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Front cover image: Mrs W. J. Baird harrowing and rolling the fields near Paington, Devon.

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The Devon Historian

Oats, Sprats and Barley Bread: Feeding Devon in World War I

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Abbreviations

BHM	Brixham Heritage Museum
DAT	*Devonshire Association Transactions*
DEI	Devon and Exeter Institution
DHC	Devon Heritage Centre
NDRO	North Devon Record Office
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
PWDRO	Plymouth and West Devon Record Office
TDH	*The Devon Historian*
TNA	The National Archives

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Introduction

HENRY FRENCH

These articles on farming, fishing, and various aspects of food supply in Devon during the First World War reflect a series of research topics that emerged out of an initiative run by the History Department at the University of Exeter, as part of its involvement with one of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded First World War Community-Engagement Hubs, 'Everyday Lives During the First World War', co-ordinated by Dr Sarah Lloyd at the University of Hertfordshire. Through this collaboration, we obtained funding for a part-time project officer, Dr James Wallis, who organised a series of project workshops in which a group of volunteers discussed sources, methods of analysis and their findings about life in Devon during the First World War. This research was brought together under the title 'Food, Farming and Fishing in Devon During the First World War', under the auspices of the Devon History Society, through the efforts of Dr Julia Neville, The Devon History Society's affiliated societies secretary. It featured at the DHS' Annual General Meeting in October 2016. We were also assisted considerably by Southwest Heritage Trust/Devon Heritage Centre's on-going 'Devon Remembers Heritage Project', funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and in particular, the efforts of its project officer Katherine Findlay, particularly in bringing in contributors on fishing.

This research resulted in an initial publication, entitled *Food, Farming and Fishing in Devon During the First World War*, containing a series of brief essays, which is available on-line via the DHS website.[1] However, a number of the volunteers wanted to continue their research to develop more substantial 4,000-word articles for this journal. They extended their existing analyses, and presented some of their findings at a special conference entitled

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'Oats, Sprats and Barley Bread: Feeding Devon in World War 1', held in May 2017. We are extremely grateful to the unstinting efforts of the editor, and to guidance provided by the anonymous peer reviewers, whose suggestions and insights have materially improved the structure and content of the articles presented in this issue.

Although most academic research remains focused on the origins, conduct, logistics and battles of the First World War, in the last two decades there has been a move to research civilian life on all sides during the conflict. Such revisionist histories have stressed the obvious fact that war does not necessarily bring out the best in people. They have revealed stories of civilian 'shirkers' unwilling to volunteer; slip-shod military production and assembly line militancy; self-interested narrow-mindedness about the implementation of petty regulations; and the continued and very real presence of class divisions and privilege in relation to power, resources or food. Perhaps understandably, this research has tended to concentrate on life in capital cities, or industrial towns, given their significance in terms of population size or for war production.[2] In view of this, there have been calls to broaden the focus of historical attention, to include a wider range of local communities.[3] In the wake of the centenary of the outbreak of the war, there have also been a number of general studies of life on the 'Home Front'.[4] There have been relatively few studies of rural Britain,[5] but Devon has received more attention than most English counties.[6]

Research by Bonnie White and Richard Batten has demonstrated that Devon men's reluctance to volunteer between 1914 and 1916 became well-known within the region and the nation, and that it was attributed, in part, to the reluctance of Devon farmers to let their sons go off to war.[7] Recruiting parties were frequently welcomed with a cream tea, but often in villages where men of military age were suddenly very thin on the ground.[8] Similarly, Bonnie White has shown that civilians did not always bear food shortages stoically. In Plymouth, Exeter and Barnstaple, there were disturbances outside shops in the spring of 1917. Women and children queued up for bread, potatoes, eggs and other goods from early in the morning. The black market also operated, with farmers selling at the farm-gate to metropolitan buyers, and numerous low-level dodges were deployed to cheat the systems of price-controls and partial rationing introduced in the autumn of 1916.[9] At the same time, Richard Batten's research into the operation of military tribunals after the introduction of conscription in the spring of 1916 has illustrated the often heavy-handed, crass ways in which they attempted to reconcile the urgent need for army reinforcements, against the equally pressing requirements for agricultural labour.[10] This resulted in a number of farmers' sons and rural

workers being excoriated as 'shirkers', and having their appeals dismissed in sometimes patronising and very patrician tones.

These kinds of correctives are very important in order to prevent our historical lens from being misted up by centenary nostalgia or distorted by the imperatives of popular commemoration. However, as the articles in this issue of *The Devon Historian* illustrate, the bathos of ordinary life in wartime should not obscure some of the substantive achievements of the people of the county, however much they were otherwise immune to the supposedly ennobling effects of wartime struggle. This can be illustrated by the example of agricultural production in the county. Bonnie White and Peter Dewey demonstrated that the problem of labour shortages in agriculture was never fully resolved, either in the county or in the country as a whole.[11] In Devon, White's figures suggest that the total labour force in agriculture shrank from 41,940 persons to 31,330 persons in 1918.[12] Despite this, she shows that the county's farmers remained reluctant to call on the Women's Land Army. In the final year of the war, Devon's farmers were ten times more likely (