, and the barbarian Celts did not. William refers to the poor agriculture of Ireland resulting in 'a ragged mob of rustic Irishmen outside the towns; the English and French, with their more civilised way of life, live in the towns.'⁴⁴ He also notes that the Scots 'were accustomed to lurk ingloriously in marshes rather than dwell in lofty cities.'⁴⁵ It would thus be entirely in keeping with William's worldview that having heard a story that Athelstan had once removed some Britons from Exeter, William should report and re-present this episode as the expulsion of the barbarian Britons from the civilised English city of Exeter.

Athelstan's law codes may throw some light on the real reasons for the expulsion of the Britons. There are six legal texts surviving from Athelstan's reign, known as I-VI Athelstan; at least one other set of laws has not survived.⁴⁶ Athelstan's law codes demonstrate a particular concern with disruptive behaviour, epitomised by the crime of theft, which was regarded as a breach of the peace and an act of disloyalty. Strong sanctions were put in place in two of Athelstan's codes; those who breached the peace were to be uprooted from their native district and transported to another part of the realm, where they might cause less trouble. Interestingly, the earlier of these codes, V Athelstan, was promulgated at Exeter during a Christmas period of uncertain date,⁴⁷ and it states:

I, King Athelstan, declare that I have learned that the public peace has not been kept to the extent, either of my wishes, or of the provisions laid down at Grately. And my councillors say that I have suffered this too long.

1. Now I have decided with the councillors who have been with me at Exeter at midwinter, that all [disturbers of the peace] shall be ready to go themselves, with their wives, with their property, and with everything [they possess], whithersoever I wish, unless henceforth they are willing to cease [from wrongdoing] – with the further provision that they never afterwards return to their native district.

2. And if anyone ever meets them afterward in their native district, they shall be liable to the same punishment as one who is taken in the act of thieving.⁴⁸

Similar provisions appear in IV Athelstan promulgated at Thunderfield, Surrey.

3. And if anyone is so rich or belongs to so powerful a kindred, that he cannot be restrained from crime or from protecting and harbouring criminals, he shall be led out of his native district with his wife and children and all his goods, to any part of the kingdom which the king chooses, be he noble or commoner, whoever he may be – with the provision that he shall never return to his native district. And henceforth, let him never be encountered by anyone in that district; otherwise he shall be treated as a thief caught in the act.⁴⁹

These punitive actions do not sound greatly different to what is reported by William to have happened to the Britons in Exeter. The expulsion is therefore consistent with the character shown by Athelstan in the laws, and it suggests that a group of Britons were expelled not because of their race, but because they were disruptive troublemakers. Whether we could go further and directly link the Exeter expulsion to the promulgation of the V Athelstan law code at Exeter is another matter, but is not necessary to do so to make William's account credible.⁵⁰

The broader significance of the expulsion warrants consideration. In William's account, the expulsion of the Britons from Exeter is linked with the fixing of the boundary between the Cornish Britons and the English at the river Tamar, and comes at the end of a section describing how Athelstan had exerted his power over other kingdoms and peoples of Britain. According to this section, Athelstan successively established control over the kingdom of the Danes of York, accepted the surrender of the kings of Scotland and Cumbria, took the surrender of, and tribute from the kings of the Welsh, before turning his attention to the Western Britons. It has therefore sometimes been assumed that there had been some kind of Cornish rebellion against Athelstan, but this is not actually stated by William.⁵¹ Elsewhere, William states that Cornwall had been conquered by King Egbert of Wessex.⁵² This is nearly 100 years earlier than the time of Athelstan, following a series of campaigns conducted by Egbert in Cornwall between 815 and 838. The latter date is that of the last conflict recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle between the West Saxons and the Cornish, when Egbert defeated a combined force of Britons and Danes at Hingston Down in Cornwall.⁵³ Firm evidence is lacking of continuing conflict

which might provide a wider context for a West Saxon action against Britons in Exeter. The Welsh poem *Armes Prydein* (The Prophecy of Britain) prophesies the expulsion of the Saxons from Britain by a grand alliance of the Welsh, Irish, Danes of Dublin, and Britons of Cornwall, Strathclyde and Brittany. The poem was probably written during the period c.927–937, although the precise date is a matter of debate, and may reflect the aggressive policies of Athelstan in establishing his wider kingdom.⁵⁴ However, the involvement of the Cornish in active rebellion against the Saxons may have been nothing other than a fond hope of the poet.

In contrast, there is much evidence to suggest that later kings of Wessex, Alfred and Edward, had retained control of Cornwall since Egbert's reign, notably in their ability to dispose of land, make ecclesiastical administrative arrangements, and levy manpower for defence.⁵⁵ However, Athelstan established a separate bishopric of Cornwall, which had previously been part of the Crediton diocese covering both Devon and Cornwall. He appointed a bishop with a British name, Conan.⁵⁶ This occurred around 930.⁵⁷ A later tenth-century document confirms that the bishop of Cornwall officiated 'as far as the Tamar flowed' and that by 946–55 (if not originally), the bishopric was sited at St Germans.⁵⁸ It is not clear whether this ecclesiastical act was accompanied by any kind of political settlement, but it must have represented a significant gesture towards the Cornish by recognising their distinctive regional and ethnic identity. As well as creating the Cornish bishopric, Athelstan was remembered in later traditions as a benefactor of the Cornish churches of St Buryan, Padstow and Bodmin.⁵⁹ These are not the actions of a king with a hatred of the British race, and put William's account of the setting of the Cornish border in a rather different light. In *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* William states that he knew very little about the bishopric of Cornwall.⁶⁰ He did not know the list of bishops, and was not certain whether the see was at Padstow or St Germans. It seems likely that the same oral sources at Exeter who furnished William with his account of the expulsion of the Britons from Exeter also told him about the setting of the Cornish border at the Tamar. Given his lack of knowledge of the Cornish bishopric, it is perhaps unsurprising William should regard the setting of the border as another action demonstrating Athelstan's power over his opponents, rather than as recognition of the distinct Cornish identity within the kingdom of Wessex and England.

It remains finally to consider whether Athelstan fortified Exeter. The Exeter city wall as it now exists represents a patchwork of many phases, but in origin the wall is Roman, of late-second or early-third-century date.⁶¹ The towers surviving today are all late medieval, but William's account of mural towers

at Exeter in the early twelfth century is confirmed by two other Norman writers.⁶² William's references to towers and the 'wall of squared stone' must certainly refer to the Roman period wall. Stretches of Roman wall survive today with a facework of neatly squared stone of volcanic trap.⁶³ Furthermore, towers were a common addition to wall circuits in the Later Roman period, initially of a type flush with the wall-face, later in the form of projecting towers. Although the existing towers at Exeter are all of medieval or later dates, the foundations of a Roman mural tower were excavated in Paul Street in 1983-4.⁶⁴ Athelstan was therefore not 'the first' to fortify the city, but it is possible that Athelstan did repair the city walls.⁶⁵ A post-Roman, pre-Norman castle phase of wall building was identified during city wall survey work in the early 1990s,⁶⁶ ironically spanning the area of an early-twelfth-century tower which acquired the name 'Athelstan's Tower' in the Victorian era.⁶⁷ This consists of a crenellated parapet of poorly jointed large square blocks of white Triassic sandstone in a coarse lime mortar. However, this work cannot be dated any more closely: it may date to Athelstan's reign but equally it may date to Alfred's refoundation, or some other undocumented phase.⁶⁸

The evidence suggests that William of Malmesbury almost certainly acquired his stories about Athelstan and Exeter from oral sources whilst visiting the city. He states in the *Gesta Regum* that stories of Athelstan were circulating at Exeter during this time, and although not acknowledged directly by him as a source this does seem to be the case.⁶⁹ However, these stories were recorded some two hundred years after the events they describe and must be treated with caution.⁷⁰ It is not credible that Athelstan embarked on some kind of ethnic cleansing of the Britons from Exeter, this must be William's spin on the material fuelled by his anti-Celtic sentiments. It is however highly likely that Athelstan would have dealt decisively with a group he considered to be troublemakers, by removing them from the city to a place where they could not be disruptive. In the case of Britons, this would naturally be Cornwall. As for the defences of Exeter, Athelstan may or may not have restored these; clearly his reputation was such that he was believed to have constructed them even though they were built in Roman times. The Roman buildings of Bath were believed by an eighth-century poet to have been the work of giants;⁷¹ the twelfth-century city dwellers of Exeter clearly regarded Athelstan with a similar level of awe.

NOTES

1. Pol Hodge, 'National Curriculum History For Key Stage 3 (for Cas Davey)', in Pol Hodge, *Otter Than A Bitch Mackerel* (Callington: Giss 'On Books, 2002) <<http://colecizj.easyvserver.com/vb16intr.htm>> accessed 23 July 2013. Pol Hodge (born 1965) is a Cornish language poet and performer, general secretary of the Cornish Language Fellowship and member of the Cornish Language Board.
2. R. M. Thomson, 'Malmesbury, William of (b. c.1090, d. in or after 1142)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29461>> accessed 23 May 2013.
3. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, eds, trans. *William of Malmesbury. Gesta Regum Anglorum. The History Of The English Kings Vol. I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 216–7. R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, eds, translators, *William of Malmesbury. Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of The English Kings Vol. II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 121–22.
4. R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, eds, translators, *William Of Malmesbury. Gesta Pontificum Anglorum. The History of The English Bishops Vol. I and II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), i, 314–5 and ii, 150.
5. Mynors, Thomson, and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum I*, 210–11.
6. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum II*, 116–8.
7. Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan. The First King of England* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 251–58.
8. A view shared by a number of recent commentators; Robert Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon* (Exeter: Mint Press, 2008), xviii; Nicholas Orme, *Exeter Cathedral: The First Thousand Years, 400–1500* (Exeter: Impress Books, 2009), 7; and Foot, *Æthelstan*, 164.
9. Foot, *Æthelstan*, 48.
10. Foot, *Æthelstan*, 261–2. The charters are numbers S399 and S400 (928), S418a (932) and S416 (931) as referenced at, 'The Electronic Sawyer, Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters', <<http://www.esawyer.org.uk/about/index.html>> accessed 23 May 2013.
11. Foot, *Æthelstan*, 141.
12. Traditionally in 932. Orme, *Exeter Cathedral*, 7–10.
13. Rosemary Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture Volume VII: South-West England* (Oxford: British Academy and Oxford University Press, 2006), 65 and 118–124. The stones are at Lady St Mary church. An alternative view, that these names represent Breton migrants of the late-ninth to tenth centuries, is considered but rejected.
14. Sheppard Frere, *Britannia*, 3rd edn (London: Pimlico, 1991), 370.
15. Nicholas Grant, 'From Dumnonia to Devonshire', *TDH*, 79 (2010), 17–35, at 18 and 21.
16. Christopher G. Henderson, and Paul T. Bidwell 'The Saxon Minster at Exeter' in

- Susan M. Pearce, ed. *The Early Church In Western Britain And Ireland* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1982), 145–75, at 150–57.
17. Paul T. Bidwell, *Roman Exeter: Fortress and Town* (Exeter: Exeter Museums Service, 1980), 87. Much of the post-1970s excavation work in Exeter has yet to be fully published, but it remains the case that no evidence has been found for substantial occupation between the fifth and late-ninth centuries. Dark soil deposits have continued to be found, e.g. Beverly Nenck, Sue Margeson, and Maurice Hurley, 'Medieval Britain And Ireland In 1994', *Medieval Archaeology*, 39 (1995), 180–293, 195–6.
 18. Ewen Campbell, *Continental and Mediterranean Imports to Atlantic Britain and Ireland AD400-800* (York: Council For British Archaeology, 2007), table 16, <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/campbell_cha_2007/> accessed 23 May 2013.
 19. George C. Boon, 'Byzantine and Other Exotic Bronze Coins from Exeter' in Neil Holbrook and Paul T. Bidwell, *Roman Finds from Exeter* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), 38–45, at 40.
 20. J. P. Allan, *Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Exeter 1971–80* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1984), 10–11 and 353.
 21. As suggested by John Allan, Christopher Henderson, and Robert Higham, 'Saxon Exeter' in Jeremy Haslam, ed. *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1984), 385–414, at 406.
 22. Thomas Kerslake, 'The Celt and the Teuton in Exeter', *The Archaeological Journal*, 30 (1873), 211–225, at 217–19.
 23. Susan M. Pearce, 'The Dating of Some Celtic Dedications and Hagiographical Traditions in South Western Britain', *DAT*, 105 (1973), 95–120, at 110–12.
 24. Nicholas Orme, *English Church Dedications: With a Survey of Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 23–4 and 34.
 25. Nicholas Orme, ed. *Nicholas Roscarrock's Lives of the Saints: Cornwall and Devon* (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1992), 163.
 26. Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 179.
 27. W. G. Hoskins, *A Thousand Years in Exeter* (Exeter: James Townsend and Sons, 1960), 12–13.
 28. J. E. B. Gover, Allen Mawer, and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names Of Devon, Vols I-II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931–2), i, 21.
 29. David Hill, 'Gazetteer Of Burghal Hidage Sites' in David Hill and Alexander R Rumble, eds. *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 189–231, at 204. David Hill, 'Aethelstan's Urban Reforms', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 11 (2000), 173–86, at 178–81.
 30. A hide was a taxable land unit, the area needed to support a freeman and his household. Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd edn, 1971), 279.

31. A perch was equal to 5½ yards or just over 5 metres. Nicholas P. Brooks, 'The Administrative Background to The Burghal Hidage' in Hill and Rumble, *Defence Of Wessex*, 128–50, at 130.
32. David Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England*, corrected edn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 86.
33. Hill, 'Gazetteer', 204.
34. 'Electronic Sawyer', S399.
35. Hill, 'Gazetteer', 204. Hill, 'Athelstan's Urban Reforms', 178–81.
36. Ian Burrow, 'The Town Defences of Exeter', *DAT*, 109 (1977), 13–40, at 33.
37. Allan, Henderson and Higham, 'Saxon Exeter', 396.
38. Brooks, 'Administrative Background', 128–31.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum I*, 216–217.
41. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum II*, 371; John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 9–10 and 27–8; Kirsten Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest in the Works of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 89–92.
42. Mynors, Thomson, and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum I*, 214–5. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum II*, 120–1.
43. Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum I*, 216–217.
44. Mynors, Thomson, and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum I*, 738–9. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum II*, 371.
45. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Pontificum I*, 216–7 and *Gesta Pontificum II*, 83.
46. Foot, *Æthelstan*, 136–48, particularly 140–5. None of the laws can be dated more closely within Athelstan's reign (924 to 939).
47. Foot, *Æthelstan*, 264. Foot tentatively suggests 930, 931 or 934.
48. F. L. Attenborough, ed./trans., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 153.
49. Attenborough, *Laws*, 147.
50. Hill, 'Gazetteer', 204. Hill, 'Athelstan's Urban Reforms', 178–81.
51. For example, by Srenon, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 341–2.
52. Mynors, Thomson, and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum I*, 152–3. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum II*, 76.
53. Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker, eds, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), 41.
54. Ifor Williams, ed. *Armes Prydein* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1982), 3 and 22. The reference to the men of Cornwall is at line 11 of the poem.
55. J. J. Alexander, 'The Athelstan Myth', *DAT*, 48 (1916), 174–179, at 174, expanded on in J. J. Alexander, 'When The Saxons Came To Devon. Part IV', *DAT*, 54

- (1922), 187–198, at 192–8, and J. J. Alexander, ‘When The Saxons Came To Devon. Part V’, *DAT*, 56 (1924), 263–278, at 269–74.
56. Lynette Olson, *Early Monasteries in Cornwall* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), 63–4.
57. Conan attests S412, S413 and S416 dated March, June and November 931, but not S403 and S405 dated April 930. For the charters, see ‘The Electronic Sawyer, Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters’, <<http://www.esawyer.org.uk/about/index.html>>.
58. Dorothy Whitelock, ed. *English Historical Documents Vol. 1 c.500–1042*, 2nd edn (London: Eyre Methuen, 1979), 822–3. This is a letter from Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, to King Ethelred, dated to between 980 and 988, and detailing the history of three manors in dispute between Crediton and St Germans.
59. Olson, *Early Monasteries*, 72 and 78.
60. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Pontificum I*, 318–9 and *Gesta Pontificum II*, 153–4.
61. Bidwell, *Roman Exeter*, 65–6.
62. The two writers are Orderic Vitalis writing in 1125, and the anonymous author of the *Gesta Stephani* of the mid-twelfth century. Orderic states that prior to the siege of Exeter by William I in 1068, the citizens of Exeter ‘had built or restored their towers and battlements as they judged necessary’, see Marjorie Chibnall, ed. trans. *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis Vol. II: Books III and IV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 211. The author of the *Gesta Stephani* states that at the time of the siege of Exeter by Stephan in 1136, ‘Exeter is a large town, with very ancient walls built by the Roman emperors . . . there is a castle in it raised on a very high mound surrounded by an impregnable wall and fortified with towers of hewn limestone constructed by the emperors’, see K. R. Potter and R. H. C. Davis, *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 33.
63. Stuart Blaylock. *Exeter City Wall* (Exeter: Devon Archaeological Society, 1998), unnumbered page.
64. Chris Henderson, ‘The Roman Walls Of Exeter’, *Devon Archaeology*, 2 (1984), 13–25, at 23–4.
65. Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Pontificum I*, 314–5.
66. Nenk, Margeson, and Hurley, ‘Medieval Britain’, 195–6.
67. Blaylock, *Exeter City Wall*, unnumbered page.
68. This work is discussed (and illustrated) in the context of the city’s late Saxon development in Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon*, 167–74.
69. For William’s use in his works of oral sources and the evidence of physical remains, see John Scott, *The Early History of Glastonbury. An Edition, Translation and Study of William Of Malmesbury’s De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1981), 20–4.

70. Charles Insley, 'Kings and Lords in Tenth-Century Cornwall', *History*, 98, Issue 329. (2013), 2–22. <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-229X.2012.00574.x/pdf>> accessed 23 April 2013.
71. *The Ruin*, in R. K. Gordon, trans. *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1954), 84. The poem, by an unknown author, was from *The Exeter Book* (Codex Exoniensis), a tenth century anthology of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

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Medieval Hatherleigh

JOHN LEACH

Situated on a south-west facing slope above the River Lew, Hatherleigh is characterised by the church spire, and innumerable cob and thatch cottages. Surrounded by the heavy and wet clay soils of the Culm grasslands, the town is located on a detached portion of the Crediton inlier of Permian sandstone (the '*red-land*').¹ This produces a much warmer and well drained soil which is significantly better for agriculture. Earlier habitation is suggested by the presence of a Roman tiley on Hatherleigh Moor, but beyond noting this, little can be said at present.²

The place name, Hatherleigh, means hawthorn wood.³ For early Anglo-Saxon farming peoples with excellent knowledge of landscape, perhaps some natural clearing on good soil seemed a good place to settle. The leigh element (originally *leah*) is very common in West Devon and is said by Margaret Gelling to be rare before 730.⁴ Such a date conforms to W. G. Hoskins' suggestion of an eighth-century English settlement of Exmoor and the Culm grasslands of north-west Devon.⁵ A settlement date for Hatherleigh from the mid-eighth century is plausible, but not proven. The earliest documentary record of Hatherleigh is in a charter of endowment for Tavistock Abbey dated 981⁶.

As part of the Benedictine order, Tavistock became, 'the richest monastic house in Devon, and the only one that held its lands in chief of the Crown by knight service'.⁷ Its spiritual and temporal history has been fully recorded by H. P. R. Finberg.⁸ Heading the list of benefactors are Ordulf (the late King Edgar's brother-in-law) and his wife Aelfwynn. Twenty properties were given by them as endowments including Hatherleigh. 'This latter property also then included nearby Jacobstowe and part of Monkokehampton; an area comprising almost 7,000 acres.' In the hands of the Abbey, Hatherleigh was a

manor, and John Manaton suggests that it was so prior to 981.¹⁰ Over time the usual manorial functions developed including the Court Baron, which dealt with property matters, and the Court Leet, which dealt with petty offences. The latter continuing down to 2008, under the direction of the portreeve.¹¹ The court was possibly held at an early date at Yollabury (see below), but by the thirteenth century was situated in the (then) village as noted in a Quitclaim dated between 1200-49.¹² Here Walter and William Pygat were granted a right to a burgage 'between the court of the Abbot and the burgage of Robert the priest's son' for an annual rent of 4½d (1½p) to the Abbot and 2d (1p) to the Church.¹³

At the heart of the manor was the Abbot's farm. Where this was cannot be said with any certainty, but Finberg draws our attention to Yollabury about half a mile east of the town. Etymologically, the name means 'the old burh'. Notwithstanding being in an elevated position there is no known fortification here, although Finberg suggests that 'since burh often signifies a manorial centre this may indicate the site of the original barton'.¹⁴ Considering the location of Yollabury, two features stand out. First, the network of paths and roads, which converge upon it from every direction and secondly, that Sanctuary Lane runs directly between it and the church. Very appropriate perhaps, for someone seeking to escape jurisdiction from an earlier manor court. Finberg's thesis is contrary to J. S. Short's statement that 'Yollaberry, anciently Yeo-la-beara, containing sixteen acres, two roods, twenty-two perches, was in the beginning of King Edward III's reign [1327-77] the property of Nicholas Yeo, son of William Yeo who had this together with Heanton Satchville . . .'.¹⁵ However, Finberg's suggestion may relate to an earlier arrangement before parts of the estate began to be lost or sold off. It is noteworthy here that between 1174 and 1184 Passaford was taken from the Hatherleigh manor when Robert Fitz Baldwin Fitz Gervase 'confessed to having extorted it from the Abbot through the power and pressure of my uncles Roger Fitz Reinfred and Master Walter of Coutances, keeper of the royal seal'.¹⁶

The first full account of the manor is found within the Domesday survey of 1086, (Table 1). Here we find that the Abbot is number five of some 51 men and women who held land from the King. He had a substantial holding. Here we find *Ipsa aecclesia tenet Adrelie* – 'The Church itself holds Hatherleigh.'¹⁷

Tax was paid on hides; the amount of land a plough-team could plough in a year. Due to the vagaries of soil type, topography and local custom it was a very variable unit, but historians have given it a nominal value of 120 acres.¹⁸ In Hatherleigh it may have been slightly more or less. From the Domesday survey it can be seen that there were 23 ploughs and so 23 plough-lands or hides. Using the nominal value means that there were some 2,760 acres of

Table 1: The Domesday Survey for Hatherleigh

Translation of <i>Domesday Book</i> entries	Notes
The Church itself holds Hatherleigh. Before 1066 it paid tax for 3 hides.	Hatherleigh was spelt 'Adrelie'. A hide is the land which one plough-team could plough in one year. Nominally 120 acres, although this is a matter of debate.
Land for 30 ploughs.	Arable land available for cultivation. There were however, only 23 ploughs on the manor.
[Abbot's demesne estate] In Lordship 3 ploughs; 6 slaves; <i>*½ hide.</i>	Farmed directly by the Abbey. It had 3 ploughs, but only paid tax on one half hide, or ¼ of the land available for ploughing and cultivation.
[Abbot's further estate]	Land held from the Abbey for service on the Abbey's demesne land.
26 villagers and 6 cottagers with 10 ploughs <i>*and 1½ hides.</i>	Tax payable on 1½ hides – see above
Meadow, 100 acres; pasture 3 leagues long and ½ league wide; woodland 2½ leagues long and ½ league wide. <i>*15 cattle; 4 pigs; 44 sheep; 24 goats.</i>	Belonging to Abbey, but with villagers having some 'common rights'. Animals were edited out of the final edition of <i>Domesday Book</i> .
[Sub-tenant's estate – Fees]	Land held from the Abbey for military service. The stated holdings of the sub-tenants were the taxable parts of their land – see above.

*Information in italics is from the *Exon Domesday*, which included the original survey of Hatherleigh. Much information was edited out when the *Domesday Book* was produced. Text in square brackets has been added.

Translation of <i>Domesday Book</i> entries	Notes
Of this manor's land Nigel holds ½ virgate of land; less ½ furlong; less ½ furlong;	A virgate is a quarter of a hide. A furlong is an areal measurement as well as a linear one. Nominally $\frac{1}{16}$ of an acre.
Walter, 3 virgates of land;	<i>Exon Domesday</i> states that Walter had ½ a hide and a ½ virgate. This, together with the other contributors in the manor, amounts to the 3 hides taxable. The <i>Domesday Book</i> figure is in excess of this by $\frac{1}{8}$ hide.
Geoffrey, ½ virgate of land and ½ furlong;	
Ralph, ½ virgate of land.	
In Lordship 4 ploughs; 3 slaves;	Farmed directly by the sub-tenants.
12 villagers, 4 small holders and 5 Cottagers with 6 ploughs.	Tenants of the sub-tenants who farmed land in return for services on the sub-tenants' estates.
A mill which pays 6d on Geoffrey's land.	<i>Exon Domesday</i> states this is on Walter's land. Possibly an error in copying.
Value to this manor, to the Abbot £10, to the men-at-arms £3; value formerly £9, in total.	Income from the land. The men at arms are the sub-tenants. 'Value formerly' refers to the value in 1066.

Source: J. Morris, ed. *Domesday Book*, 2 vols (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985), i, 103c.

land as arable or lying fallow. By modern agricultural standards such an extent of arable would be unimaginable, but a thousand years ago the town was smaller and the adjoining less fertile Culm soils would also be cultivated through necessity. Barley would have been grown to make ale, and oats was an acceptable cereal, particularly on the poorer soils. Wheat too may have been grown. The Domesday surveyor however, estimated that there was sufficient land available for another seven ploughs.

Medieval measurements are difficult to appreciate due to much customary variance. The Phillimore translation of Domesday describes a medieval *leuga* or league as being one and a half miles long.¹⁹ From this, the extent of the Hatherleigh manor can be fully appreciated (Table 2). It should be noted however, that all of the figures in Domesday have a rounded character and are probably approximations.

The Domesday survey also gives insight into the management of the Hatherleigh manor, which falls into four parts. First, the Abbot's demesne, which was farmed directly for the benefit of the Abbey. The Survey notes a number of slaves who would have been fulltime workers for the Abbot. Secondly, lands belonging to the Abbot, but farmed by villagers and cottagers in lieu of service in kind, or labour rendered, on his demesne; this was the Abbot's further estate. Thirdly, there was the land held by four sub-tenants or men-at-arms, in return for military service. In turn, they let parts of their estates to other villagers and cottagers in return for labour and service. Finally, there was the pasture and woodlands, with such potential rights as pannage, pasture, and woodage, available to all and subject to payment of a nominal fee to the Abbot. At this point it should be noted that great care needs to be taken with the Domesday figures for people and animals; invariably they are

Table 2: Nominal acreage for Hatherleigh Manor in 1086

Arable	Land for 23 ploughs	2,760 acres
Meadow		100 acres
Pasture	3 x ½ leagues	2,160 acres
Woodland	2½ x ½ leagues	<u>1,800 acres</u>
		6,820 acres

Source: J. Morris, ed. *Domesday Book*, 2 vols (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985), i, 103c, and ii, 'Technical Terms'.

incomplete. The fact of 23 plough-teams implies the presence somewhere of 184 oxen, based on eight oxen per team.²⁰ These are not recorded.

Under the feudal system only the King owned land; all others held it subject to service. The Abbot held his estates subject to acknowledging the lordship of the King, and providing a number of men-at-arms (or knights), plus retainers and supplies, whenever the King went into battle. In 1086 the Abbot had to provide fifteen men-at-arms; increased to sixteen by 1135.²¹ The Abbot therefore sublet part of his estates to men-at-arms in return for military service – these holdings were known as Fees. Out of sixteen Fees required for the whole of the Abbot's holdings, the Hatherleigh manor had to provide one and a half. The allocations for 1135 are noted in Table 3.

Table 3: The allocation of Fees for Hatherleigh Manor in 1135

Roger Cornu	For East Pulworthy	¼ Fee
William de Creubere	For Fishleigh and Hannaborough	½ Fee
Ralph de Oskercuille	For Broomford	¼ Fee
Reginald de Liddintone	For Langabear and Marshford	¼ Fee

Source: H. P. R. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1969), 12-14.

In addition, other local properties noted at this time include Great Velliford, Kerswell, Seldon and Passaford.²² Presumably with Hatherleigh they formed part of the Abbot's demesne or his further estate. Ever seeking to exploit the resources of its estates, the Abbey granted full 'burghal liberties and free customs' to Hatherleigh people somewhere between 1219 and 1374.²³ The thirteenth century being a time of huge economic expansion, it was common for even the smallest places to become boroughs. Frederic Maitland considers this new group of boroughs and compares them with the older, pre-conquest, fortified burghs:

We have thought of the typical borough as a town which has a court. But the day is at hand when almost every village will have its court, its manorial court. New contrasts, however are emerging as the old contrasts fade away . . . If a Lord enfranchises a manor, abolishes villein customs, takes money rents, allows his tenants to farm [administer for a fee] the court and perhaps also farm the market that he has acquired from the King, he will be said to create a *liber burgus*.²⁴

Evidence for this process can be seen in a number of Quitclaims.

When exactly Hatherleigh became a borough is unknown, but it is likely that it acquired such status in 1219–20 when it was given permission for a Thursday market and an annual Fair on 23–24 June, the feast days of St John the Baptist.²⁵ Market day was changed to a Tuesday in 1693. The borough was much reduced in area than the manor and is remembered today in the periodic beating of the bounds.²⁶ Burgesses would have the rights to market tolls, powers to restrict traders, hold courts and have burgage tenure. In return they would pay fees to the Abbot. Additionally, the Abbot granted rights of common on 430 acres of moorland within the borough. This is the origin of the present Hatherleigh Moor, upon which even today certain freeholders retain the right to graze cattle and sheep. There is no basis for the legend that the land was given to the borough by John of Gaunt, who had no known connection with the town.²⁷

The presence of burgage tenement plots is a notable feature in Hatherleigh, particularly on the east side of Bridge Street and the north side of High Street. Assuming the customary Devon rod of eighteen feet, these gardens approximate to that width or of multiples where neighbouring properties have come under one ownership. Documentary evidence refers also to burgage tenure. Between 1200 and 1249 a number of Quitclaims record grants of land by the Abbot, combined with a release from service. For example, Alan son of Roger of Hatherleigh and Robert de Ponte, were given rights to a burgage in Hatherleigh to hold from the Abbot for 6d a year for all service.²⁸ In 1279–80 Mabilia, widow of Richard le Smetha, and Robert Midawynter, were granted a double 'plot of ground, 34 feet between the burgages of Joel Ylger and Mabel, on the highway, 3d yearly rent'.²⁹ In another Quitclaim dated 1331, 'A right in a burgage on the road to Fyshlegh' was granted to Mabilia, widow of Richard de la Wodehalle, and to Stephen and Johanna Martyn.³⁰ Also a burgage 'at Yochapera between the Abbot's wood and the river Lyw' was granted in 1348.³¹

In terms of boundaries Hatherleigh is confusing. There was the manor boundary, the borough boundary and also the parish boundary. Parish boundaries were flexible until the late-twelfth century, but were important to indicate the sphere of a church's authority, and for people to know to which church they should pay their tithes. Most early rural parishes were usually closely tied to the manor which founded the church and so reflect its bounds, and 'parishes were superimposed upon a landscape that was already criss-crossed by political, administrative and tenurial divisions' as Richard Morris reminds us.³² It may be the case that parishes reflect the extent of much earlier estates, but it should be noted that private landholdings were often sold or



Figure 1. Extract from the Hatherleigh Tithe Map (1839) showing burgage tenement plots. Reproduced courtesy of the vicar of Hatherleigh.

granted away in part, and parishes were sometimes later sub-divided to create new ones. Hatherleigh parish seems to be a case in point, with Jacobstowe becoming separated at some point to form its own parish.

A moot question is whether the origins of Hatherleigh parish church were monastic or secular (i.e. non-monastic). If there was a church prior to 981 it would have been entitled to the tithes. Hatherleigh has traditionally had a Rector who would have received the Great (or *Rectorial*) Tithes such as corn, hay and wool. The first record of the church occurs in 1184 when Bishop Bartholomew gave the rights to the tithes of churches of Tavistock, Lamerton, Milton, Brentor, Abbotsham, North Petherwin and Hatherleigh to Abbot Herbert, due to the poverty of the Tavistock Abbey.³³ This grant was confirmed in 1193 by Pope Celestine III in a document which states that

the Great Tithes be given for the use of the Abbey's infirmary.³⁴ Due to the alleged ill behaviour of the Abbey community, Bishop Walter de Bronescombe of Exeter challenged Abbot John Chubb, in 1265, to show by what right he held the above appropriated churches and the chapel of Monkokehampton. When the matter came to court the Abbot was not represented so the Bishop sequestrated all the revenues, and instituted Robert de Trello as Rector (and not Vicar – with rights only to the Small or *Vicarial* Tithes – ie. all other produce). To enforce the action, a party of men belonging to Gilbert de Clare, the 7th Earl of Gloucester, came to Hatherleigh and threatened to burn it down.³⁵ Livestock valued at £22 1s 4d (£22.8p) was seized and the tithe corn sold off by the Bishop's steward. Bronescombe's successor restored the advowson (the right to appoint the priest) and tithes to the Abbey in 1283-84.³⁶ In 1288 the Great Tithes were valued at £6 13s 4d (£6.67) and the priest's allowance (? vicarial tithe) was £2.³⁷

The tithe evidence would then suggest the possibility of a church at Hatherleigh with a secular priest prior to 981, otherwise the Abbey would have received all of the tithes from its earliest days. What form such an early church would take is unknown, but it probably began as a simple two cell wooden or stone structure. The earliest physical evidence is the Norman font.³⁸ John Manaton refers to an earlier, possibly Saxon font now lost.³⁹ The bulk of the present church, dedicated to St John the Baptist, is of perpendicular style dating from the late-fifteenth century, although there are indications of the earlier fourteenth-century decorated style. Local stone was generally used, although granite can be found in some of the piers and the porch.⁴⁰ Throughout the period religious faith and festivals, and regular attendance at mass formed the backcloth to daily life, and an understanding of the mysteries of life and death.⁴¹

A later feature within the Church was a guild devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to Eamon Duffy such organisations formed a major part of the social and spiritual life of the community.⁴² These were spiritual groupings, which provided social facilities, and care and financial assistance to its members in times of need such as illness, unemployment or bereavement. Hatherleigh's guild was founded in 1399 and Robert Hereward was appointed the first chaplain.⁴³ Income came from gifts and from initial endowments of land at 'Hatherlegh, Middlefisshele, Haneborough and Polewothy'.⁴⁴ In 1437 Thomas Hayside, William Medelond and Richard Storia 'wardens of the store of the Fraternity or Gild of Blessed Mary' were granted rights to property in 'Lydebryge' and 'Clyv' (south-west of Hatherleigh).⁴⁵ The store was literally the place to keep such items as, for example, candles and tapers. Most manors at this early time had their own church, and some farms also had private chapels.

One such was at Hurdlebridge (Hurlbridge) to the south of Hatherleigh.⁴⁶ First recorded in 1424, its ruined foundations were extant within living memory.

It is impossible to know how Hatherleigh might have looked at this early period. The nature of the town would have been small, agricultural and rural. It may however, in some small way have reflected the monastic nature of its landlord. Possibly a few monks were out-stationed there with lay help to run the manor, and a church bell tolling to mark the monastic offices. Cob and thatch cottages would have predominated with perhaps some constructed of wood (probably all of single storey); many with long burgage tenement plots behind. The earliest church may not have had a spire – they were not fashionable until the later Middle Ages. The market square was probably larger – the Old Schools and adjoining buildings most likely being later infill. Possibly there was a second market space selling some other commodity, the sudden widening of lower Bridge Street suggests this. Places recorded in old records which are now lost include Exeter Road, ‘Lawestrete’, ‘a fountain called Redewill’, ‘Boghedych’, ‘Bytuneweghyn’, ‘Dryhous’, ‘Le Litelbearer’ and ‘Yochapera’.⁴⁷ Apart from the church, most of Hatherleigh’s medieval buildings were lost in the fire of 1840. The exception was the George Hotel, dating from the late-fifteenth century. This building was swept away by fire in 2008.

Although Hatherleigh was surrounded by fields, we cannot be certain whether or not it had a medieval open field system of farming. Once thought to be limited to the wider Midlands region, there is increasing evidence for the open field system within Devon.⁴⁸ Fields to the west of Upcott, as shown on the Tithe Map, strongly suggest a selion strip origin.⁴⁹ However, the emphasis on breeding sheep for the Devon wool trade caused many fields to be created as closes or enclosed at a very early date. In 1412 Abbot Mey ‘complained that a band of rioters two dozen strong came to Hatherleigh, broke his closes, levelled his hedges, assaulted his servants and carried off his corn in sheaves [and] besieged a plot of his called Monkleigh (Monkokehampton).’⁵⁰ Finberg suggests that this may have been an enclosure riot.

A focal point in the community would have been a mill for the grinding of corn. Domesday Book records such on one of the sub-tenant’s estate (possibly that at Totleigh recorded in 1552 when part of the Hatherleigh Manor was sold) but this was not a demesne corn mill. The latter most certainly would have existed and have been a source of income, as the tenants and villagers would be required to grind their corn there. Most probably in 1086 it was part of the Abbot’s demesne and not taxed separately. This or a later mill was situated at the bottom of Bridge Street, where it was fed by the long leat which flows behind the present fire station from the River Lew.

The road network, or more accurately a path network (as very few wheeled

vehicles existed until the sixteenth century), can be conjectured by looking at a large scale Ordnance Survey map. Allowing that some paths have become roads, a clear network emanates in all directions from the market place. One former route of probable early significance (now lost) was that from the George Inn along the broad path to Lewer and on to Sheepwash bridge. In the opposite direction it continued up High and Higher Streets and over 'The Moor' towards Crediton.

There was no formal road maintenance until 1285, when it then became the responsibility of the Manor as defined by the Statute of Winchester. Indirectly then, the Abbey was responsible for roads on its lands, and so its lay tenants and workers would be summoned to do the work. Justice was provided by the Manor Court and the Borough Court for offences within their jurisdictions. Serious offences were dealt with by the Black Torrington Hundred Court or by the new Justices of the Peace from 1361. The Abbey provided limited health care based on its infirmary at Tavistock, and education for a very limited number of wealthy children. Additionally, and more locally, some Chantry Chaplains sometimes taught to supplement their incomes.

Life in Hatherleigh changed significantly on 20 March 1539. That was the day on which King Henry VIII dissolved Tavistock Abbey and sequestered all of its lands and possessions; 558 years of monastic administration had come to an end. In its place came a new era of private landowners. To raise money from his estates the King sold part of the Hatherleigh Manor to Lord Clinton and Saye and Henry Herdson in 1552. They in turn split the estate up into four lots and sold it in the same year. Fishleigh was sold to Leonard Yeo, certain property, 'probably Seldon' to Arthur Darcy, and a cottage, a close called 'le Mylne parke' and the mill at Totleigh to William Cavendish. The manor and remaining lands were sold to John Arscott and it has descended through the Arscott and Molesworth lines to the Laing-Trengrove family, to-day.²¹ A new chapter in Hatherleigh's history had begun.

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6. H. P. R. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1969), 2.
7. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey*, vi.
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9. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey*, n. 87.
10. John Manaton, *Hatherleigh* (Exeter: Devonshire Association, 1951), 2.
11. Due to the low attendance at the 2008 Court it has been decided to hold them less frequently.
12. A Quitclaim was grant of land for rent in lieu of service.
13. DHC, 312M/TY198, Hole of Parke. The payments are recorded in pre-decimal British currency, expressed in pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d); modern values are given in brackets here, and elsewhere in the text.
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15. DHC, Manuscript, J. S. Short, *Historical Memoirs of the Town and Parish of Hatherleigh, Devon, Collected from the Best Authorities, 1825–55*.
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17. John Morris, ed. *Domesday Book*, 2 vols. (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985), i, 103c.
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19. Morris, *Domesday Book*, ii, 'Technical terms'.
20. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 475.
21. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey*, 12.
22. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey*, 87n.
23. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey*, 205.
24. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 261.
25. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey*, 198.
26. 'Beating the bounds' is an ancient custom which usually took place at Rogationtide (the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Ascension Day). The vicar and parishioners walked their boundaries, marking trees and stones to establish their territory and prayed for good weather for the harvest.
27. Manaton, *Hatherleigh*, 4–5.

28. DHC, 312M/TY196, Hole of Parke.
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30. DHC, 312M/TY208, Hole of Parke.
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42. Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 2001), 24–46.
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Branscombe 1280–1340: A Medieval Landscape

JOHN TORRANCE

Introduction

This is the second of two articles on Branscombe, East Devon, in the first half of the fourteenth century. The dean and chapter of Exeter cathedral were lords of the manor, and reports of visitations by canons in 1281, 1301, 1307, 1318 and 1330, and a rental and custumal (*rentale et custimarium*) drawn up in 1339, are in the cathedral archives.¹ The first article used these sources to describe the manor's organisation;² this one will examine how elements of the manor – first, the demesne farm and manor house; secondly, free hereditary holdings; and third, villein holdings – fitted into the Branscombe landscape. This will be pursued in some detail, for as Harold Fox wrote, 'we need detailed studies of individual villages', and Fox's own study of East Devon manors did not include Branscombe.³ First, though, a brief topographical description.

The setting.

Branscombe parish boundary extends northwards from an east-west coastline until it meets and follows a curve in the ancient route from Seaton to Exeter, now the A3052. The land is a plateau of between 140 metres and 170 metres (400 and 500 feet) dissected by the deep valleys of three streams which rise in the parish and meet to form a small river flowing through a floodplain to a gap in the cliffs at Branscombe Mouth. The village, contained in this steep-sided amphitheatre, consists of four small settlements on the lower slopes around the floodplain, linked by a lane. In the fourteenth century these hamlets were

called La Forde (now Square) at the mouth of the eastern valley, La Brygge (now Bridge) at the mouth of the central valley, 'near the church' (now Church) low in the western valley and La Dene (now Street) higher up in the western valley. The three valleys fan out north and west, and a mile of upland separates Branscombe from the hamlet of Weston, near the western boundary.

The tithe apportionments of 1840 showed arable on the plateau; pasture, orchard and coppice on valley slopes; and meadowland in the bottoms and on the floodplain. Although fourteenth-century land-use cannot be read back from 1840, this pattern of mixed farming, in so far as it was due to soil, topography and geology, probably changed little before livestock began replacing arable in the nineteenth century.

The demesne farm

Among various grants of land made by the steward and reported in 1307, Thomas de Bromptone received 'half a ferling of barton land [*de Bertone*] . . . and another half ferling of villein land [*terra nativa*]. This distinction between 'barton land' and 'villein land' separated the demesne – land reserved for the lord's use – from land let to the villeins or '*nativi*'. The word 'barton' also designated the demesne farm (*bertona manerii*) which the visitations of 1301 and 1307 called La Biry, identifying it as the modern Berry Barton farm, in a branch valley on the seaward side of Street.¹

In 1840 (as now) Berry Barton's land stretched along the coast, from near Branscombe Mouth in the south-east westward to Littlecombe, but the demesne farm included Branscombe Mouth and extended further inland. This difference was reflected in the 1840 tithe apportionments, which attached the term 'barton land' to nine contiguous farms and meadows stretching from Branscombe Mouth north-westward to Street and beyond – Little Seaside, Withy Beare, Manor Mill, Hole Meadow, Church Living, Pitt, Lower Deane, Deem's and Corte. These all adjoined the landward boundary of modern Berry Barton and were previously part of the demesne farm, hived off into separate tenancies in the fifteenth century, as was Berry Barton itself.²

Thus the demesne farm included the floodplain, the slopes south of the lane from Branscombe Mouth to La Forde and La Brygge and up the western valley to La Dene (except for churchyard, vicarage and glebe – church land given from the demesne), the plateau around La Biry and the coastal ridge leading back to Branscombe Mouth (Figure 1) – a compact area, about 500 of the best acres. The 1281 report described the demesne as 'two carucates of land

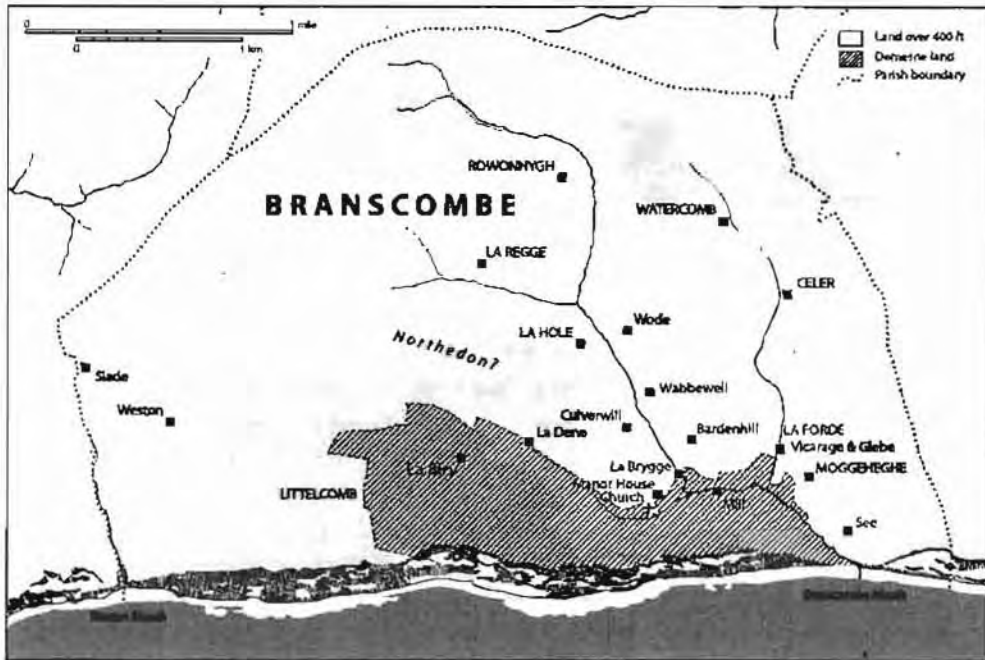


Figure 1. Map showing the demesne farm (hatched) and some tenant holdings in 1339.

with meadow, pasture and garden'. 'Carucate' (a unit of ploughland) refers to the 240-plus acres of arable plateau, while 'meadow, pasture and garden' (to which must be added a wood, orchards and fishpond, mentioned elsewhere) refers to the floodplain and the western valley.

La Biry's buildings were inspected periodically by canons visiting in pairs. Thus, by 1281, the steward Thomas de Herteford had built two granges, a byre and a barn and improved other buildings, but in 1301 repairs were needed, despite the steward Henry de Somerset having spent £26 damages from the estate of his predecessor Roger de Derteforde, and £20 more. In 1307, after Henry's death, repairs were needed to the wain house, two barns, the granary, bakehouse and bailiff's room. These were wet and stormy years, and thatch, timber and cob suffered badly.⁶ By 1318 James de Berkeley had built a new barn but the other was even more ruinous, as were the granary and byre, and the visitors ordered them to be repaired by the following Easter 'under the usual penalty of 40s'. By 1330 a second new barn had been erected by Richard de Clare, and the byre, dairy, and other buildings were satisfactory.

The manor house and other demesne property

The 1318 visitation report distinguished the ‘barton of the manor’ – La Biry, the manor farm – from the manor house, and referred to ‘a hall in the chief manor house (*aula in principali manso*) next to the church’. This is where the manor court would be held and where the bailiff and reeves would eat at ‘the lord’s table’. It needed a new stable, and the report recommended combining the old bakery with a new kitchen. By 1330 the hall was satisfactory and Richard de Clare had rebuilt the kitchen, so between 1307 and 1330 all the manorial premises were improved.

Today the site of this manor house ‘next to the church’ is occupied by Church Living farmhouse and the adjoining Church Living Cottage.⁸ They have a central position in the village on the only plot of ‘barton land’ north of the lane on the 1840 tithe map. A National Trust architectural survey dated Church Living to the late-fifteenth century, and it probably postdates 1463 when, serfdom and stewardship by the canons having ended, the ‘hall of the court of the manor’ was leased out with one of the ‘barton land’ farms. Blackened roof timbers suggest the farmhouse contains part of the original hall.

Church Living Cottage is a medieval stone building with an upper-storey ogival window, and recent excavation of a ramped driveway uncovered a stone-mullioned lower-storey window.⁹ In 1307 it was referred to as ‘the chamber at Branscombe, opposite the church’, and in 1330 as ‘two rooms and a garderobe’ belonging to the manor house. This would be where the steward and visiting canons would stay. The 1463 lease of the farm called it ‘the little chamber with the solar above’. The new tenants were allowed access in the absence of the cathedral’s servants, who evidently still used it.

The 1281 and 1307 reports both mentioned two mills. In 1307 one was named ‘*molendinum de la Pole*’,¹⁰ and the other was presumably a precursor of Manor Mill, now a tourist attraction standing on a leat in ‘barton land’. The 1339 custumal required villeins to fetch millstones and maintain the leat for ‘the lord’s mill’ (Manor Mill); the ‘la Pole’ mill was apparently defunct.

The 1307 report referred to the ‘lord’s wood’,¹¹ gardens, orchards (*pomaria*) and a fishpond. When the new steward, James de Berkeley, drew the fishpond, it yielded only a bream, twelve roach and some eels, his predecessor Henry de Somerset having failed to restock it. Elijah Chick guessed that the fishpond was ‘where the meadows called waterlakes are now’ (1906), and a senior resident still remembers ‘waterlakes’ as the name of a marshy area where the central valley stream flows under the road at Bridge into Hole Meadow, which was part of the demesne farm.¹² Freshwater fish were a luxury reserved for the canons.

The name of Robert atte Punde, a villein listed in 1339, indicates that a pound existed to ransom straying animals. Robert's holding probably became Pound Tenement at Street, a farm opposite a field in Pitt Farm called Pound Close. Since Pitt Farm was 'barton land', Pound Close was probably the site of the manor pound.

At some time a rabbit warren, which would have belonged to the demesne, was established at the head of the western branch of the central valley. In 1840 a tenement there called Poole Lands contained 35 acres, nearly 29 of which were rabbit warren, part of it an 'old warren'. In 1339 a villein called Roger atte Pole, whose name suggests he lived there, held two ferlings, so if the old warren was medieval his holding might have carried duties as warrener.¹⁵ Here too may have been the 'la Pole' or 'pool' mill. Four springs feed a stream here which, dammed to create a pool, could have turned a millwheel, which the stream bed could have accommodated. The question why there might have been a mill in this remote valley is addressed below.

Free tenant holdings

There were eight free hereditary holdings in 1339, for which the custumal gave place-names. They can be identified with freeholds on the 1840 tithe map, and sometimes carry an archival trail of recorded transactions from the fourteenth century onwards. They were mostly peripheral to the village, and somewhat heterogeneous. Two, listed simply as 'tenements', fit Hoskins' description of assarts, made by

individual colonists, armed with a charter from the lord of the manor. The charter granted them what we should call today a freehold estate . . . to be held by socage tenure at a small annual money rent, perhaps with the obligation also to attend the manor court at stated intervals, to grind corn at the lord's mill, and to pay a relief when an heir succeeded to the estate.¹⁷

Although no charters have survived, the farms of Watercombe, held by William Le Peytewin,¹⁶ and Rowonhygh (later Rockenhayne), held by John Rocke, were probably reclaimed from the wild by their forbears. They were far up the eastern valley and the eastern branch of the central valley respectively.

Nearer the village, William atte Hole inherited his house and 'land adjacent' in the central valley from Thomas atte Hole who attended the 1307 visitation. He was an independent farmer like Le Peytewin and Rocke. Later, this became Hole House, a freehold of only 47 acres but the home, successively, of the

Holcombe and Bartlett families, who lived as gentry by renting other estates in the neighbourhood.¹⁷

The smallest free tenancy, a house and close at 'Celer' (Seller's Wood in the eastern valley) was held by John Walrond, a neighbouring landowner at Bovey in Seaton. In 1270 Alan Dagville had claimed it from William Walrond of Bovey, on condition that if Dagville died without heirs it should revert to William's son John. John had to enforce his claim in 1278 because Henry de Eesse had offered Dagville 100 silver marks for it.¹⁸ Why so large a sum for a small tenement? Oswald Reichel connected Celer with *salarium* and translated it as 'fish-curing shed', but *celer* is the Middle English form of 'cellar', a storeroom, not necessarily underground,¹⁹ whose late Latin equivalent was *cellarium*. Celer's position on a route from the Walronds' fishing village of Beer to Branscombe, where harvesters received rations of herring and pilchard, makes Reichel's supposition plausible, but another explanation of the site's value is suggested by lumps of iron furnace slag recently found there.²⁰

Two large cheap free holdings on high ground between Branscombe and the hamlet of Weston were probably run mostly as unenclosed sheepwalks. Their tenants, John de Bittelesgate and John de Bromleghe were landowners in neighbouring parishes. Parts of John de Bromleghe's holding, however, near Weston and at Bulstone, included former villein land, strip fields already enclosed in the Middle Ages, perhaps by him.²¹

This suggests a decline in the strip farming population, and other grants to free tenants point in the same direction. A messuage and five ferlings at 'Norton' (held in 1339 by John Pymor) had been granted by Dean Andrew Kilkenny to Jordan, 'our clerk, for his service' in 1294.²² Jordan enclosed a farm of about 40 acres, replacing five villein holdings, probably held as arable strips.²³ Two ferlings at Norton were also granted 'at will' to William Pymor to be held in villeinage, but he gave them up before 1339. The whereabouts of Norton is discussed below.

The Branscombes of Edge

Richard de Brankescombe or de Branscombe ranked first among the free tenants in 1339, though his family had arrived fairly recently. In 1289 Dean Kilkenny had granted his father, also Richard, in free socage 'the tenement and all the land of La Regge with all its appurtenances', previously held in villeinage by Henry of La Regge.²⁴ Subsequently the Dean granted to Richard senior and Cecilia his wife a ferling and a half of land at Norton, a ferling in La Combe, and an enclosed holding called Moggeheghe, formerly held by Wymarca Mugge, a villein's widow.²⁵ So here again were cases of vacant villein

land changing to free tenure. Richard de Brankescombe senior may be the 'one tenant' referred to when the villeins complained in 1301 that the alienation to him of 'several lands (*plures terras*)' had increased the burden on them of supplying in turn *panis benedictus* and other needs of the church.

At Edge (as La Regge came to be known) the Brankescombes built a stone house on a ledge near the head of the western branch of the central valley.²⁶ Since Richard senior was the first Brankescombe at Edge, this was not the birthplace of Bishop Walter Bronescomb, as is sometimes claimed,²⁷ although the Dean's generosity to Richard senior might have been due to kinship with the recently deceased bishop. His origins are obscure.²⁸ Richard junior, however, had a notable career as judge and sheriff, acquired manors of his own in South Devon, and sold his Branscombe holdings to Sir John Wadham, another judge, around 1370.²⁹

The valley and hillsides south of Edge are the likeliest site of Richard's two ferlings, and the house and ferling at 'La Combe' was probably nearby.³⁰ In later centuries a large acreage on high ground north of the house was farmed from Edge, and this probably included all the holdings at 'Norton'. The word 'Norton' means 'north settlement', so there may have been a hamlet nearby whose inhabitants had farmed an open field of strips named after it.³¹ If so, its alienation suggests that the hamlet was declining or abandoned by 1300,³² which could explain why nothing is heard after 1307 of the mill that might have been at Poole Lands, nearby.³³

Further evidence that the manor was losing unfree labour is the amount of land that stewards were granting in tenancies 'at will'. In 1307 ten ferlings, seven of villein land and three of barton land, were held by various free tenants in this way.³⁴ Richard de Brankescombe senior was one of these, holding 'at will' two and a half ferlings of barton land, not inherited by Richard junior. Conceivably they were the two ferlings with a close and a croft at La See, which a postscript to the custumal says had been held by 'Robertus de Brank' but were no longer tenanted – possibly a garbled reference to Richard or another of the Brankescombes. This must have been part of what became Little Seaside Farm, near Branscombe Mouth. The farmhouse is said locally to have begun as a salter's cottage, and salt could have been harvested here in the thirteenth century, as it was in the Otter, Sid and Axe, for there would have been a small estuary and saltmarsh before the present pebble bank blocked the tides. The build-up of East Devon's coastal pebbles, diverting or closing the river mouths, began in the fourteenth century with the storms of the 'Little Ice Age'.³⁵ Before that, salt-pans could have been worked where the tithe map shows four acres called 'The Moor' (marsh), and if so, the postscript to the custumal might record their abandonment, perhaps destroyed by storms.³⁶

Villein holdings

Eighteen of the 75 villeins in the custumal had names with 'atte', 'in the', or 'de' (of) followed by the name of a place or topographical feature, twelve of them recognisable as later farms or parts of the village. It seems safe to assume that these names indicated where their messuages (house and farm buildings) and holdings were situated. For example, Richard in the Dene senior and junior and Lucas in the Dene, who held between them three messuages and four and a half ferlings, would have lived and farmed, like Roger atte Punde, in the western valley, La Dene.

The westernmost villein holding in 1339 was at Little Slade, near the Salcombe Regis parish boundary. John atte Slade (and Thomas atte Slade before him) held one ferling there, and 'from time immemorial (*de antiquo*)' eight acres 'adjacent' to it at 'Blakelond'. John of Weston, present at the 1307 visitation but not in the 1339 custumal, would have been their neighbour at what became Lower Weston Farm.³⁷ William of Laneweve held one ferling and one close, probably at what became Landway Farm, north of Weston.³⁸

A messuage and three closes rented by John atte Wode might have been the beginning of Woodhouse Farm in the central valley, and further down John Langhe of Culverwill and Walter of Culverwill held about fourteen acres of what became the forty-acre Culverwell Farm. Walter atte Brigge had a messuage and half a ferling at the valley mouth, where Bridge Farm remained until the nineteenth century. He also paid 6s 10d for two acres of meadow and marsh there, a high rent reflecting the scarcity of meadow and reedbeds in Branscombe.³⁹ John atte Brygge had a messuage and one ferling, with more land adjacent, above 'La Guappe', and Stephen of Bardenhill also rented an acre and a half adjacent to his messuage and ferling 'above Guappe'. 'Bardenhill' became Barnwell, a farm on the eastern slope of a gap in the hills where the central valley joins the floodplain, so 'Guappe' may well mean 'gap', and John atte Brygge may have lived on the western slope, perhaps on the site of Rising Sun cottage.⁴⁰ If the smithy was already at the Old Forge nearby, their neighbour would have been William le Smyth, with a messuage and one ferling. William atte See would have held his messuage and half-ferling, with two and a half acres adjacent, on the east ('native') side of Branscombe Mouth, at what became Great Seaside Farm.

Thus in some parts of Branscombe, mainly in the valleys, a villein's 'one messuage and one ferling of land' was apparently an enclosed small farm, which often grew into a larger copyhold farm in later centuries. Rent paid for acres 'adjacent' confirms that these were permanent homesteads: John atte Slade, John of Culverwill, Walter atte Brigge, John atte Brygge, Stephen of

Bardenhill and William atte See all paid this, and so, among others not located by their names, did Walter Wilemot and John Holeweye.⁴¹ These holdings would not have taken up all of the valleys; some slopes may have been pasture held by other tenants, or perhaps common pasture.

Some villeins named in the custumal, like William le Smyth, John le Taylor or Michael Draper were artisans or tradesmen with workshops,⁴² and there was also some extractive industry. Exeter cathedral fabric accounts for 1328 and 1331 show plaster of Paris bought from Salcombe Regis and Beer but made with gypsum from Branscombe cliffs. In 1341, the cathedral bought from J. Stone seventeen cartloads of Branscombe stone, taken by barge to Topsham. No doubt this quarryman was the John Stone who in 1339 rented a messuage with one and a third ferlings and a close.⁴³

A villein elite?

At least six of the twelve villeins who paid the highest rents (over 8s) in 1339 held enclosed small farms: Stephen of Bardenhill, Richard in the Dene senior and junior, John Holeweye, Roger atte Pole and John Hokenleghe. The 1332 lay subsidy assessments on livestock and crops also show a stratum of better off villeins including some of the small farmers identified above. At least nine of the sixteen villeins assessed at more than 20d were probably small farmers – Richard in the Dene senior and junior, John Hokenheyne (Hokenleghe), John Holeweye, Roger atte Pole, Robert atte Ponde, William Weston, Walter Wilemot, and John atte Wode. Others – Walter atte Brygge, William in the Dene, John atte Slade – came in just below, at 18d. These farms were mostly in valley locations with pasture and meadow, suitable for rearing cattle and oxen, high-value items with valuable by-products.

Most manors had a stratum of better-off villeins, likely to act as reeves and take a leading role in community affairs, and Branscombe seems no exception. The juries that met the visiting canons would have empanelled leading men. Sometimes free tenants took part – John Rocke, William Le Peytewin, Thomas atte Hole, John de Bromeleghe and John de Birtelesgate were – unusually – all sworn in for the 1307 visitation. Among the villein jurymen in 1301 and 1307 were Luke and Robert 'de Bosco' (atte Wode), Thomas atte Slade and Stephen of Holeweye, John atte Slade, John Holeweye and John of Weston, all probably small villein farmers. William Mareys, a member of both earlier juries and still alive in 1339, had one of the largest villein holdings, with a messuage, two ferlings and two acres, probably an enclosed farm. In 1330, when only four jurors were named, two were Roger atte Punde and Walter atte Brygge, both small farmers.

Strip farmers

What of the 53 villeins who held only one ferling or even less, most of whose names have no reference to place? The 1339 listing of villein holdings may reflect a perambulation of the parish. It starts in the west with John atte Slade, and several sequences of names suggest geographical progression. Only tentative deductions can be drawn from this, but the fact that John atte Slade is followed by fourteen one ferling householders, listed identially *seriatim*, suggests they were inhabitants of Weston who farmed strips in a surrounding open field.

The evidence for strip-fields in Branscombe is discussed in a companion piece to this article, comparing the archival evidence used here with the inferences about medieval field-systems displayed on the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) map of Devon.⁴² Briefly, the HLC map shows 'medieval enclosures' in the valleys, where small farms have been identified, and four areas of 'medieval enclosures based on strip fields'. One area surrounds Weston, and three are on the plateau surrounding Branscombe, at Bulstone, 'Norton' and Stockham's Hill. If the fourteen one ferling householders mentioned above can be placed at Weston,⁴³ a similar series of twelve one-ferling householders listed later in the custumal could be strip-farmers on Stockham's Hill to the east, where there is no evidence of enclosure by this date.⁴⁴

This leaves unplaced 27 of the 53 one-ferling householders, most of whom might have been strip-farmers. Fifty-three single ferlings would occupy about 400 acres, whereas the HLC map marks some 530 acres as 'medieval enclosures based on strip fields'. Possibly, therefore, up to 130 acres of strips might have gone out of cultivation by 1339, and much of this acreage was enclosed by free tenants, by John de Bromleghe at Weston and Bulstone and by Pymor and Brankescombe and others at 'Norton'.

So the transition in Branscombe from strip-farming to enclosure was not straightforward. On the one hand, richer villeins may have held enclosed valley farms 'from time immemorial', as John atte Slade claimed. On the other hand, the disappearance of poorer families led the dean and chapter to replace villein strip framers by free tenants, who enclosed some of the former open fields. Parts of the open fields may also have been derelict or used by unentitled villeins,⁴⁵ perhaps merging with common land towards the periphery of the parish.

Finally, who worked for the free enclosers? A possible answer to this was suggested in the first article: because villein holdings were small, and unpaid 'week-work' was not required by the manor, members of villein families could

have worked for wages on the demesne, or else for free tenants. Or did some of the 'disappearing' unfree tenants become landless wage-labourers? The sources do not say.

Conclusions

The main finding of this study is the location of the demesne farm at Berry Barton, with a 500 acre block of land lying south of the village lane and extending on to the plateau and out to the cliffs. The hiving off of tenant farms from the demesne in the fifteenth century can now be understood and followed in documents – for example the manor house, now definitely identified with the site of Church Living, became the farmhouse of a copyhold farm. The fourteenth-century demesne also owned a mill (or perhaps two), a fishpond, orchards and possibly a rabbit warren.

The location of free holdings also reveals their diversity; two perhaps began as assarts, iron may have been smelted at another, two may have been sheepwalks. Edge, a mansion far from the village but near the highway to Exeter, began as a gentrified ex-villein holding whose aggrandisement reflected the social ascent of the Brankescombe family.

Villein holdings located by personal names reveal a number of small enclosed farmsteads, mostly in the valleys, often nuclei of later copyhold farms, whose tenants were leading villeins. In contrast, some two-thirds of the villeins held only one ferling, much of it apparently in arable strips on the remaining open fields. But strip farming had decreased, and two open fields had been largely enclosed by free tenants, their rents compensating the dean and chapter for loss of unfree labour. This, together with the amount of land granted 'at will' to non-hereditary tenants, suggests that by 1300 there was already a demographic decline in Branscombe.⁴³

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NOTES

1. ECA, DC 3672a, visitation of 1281 (including a brief 'extent' or valuation), with translation by R. Bass; F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of Walter de Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter* (London and Exeter: Bell, 1892) 193–196, Visitations of 1301 and 1307 (English paraphrase in Hingeston-Randolph, 'The Manor and the Parish 600 Years Ago', *Newbery House Magazine*, February–March 1890); ECA, DC 2850, visitation of 1318 with translation by R. Bass; Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter*, 3 vols., (London and Exeter: Bell, 1894–1899), i, 574, Visitation of 1330; ECA, DC 3683, Rental and Custumal of Branscombe, 1339 (MS transcription by J. Y. A. Morshead in DHC, 'Scrapbook' for Branscombe).
2. J. Torrance, 'Branscombe 1280–1340: An East Devon Manor Before the Black Death', *TDH*, 81 (2012), 67–80.
3. H. S. A. Fox, 'Field Systems of East and South Devon, Part I: East Devon', *DAT*, 104 (1972) 81–135, at 82.
4. La Biry took its name from the Iron Age enclosure (*burh*) nearby (Berry Camp), and there had been Roman occupation in the vicinity.
5. As can be seen from a Branscombe Rental of 1506. ECA, DC 3684 (MS transcription by J. Y. A. Morshead in DHC, 'Scrapbook' for Branscombe).
6. For climate change in this period, see B. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1979), 24–5. For famine and cattle plague in East Devon between 1314 and 1321, see J. Davidson, *A History of Newenham Abbey*, 2nd edn (London: Longmans, 1895), 67–8.
7. Probably what the 1307 report referred to as 'a hall called Hinenehalle'. In 1318 the hall needed some repair, but had three adequate *gumos* (bays? R. Bass suggests 'gables').
8. Branscombe historian Elijah Chick guessed rightly that 'possibly at the "Church Living" they [the church authorities] had some sort of country house', Elijah Chick, *A Short Sketch of the History of the Parish and Church of Branscombe* (Exeter: W. J. Southwood and Co., 1906), 24.
9. So described in the lease. The rental of 1506 still described it as *mansione dominorum*. ECA, DC 6017/2; ECA, DC 3684.
10. S. Blaylock, *Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording at Church Living Cottage, Branscombe, Devon, 2012–13*. Stuart Blaylock, Cullompton, 2013. Traces of a garderobe were found, and evidence that a slate roofed mid-thirteenth-century building had been rebuilt in the early-fourteenth century.
11. Discussed below. Hole Mill, upstream in the central valley, still exists as a house, but 'de la Pole' was not a mistranscription of 'de la Hole'.
12. Possibly the seventeen acre 'Pegallerwode', part of Church Living Farm in 1506. In 1840 Great and Little Pigaller were two fields on barton land in Manor Mill Farm.

13. Chick, *A Short Sketch*, 26, and W. Carpenter, personal communication, 2012. The 1506 rental included one acre of 'Waterlette' with Church Living Farm.
14. Mere speculation, of course. But the sandy soil here was suited to medieval rabbits, an introduced species which could not yet burrow in the stiff clay which prevails at Branscombe. No warren is mentioned in fourteenth-century sources, unless the description of a holding 'in La Coumbe and outside our park there' in an undated grant of about 1300 included the warren as part of a park belonging to the demesne. La Combe was probably the name of the western branch of the central valley. ECA, DC 682.
15. W. G. Hoskins, *Devon*, 2nd edn (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972), 71.
16. A medieval stone coffin said to belong to the Peytewin family, ancestor of local families surnamed Payton, is in Branscombe churchyard.
17. The west wing of Hole House may date from the late-fourteenth century, and if so, suggests that the house was then already substantial. The 'land adjacent' may have been half a ferling at Wabbewell and 'three acres which Roger de Sege formerly held' in Branscombe, which Richard and Joan de la Hole acquired in 1238 from Richard de Langford. Oswald J. Reichel, ed., *Devon Feet of Fines*, DCR5, 2 vols. (Exeter, 1912), i, 143, no. 285; Oswald J. Reichel, *The Hundreds of Devon*, The Devonshire Association (Exeter 1928-1936), 356. There is still a house named Wobble near Hole.
18. Reichel, *Devon Feet of Fines*, i, 367, no. 712; ii, 17, no. 791. Reichel, *Hundreds*, 348.
19. This sense of cellar was still used in Branscombe in 1945, referring to a potato shed.
20. Michael Fielden, personal communication, 2011.
21. John Torrance, 'The Landscape of Branscombe in the Early Fourteenth Century: Historic Landscape Characterisation in the Light of Archival Evidence' in Jane Bliss, Christopher Jago and Elizabeth Maycock, eds., *Aspects of Devon History: Landscape, People and Places* (Exeter: The Devon History Society, 2012), 45.
22. ECA, DC 683.
23. The previous tenants, named in the grant, were John of la Lynche, Richard Cardigan, John Mody, Richard Pacye and Henry le Wylshe
24. ECA, DC 681, 682, 684. Witnesses included John Rocke and Thomas de la Hole, his Branscombe neighbours, as also when he purchased Borcombe in Colyton, across the road from Edge, in 1300. DHC, 123M/TB, 259, 257. That he was the father of the Richard de Brankescombe in the 1339 Custumal appears from a deed of 1368, when the younger Richard sold Borcombe, acquired 'by hereditary right by the death of Richard de Brankescumb his father'. DHC 123M/TB 259.
25. Moggs Lane leads seawards from The Square, and in 1793 Mugpark was the name of a meadow and orchard nearby, so Moggeheghe was near La Forde. John Rocke also held one ferling freely at La Forde, perhaps the later freehold Woorons. William Mogge held a ferling of villein land in 1339.

26. The Old English *ecg*, meaning 'edge or hillside' seems the obvious etymology of Edge, J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, eds, *The Place-Names of Devon* (Cambridge: The Place-Name Society, 1931), 621. Beverley Rowe suggests that 'La Regge' and 'attar Edge' in these documents may be an early example of the 'intrusive R' between adjacent vowels found in later varieties of English pronunciation. The present name Edge Barton Manor dates from when it became one among many 'manors' belonging to the Earls of Ilchester, who let it as a farmhouse or 'barton'.
27. By Pevsner, for example. Bishop Bronescomb was called 'native in Exeter' in George Oliver, *Lives of the Bishops of Exeter, and a History of the Cathedral* (Exeter: William Roberts, 1861), 39.
28. The 1289 grant called him 'Richard de Brankescumb alias Budde'. Data on the history of the Branscombe family is available at R. Branscombe, <www.branscombe.net/genealogy/timelines> accessed June 2012.
29. In 1374 John Wadhams's wife received a license for celebrating mass in her chapel at Edge. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed. *The Register of Thomas de Brantyngham, Bishop of Exeter*, 2 vols. (London: Bell, Exeter: Pollard, Fland, 1901-6), i, 356.
30. The holding at La Combe might have become Oakhill (Tithe Map 638-66), further down the central valley from Edge. In 1840 it was a small freehold estate with a ruined house and nine acres belonging to Lord Ilchester, by descent from the Wadhams of Edge.
31. Compare 'Weston'. I owe this suggestion to Peter Herring.
32. The likeliest site for a hamlet is near the present Edge Farm. The land at Norton contained at least 64 acres: some 49 acres of freehold land and 2 ferlings (15 acres) that were 'in the hands of the manor' in 1339. The Historic Landscape Characterisation map marks at least 82 acres in this area as medieval enclosures based on strip fields.
33. It might also explain the parochial chapel at 'Ridic', north-east of 'Norton' which could have served the hamlet, and of which nothing is heard after 1301. John Torrance, 'Raddis Lane: what's in a name?' *TDH*, 77 (2008), 51-66, at 61.
34. John Rocke (½), Thomas Faitcoul (1), Robert of Lanweye (1), John Gregore (2½), Thomas of Lenge (1½), Thomas of Brompton (1), Richard de Brankescombe (2½).
35. J. Y. A. Morshead, 'Our Four Manors', *DAT*, 142 (1903), 146-155, at 153; M. Parkinson, 'The Axe Estuary and its Marshes', *DAT*, 117 (1985), 19-62, at 24-5 and 40-41.
36. The postscript adds 'Now let it be seen whether it is more profitable to sell these lands, or retain them for the lord's work'. *Domesday Book* lists salt pans at Beer, but so far there is no medieval evidence for them at Branscombe.
37. William Weston was assessed in Branscombe for the 1332 lay subsidy. Audrey M. Erskine, ed. *The Devonshire Lay Subsidy of 1332*, DCRS, new series 14 (Torquay: 1969), 45.
38. The 1307 report noted a grant of one ferling to Robert of Lanweye.

39. Bridge Meadow was the eighteenth-century name for the present playing field.
40. William Berdenhill was assessed at Branscombe for the 1332 lay subsidy. Barnwell had 12 acres in 1840. Rising Sun, probably then a cider house, was marked on Benjamin Donn's 1765 Map of Devon.
41. John Holeweye paid the high rent of 8s 3d for his messuage and one ferling. Richard of Holleweye was a juror at the visitations of 1281 and 1301. William Holeweye appears in 1327 and 1332 lay subsidy rolls. A few villeins had topographical bynames which cannot be placed. e.g. William in the Lane, Stephen atte Wille, and Robert Uppehyll. Roger of Healdeweye may have lived at Elverway, and John Hokenleghe at Hooknell, both farms in the eastern branch of the central valley.
42. John le Taylor appears as John *cissor* in the 1332 lay subsidy roll.
43. John Stone was one of the twelve highest rent-payers. He and a John Stone in Beer were each assessed at 2s in the 1332 lay subsidy, and John Stone of Beer appears as a stone merchant in the cathedral fabric accounts. So two John Stones or one? Audrey M. Erskine, ed. *The Accounts of the Fabric of Exeter Cathedral, 1279–1353*, 2 vols, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series, 24, 26. (Torquay: 1981, 1983), ii, 244, 247, 263, 273.
44. Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) map, <<http://gis.devon.gov.uk/basedata/viewer.asp?DCCService=hlc>> accessed June 2013; Torrance, 'Landscape of Branscombe', 46–7.
45. *Ibid.*, 46. The HLC map marks some 234 acres as 'medieval enclosures based on strip fields' around Weston; these fourteen holdings would have accounted for 105 acres. By 1339 western Lugmoor had already been enclosed from this open field by Bromleghe.
46. By 1506 Stockham's Hill had been combined with La See to form Seegrownde (later Great Seaside Farm) and leased as a free tenement to William Walrond of Bovey, whose Beer estate adjoined it along Branscombe's eastern parish boundary.
47. William Mareys, a two-ferling villein farmer who rented an additional two acres, did not know in 1339 'where they lie', as if they were strips he did not bother to cultivate.
48. Demographic decline may have been hastened by the famine of 1315–18, but there is no indication (e.g. in the visitation report of 1318) of its severity in Branscombe.

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The Chapel of St David at *Hamme* in the Parish of Ashprington, Devon

JEANNE JAMES

It is proposed in this article, on account of the proximity of Ham Reach on the River Dart together with field names, that the Chapel of St David at Hamme in the parish of Ashprington was near Ashprington Point and not, as suggested in the mid-eighteenth century, at Painsford where the chapel was dedicated to St John the Baptist.

The sources

In the century after the Norman Conquest, there was notable activity in Ashprington. The *Domesday Book* of 1086 records that Judhel of Totnes held the manor of Ashprington (*Aisbertone*) and gave the church there to Totnes Priory.¹ The present church has a Norman font but, according to Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, the tower 'is no doubt the earliest part of the church'. They note that 'the most usual reminders of the twelfth and thirteenth century are church towers', whilst Norman fonts, which in Devon number more than a hundred, are in many cases the earliest remaining part of an earlier church.² However, it is likely that both the tower and font in Ashprington post-date Judhel's gift. In 1088, as part of the foundation endowment, Judhel gave to the priory the Saturday yield of his two fisheries at Ashprington and Cornworthy. Between 1134 and 1138, Roger de Nonant gave to Totnes Priory 'the fish market which I made on the land of the monks at Ashprington' and by a separate charter Roger gave the manor of Ashprington to the priory.³

Some 200 years elapse before the reference that gave rise to the enquiry

in this article. On 30 June 1334, the register of John Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, records a letter to the Archdeacon of Totnes in which the bishop issued a mandate citing a certain William of St David in the *Hamme*, who claimed to be a hermit. The bishop denounced a public rumour, of respectable origin, that the said William was living in the manner of a hermit but had not promised obedience to anyone nor did he wear the appropriate habit of hermits. He seemed to be guided by an unsound mind, holding sacrilegious and perverse doctrine of which his teaching contained some discordant with the Catholic faith. This was considered to be offensive to the eyes of the 'Divine Majesty' and he held his soul in grave peril. He showed no sign of shame and did not fear the bishop. He was unable to strive for truth or to discard blasphemies and contentions. The bishop, because of his official duty, was bound to root out and punish these wrongs both to himself and his whole subject community, to prevent them from being disseminated further. He entrusted the matter to the Archdeacon of Totnes. The aforesaid William should be summoned and appear in the Bishop's Court, or at least before the bishop's commissary in this regard, on 7 July (the third day of the administration of justice, just before the feast of the translation of St Thomas the Martyr) – and if necessary he should be made to swear under oath.⁴ The reference to a 'hermit' of 'St David in the *Hamme*' suggests the existence of a chapel at *Hamme* dedicated to St David.

The next reference to St David in Ashprington parish, dated 14 April 1383, confirms that there was a chapel there dedicated to St David. By this time the chapel was clearly more under the control of the Church which was, of course, Catholic before the Reformation. Bishop Brantingham granted a licence to John Andrew, Rector of Ashprington, to celebrate, or hold divine services celebrated by suitable priests, in the chapel of St David in his parish, on St David's Day (1 March) and St Peter's Chains (1 August), for as long as it pleased the bishop.⁵ Bishop Stafford renewed the licence for John Andrew on 26 June 1419, this time with reference to the same location as that of the 'hermit', in the chapel of St David at *Hamme*.⁶ On 5 June 1424, Bishop Lacy granted a third licence to Robert Gode, Rector of Ashprington, for divine service to be celebrated by himself and others in the chapel of St David.⁷ No further references to this chapel have been noted in the pre-Reformation bishops' registers. However, the antiquary Tristram Risdon, who lived from about 1580 to 1640, gave an illuminating reference that in the parish of Ashprington was a well dedicated to St David. The well was much frequented and believed to be medicinal for many maladies, but belief in its virtue and visits to it 'soon vanished'. Significantly, Risdon recorded that near to the well was a chapel dedicated to the same saint. He wrote in the past tense so presumably the well and chapel had ceased to be frequented by his time.⁸

In 1742 John Ecton, in his *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum*, referred to a chapel of St David and identified it incorrectly with Painsford where, it will be shown, the medieval chapel was dedicated to St John the Baptist.¹⁰ In a reply to a questionnaire from Dean Jeremiah Milles in 1755–56, no chapels of case or ruined ones are recorded for Ashprington parish.¹⁰ Nicholas Orme has found that the dedication of Ashprington church to St David is first recorded in 1782, and considers that the chapel dedication was transferred to the church, through lack of any evidence about the church dedication.¹¹

Discussion

So, by 1334 there was probably a chapel dedicated to St David at *Hamme* served by an allegedly bogus and blasphemous hermit; and between 1383 and 1424 at least there was a chapel recognised by the bishops and served by the rectors of Ashprington and other suitable priests. Perhaps all this time and beyond, there was also a holy well of perceived medicinal properties that became a centre of pilgrimage, near to the chapel. The fact that there is no episcopal reference to the well or spring is not surprising, since holy wells near chapels are rarely mentioned in the bishops' registers.¹² With regard to the dedication, Nicholas Orme suggests that it is unlikely that the chapel and well of St David were of Celtic origin, as the dedication might suggest, since medieval dedications to this saint were uncommon in the diocese of Exeter – only one is known in Cornwall and two in Devon. However, St David was commemorated at Exeter Cathedral by the twelfth century whereas his feast day was not given general authority in southern England until 1415.¹³ There may have been some link with Wales, where the total number of wells known to have been dedicated to St David, the national saint, greatly exceeds those of any other Celtic saint and where the perceived ability of the saint's wells to relieve disease was recorded in the late twelfth century.¹⁴ Furthermore, the tall, slender style of the tower of Ashprington parish church is reminiscent of similar church towers that can be found in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.¹⁵

The question remains, where was *Hamme*? The name, according to Eilert Ekwall, is generally held to mean 'enclosure', but in place-names it is so often used to refer to the flat land on a river or even a bend of a river, that 'water-meadow' must be assumed to be one of the chief meanings of the word.¹⁶ Indeed, the *Hamme* of 1334, mentioned in the second paragraph of this article, in *Place-Names of Devon* is identified with Ham Reach on the River Dart.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in view of the confusion about the location St David's chapel at *Hamme*, we should also consider where *Hamme* was not. The above sources show that the chapel was distinct from and became dependent

upon the parish church, the earliest surviving parts of which are its tower and Norman font.¹⁸ Licences were granted for two or three other chapels in Ashprington from which the location of that dedicated to St David should be distinguished, namely St John the Baptist at Painsford, St James of uncertain location and a domestic chapel at Sharpham House. For clarity, the references to medieval chapels in Ashprington parish are set out in chronological order in the Appendix.

The chapel of St John the Baptist at Painsford, a private residence, was first mentioned in 1400, and licence for it as a chapel in addition to that of St David's was included in references dated 1419 and 1424; Painsford chapel was refounded in 1687 but part of the medieval walls and the well remain.¹⁹ A chapel dedicated to St James was also included in the licence of 1424. This could have been the domestic chapel or oratory at Sharpham where, on 20 September 1426, Robert *Frenssh* and his wife were granted licence for divine service 'in the presence of either in any suitable place in their house at Sharpham'. Sharpham House was rebuilt in the late-eighteenth century, and no remains of the medieval chapel have been noted.²⁰ The rather misleading description in the bishops' registers of a 'suitable place' has sometimes indicated the presence of a chapel or oratory, perhaps because named individuals applied for the licence and the bishop's clerk was not sure whether their house had a chapel, oratory or suitable place.²¹ A second possibility is that the chapel of St James could have been a separate one of unidentified location. A third possibility is that the chapel dedicated to St James was a side-chapel with a chantry in the parish church, where the Lady Chapel on the north side of the chancel is now dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St James.²² A fourth possibility remains that, if the chapel or oratory at Sharpham was not the one dedicated to St James it could perhaps have been St David's at *Hamme*. However, this is unlikely since in references to St David's no names of domestic chapel licencees are mentioned and, being staffed originally by a hermit and later reported to have been a place of pilgrimage, it would have been a public chapel. The only reference to the 'suitable place' at Sharpham suggests it was a domestic one. Furthermore, two separate locations are suggested since consecutive bends on the River Dart as it flows past Ashprington are named Sharpham Reach, the 'sharp hamm' referring to a prominent bend in the Dart here, and at Ham Reach.²³

It follows that a chapel at *Hamme* would have been on land near Ham Reach. On the Ashprington Tithe Map and Apportionment of c.1840 (Figure 1), at the Ashprington Point peninsula, just below Ham Reach, two fields are named Ham Park and one is Ham Close, supporting the likelihood of this being *Hamme* of the references. A fourth field is called Barn Field and a

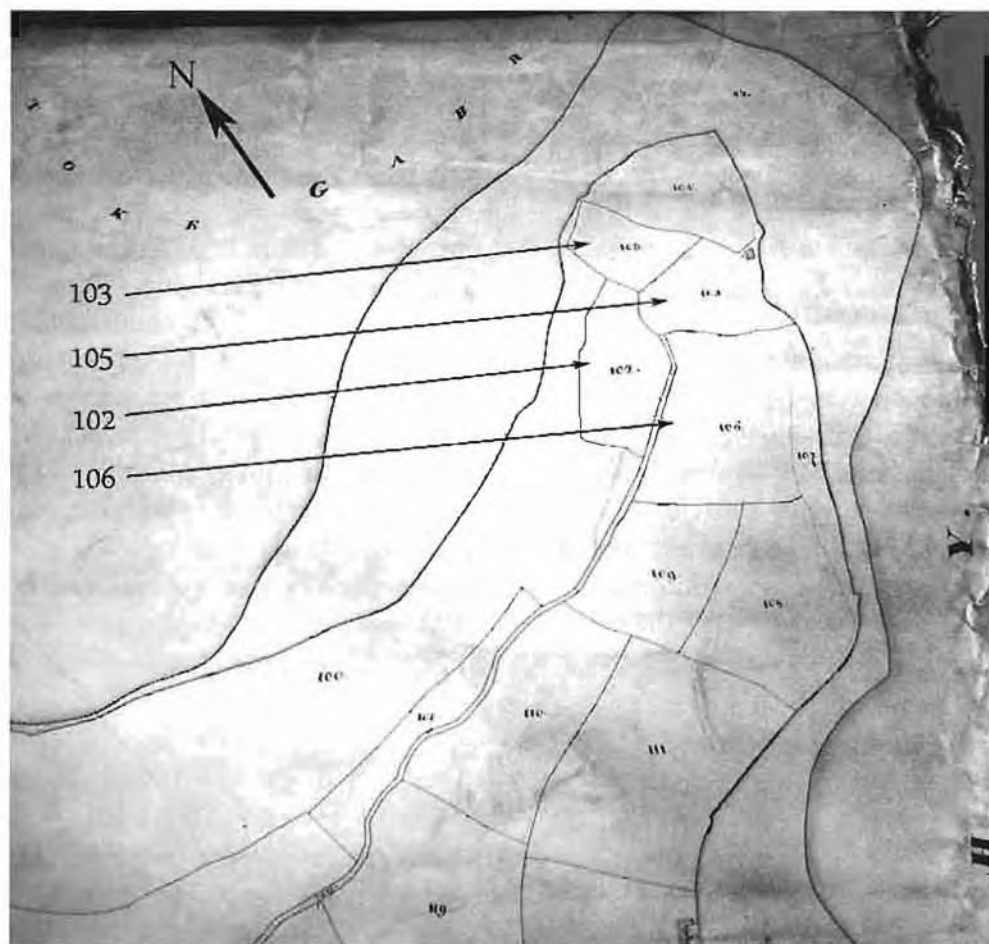


Figure 1: Part of the Ashprington Tithe Map – Reproduced courtesy of Devon Heritage Centre. Fields numbered 102 and 103: Ham Park, 105: Barn Field, 106: Ham Close.

building is marked on the Tithe Map, near the riverside end of a footpath that runs from near the church to Ashprington Point.²⁴

In cases where the site of a medieval chapel has been identified by pre-Reformation documentation, it is common in the Tithe Maps and Apportionments to find field names of Chapel Park and Chapel Close. However, since pilgrimages and cults of saints ended at the Reformation and had evidently ceased at St David's by at least Risdon's time, any 'chapel' field names could have been changed to emphasise that the chapel and well were no longer used. Furthermore, after the Reformation, at least 40 former medieval chapels in Devon are known to have been converted to other uses such as barns.²⁵ It is

possible that this was the case with the former building shown on Barn Field on the Tithe Map. It should be mentioned that in Ashprington there are other fields with the name of 'Ham', indeed Painsford Farm has a Higher and Lower Ham, and Ham Orchard,²⁶ but the chapel there was not dedicated to St David and the proximity of Ashprington Point to Ham Reach on the River Dart makes it a much more likely location for *Hamme*.

On a visit to the site, it was noted that the public footpath from Ashprington leading to Barn Field has the appearance of being of some antiquity, being of the width of a bridle path with high hedge banks. As such, the wide public footpath ends at Barn Field but the track shown on OS Map, South Devon, Grid Reference SX 8374 5725 continues towards the River Dart over a stile where there is an overgrown area, the site of the building marked in Barn Field on the Tithe Map (Figure 2). Nearby is a small landing area, approached by a former gateway through stone walls which may not be of great antiquity. On the opposite side of the river is Stoke Gabriel, where footpaths leading to the water's edge and a quay are marked on present-day maps and indicated in Figure 2. The channel of the Dart is close to the Stoke Gabriel side.

If St David's well was much frequented, as Risdon stated, and if it was



Figure 2: View from Ashprington Point to Stoke Gabriel with footpaths arrowed 1 and 3. Site of building as marked in Barn Field on the Tithe Map, arrow 2.

situated near Ashprington Point, as suggested in this article, pilgrims could have arrived not only from or through Ashprington but, more easily, from Dartmouth or Totnes by boat, with larger boats perhaps berthing at Stoke Gabriel. The position of footpaths on either side of the river suggests that there was a ferry between Ashprington and Stoke Gabriel.

Neither the Tithe Map of Ashprington nor the Ordnance Survey map show a spring or well on the Ashprington Point peninsula. The Ordnance Survey map, from which Figure 3 is drawn, shows a building beside the public footpath, at the inland point of Barn Field. As seen from the public footpath, this is a stone built barn that appears to date from the nineteenth or twentieth centuries, at the rear of which is a covered and enclosed lean-to building apparently used as a collection point for surface water. Could there also be a spring here? On the river side of the barn is a further enclosure with stone walls that appear to be older with trees growing through them. The enclosure appears to be a stock yard, but could the walls have been part of a medieval chapel or hermit's abode, or could the building have been made with re-used stone from a medieval building, perhaps that shown on the Tithe Map in Barn Field?

There is no apparent evidence that either the barn shown on the Tithe Map or that on the Ordnance Survey map are on the site of the former chapel of St David. However, the place-name of Ham Reach, the field names incorporating 'Ham', the existence of two buildings near a footpath in this remote spot and a site suitable for a landing stage suggest that somewhere on Ashprington Point peninsula could have been the site of the chapel and well of St David.²⁷ It is possible that the fish mentioned in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and perhaps subsequent ones, might have been landed here but it seems more likely that they would have been landed in Bow Creek between the parishes of Ashprington and Cornworthy. No further references to commercial fishing have been noted in the vicinity of Ashprington until the seventeenth century. In 1614 Sir Edward Giles, Member of Parliament for Totnes, supported a bill to prevent weirs from damaging fish stocks.²⁸ A weir was built on the River Dart in the seventeenth century, about a mile upstream from Totnes, to which point the river continues to be tidal.²⁹ The Giles family had been owners of Bowden House, a mile south east of Totnes and to the north-east of Ashprington, since the mid-sixteenth century.³⁰ But this tenuous link with fishing has nothing to add to discussion about the possible location of St David's chapel.

Returning to the 'bogus hermit', on Ashprington Point he would have been well situated for the traditional role of many hermits, as a watchman and light-keeper for boats sailing between Dartmouth and Totnes. He could have also occupied himself usefully by running a ferry service – and there were

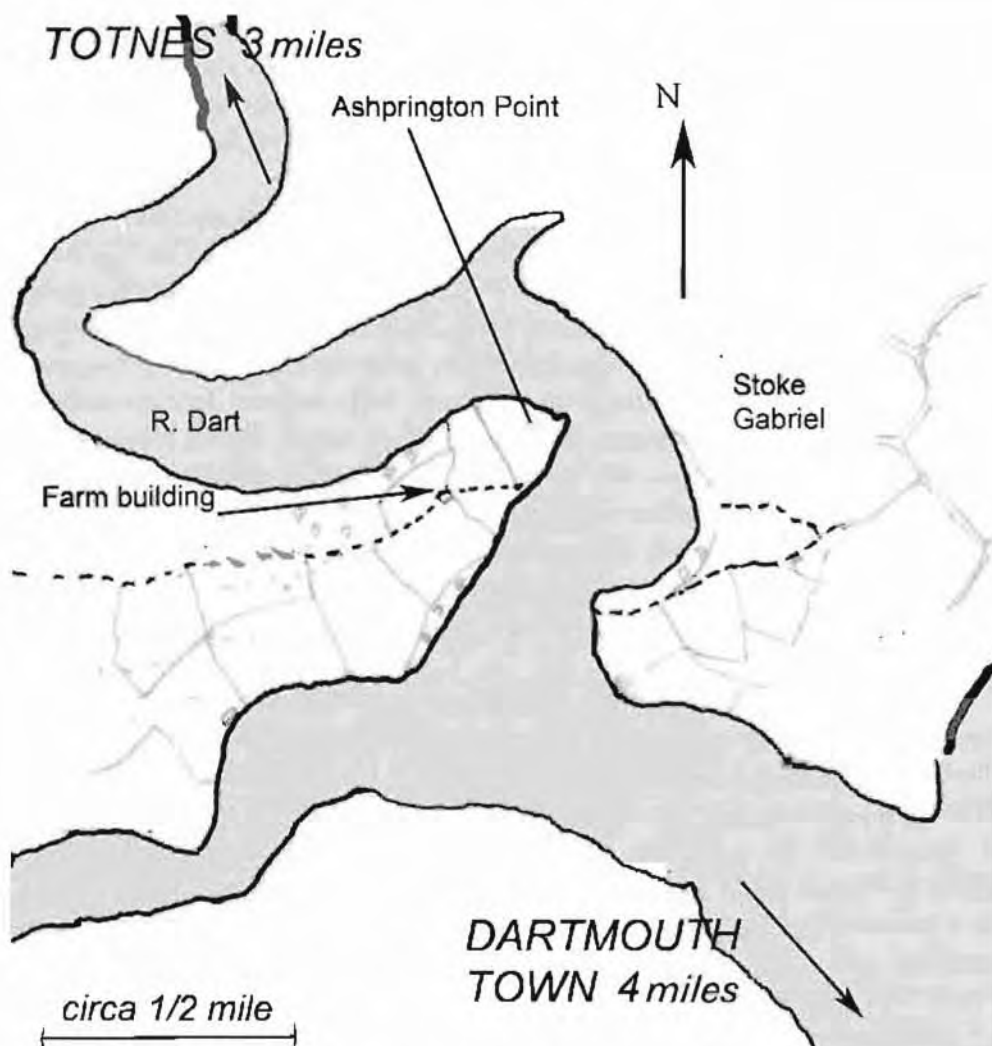


Figure 3: Sketch Map of Ashprington Point.

often chapels near ferry points for prayers or thanksgivings before or after a journey.³¹ As for the holy well, evidence for that came some three hundred years after William. We do not know whether 'genuine hermits' succeeded him, only that services between 1383 and 1424 at least were celebrated by the rectors of Ashprington or other suitable priests. However, although the suggestions put forward in this article cannot be verified, they may, at least, generate some useful discussion and investigations. The chapel of St David was not at Painsford; if it was not at Ashprington Point, where was it?

Acknowledgements. I acknowledge with gratitude the helpful comments on a much earlier draft of this article in the first instance by the late Dr Harold Fox, who suggested I write on this subject, and later by Professor Nicholas Orme. More recently, I thank Mr Simon Boyes, who wrote the church booklet, for his helpful discussion. I also thank Dr Matthew James for his photography and illustrations.

APPENDIX

A List of References to Medieval Chapels in Ashprington

30 June 1334, reference to a hermit of St David in the *Hamme*:

F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (1327-1369)*, 2 vols (London: Bell; Exeter: Pollard, Eland, 1897), ii, 751-2.

14 April 1383, licence to celebrate to John Andrew, rector of the parish church of Ashprington, and for celebration of Divine Services by suitable priests in the Chapel of St David in his parish on St David's day and on St Peter's chains:

F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of Thomas Brantingham, Bishop of Exeter (1370-1394)* 2 vols (London: Bell; Exeter: Pollard, Eland, 1901), i, 492

13 May 1400, licence to John Wolhaye and his wife Joan in the Chapel of St John, within their mansion of *Pensford* in Ashprington:

F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter (1395-1419)* (London: Bell; Exeter, Pollard, Eland, 1886), 282.

24 February 1412, licence for an oratory at *Pensford* to Richard Pyperell junior:

Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter*, 279.

9 December 1421, licence to celebrate to Richard Pyperell and Christine his wife, for divine service in the presence of either in the chapel of St John Baptist, an oratory or other suitable place, in their house in the parish of Ashprington:

G. R. Dunstan, ed., *The Register of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter (1420-1455), Registrum Commune*, 5 vols, Canterbury and York Society, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series, 60 (1963), i, 55.

5 June 1424, licence to Robert Gode Rector of Ashprington, for divine service celebrated by himself and others in the chapels of SS. David, James and John the Baptist in his parish:

Dunstan, ed., *The Register of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter* (1963), i, 103.

20 September 1426, licence to celebrate to Robert Frenssh and his wife for divine service in the presence of either in any suitable place in their house at *Scherpham* (Sharpham) in the parish of Ashprington:

Dunstan, ed., *The Register of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter* (1963) i, 189.

NOTES

1. Caroline and Frank Thorn, *Domesday Book: Devon*, vol. 9, 2 parts, John Morris, general ed. (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985), part 2, 1, 71.
2. Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Devon*, 2nd edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), 135, 39–40.
3. Harold Fox, *The Evolution of the Fishing Village* (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2001), 90, n. 21, citing H. R. Watkin, *The History of Totnes Priory and Medieval Town*, 3 vols, 1914–17 (Torquay: published by the author, 1914), i, 27–28, 35–6.
4. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (1327–1369)*, 2 vols (London: Bell; Exeter: Pollard, Eland, 1897), ii, 751–2.
5. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of Thomas Brantingham, Bishop of Exeter (1370–1394)*, 2 vols (London: Bell; Exeter: Pollard, Eland, 1901), i, 492; David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 115, 346.
6. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter (1395–1419)* (London: Bell; Exeter: Pollard, Eland, 1886), 7, 122.
7. G. R. Dunstan, ed., *The Register of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter (1420–1455), Registrum Commune*, 5 vols, Canterbury and York Society, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series 60 (Torquay: The Devon Press Ltd, 1963), i, 103.
8. Tristram Risdon, *The Geographical Description or Survey of the County of Devon*, with additions by William Chapple (London: Rees and Curtis, 1811), 166.
9. John Ecton, *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum* (London: printed for D. Browne, A. Millar and F. Gosling, 1742), 169.
10. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Milles, 22754-5 MSS Top. Devon b.1–2, 'Queries for the County of Devon'; 22761-5 MSS Top. Devon c. 8–12; 'Parochial History of Devonshire' (1755–56).
11. Nicholas Orme, *English Church Dedications, with a Survey of Cornwall and Devon* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 128.
12. Jeanne James, 'Medieval Chapels in Devon', MPhil dissertation, University of Exeter, (1997), 102–121, dissertation available online at <<http://hdl.handle.net/10871/9914>>.
13. Nicholas Orme, *The Saints of Cornwall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 102–3.

14. Francis Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*, 2nd edn (Cardiff, 1992), 42.
15. Simon Boyes, *St David's Church Ashprington Devon* (Church Booklet, no date).
16. Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 214.
17. *The Place-Names of Devon*, 2 vols, English Place-Name Society, viii-ix (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931-2), i, 315.
18. Cherry and Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon*, 135.
19. Hingeston Randolph, ed., *The Register of Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter*, 279; also as notes 3 and 4 above; Cherry and Pevsner, 136. Thanks to Mr Peter Foster, the owner, for allowing me to view the remains of the chapel and a plan drawn by Robert Waterhouse.
20. Dunstan, ed., *The Register of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter*, i, 103, 189; Cherry and Pevsner, 722-3; England, Devon, Ashprington, Sharpham House, <<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>> with the accompanying Google and Bing maps, accessed 23 May 2013.
21. See the reference of 1421 to the chapel of St John the Baptist (Appendix); another example is licence in 1448 for a 'suitable place' at Collacombe in Lamerton where a chapel remains in the east wing: Dunstan, ed., *The Register of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter*, new series 62 (1967), iii, 16.
22. Boyes, *St David's Church Ashprington, Devon*.
23. Gover, Mawer and Stenton, *The Place-Names of Devon*, i, 315; Ordnance Survey Map, Outdoor Leisure 20, South Devon, 1:25 000.
24. DHC, Tithe Map and Apportionment, Ashprington (c.1840).
25. James, 'Medieval Chapels in Devon', 243, and the Gazetteer.
26. Tithe Map and Apportionment, Ashprington.
27. The existing barn is at OS Map, South Devon, Grid Reference SX 8374 5725; the former building marked on Barn Field on the Tithe Map is at SX 8382 5726.
28. Tim Venning and Paul Hunneyball, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604-1629*, eds, Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 30, <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/giles-sir-edward-1566-1637>> accessed 23 May 2013.
29. 'Tornes, 3 Geography', <Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom> accessed 23 May 2013.
30. Cherry and Pevsner, 195.
31. Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England* (London: Methuen and Co., 1914), 1-6, 49-50; James, 'Medieval Chapels in Devon', 135-6, 143.

Jeanne James read History at the University of Exeter and completed her MPhil there, supervised by Professor Nicholas Orme, with an analysis of 'Medieval Chapels in Devon'. She identified some 1,300 from documentary evidence, many of which have disappeared without trace.

The Contribution of Devon's Militia to England's Defence Against the Spanish Armada

IAN COOPER

The precise role of Devon's militia during summer 1588 has, until recently, been shrouded by the recurrent tendency of historians to misinterpret the primary function of the militias in the southern maritime counties. The basic idea put forward has been that their main role during the Armada crisis was to march in-step with the Spanish and English navies, shadowing them as they progressed eastward along the Channel. Lindsay Boynton seems to have been the earliest proponent of this idea, writing in 1967 that 'there were mobile forces, of indeterminate number, which remained in the maritime counties to shadow the Armada . . . as the Armada made its way up the Channel, they moved with it to cover as far as possible the landing-places along the coast.'¹ This premise has been largely supported by subsequent scholars with James McDermott writing as recently as 2005 that 'as the composite host shadowed the armada passed eastward along the English coast, "old" formations – those that had come furthest from the west – dropped out and returned home as the bands of the counties into which they advanced joined it.'² Indeed, with specific reference to Devon's militia, John Roberts has suggested that 'it seems probable that these men moved along inland more or less in step with the Armada's progress up the Channel.'³ Yet in spite of this firmly entrenched view, Neil Younger has recently refuted the idea, arguing that in reality 'aside from the intrinsic improbability, in the context of Elizabethan military capability, of a massed force moving along the south coast with no overall commander

or staff, there is no solid evidence that such a movement took place, or even that it was planned in any detail.⁴ However, if the militias in the southern maritime counties did not coalesce into a shadow army, what was their true function during the Spanish Armada crisis? This article answers that question by utilising Devon as a case study.

As late as March 1588 the Privy Council were gearing up to repel what they believed would be two separate Spanish attacks: an amphibious assault somewhere along the south coast of England or Wales and a primary Spanish attack spearheaded by the Duke of Parma, who had gathered his forces across the English Channel in Flanders, in either Kent or Essex.⁵ However, Simon Adams has crucially revealed that by mid-July 1588 the Privy Council had received new intelligence that suggested Spain's forces intended to launch just one coordinated attack on London.⁶ Essex therefore became the centre of the Privy Council's defence preparations because, as Sir William Monson observed, '... if an enemy land on [the] Essex side, he may march directly to London without let, impeachment, or other impediment, but by the encounter of an army . . . [whereas] if an enemy land in Kent he is kept by the river of Thames'.⁷

Consequently, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was commissioned a lieutenant-general and instructed to begin mustering an army, composed of approximately 1,500 horsemen and 11,000 militiamen from the Home Counties, at a strategically advantageous location on the north bank of the River Thames. Leicester thought Tilbury to be the 'most apt place' to concentrate the bulk of his forces and throughout August 1588 he utilised the port as his headquarters.⁸ However, while the Privy Council were seemingly confident that the Spanish intended just one coordinated attack on the capital they could not neglect the possibility of an attack elsewhere along the south coast. Nor could they be certain that Leicester's army would successfully repel a Spanish onslaught in Essex. With this in mind it was deemed essential that the militias of the southern maritime counties adopted a mutual aid initiative and that a reserve army of militiamen should be instructed to muster near London to defend the Queen in the event that Leicester's army failed. Devon's militia played a crucial role in both of these contingency measures.

The mutual aid initiative in the southern maritime counties – or, the forces to 'impeach the landing . . . of th'enemy upon his first descent' – has been described by Younger as 'by far the least understood' element of the Privy Council's defensive strategy owing largely to the reluctance of historians to dismiss the idea of a shadow army.⁹ The true role of the militia in each southern maritime county was to act as a skirmish force, resisting any Spanish landing

attempt in the first instance and, once that became futile, delaying the enemy's advance inland as much as possible in order to buy time for reinforcements to arrive from neighbouring counties. As Sir Thomas Scott put it in reference to the role of east Kent's militia:

by keeping thenemy from Landing by disordering or deminishing some plar]te of his forces or at the leaste by staying of him for a tyme: Wherby thenland plar]tes of this Countie and other Counties adioyning may be in the more forwardnes to stave the enemy from speedy passage to London or the harte of the realme.¹⁰

Thus, the mutual aid part of the Privy Council's defence strategy would only be initiated in the specific location that the Spanish chose to attack. For example, in the South-West, if the Spanish attacked Falmouth, Cornwall's 4,000 trained militiamen would be reinforced by 4,000 from Devon and 3,000 from Somerset. If Plymouth or Tor Bay was targeted, Devon's 4,000 trained militiamen would be supported by 2,000 from Cornwall, 3,000 from Dorset, 2,000 from Wiltshire and 4,000 from Somerset. And if Poole was assaulted, Dorset's 4,000 trained militiamen would be aided by 4,000 from Devon, 4,000 from Somerset and 2,000 from Wiltshire. Similar arrangements were put in place further eastward thereby ensuring that all of the key ports along the south coast of England – from Falmouth in Cornwall to Yarmouth in Norfolk – were defended by a fighting force that ranged between 11,000 and 20,000 men.¹¹

Of course during the actual event the English naval forces were able to prevent the enemy from landing on the south coast, successfully harrying the Spanish fleet towards Calais. This ensured that the mutual aid initiative was never actually initiated despite Henry Whitfeld's unsubstantiated claim that 'amid beating drums and waving flags, seventeen thousand soldiers marched into Plymouth and encamped on the Hoe; and eleven thousand more continued the journey to Falmouth to resist the attack if it fell there.'¹² In reality, the navy's success freed Devon's militia, along with the militias in the other southern maritime counties, to begin preparing for their secondary function: joining the inland counties to form the army that would defend the Queen in the event that Leicester's army in Essex failed to thwart the anticipated Spanish attack on the capital.

The London army, which was to be placed under the command of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, was by far the largest force that the Privy Council planned to muster during the Armada crisis and, if it had been required, would have represented England's last line of defence. The Council's orders to muster

the main bulk of this force – which numbered over 40,000 footmen and 4,000 horsemen – were issued between 23 and 28 July 1588.¹³ Devon was ordered to send 2,000 footmen who were ‘to be at London’ on 10 August. To put this into context, 2,000 men was only the seventh highest contribution: Somerset was ordered to provide 4,000 men; Norfolk and Suffolk 3,000; Gloucestershire and Sussex 2,500; and Wiltshire 2,300. In addition, an arrival date of 10 August gave Devon’s militia more time than any other contributing county to make ready. Clearly, this did not reflect Devon’s inability to levy more than 2,000 men; after all it has already been revealed that the county was expected to provide Cornwall and Dorset with 4,000 men under the mutual aid initiative. However, one possible reason why Devon’s contribution was relatively modest was the fact that the two western-most counties had been in a state of military readiness longer than any other region during the run up to the Armada. It is therefore feasible that the Privy Council was reluctant to impose too great a burden on either Devon or Cornwall over and above the mutual aid initiative – a possibility that is supported by the fact that Cornwall’s militia was not required to contribute at all to the London army. Another possibility was that the Council wished to maintain its hitherto impressive defensive flexibility. After all there was no way of predicting the eventual success of the English fleet once it had harried the Spanish into Calais and, as Simon Adams has pointed out, there were nagging ‘fears in August [1588] that the departure of the Armada northwards [to Scotland] was a feint . . . as part of a plan to double back’.¹⁴ Thus, if the naval skirmishes had played out more evenly the Spanish may well have felt strong enough to retreat westward and gain a foothold in the West Country to await reinforcements. Completely draining the militia from the South-West for service in the London army would have left England’s back door wide open to that threat.

Of course in reality the Armada crisis of 1588 was all but over by 3 August with the Privy Council ordering those troops that had commenced their journey to the capital to return home to their respective counties so that they did not enter into the Queen’s pay.¹⁵ Indeed, with the scrapping of the London army on 3 August it seems highly probable that Devon’s levy of 2,000 militiamen, who still had a week to go before their allotted arrival date in London, never left the county. The Devon militia’s practical role during the Armada crisis was therefore restricted to mustering within the county to repel a possible amphibious Spanish assault on the Devon coast and to make ready 4,000 militiamen to serve as reinforcements in the event of a Spanish attack in either Cornwall or Dorset.¹⁶

Acknowledgements. I am indebted to Professor James Daybell, Professor Mark Brayshay, Mr John Draisey, and the anonymous reader of this article for their comments and suggestions.

NOTES

1. Lindsay Boynton, *The Elizabethan Militia, 1558–1638* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 160. In contrast, Conyers Read made no such claim when writing in 1960. Instead he wrote: 'it seems likely that . . . large forces were stationed in the maritime counties along the channel. One list puts this figure at 21,272 fighting men' (Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1960), 417).
2. James McDermott, *England and the Spanish Armada: The Necessary Quarrel* (King's Lynn: Yale University Press, 2005), 371.
3. John Roberts, *Devon and the Armada* (East Wittering: Gooday Publishers, 1988), 257.
4. Neil Younger, 'If the Armada had Landed: A Reappraisal of England's Defences in 1588', *History*, 93:311 (July, 2008), 328–54, at 334.
5. TNA, State Papers (hereafter SP) 15/30 fol. 186; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part V. The Manuscripts of the Right Honourable F. J. Savile Foljambe* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1897) (hereafter HMC *Foljambe*), 32.
6. Simon Adams, ed., 'The Armada Correspondence in Cotton MSS Otho E VII and E IX', in M. Duffy, ed. *The Naval Miscellany*, 6 (Naval Records Society, 146, 2003) (hereafter Adams, 'Armada Correspondence'), 37–92, at 80–1.
7. M. Oppenheim, ed., *The Naval Tracts of Sir William Monson in Six Books*, 2 (Naval Records Society, 1902), 283.
8. TNA, SP 12/213 fol. 38.
9. HMC *Foljambe*, 45; Younger, 'If the Armada had Landed', 333.
10. TNA, SP 12/212 fol. 64.
11. TNA, SP 12/213 fol. 141. For examples of arrangements further eastward see: *Acts of the Privy Council* (hereafter APC), xv, 269; TNA, SP 12/213 fol. 55.
12. Henry Francis Whitfeld, *Plymouth and Devonport: in Times of War and Peace* (Plymouth: E. Chapple, 1900), 54.
13. APC, xvi, 171, 186 and 195–6; HMC *Foljambe*, 57; TNA, SP 12/213 fol. 114.
14. Adams, 'Armada Correspondence', 50.
15. APC, xvi, 215–6.
16. For more information on Devon's maritime history see: Michael Oppenheim, *The Maritime History of Devon* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1968); M. Duffy, ed. *The New Maritime History of Devon: From Early Times to the Late Eighteenth Century*, I (Exeter: Conway Maritime Press, 1992).

Ian Cooper has been working at Plymouth University and Devon Heritage Centre on an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded collaborative doctoral award. He has also catalogued the Seymour of Berry Pomeroy manuscripts which were deposited by the Duke of Somerset in 2003. These papers, which reveal a great deal about the political and military climate in Devon during the Armada and Civil War periods, are now available at Devon Heritage Centre.

‘Beating the Bounds’ of Bovey Tracey

FRANCES BILLINGE

The custom of ‘beating the bounds’ is an ancient ritual which was established firmly in Christian culture by the late medieval period. Ceremonies usually took place at Rogationtide, when the parish priest led parishioners in a procession to mark the boundaries of the community, and religious observances were aimed at bringing good weather and blessings for an abundant harvest. As they passed particular milestones the perambulators would ritually ‘beat’ the landmarks with sticks, and stone crosses were often placed to denote the extent of boundaries. As well as fostering a communal sense of identity, the regular habit of walking the boundaries aided the settlement of territorial disputes before maps were commonplace.¹ In Bovey Tracey, the ‘beating of the bounds’ took place traditionally on the first Monday after the third of May (Roodmas day), the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Cross in the liturgical calendar. The perambulation ceremony was known as the Mayor’s Riding. At some point during the proceedings the newly appointed mayor rode three times around a boundary cross and struck it with a staff, probably to emphasise his status.²

It is not clear when the ‘beating of the bounds’ first took place in Bovey Tracey, but in 1888 the mayor described the Mayor’s Monday celebrations as the six hundredth and forty-first anniversary of the ‘beating of the bounds’ of the parish.³ This would suggest that the ceremony first took place in 1247. A borough had already been created in Bovey Tracey earlier in the century, and permission to hold a market was granted in 1219. The Lord of the Manor, Henry de Tracey, was later granted a royal charter to hold a three-day annual fair in the town (1260).⁴ There is no reference to a perambulation of the borough or parish in the Court Baron and Court Leet rolls, nor in the churchwarden’s

accounts, although the vestry minutes of 1871 refer to a borough ceremony of Mayor's Day with the revenues from two fields called Portreeve's Parks traditionally used to meet the expenses. The parks were later differentiated as Great Portreeve's Park and Little Portreeve's Park.⁵ The portreeve was the senior officer of the borough and was later called mayor. Nineteenth-century local newspaper reports indicate that the 'beating of the bounds' was continuing on a regular basis, but by this time the emphasis was clearly on civic rather than religious preoccupations as this article will demonstrate.

The borough would have been an important geographical and administrative area within the wider parish, and the 'beating of the bounds' was a significant day for the mayor, the Lord of the Manor, and the local dignitaries, who were able to demonstrate their power and status within the locality.⁶ A local newspaper article in 1853 described the perambulation ceremony as a 'grand affair' when the whole town was bedecked with flowers, flags and arches with a procession of forty horses proceeding at noon to visit the precincts of the town.⁷ At a dinner presided over by the Court Leet officials of the borough there was discussion about the borough's rights to use the revenues from its Portreeve's Parks to pay for the Mayor's Day celebrations. This was a recurring theme until the demise of the borough in 1886. Both these parks are still in agricultural use. (Figure 1).

The borough celebrations provided an opportunity for defending local hierarchies, and officers clearly felt themselves to be a grand body. The mayor



Figure 1: Portreeve's Park Bovey Tracey, 2013.

compared himself to the Lord Mayor of London and said that 'Bovey' had once been entitled to send a member to parliament, although this was not the case. The mayor hoped that the town would prosper and would once again be known as the 'city of Bovey', a further exaggeration. A newspaper in 1858 reported on 'The Mock Lord Mayor's Day', when Jabez Mugford was elected as mayor and he and others proceeded around the borough boundaries which were described as across Bovey Heath and round the Pottery.⁸ A hundred people were on horseback, and a hundred and twenty celebrated afterwards with dinner at the Dolphin Hotel.

A year later *The Western Times* reported on 'Bovey Tracey Mayor's Monday', describing how, in accordance with the annual custom, the Mayor accompanied by freeholders of the town and several friends, visited the boundaries of the borough.⁹ The 'beating of the bounds' was once again followed by a dinner provided by the mayor, Mr Mugford, and attended by officers of the borough such as Mr William, who was known as the High Bailiff. Bovey Tracey did not have a 'High' Bailiff but newspaper accounts in later years described how officers were called 'Lord Mayor' and 'High Bailiff' as courtesy titles for the ceremony. The use of grand titles was probably a means of highlighting the prominent position of the officials within the locality. Various roasts were made, including one to 'The Manor of Bovey' indicating that the gentry and borough officials were on friendly terms.

At this dinner we hear of matters which were of concern to the borough. The mayor noted that the nearby market town of Newton Abbot enjoyed the advantage of having a railway station, and acknowledged the friendship between these two boroughs. There was also reference to the recent talk about enclosure of the Heath (Heathfield). The latter issue was a concern to the inhabitants of Bovey Tracey who would have been aware that enclosure of common land could result in them losing long held rights in connection with turf, gorse and bracken gathering and pasture for their animals. The day after Mayor's Monday the freeholders of the borough were entertained to tea by the mayor. Although the religious dimension of the perambulation ceremony had diminished, food and drink clearly continued to be an important feature of the event!

On the 'Mayor's Day' in 1860 *The Exeter Flying Post* informed readers that a procession of the mayor and authorities had inspected the parochial boundaries followed by a public dinner.¹⁰ As the mayor held office in the borough it is confusing that this article describes an inspection of the parish boundaries. The issue is not straightforward, as many parish boundaries reflected old manor boundaries, and borough boundaries (often a smaller area) were overlaid on existing limits. The mayor of Bovey Tracey would not have

had any jurisdiction with regard to parish boundaries, and the 'authorities' at the Mayor's Day dinner were clearly the officers of the borough and not the parish. It is possible that the 'beating of the boundaries' of the parish could have been completed in a day on horseback, but the distance of over twenty-three miles and some rough terrain might have precluded dinner festivities. However the borough boundaries of approximately six miles could have been perambulated in part of a day.

As in the previous year the Mayor raised potential concerns about 'the poor' losing the right to take turf from the Heathfield if it was enclosed. He confirmed that Bovey Tracey had been assured that the potential enclosure of Heathfield would not prevent the Mayor's day being observed. This is an important point as it suggests that the borough was concerned about maintaining its long held rights. The lack of a railway station was still a concern and Mr Wills expressed the view that Bovey Tracey needed the railway to improve its prosperity. There were further references to the appropriate use of borough funds and the possible decline of customs and rights of the borough.

In 1863 *The Western Times* reported the municipal rejoicings and celebrations at the election of the Mayor, and to the town boundaries and those of the parish being perambulated according to the ancient custom.¹¹ This was possibly a partial perambulation of both boundaries as it was not possible to accomplish a complete circuit in one day. The 'Lord' Mayor, Mr Jabez Mugford, recollected that he had first ridden the boundaries twenty-seven years previously (in 1836), but he did not specify whether or not they were borough or parish bounds. He was concerned that the Mayor's Day was going into decline, and the Heathfield was about to be taken from them. He hoped that the time-honoured custom of receiving revenue from the Portreeve's Parks would still allow the Mayor, High Bailiff, Aldermen, and Chief Magistrate their customary privileges, and that the Mayor's Monday would continue to be celebrated.

There is a gap of seven years before the next newspaper report of 1870 described the process of the ancient borough electing the Portreeve and Sheriff and the town being perambulated.¹² There is no mention of parish boundaries on this occasion. The procession started in front of the Dolphin Hotel with some twenty people on horseback and fifty on foot, and continued around the town. Then Mr Hurrell, the Mayor, and Mr Aggett the bailiff, presided over a dinner at the Dolphin Hotel. Reference was made to the Portreeve's Parks raising £20 to defray the costs of the Mayor's Day, with the suggestion that this land should be sold and the money used to help bring a better water supply to Bovey Tracey. The Mayor of Dartmouth, a visiting dignitary, examined

the freehold held by Mr. Hurrell, and stated that in his view Bovey Tracey (borough) should not part with the land as the title deeds were long established. The issue of poor water supply was discussed further. It was felt that if there was a better water supply, Bovey Tracey, like Torquay, might become a place of resort for those hoping to improve their health.

In the first of two newspaper accounts of the Mayor's Day the following year reference was made to the Portreeve's Parks being given to the borough in the 1600s.¹³ However they were clearly given earlier than that as they occur in the borough section of the Church Rate in 1596.¹⁴ The article describes the procession around the town (not the parish) by thirty horses with the mayor and dignitaries travelling in a carriage. The celebratory dinner was held at the new Town Hall. The concern raised at this meeting was that the Endowed School might be moved from Bovey Tracey to Ashburton. A second article in *The East and South Devon Advertiser* on 13 May 1871 tells us that Mayor's Monday took place on the first Monday after 3 May with the boundaries of the parish being beaten on horse and foot starting at noon, and including the tradition of beating the 'magic stone' near Bovey Heath.¹⁵ This stone has since been removed to make way for building. However it was the bounds of the borough which were visited on this day, so again some confusion as to the tradition. At the dinner presided over by Mr Aggett the Mayor, the Portreeve's Parks revenue continued to be an issue, with the suggestion that the money should go towards education. The dignitaries reminded their audience that the Parks had been given to the borough by the Earl of Devon 200 or 300 years previously, in order to ensure the continuation of the Mayor's Day. No official record of this gift has yet been found.

By 1872 Mayor's Monday was reported as being no longer supported by the leading inhabitants, however they did attend the dinner!¹⁶ The mayor and bailiff 'beat the bounds' by carriage with thirty more people on horseback. At the dinner the discussion focused on the disagreement about how to spend the revenue from the Portreeve's Parks, and it was again suggested that the money should be spent on education and not on festivities. By 1873 the occasion had been elevated to 'Lord Mayor's Day'.¹⁷ The Mayor elect, Mr J. Hurrell, arrived by train from his home in Dartmouth to visit the parish boundaries, and joined the procession to visit the boundary markers. They went first to Wifford Corner at Bovey Heathfield (which by this date had been enclosed), and then to the Kissing Stone on the Newton Turnpike Road (since removed). After this they progressed to Long Thorn, Venn Pool, Bastow Stone, and on to the Vagabond Stone.¹⁸ They rode around the stone at Tetty Hill on the Newton Road three times, going next to Beera Brook and around the town before returning for a celebratory dinner (Figure 2).

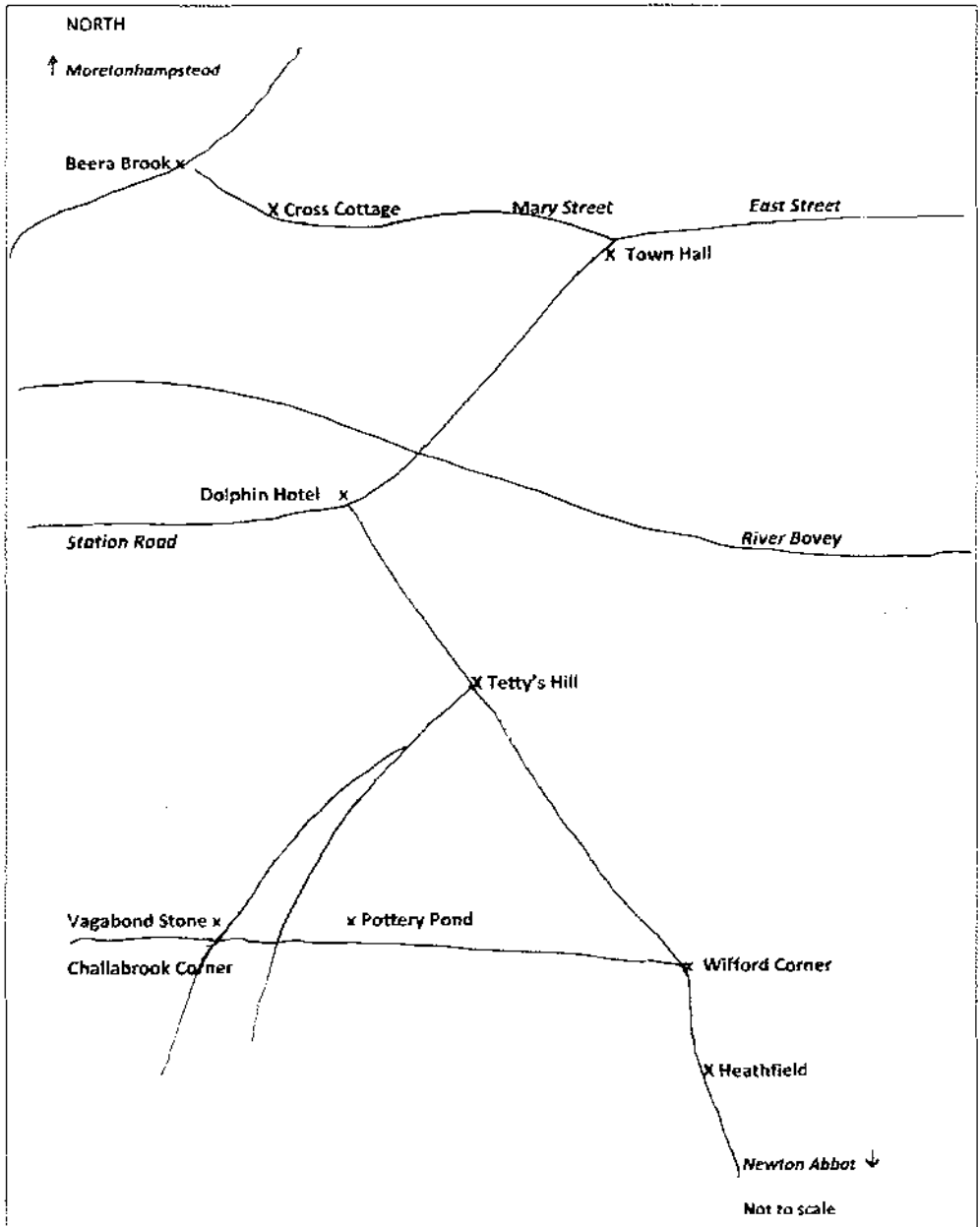


Figure 2: 'Beating the bounds' of Bovey Tracey: places visited in 1873.

A local boundary cross can still be seen in an exterior wall at Cross Cottage in Bovey Tracey, following its removal from the lane nearby in 1815 when the road was widened (Figure 3). Long Thorn, Venn Pool and Bastow Stone have yet to be identified.



Figure 3: A boundary cross at Cross Cottage, Bovey Tracey.

The procession went three and a half miles in all, clearly not far enough to visit either the parish or the borough boundaries. At the dinner disappointment was expressed that the Newton Magistrates, of which Mr W. R. Hole of Parke was Chairman, would not allow a time extension to the King of Prussia public house or the Dolphin Hotel. Nevertheless, by all accounts those celebrating were determined to have a good time! The assembly discussed the issue of the revenue from the Portreeve's parks. They did not want to use it for a school in Bovey Tracey as potential pupils living outside the parish might benefit at the cost of impoverished local inhabitants. It was agreed that the money should go to support the local Cottage Hospital.

The report of 'Lord Mayor's Day' in 1874 described the previous Mayor's Monday, stating that since Heathfield had been enclosed, the boundary beating had been discontinued.¹⁹ It was thought that no part of the custom would survive due to lack of support. At the dinner presided over by the Mayor,

Mr Endacott, there was much discussion in support of the continuance of Mayor's Monday. Mr W. O. Loveys the Portreeve elect (the holder of this post traditionally became the mayor in the subsequent year) expressed that money was no object to him and he would be willing to fund his duties out of his own pocket. In 1875 Mayor's Monday merited no more than a brief report, in which the ceremony was described as being 'on its last legs'.²⁰ There are no further reports for seven years, and then the lack of a ceremony appears to have been a matter of concern to the Court Leet. In May 1882 the report described a much less popular occasion.²¹ The procession drove around the outskirts of the parish, followed by dinner. Debate about the Portreeve's Parks revenue continued and it was felt that any balance of funds should go to 'the poor'. Perhaps the lack of festivities can be explained by the expected demise of the borough, because in the same month the Municipal Corporations (Unreformed) Bill was due to be read in Parliament, and the press in other areas reported on the plan to abolish special judicial bodies such as the borough of Bovey Tracey.²² The borough officials were aware that with the anticipated passing of the Municipal Corporations Act the borough would be subsumed into the new Newton Abbot Rural District Council. It was also clear that under the Act its property should be 'applied for the public benefit of the inhabitants of the place.'²³

It is no surprise that these changes were much debated at the Mayor's Monday the following year.²⁴ *The East and South Devon Advertiser* described the ancient custom of 'beating the bounds', referring both to officials connected with the Court Leet, (mayor elect, high bailiff, constable, cryer, bill-poster, and ale-tasters), as well as church officials such as the church warden. Although borough officials had accepted the demise of the borough, they were determined to keep the Portreeve's Parks, affirming that the fields had long ago been left to the office of the Portreeve by the Earl of Devon to celebrate a wedding in his family. The borough was nevertheless willing to use any funds to help the cottage hospital. By this time Bovey Tracey was described as having a good sewerage system, and a good water and gas supply so the money was not needed for those utilities.

A newspaper report of 1884 referred to Mayor's Monday as being the right of the parish – but this was incorrect as it was the right of the borough.²⁵ The mayor and the bailiff presided at the dinner. Mr Joll, the bailiff, recalled the last forty years of Mayor's Monday celebrations when the parish bounds were beaten by seventy to a hundred horsemen. Clearly he was comparing his fond memories with the greatly diminished turn-out in recent years. A lengthy article in the *East and South Devon Advertiser* in 1886 suggested a revived

interest in the custom. The portreeve, bailiff, and ale-taster participated in partial 'beating of the boundaries' of the borough. None of the places they visited were on the parish boundaries, and only a partial perambulation of the borough took place.²⁶

The 'beating of the bounds' did not occur in 1887 and the company just met for a dinner presided over by the Mayor, Mr Crocker.²⁷ Discussion about the Portreeve's Parks continued with some wanting the money to go to the church for a burial ground, others dissenting. The portreeve lamented the demise of Mayor's Monday and suggested that it should be revived. A final newspaper report on the celebrations in 1890 suggests that the work of the borough was in decline. At the dinner concerns were raised about the role of the Charity Commissioners who were appointed to oversee the appropriate transfer of property previously held by unreformed corporations such as the borough of Bovey Tracey. Mr Jonas Steer was elected as Mayor. Discussion centred on the possible use of revenue from the Portreeve's Parks for improving footpaths and the sewerage system, widening streets, and providing a water cart.²⁸ It was proposed that a committee should be set up to spend the money and this became the Bovey Tracey Town Trust which continues its charitable work to this day. There are no further reports of the Mayor's Monday processions until May 2013 when the Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust revived the ceremony of 'beating the bounds' of the historic borough.²⁹

Local newspaper reports of Mayor's Monday highlight continuity and change in Bovey Tracey. The ancient tradition of 'beating of the bounds' continued until late in the nineteenth century, but the religious aspects of the ceremony had diminished. The prominence of the celebratory dinner, and the assumption of grand titles by borough officials, perhaps indicates a defensive reaction in the face of declining municipal power and independence in the localities during the Victorian period. Local officials were therefore keen to continue the tradition, despite a growing lack of support for the event. One positive outcome of the changes led to the development of an enduring charitable trust to help local people in need, despite opposition to its foundation at the time. Further landmarks of local significance visited at the 'beating of the bounds' are yet to be identified. This is work in progress, and further research on the location of these sites will increase our knowledge of the history of Bovey Tracey.

NOTES

1. Steve Hindle, 'Beating the Bounds of the Parish: Order, Memory and Identity in the English Local Community c.1500–1700', in Michael J. Halvorsen and Karen E. Spierling, eds, *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008), 205–229; Oliver Rackham, *The History of the Countryside* (London: Dent, 1986), 19–20.
2. Daniel and Samuel Lysons, *Magna Britannia Devonshire* (London: Thomas Cadell and Davies, 1882) vol. 6 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=50569>>, 47–69, accessed 5 May 2013; G. W. Ormerod 'Wayside Crosses in the District Bordering the East of Dartmoor', *DAT*, 6, pt 2 (1874), 387–399; Mike Lang, 'The Bovey Stone', in Veronica Kennedy ed., *The Bovey Book: The Story of a Devonshire Town in Words and Pictures* (Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust, 2004).
3. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 12 May 1888.
4. Samantha Letters 2010, 'Gazeteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516 with the dates of their foundation', <www.history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=272> accessed 5 May 2013; *Calendar of Patent Rolls (1226–1516)* 6 vols, <[www.sdr.lib.iowa.edu/patent rolls/](http://www.sdr.lib.iowa.edu/patent%20rolls/)> accessed 5 May 2013; Maryanne Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 59.
5. DHC, 2160A/PV2, Bovey Tracey Vestry Book.
6. Frances Billinge, Tracing the Boundaries of the Borough of Bovey Tracey from Saxon Times to the Present, *TDH*, vol. 81, (2012), 3–16.
7. *The Western Times*, 14 May 1853.
8. *Exeter Flying Post*, 13 May 1858.
9. *The Western Times*, 14 May 1859.
10. *Exeter Flying Post*, 9 May 1860.
11. *The Western Times*, 12 May 1863.
12. *The Western Times*, 13 May 1870.
13. *The Western Times*, 11 May 1871.
14. DHC, 312M/Z/PH 1-2 Bovey Tracey Church Rate 1596.
15. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 13 May 1871.
16. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 11 May 1872.
17. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 10 May 1873.
18. Map of Brimley Road private house deeds 1903 shows the Vagabond Stone on Brimley Road.
19. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 9 May 1874.
20. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 15 May 1875.
21. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 13 May 1882.
22. Municipal Corporations (Unreformed) Bill read in the House of Lords Bill 4 May 1882; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16 May 1882.

23. Municipal Corporations Act 1883, chapter 18, 46 and 47 Vict. <www.legislation.gov.uk/pqa/Vict/46-47/> accessed 9 May 2013.
24. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 18 May 1883.
25. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 10 May 1884.
26. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 15 May 1886.
27. *The East and South Devon Advertiser*, 14 May 1887.
28. *The Western Times*, 10 May 1890.
29. *The Mid Devon Advertiser*, 10 May 2013.

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Book Reviews

Clive Aslet, *War Memorial: The Story of One Village's Sacrifice from 1914 to 2003* (London: Viking, 2012) 342 pages, 40 photographs. Hardback. ISBN 9780670921539. £20.00.

This is a local book in that its central theme deals with those whose names appear on the war memorial at Lydford, yet it is likely to catch the attention of a wider national audience as the centenary of the beginning of the Great War approaches and awareness of similar memorials throughout the country becomes rekindled.

What first drew me to it was curiosity about its thickness. How could the writer have produced so substantial a volume about the Fallen of Lydford when I had managed to contribute only two or three pages to our village magazine about those named on the memorial at Thorverton? The answer was that Clive Aslet had recreated as much as he could of the lives of the twenty-three individuals who died between 1915 and 2003 and then taken them as pegs on which to hang a great variety of background material. Archie Huggins goes with the Royal North Devon Hussars to Gallipoli, which leads to a brisk history of the Yeomanry, an account of mobilisation and training in 1914, the reasons the Dardanelles campaign was undertaken, the outward voyage in *Titanic's* sister ship, *Olympic* (luxurious for the officers), the grimness of the fighting, and Archie's death from dysentery. Samuel Voysey and Mancel Clark came back from Canada to fight, which opens up description of the reduced opportunities for employment on Dartmoor early in the last century, the attraction and promotion of emigration, the rapid growth of the Canadian army, action on the Somme, and the deaths of the two men within two days and a matter of just yards of each other. Richard Gillett's army career some twenty-five years later is presented in the setting of training troops in the Indian Parachute Brigade, the advance of the Japanese through Burma, and the eventual stopping of the enemy at Imphal following its previous weakening by fierce defence at Sangshak, where Richard died. Other lives provide more

pegs, for instance for remarkable statistics, such as that a single mile of trench might be protected by 900 miles of barbed wire and that 7,000 miles of railway track were built in France for military purposes (whether by the Allies alone or by the Germans, too, is not clear) and for tidbits of information, such as that it was a Major Nissen of the Royal Engineers who thought up those huts and Colonel Lewis, an American, who designed the Lewis gun. In addition, amongst much else, there are descriptions of life in Lydford in the years before 1914 and changes in its social composition between the two World Wars, and then the political events that led to a death in the Falklands and a death in Iraq.

In a few cases there were descendants who could provide photographs or family memories – and living relatives of the two who died recently – but very little could be established about most of the individuals beyond what is shown by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission site and census and birth, marriage and death details available online. Few wrote letters or diaries that have survived and the often vivid first-hand experiences are mainly those of others serving in similar circumstances, now recorded at the Imperial War Museum. Clive Aslet took a good deal of local information from back numbers of the *Tavistock Gazette*. When he was writing, he could not draw on the British Newspapers website which now gives instant access to First and Second World War coverage in other West Country daily publications. But he missed little that way; only Archie Huggins's death was reported elsewhere and that only because he was a good enough footballer to have played occasionally at Exeter City's ground.

Clive Aslet does not make clear why Lydford was chosen to represent what he estimates might be 10,000 village memorials in the country and does not claim that it is necessarily typical. There are certainly similarities with Thorverton. Three brothers were lost here in one war; three brothers were lost there in another war. A woman's name is recorded on the memorial at Thorverton, the only woman in the whole county according to an admittedly rapid scan I once made of the 14,000 names on the First World War scroll in the Devon Heritage Centre, and another woman's name appears amongst the Lydfordites who died in the Second World War. Each of these women, moreover, had a brother whose name appears alongside. But of these four young people, just one died in action, killed in Holland in 1944. The other three all died in England of illness, and two of them after their wars had ended. Of the thirteen on the original Lydford memorial, nine were killed in action or died of wounds, and four from illness or natural causes either during their war or some years later. Similarly, in Thorverton twelve out of sixteen died when serving abroad, while four died in England without ever seeing

action. War memorials are not wholly about the gallant Fallen. They in fact commemorate those who died courageously, or obediently, or by accident, or through friendly fire, or just because they were serving in the forces at the time. And not a few of those commemorated had only very slight connections with the place that remembers them. If you read between the lines, Aslet's admirable book brings out these truths most convincingly.

Ian Stoye

Jane Bliss, Christopher Jago and Elizabeth Maycock, eds., *Aspects of Devon History: People, Places and Landscapes*. The Devon History Society Fortieth Anniversary Book (Exeter: Devon History Society, 2012) xx + 428 pages. Softback. 102 illustrations. ISBN 9780903766029. £18.

With twenty-nine chapters, an introduction, index, maps and tables, and many illustrations, the Devon History Society's fortieth anniversary book explores the county's history from the tenth century to the modern era in an engaging manner.

In an edited collection of some four hundred pages – drawing on the expertise and enthusiasms of professional and non-professional historians – a number of essays stand out as worthy of note, but the whole enterprise shows a sophistication hardly surprising when one reads the contributors' biographies. *Aspects of Devon History* expresses the commendable ambition and vigour of the county's local history societies, whose significance in advancing understanding of Devonian history is convincingly demonstrated. Todd Gray's introduction notes the 'peripheries of Devon studies are stronger than the centre,' and that this large county's different traditions and identities mean county studies are fragmented. Exeter and Plymouth figure in the essays but it is the villages and smaller towns that predominate in this enjoyable and rewarding collection.

The collection begins with chapters on becoming professional historians, from three professors (two of whom are retired): Mark Stoye, Christopher Holdsworth and Ivan Roots. Like the other contributors, the three represent Devonians born and bred (Stoye, of the University of Southampton) or those who have, to use the phrase of the Kentish man Roots, 'achieved Devon'.

The short chapters that follow are organised in chronological fashion, beginning with Mary Freeman's study of Tavistock and the traces of the tenth-century thane Ordulf, and ending with Andrew Jackson's essay on twentieth-century rural Devon through the eyes of the writer Ernest Martin. Between

these two, essays contribute to political history (Dartmouth Members of Parliament; the Western Rising of 1549; the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies preparing for a general strike in 1925–6), economic and industrial history (North Devon shipping industry; and Chagford woollen mills and hydro-electricity), histories of water supply (the Moorstone leat; rural East Devon before mains water), and philanthropy (the operation of parish poor law in Sampford Peverell; and work for disabled children and adults by Georgiana Buller).

The authors often adopt a biographical approach, in keeping with the collection's theme, and other essays include Devon-born celebrities: R. H. Parker's survey of the leading American accountant George O. May, and Patricia Nash's biography of the paper manufacturer and US Congressman George West. Other essays explore landscapes and communities (for instance, fourteenth-century Branscombe and Ottery St Mary, eighteenth-century Sampford Peverell, the rebuilding of Victorian Kenton). Religious life and religious controversy are the foci of essays on nineteenth-century Rose Ash (with its rare survival of a Nonjuror church interior until Victorian improvements), and Woodbury (where a vicious campaign against an alleged Tractarian vicar was fought). Several essays tackle historical sources – Nicky Campbell's discussion of the letters of Victorian school children written to the philanthropist Sir Henry Peek at his model community in Rousdon; and Geoff Squire on twentieth-century postcards of Branscombe as a holiday resort; Andrew Jackson's overview of the archive of the rural sociologist Ernest Martin. Greg Finch's chapter extends the coverage beyond county borders by exploring the 'Great Exodus' of Victorian Devonian migration, and the world beyond Devon features in a sketch of a Tamil servant, 'Podian' who ended up a well-loved figure in the early to mid-twentieth-century Woodbury.

Many of the essays have commendable features – clear exposition of fourteenth-century taxation and surname practices, interesting discussion of drovers and hedgerow dating, deft summary of the role of the unreformed vestry, and fascinating details of the 'hydraulic ram' technology, for example. For this reviewer, a number of essays managed within the confines of a few pages, to be remarkably informative: John Torrance's essay on fourteenth-century Branscombe which uses cartographic and archival sources to assess the 'historical landscape characterisation' map of Devon; Nicholas Orme's essay on the pioneer antiquarian William Worcester (a Bristolian); Michael Nix's essay on the Devon shipping industry (based on unpublished doctoral research); an evocative team-authored essay on eighteenth-century Sampford Peverell and the poor-law; Arthur Dark's essay on Parkham in the 1840s, that drew on his own family's long associations with the hamlet, and conveyed

powerfully the inward, self-sufficient, and interrelated community in an age – not distant – before improved roads made wheeled vehicles practical; and Greg Finch's examination of nineteenth-century out-migration and in-migration.

Most of the chapters incorporate endnotes and bibliographies. The photography, maps, tables and family trees are valuable enrichments, or crucial to the purpose of particular chapters (Ann Bond's on the polychromatic rebuilding of Kenton, for instance). The chief sources are county record offices, family archives and oral history, but several essays draw on material in the British Library, The National Archives and the Bodleian. One essay (the Bowers, Cutts, Passey and Weller essay on Sampford Peverell) is the fruits of a wider local research project: indicating the important results of collaboration in local history research.

This is a fitting commemorative volume, with a value which means its readership ought to extend beyond the membership and supporters of the Devon History Society.

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Martin Body, *The 2nd Devons War Diary: The 2nd Battalion Devonshire Regiment and its Lost Men 1914–19* (London: Pollinger, 2012) 483 pages. 3 maps, 3 images. ISBN 9781905665846. Print edition £19.99. e-Pub edition. ISBN 9871905665853. £7.99. e-book, Kindle edition. ISBN 9781905665860. e-book, PDF edition. ISBN 9781877.

This is an unusual book. Author Martin Body has assembled a core of three sections in which the names and personal details of those killed whilst serving with the 2nd Battalion the Devonshire Regiment (2nd Devons) during the First World War have been aligned with the daily entries in the battalion's war diaries. His approach makes it possible to identify known individuals, with as much of their personal detail as the author has been able to gather, and to set this information in the context of the contemporary descriptions of the battalion's daily locations and actions. The book's publication in 2012 could hardly be more relevant, given that we are now rapidly approaching the centenary of the beginning of that catastrophic war.

When your reviewer first glanced through its pages, the book seemed to be a straightforward work of reference, useful enough to any reader with a fairly narrow interest in this particular battalion or to one wishing to investigate what

became of an individual soldier. Such a book might, perhaps, be unlikely to attract a reader with more general interests. However, a closer reading reveals the narrative that emerges by reproducing the transcribed diaries sequentially in printed form. Many entries in the original documents were hand-written and can sometimes be difficult to read. The book provides an experience quite different from leafing through the rather flimsy paper of the originals, usually when in pursuit of researching a specific battle or event. It presents a narrative of the broad sweep of all battalion activities across the entire length of the war, and does so in considerable detail.

Full descriptions are given of the battalion's objectives and actions, including two major and celebrated battles in which the 2nd Devons were involved; the first day of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, where the battalion was cut to pieces in its attack at Ovillers, and their stand at Bois de Butte on the Aisne in May 1918. Here, as at other points in the book, the author has provided his own illuminating notes and comments. The battalion's routine marching up to and away from the front line is clearly described with all relevant place names recorded in front line, support and reserve deployments, as well as in billeted and rest areas to the rear. Recreational events, such as cricket, football and rugby matches are mentioned, as well as church parades and inspections by brigade, divisional and corps commanders. The comings and goings of named officers taking leave or attending training courses are recorded, as well as the daily toll of casualties. Thus the diaries present a well rounded view of all the military and social activities of a front line infantry battalion fighting on the Western Front.

My namesake, Captain Henry Harris Jago MC, appears in the book's alphabetical list of those who died and connects with his personal details at section 2. It would seem that Captain Jago was the son of William and Jeannie Jago of Leigham Terrace, Plymouth, and brother to 2nd Lt Edward Arthur Jago, also of the 2nd Devons, who was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Captain Jago's name recurs frequently throughout the diary until his own death, including his being awarded a bar to his Military Cross following the battle for Passchendaele in November and December 1917. He was killed on 24 April 1918 near Pozières. He has no known grave and his name is inscribed on the Pozières memorial to the missing. He was just 23 years old.

In addition to these sections, the book contains a short Author's Note, a glossary and bibliography. Brief reference is made in the Author's Note to the book's main sources, including The National Archives document WO/95/1712, from which the diaries derive. The book comes in both printed and electronic formats. There are a few minor editorial niggles. It would have been helpful to

have a few more maps setting the diaries in their geographical context, a place-name index and also a reference to the section title at each right hand page heading instead of repeating the author's name throughout. Also, there are no biographical details about the author. But this is a useful book for firstly, those readers wishing to gain insights into what it was like to fight on the Western Front, as seen through the experiences of the 2nd Devons and secondly, those readers wishing to trace an individual who fought and died with this battalion.

Chris Jago

John Dike and Peter Lamb, *Torquay's Electricity History 1877-1948* (The South Western Electricity Historical Society, 2012) obtainable from Peter Lamb, 35, Station Road, Backwell, Bristol, BS48 3 NH. 63 pages. Illustrations. No ISBN. Softback. £3.00.

This is the first publication of the South Western Electricity Historical Society, and they have produced a sensibly priced book which will doubtless be welcomed by electrical enthusiasts. The authors, no strangers to electricity, were both employed by South Western Electricity Board, and both have previously written books on the subject.

The immediate reaction of the reviewer was to question whether the cost of publication was a problem, for it would appear that space has been compromised. For example, it is unusual and perhaps a little unfortunate, to see inside covers being used for text. Why? An extra page or two would look so much better. The verso title page, usually listing publication details, copyright restrictions etc., is in fact the contents page. Furthermore, the excellent photographs (most of which are from the early-twentieth century, but very well reproduced) are accompanied by captions which could be in a smaller font, and better spaced. They unfortunately spoil the photograph pages, and a little more 'white space' would have looked so much better. One or two maps and diagrams add to the interest, however.

That said, the text is incredibly detailed, and well laid out. The chapters have been thoughtfully planned, and the content, whilst technical, is nevertheless interesting – even to non-enthusiasts. The book explores not only Torquay's electrical history, but the general electrical picture from the late-nineteenth century, and how a small undertaking grew, and eventually took over South Devon. The problems and challenges faced by electrical engineers in those early days were enormous, but all were overcome. The authors have ensured that

tramways, nostalgic in themselves, are well documented and accompanying photographs bring back even more memories.

Most of the content, understandably, relates to electrical history, but no doubt many Devonians will be surprised to read of *Dartmoor Diversions into Hydro*, for who would have known that a 1920 Bill proposed no fewer than eight reservoirs being constructed in the area between Sticklepath, Mary Tavy, Ivybridge and Chagford? The Bill was proposed by Dr John Purves ('an electrification expert') who was the owner of the Dartmoor & District Hydro-Electric Supply Company. Fortunately, his various Bills were met with severe opposition, notably from the Dartmoor Preservation Association, and the noted historian and geologist R. Hansford Worth. Although they were all defeated, even today there are still murmurings regarding the possibility of harnessing Dartmoor's various waters by turbine or Archimedean screw devices.

Wartime problems did not really affect Torquay's electrical supply to any degree, but the town did receive twenty-one air raids by the enemy, although none seriously affected electrical supplies. Nearby Newton Abbot, it is noted, almost lost its all-important power station, which continued until it was finally closed in 1974. Even in 1944, despite the on-going war, plans went ahead for even more generation capacity in the area. The more recent developments have been included, showing how the incredible post-war demand for electricity placed a great strain on the Torquay area, as well as other parts of the county. Demand never outstripped supply, but there was never any chance for the suppliers to relax.

The Electricity Act of 1947, implemented by Electricity Supply Industry, meant that The Torquay Electricity Department's days had come to an end when it became part of the South Western Electricity Board. Many similar undertakings in other parts of the country, of course, suffered the same fate. One could say that, in Torquay's case, 'the local boy made good', and it is satisfying to know that this story has been put into print for future generations.

The various appendices are easy to read, and contain much information in themselves. However, it is always a shame to see well-written books produced without a comprehensive index, and in this case it would have helped considerably.

Dick Passmore

Dave Dingley, *Partners in Time: The History of Dolton and Dowland* (Privately published, 2011) 207 pages. Numerous illustrations. Softback. No ISBN. £15.50. Available from the author at Dartmoor Cottage, Dowland, EX19 8PG. email: dartmoor@gotadsl.co.uk.

Dave Dingley's great interest is the development and economy of his home parish of Dowland and the adjacent one, Dolton; this is the sixth volume that he has written and privately published on the subject. Knowing the area so well, he conveys to the reader a sense of pride in the parishes studied. His research has been detailed at the same time as being selective and in many ways seems to be aimed at the layman. Although the subject has a very narrow focus, others might relate it to their own parish, whether because they have carried out or read similar surveys, or because it inspires them to research their own area more closely. With an introduction defining Dave Dingley's area of interest followed by a glossary of medieval terms, the reader understands what the book will provide for them.

The opening chapter introduces the medieval world of Dowland and Dolton, the start of a community and its geography. Moving on, the second chapter gives a history of the development of the land itself, starting with the names, both of which may derive from the Celtic word meaning dark or black. Chapter 3 looks at the Domesday farms and the medieval manors, a brilliant piece of detective work showing a remarkable continuity. These three chapters give a good basis for the rest of the book which covers the history of the two parishes until the late-nineteenth century when Dave Dingley closes his historical survey.

As well as studies into the feudal system, the post-medieval manors, the village, and individual dwellings, there is a chapter about Stafford Barton, a small Domesday manor which remained in the same family for almost 700 years. Subsequent owners have taken the stewardship of the property seriously including the current owner who bought the manor in 2008, extensively and sensitively renovated it to ensure that it is in a state of good repair and meets contemporary standards, and who was pleased to allow the author access on a number of occasions.

The nineteenth-century chapter records the development of the villages and village life at a time of great change in terms of economics, education, communications, and demographics. It is interesting to observe the number of properties and tenements that were on the Tithe Award of the 1840s for which there is no longer any evidence. This is common in many rural parishes. With so many small holdings and such a large county, it is no wonder that it was once claimed that 'Everybody has a grandfather who farmed in Devon'.

Partners in Time continues with a 65-page gazetteer of all of the Tithe Award properties in Dolton and Dowland, followed by eight appendices which give more detail on specific subjects mentioned in the main text.

Local histories can be introspective, but Dave Dingley has managed to place the history of Dolton and Dowland in a wider local context so that for the lay reader or the specialist, there can be little more that they need to know about the development of these two villages. The services of an editor or a good proof reader would have eliminated occasional typing errors and minor inconsistencies, Dave Dingley is, however, to be congratulated on achieving his objective and providing a good local history resource.

Bob and Jacqueline Patten

Richard A. Edwards, *Devon's Non-Metal Mines*. (Wellington: Halsgrove Discover Series, 2011) 160 pages. Hardback. 125 photographs and figures. ISBN 9780857041180. £16.99.

This is an extremely well-written and readable book, and clearly the product of an impressive range and depth of research on the part of the author. The geological context is clearly and simply explained in the Introductory Chapter One with the aid of a geological map of Devon showing the locations of the mines discussed in the book with brief review of 'Devon's Earth History'. The book is beautifully illustrated throughout with 125 photographs, maps, drawings and diagrams which greatly help to explain in considerable detail and to document, the geological, mining, social and historical aspects of the main topics chosen.

The second chapter deals with the blue Penn Recca slate workings of Buckfastleigh which are geologically comparable to slates worked at several locations in Cornwall, but all on relatively small scale compared with the very much larger operations of North Wales. Workings at Penn Recca slates started in the fourteenth century, and ended in 1908. During this period and since, the water from the workings has been used as a contribution to the local water supply, while the workings have attracted 'cavers' (mainly during 1949-51) until access was eventually prohibited. The workings continue to form an attractive habitat for many bat species, which have been identified and studied here since 1949.

Coal mining in Devon will sound strange to many, but the Culm carbonaceous shale with thin anthracite beds are broadly contemporaneous with

similar Coal Measures strata of South Wales just across the Bristol Channel. The outcrop of these steeply dipping strata runs eastward from the Bristol Channel coast through Bideford and for about fifteen miles to the east. Working of these started in the Middle Ages, but the main development was during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, using mainly local labour, with a few Cornishmen. While the anthracite was used as a fuel, the carbonaceous shale was a source of black pigment for paints, polishes and even cosmetics. 'Bideford Black' was used to paint the wooden ships of the Royal Navy for much of the nineteenth century, an interesting detail which the author presents of many, concerning the many mines, mining methods and also the miners.

The following Chapter Four deals with the mining and manufacture of whetstones (or scythestones) from sandstones of the Lower Greensand of the scenic Blackdown Hills. These supplied a mainly agricultural demand, to sharpen cutting tools, since the earliest times (a whetstone of Middle Bronze Age origin was found during works on the A30 in 1999). The main exploitation was from about 1730 to 1930, peaking in the mid-1800s, when up to 2000 'stones' were produced daily. An interesting local event and probably an important outlet was the annual Exeter 'Scythestone Fair' in Waterbeer Street, just prior to hay harvesting time. The author brings together several rich sources of research to provide a fascinating account of the working and manufacture of the stones, the local social history and the health implications of mining for the workers.

The focus then moves, in Chapter Five, southwards to the Beer Stone workings on the south coast of the county, used on some scale by the Romans and subsequently as one of the major types of freestone for both Exeter and Winchester Cathedrals. Explanation of the special geology of the Beer Sandstone as a very local variant of the Chalk succession, is followed by further detail concerning the history of working and the methods used for transporting the stone blocks from the mines by horse-drawn carts either by road or to Beer Harbour and onto boats. It is said that over 400 horses were kept for transport alone indicating the size of the mining operation. Although as examples show, Beer Stone has limited resistance to weathering, it is incomparable for internal use where the light colour, and the capacity to display sharp detail, can be best displayed.

The Tertiary clays and lignites of both South and North Devon, are the subjects of Chapters Six and Seven respectively. Clay and lignite are part of the same succession of more than 660 metres thickness in the Bovey Basin, which is largely fault-bounded and about fourteen kilometres long (NW-SE) on the alignment of the Stricklepath Fault. The smaller Petrockstowe Basin of

North Devon lies along the same alignment, and contains similar clays but more sand and gravel.

Working of both clays and lignite seem likely to have started in the sixteenth century, clay for making pipes in which to smoke the newly introduced tobacco, and lignite which was probably used mainly for burning lime, or as a general fuel for heating. The clay industry, with current production of over one million tonnes (mostly exported), has been a major local employer for over 300 years and seems capable of thriving well into the future. By comparison, the exploitation and use of the lignite resources has been very limited because of its low thermal output and high residue, and also the foetid fumes it produced on burning. Although it was inefficient as a fuel, it was also seen at one time as a potential source of organic chemicals, but this too was found to be non-commercial.

This volume brings together thorough geological insight with industrial history, and absorbing explanation of the range of applications for the various resources and the communities which they supported and supplied. The length of the list of references reflects well the thoroughness of the author's research and is, in itself, a resource to be 'mined' at leisure. This absorbing and attractive publication is excellent value and one which I recommend unreservedly.

K. J. Edworthy

Todd Gray, *Lest Devon Forgets: Service, Sacrifice and the Creation of Great War Memorials* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2010) viii + 248 pages. 137 illustrations. ISBN 9781903356562. £19.99.

For some time now, the Imperial War Museum has been creating a War Memorials Archive¹ and has recorded over 60,000 examples so far. To this valuable national resource can now be added Todd Gray's definitive study of war memorials in Devon which fully deserved to win the Devon History Society Book of the year Prize for 2011.

It has been estimated that about 750,000 Britons died in World War I, with many more seriously wounded. The death of so many loved ones was devastating for their families, friends and local communities and a desperate need was felt throughout Britain to mourn and remember their lives given in the service of their country. Dr. Gray has contributed to our knowledge of this need for commemoration by visiting 'nearly every one of the county's ancient 450 Anglican churches and many of the Victorian ones as well as some of the Free Churches . . . [and] endeavouring to view every communal monument.'²

and then by asking the questions – how did these memorials come about, how was their form decided and who paid for them? Although many memorials are described in detail, and the book is replete with photographs, *Lest Devon Forgets* is not an inventory, but a rounded discussion of the memorials and the issues surrounding their creation. Mainly through the use of newspaper records, Dr Gray is able to place the multitude of memorials (none of which are identical) in their context ranging from the impressive and poignant group of figures by local sculptor John Angel which make up the well-cared-for Exeter War Memorial in Northernhay Gardens to some which are rather more neglected, for example, the memorial in Barnstaple that has shockingly ended up in a public toilet, and the memorial in Higher Talc which has clearly lacked the care it should have had, being now in an overgrown hedgerow and barely visible.

Perhaps, at this point, it is appropriate to give an example of the kind of detail Dr Gray goes into in his description of memorials. In the years immediately following the end of the war, one of the most influential events which took place was the unveiling of the Cenotaph in London's Whitehall, designed by Edwin Lutyens. It was originally intended to be a temporary wood and plaster structure, erected in 1919 for a Victory Parade, but it proved so popular that a permanent memorial was made in Portland Stone and put up in 1920. The simple message on it says, 'The Glorious Dead', and this emphasis on simplicity of style and wording was strongly promoted by the artistic and political elite. The great fear was that all sorts of unsuitable and unsightly memorials would be created if local people were left to decide for themselves. All kinds of advice was offered to those who were the leading lights on the committees which were set up in towns and villages all over the country to decide how their community would commemorate the sacrifice of local men and women who had been lost in the war. Todd Gray looks at all these issues as he discusses how each Devon memorial came into being. He takes as a typical example the small village of Inwardleigh, and their debate about the form and location of their memorial and who should be remembered on it. At first, some of the villagers thought a village hall might be a good way of commemorating the sacrifice of the five local men who had lost their lives in the war, but this was rejected as it was opposed by those who thought it would be used for frivolous things like dancing, which would be inappropriate. Then it was suggested that a granite cross should be placed in the churchyard, but this caused discontent among the local chapel-goers, although the idea of the cross was well received. The monument was eventually placed outside the village school in a patch of rough grass. The other issue was the question of wording and who should be included in the dedication – a common problem for many towns and villages. It was decided that all those who went to

fight, even if they came back safely, should be named on the inscription (which gave rise to the criticism that it could no longer be called a memorial), and the wording was as follows: 'Lest we forget. This stone is erected by the parishioners as lasting tribute to those who responded to the call of duty in the Great War, 1914–1918'. There followed the names of the forty men who served in alphabetical order. All the considerations that were so hotly debated at Inwardleigh come up again and again as Dr Gray examines the genesis of innumerable memorials in his book. What kind of memorial? Where should it go? What wording should be on it? Who should be included? How much can we afford? These were the questions raised in almost every case and which Dr Gray examines in his fascinating survey.

In his introduction, Dr Gray acknowledges the work done before him on Devon war memorials, for example, Barbara O' Kelly's excellent piece in *The Devon Historian* of 2008 as well as Alex Mettler and Gerry Woodcock's work on Tavistock and Brian Moseley's website on Plymouth,¹ but does not really explore the more general aspects of memory and memorialisation, a phenomenon which has been the subject of a considerable amount of academic interest over the past few years.² This, however, is a very minor criticism of this thoroughly researched study, whose publication is all the more apposite as we approach the centenary of the outbreak of the 'war to end all wars'.

Mitzi Auchterlonie

1. War Memorials Archive, at <<http://www.ukniwm.org.uk>> (accessed 14 July, 2013). The site was formerly known as the UK National Inventory of War Memorials.
2. Todd Gray, *Lest Devon Forgets*, (2010), vii.
3. Alex Mettler and Gerry Woodcock, *We Will Remember Them: The Men of Tavistock Who Died in the First World War*, (Tavistock: Tavistock and District Local History Society, 2003). Barbara O'Kelly, 'Issues Relating to the Planning of First World War Memorials: a South Devon Study', *The Devon Historian*, 77, (2008), 37–47. Brian Moseley, on Plymouth War Memorials, see: <<http://www.plymouthdata.info/Memorials%20Monuments.htm>> accessed 14 July, 2013.
4. For example, Derek Boorman, *At the Going Down of the Sun: British First World War Memorials* (York: William Sessions, 1988); K. S. Inglis (1992) 'War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians' in *Guerres Mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 167, 5–21.
N. Mansfield, (1995) 'Class Conflict and Village War Memorials' in *Rural History*, 6, 1, 67–87.

Todd Gray, *Devon's Ancient Bench Ends* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2012) 192 pages, with footnotes, index and extensive colour photographs. Softback. ISBN: 9781903356616. £17.99.

Unless you are a regular worshipper, or visit a church for a particular event in the Christian or social calendar, it can be difficult to imagine the interior of a quiet village church as a hotly-contested social space. Even if you are regular churchgoer today, it might still need a bit of a leap of the imagination to picture scenes inside your parish church of jostling, name-calling and fights breaking out over seating ending in a hearing at the diocesan church court. Nevertheless, according to Todd Gray's recent addition to his corpus of research on the South West, this was a fairly regular occurrence in Devon's churches in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – all part of the rich tapestry of social interaction around one's place in the hugely important social pecking-order of worship.

Devon's Ancient Bench Ends is a richly illustrated book which helps to fill a gap in contemporary study of church interiors. We are particularly fortunate here, as a quarter of the county's churches retain ancient benches and, Gray notes, this survival rate is of national significance in itself. The book is divided into three parts: two are contextual covering the history of seating in the church, and its role in affirming social distinctions, whilst the third concentrates on the benches themselves in terms of form, design and craftsmen. Most of the discussion is concerned with the title-matter, the 'ancient' seating from the later medieval and early modern periods. However, in part one Gray includes chronological chapters on the major phases of seating erected in Devon's church interiors. Although he cautions that evidence of early seating is scant, seating for laity appears to have developed from simple backless forms in the later medieval period, to benches with backs, followed by elaborate high pews for the better sort in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Gray brings the reader up to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with revival, repair and re-construction of benches. The final phase, perhaps more ominous, is the removal of historic benches and surviving pews in favour of moveable seating to gain greater flexibility in the church interior.

Gray prefaces the book with an introduction containing a brief but useful discussion of earlier studies and extracts from contemporary accounts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that give an insight into the complexity of social relationships within the congregation, illustrated by where the parishioners were seated. This is followed up in part two which deals more fully with seating and the social order, payment for seating, who sat where, which interestingly differed from parish to parish, and disputes over seating.

Placement according to social order was a phenomenon often mirrored more simply post mortem in the positioning of funeral monuments and burials in churches. However, Devon's ancient benches differ from its corpus of funeral monuments in that, together with surviving documentary history, they represent, in the seating habits at least, a richer cross section of the county's society, from principal land holders, to servants, the poor, children and sometimes those with disabilities, all of whom were obliged to attend Sunday service up until the middle of the seventeenth century.

But what of the benches and the bench ends themselves? Part three gives as close a study of the forms, designs, pictorial representations and decorative detail on the bench ends as can be squeezed into the book's relatively modest number of pages. The corpus varies hugely in style and as much in subject-matter, and any attempts to categorise types of representation are not aided by paucity of documentary evidence on carvers. From the evidence he has found, these carvers were mostly local and designs were probably agreed between the carvers and the person paying for the seat. This, and possible reordering and removal, could explain the apparent lack of continuity between pictorial representations on sets of benches in the same church.

In discussing pictorial content, Gray coins the term 'village art' for benches that appear to have subject-matter pertaining to local or domestic concerns, as for example at East Budleigh. I was not entirely convinced that some of these did not also have meanings beyond the local, for example could the figure of a woman eating on a bench end in that church be redolent of a five senses carving of *gusto*? The book also covers Gothic and Renaissance designs and a remarkable number of bench ends include wonderful grotesques and rinceaux-type figures. It would have been interesting to know what, if any pattern book influences, might be discerned. There is also a comparatively lengthy discussion on religious images and in particular important sets of passion symbols on benches in the county and beyond.

Gray finishes with a chapter on craftsmen and decorative/identification marks. His study of different stamping patterns really moves the study forward enabling identification of hitherto 'stray' bench ends. There is also a short paragraph on protection marks, in particular the 'daisy wheel', which can be found on the bench ends at several Devon churches. Gray considers that the purpose of these on benches remains uncertain and conjectural. However, these and other related symbols can be found in both religious and domestic architecture across the south of England from larger churches such as St Paul's in London and St Cross at Winchester to Devon farmhouse screens and even an eighteenth-century Bible box. Most studies conclude that they have an

apotropaic function and it is exciting to know that Devon's bench ends also contain them.

Gray's conclusion gently reminds us that Devon's historic church seating is a remarkable legacy that needs to be better appreciated. However it is under threat as churches modernise their interiors to create spaces that no longer require fixed seating. We are losing touch with the continuity such interior furnishings help to describe in the context of the church. Let us hope this enjoyable and informative study, which left me wanting more, helps to prevent any more destruction.

Christine Faunch

Bob Mann, editor and compiler, *A Most Haunting Castle: Writings from the Ruins at Berry Pomeroy* (Totnes: Longmarsh Press, 2012) v + 114 pages. Softback. ISBN 97809561170521. £7.99.

The editor of this unusual book is well-known in Devon folklore and dialect circles and in between his introduction and closing comment has brought together a collection of poetry and prose relevant to Berry Pomeroy Castle's reputation as a particularly haunted place.

The introductory section begins with accounts of the sense of foreboding felt by a number of visitors to the castle and of instances where ghosts, such as those known as the White and Blue Ladies, have been encountered. There is then a concise, but clear, history of Berry Pomeroy Castle from its origin in the late-fifteenth century to its abandonment in the seventeenth. Finally, there is a well-informed discussion of the possible historical basis for the ghost legends. Although formal references are not provided, a number of works are mentioned in the text and the introduction ends with a discussion of further reading.

The body of the book consists of thirteen poems and eleven short pieces of prose. These begin with extracts from the 1701 edition of John Prince's *The Worthies of Devon*, Edward Montague's *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy* (1806) and Anna Eliza Bray's *Henry de Pomeroy* (1841); but soon move on to contemporary writers, including Mann himself. If only because of the time span, the styles vary as does the content. Some of the prose is factual, some fictional; some concern the unsettling ambience of the castle, some centre on specific hauntings. All are eminently readable, and their variety adds to the interest of the book. The reviewer is reluctant to offer in-depth comment on the poetry as he lacks the experience and specialised knowledge to do so. Suffice it to say

that the poems convey well the brooding and sinister atmosphere that some visitors to the castle experience, and they are certainly more comprehensible than some heard while dozing off to the late-night eccentricities of Radio 4.

This book should be of interest to all those enthused by Devon's history and legends and in particular the many ways in which they can interact. It will interest also those with a taste for the paranormal. The book's success may well depend on the extent to which these two groups overlap.

Sadru Bhanji

Julia Neville, *Viva Juanita! Juanita Phillips Champion for Change in East Devon Between the Wars* (Exeter: Julia Neville and Tony Simpson, 2012) 123 pages. 62 photographs. Softback. £10.00.

Juanita Phillips was a remarkable woman as this book makes clear. Her pioneering public work was marked by a series of milestones: first woman on Honiton Council, first woman mayor in the West Country, first woman on Devon County Council among them. But even more astonishing is the range of her interests and number of organisations to which she contributed. Julia Neville emphasises that she had the support of enormous wealth and servants, including a secretary, but the reader is still left exhausted by the breath of her activities.

Her unusual first name was the result of her birth in Chile, the daughter of Thomas Comber who had made a fortune in the nitrate industry in South America. Juanita came to England at the age of ten, but remained interested in Spanish culture and a fluent speaker of the language. She married Thomas Phillips, a Honiton solicitor, in 1906 and moved to the town. She became involved with the women's suffrage campaign in Honiton and Exeter where she chaired the local branch of the WSPU and sold papers in the streets. When the campaign for the vote was interrupted by the First World War Juanita went to London to work in the War Office while her husband was away doing officer training. When they returned to Honiton she wanted to continue to work and eventually found her vocation as a local councillor, becoming Mayor of Honiton eleven times. She also served on Devon County Council, as a JP, as a Poor Law Guardian, on various health and hospital committees including being the first woman chair of a county council committee when she took over the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee. Whilst these were traditional areas for early women councillors Juanita was involved at almost every level of the work.

It seems puzzling that there is little reference to any party affiliations, but no doubt the authors were constrained by the source material. Juanita was obviously aware that many people did not have her advantages. Among other initiatives she set up a centre for the unemployed, worked to make conditions in the workhouse better and contributed to miners' relief and other charities. This makes her role as Food Officer in the General Strike (described in more detail in Tony Simpson's article in *Aspects of Devon History*, 2012) and apparent lack of great interest in the Spanish Civil War a little surprising.

Her support for women's issues was constant, she worked for the various organisations which developed after the vote was won, such as the Open Door Council and the Equal Citizenship Society. Juanita was also very active in the Women's Institute and the Electrical Association for Women, both groups which aimed to improve life for women in rural areas. Rather touchingly she carefully preserved her WI third class certificate for jam making. Another of her initiatives was setting up a group for women doing public work in Devon to provide mutual support and networking and she used her influence to advance the careers of professional women. How this busy woman found time for amateur dramatics, including building a small theatre in her garden and producing plays and other entertainments there, and for holidays and other leisure activities is a mystery.

Juanita was Mayor of Honiton during the Second World War so was very involved in civil defence preparations and was Food Officer. This seemed to be the point where she began to feel the pressure as she stood down as Mayor in 1940, and, perhaps more tellingly, stopped keeping scrapbooks recording her activities. In 1947 her resignation as alderman followed and she and her husband moved to Awliscombe. Despite the move her involvement with some county council activities and with the transfer of services to the NHS continued. Her husband died in 1957 and she followed in 1966, her pioneering role largely forgotten.

Julia Neville's account of Juanita Phillips' life is a lively and valuable record of her amazing achievements. The context of her work is clearly explained, especially the changes in the workings of local government in the period, and the book is very attractive with large print and a very good selection of illustrations. There are no footnotes, but it is clear what sources have been used. It will help to make sure that Juanita Phillips' contribution to Devon's history is not forgotten again.

Alice Lock

Mike Sampson, *A History of Blundell's School* (Tiverton: Blundell's School, 2011) 398 pages. Monochrome photographs and line drawings. Hardback. ISBN 9780950821719. £17.50 (or £22.50 including p. and p. from Blundell's School).

As Archivist at Blundell's School in Tiverton, Mike Sampson is ideally placed to write its history. His *A History of Blundell's School* won the Devon History Society Devon Book of the Year award for 2012 – a worthy successor to his *A History of Tiverton*. Founded on his work at Tiverton Museum, this provided much source material for the Blundell's history and was similarly acclaimed by the Society in 2004.

Drawing on a range of primary and secondary sources, many of which are located at the Devon Heritage Centre and the University of Exeter Library, Sampson chronicles Blundell's from its foundation by wealthy local cloth merchant Peter Blundell in 1604 to the present. He describes the many changes and developments on the way, including the transfer of the school in 1882 from 'Old Blundell's' in the town to its present spacious site on the periphery of Tiverton.

Blundell's has been an integral part of local history, not least during the Civil War when Thomas Fairfax made it his headquarters during the siege of Tiverton. The author weaves Blundell's part in this and many other local and national events, including the twentieth-century World Wars, into his narrative. However, his focus is always the school. He celebrates its triumphs, but is not shy of describing its darker periods such as the 'Rebellion' of 1787 and the conflicts between Reverend R. L. Roberts (headmaster 1943–47), his staff and the governors.

The school has always had strong links with Tiverton and Devon and many distinguished Old Blundellians find a place in Sampson's *History*. They include Parson Jack Russell, breeder of the eponymous terriers and R. D. Blackmore, whose novel *Lorna Doone* (1869) has 'done as much as any scholarly history to make the school known to a wider audience' according to Sampson, recalling scenes from the book including the memorable fight in the school grounds between Jan Ridd (hero) and Robin Snell (bully). Both Blackmore, resplendent in mutton chop whiskers, and Russell, clad in top boots, top hat, mounted on his horse and surrounded by adoring hounds, appear among the book's many interesting illustrations. Drawn from the school archive, these are supplemented with Sampson's photographs.

Competitive sports, especially cricket and rugby, have played a large part in the school's history and correspondingly gain plenty of space in Sampson's book. Blundell's produced many sportsmen, including Somerset and England

cricketer Vic Marks and Richard Sharp, England rugby captain. They are well indexed by Sampson, along with academics such as historian and editor Sir John Squire. Blundell's also produced many leading churchmen and military leaders, including Archbishop Fredrick Temple and General Sir Walter Walker. General Walker was outraged when A. J. D. Rees (headmaster 1980–92), announced a debate about Nuclear Disarmament involving Bruce Kent of CND. The General didn't mince his words, as the author shows on page 318 with one of his many skilful quotations from the archives:

As a former commander-in-chief of NATO's northern flank, I am surprised that the Headmaster of a school, which used to pride itself on its input of officers to the three services, should initiate such a debate. I shall ensure that those people who constantly seek my advice about the education of their boys do not send them to Blundell's.

Sampson comments drily: 'His (Walker's) reaction highlights the distance that society and Blundell's had moved from the time he was at school. Modern pupils were encouraged to make informed decision on a subject once they had become aware of all sides of the argument'.

Rees also invited Jonathan Porritt of Friends of the Earth as well as a party of striking miners to meet the pupils. In this he was extending a Blundell's tradition of inviting stimulating and sometimes challenging speakers and performers including Eric Gill (an Old Blundellian), W. H. Auden, Benjamin Britten, Stephen Spender and Cecil Day-Lewis. Another surprise for anyone with outdated pre-conceptions about Blundell's is that it ceased to be an all male bastion in 1975 and became fully co-educational in 1993. Nicola Huggett, its first female head teacher, took up her post in January 2013. She is Blundell's twenty-ninth head teacher – twenty-one of whom were ordained priests.

In sum, *A History of Blundell's School* is highly informative and entertaining for the general reader. Essential homework for Old Blundellians, it brings the Blundell's story a decade further and includes considerably more text than Charles Noon's *The Book of Blundell's* (Halsgrove 2002), whilst its bibliography and index of persons and places provides many starting points for further research. However, a general subject index would have been a bonus.

Robert Hesketh

Charles Scott-Fox, *Holcombe Court: A Bluett Family Mansion* (Self-published, 2012) 260 pages. 98 illustrations. Hardback. ISBN 9780954701376. £20 plus £7.50 p. and p. Obtainable from: Thornfield, Dye House Lane, Willand Old Village, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 2RL.

Holcombe Court is one of Devon's architectural gems but hitherto known chiefly to specialists, villagers, and to friends and family of the owners. Charles Scott-Fox's book will introduce this astonishing house to a Devon readership largely unaware of this private home which has been hidden behind a high stone wall for many generations. Visitors to the adjoining parish church will know of the Court from the tantalising glimpses along the church path.

The building has a Tudor core which was extensively modernised in the 1850s by John Hayward, the Exeter architect. Unravelling what is a complicated building history is no easy task but the book is considerably enhanced by the detailed work of John Thorp of Keystone Historic Building Consultants. Scott-Fox methodically draws on this and the book is given an added integrity which a reader can trust. One example is a re-dating of the king-post roof to the second half of the sixteenth century. Devon historians will now have to amend their copies of Pevsner and think again about the Elizabethan rebuilding of grand domestic houses.

Scott-Fox manages to pull off not just a viable history of the house but one which is a model for other house histories. The Bluett family dominates the history of Holcombe Court and one of the great problems that Scott-Fox has had to face is the apparent lack of any family papers. Do they lurk with some descendant? The author has sought out all other surviving evidence and has also been fortunate in having published work by Edward Ashworth, the prolific Victorian architect. The Bluetts were at the Court for some 400 years until they sold it in the 1850s to Reverend William Rayer. It was he who hired Hayward. Followers of Reverend Swete's journals will know of his eighteenth-century watercolour and description of the house. Swete shows the considerable portion of their ancient home that the Bluetts demolished in the 1840s. This is all carefully chronicled by the author.

One of the surprises of the book is the section on garden history, a rarity for a building history. What makes it particularly relevant is the recent garden scheme which is one of the hallmarks of Holcombe Court today.

The book is well illustrated. Many photographs are of difficult internal locations and these are well lit but what does not come across is the sheer beauty of Holcombe Court. It has magnificent internal features: its carved wood and plasterwork are stunning examples of local workmanship. This is a slight criticism of the book. Another could be an ineffective use of the

figurative monuments in the church: these provide faces to the individuals who made Holcombe Court what it is today. The dating of some of the internal woodwork could have been compared with the great family pew in the church: they share a carpenter's punch mark and design which indicates a common date. But these are trifling compared to the enormous contribution that Mr Scott-Fox has made to our understanding of a house which truly deserves a book of its own.

Todd Gray

Anita Travers, ed., *Robert Furse: A Devon Family Memoir of 1593* (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society New Series, Vol. 53, 2012), xx + 206 pages. 4 colour plates, 1 b/w drawing, 1 map, 1 family tree. Softback. ISBN 9780901853530. £20 (available from the Society, 7, The Close, Exeter, EX1 1EZ).

Robert Furse was born about the year 1530 in Great Torrington. Despite his living through very turbulent times, the status of the Furse family seems to have steadily risen, through various marriages and through some astute transactions of his own. From relatively humble beginnings, the Furse family had become extensive landowners within the county. Robert married Wilmot Rowland and they had eight daughters before their last child, a son named John, was born in 1584. When John was just nine years old his father became aware of his own terminal illness, and before death overtook him, Robert wanted to leave his young son detailed written descriptions of the family's property holdings and ancestral lines. However, he also set down advice on a number of other social, moral and domestic matters that give insights into some of his own social attitudes, values and beliefs. When he died in his home parish of Dean Prior, he was able to provide his son with a considerable body of knowledge about both the family's property and their ancestors. He died in December 1593 and lies buried in the north aisle of Dean Prior church, just a stone's throw from the south-bound carriageway of the A38 trunk road. Alongside his father's battered memorial slab lies his son, John, for whom the book was written. It is this book that Anita Travers has edited as the latest volume in the New Series of publications of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society.

The sources used by Furse are thought to be largely the property deeds, which are no longer extant, the evidence from other witnesses to the transactions and his own experiences of litigation that he pursued to protect his interests. It is also thought that he had some access to documents belonging

to the Courtenay family. He is known to have held public office as constable of Stanborough hundred, was a juror and his status required him to maintain weapons and armour as part of the Devon muster. His properties, some of which were inherited from families marrying into the Furse line, were scattered from Combe Martin in the north of the county, to Dartmouth and Ugborough in the south.

The line map of the county in Travers' edition denotes property originating from four families – the Rowland, Adler, Foxcombe and Moreshead families – from whom certain properties had been acquired or inherited. Furse not only describes each of these families in terms of the details of their property but also provides thumbnail sketches of some of the individual family members. This extends to Robert's own ancestors. Thus we learn that John Furse (c.1506–72) 'was of good welthe and welbelovye of all men', and that 'his gretes delyte was in good howsekepyng verve gentell gevyngge credyt to all men whiche monye tymes did borne to his one grett henderans.' Robert also says of John that 'Yn his uthe he was verve stronge lustye and well tryed for wraxselyn, lepyngge, casten of the barre and also wyth his suorde and buckeler . . .' Nor was he especially discrete in revealing matters of a more personal nature. So Robert informs his reader that John 'was mych trobeled wythe syckenes as the pyles and yn his later dayes wythe the colycke splene and strongegurye.'

But perhaps it is the book's opening section, entitled by the Editor as 'Address to his Readers', that Furse reveals most about the social climate of his times. After an introductory passage in which he describes his purpose, he asks that his 'sequele' keep the book safe and maintain it for the benefit of his heirs. Then after a brief prayer, he begins his advice with an appreciation of the efforts of their ancestors which have conferred such benefit on them, and not to feel ashamed of their humbler origins. He then advocates matters of personal behaviour, such as reverencing their elders, telling the truth, giving money to the poor and to 'lette always thye hyrede sarvante have hys peny for his payne'. There then follows a rather more controversial section with a marginal heading of 'Howe to chuse a wife', followed by advice as to building relationships with others and on general conduct of behaviour. Once again, Furse places emphasis upon the need to avoid any snobbery that is based upon their accumulated wealth, to avoid bad company, to seek advice when needed, to accept rebuke for errors and to fear God and read and hear the Scriptures. The section concludes with extensive advice concerning the 'use' of their children, their tenants and, perhaps most controversially of all, the 'use' of their wife. Whether Furse gives this advice as his own or whether it reflects the views that were more widely held at the time, is difficult to say. But it certainly makes informative reading.

What sort of researcher would find this volume useful? Certainly historians of Devon land-ownership in late Tudor England, as well as social historians of that period. In transcribing Furse's book, Anita Travers has retained Furse's spelling which reflects some of the sixteenth-century Devon dialect and pronunciation. As to the accessibility of Furse's text, your reviewer has himself had no experience of reading Tudor English, but given a little determination and careful use of the book's glossary, the text should be within the compass of any interested reader. The volume concludes with appendices relating to Furse's legal cases, to sports and pastimes mentioned by him and to Furse's family and pedigree. It also contains a bibliography and indexes and is fully referenced with footnotes.

This is a well edited and carefully constructed volume that brings into focus a previously little known sixteenth-century Devon source. As such, it is a very welcome addition to the New Series publications of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society. As to the book's wider historical significance, Anita Travers writes – 'This is not merely a Devon text; it has a wider interest for historians of Tudor England'. She is surely right.

Chris Jago

Gerry Woodcock, *Homage to St Eustachius's: A History of Tavistock's Parish Church* (Andover: Phillimore, 2012) 304 pages. 95 illustrations. Hardback. ISBN 9781860777318. £25.

A central feature of the town of Tavistock is its fine parish church, dedicated to St Eustachius, a Roman soldier who suffered martyrdom after converting to Christianity. Its full history is the subject of this impressive work by Gerry Woodcock. The Leicestershire-born author, who read history at Cambridge, is well regarded as an 'honorary' Tavistockian by virtue of his many years as head of history and head of sixth form at Tavistock College, and for the books he has written and talks given about the town, all of which have been recognised in the title Honoured Burgess for services to Tavistock.

Tavistock has a long history of Christian influence, from well before construction of the parish church eight centuries ago, and possibly originating from the arrival of holy Celtic settlers from the sixth century. These included the Irish Rímon, to whom, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Benedictine abbey, established in 974, was dedicated. While lay people were probably allowed to worship in the abbey church, it became desirable for the parish to have one of its own. A deed of 1184 by the Bishop of Exeter refers to the 'church of St Eustachius in Tavystock'. Its precise location was not given,

but conclusive evidence indicates construction of the present St Eustachius's between 1193 and 1284, close to and parallel with the great church of the abbey. Soon, however, it was rebuilt, the new structure, dedicated in 1318, being basically that of the present building, and in 1445 it was enlarged by the addition of an extra south aisle, known as the Clothworkers'.

Until the Reformation St Eustachius's was under the patronage of the abbot, while within the administration of the Bishop of Exeter. The relationship between abbey and diocese was not always peaceful, as explained by the author. Meanwhile the abbey maintained its provision of medical and educational care for the townspeople, and hospitality to visitors. Great changes came in 1539, with the Reformation, demise of the abbey, and gradual dismantling of most of its structure. The dissolved abbey and its lands were given by Henry VIII to John Russell, whose family – subsequently earls and dukes of Bedford – held the estate and patronage of the church until the early-twentieth century.

Changes of doctrine and of styles of worship were not always acceptable to the St Eustachius's congregation. The effects of mid-seventeenth century Puritanism in the parish are noted, as was the 'potential threat to the state' in which 'papists' were regarded in their support of the Jacobites. The strongly anti-Catholic Bedfords championed the cause of nonconformity, although they remained Anglican in exercising the rites of patronage. Later, influences of the Oxford Movement were to produce further differences of views.

In line with liturgical changes of emphasis, the church building and refurbishments have undergone other alterations in modern times, notably in 1843–5, with re-ordering in 1910 and at times later. The author brings the work fully up to date with developments to the present day, concentrating not just on the building, but on clergy and people.

The substance of the book is the result of a vast amount of research. It is very well presented, written in a clear, flowing, objective style, and is a pleasure to read. Gerry Woodcock must be thanked for having given his work – including much travel – and all proceeds to St Eustachius's church. The book will provide a concise source of information for many years to come.

Helen Harris

The Devon Historian

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Devon Historian publishes researched articles which should not exceed 4,000 words in length, excluding references. Non-referenced material, notes and news items are not published in *The Devon Historian*. They may, however, be suitable for publication in the Society's biannual newsletter, *Devon History News*. Authors should not submit articles to *The Devon Historian* which are under consideration for publication elsewhere. All papers are read by the honorary editor, and will also be sent to an anonymous referee for constructive comment. Articles usually require some revision before being accepted. The article must be accompanied by all the required print-quality illustrations. The final format is at the discretion of the editor, and the editor reserves the right to edit the text (submission of an article is not a guarantee of publication). The editor, will be happy to discuss ideas in advance of submission.

Before submission please ensure that material is prepared according to the journal guidelines.

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Once the article has been accepted, it will be returned to the author with some initial editorial suggestions. When the author has undertaken revisions and incorporated any changes they wish to make, the paper should be re-submitted for copy-editing and review. The paper will then be sent back to the author with any final suggestions, and final copy should be sent to the editor by a mutually agreed date. All articles will be sent to the author at proof stage. No changes to the text can be made at proof stage, other than the correction of typographical errors. The editor will need up-to-date contact details for authors at proof stage.

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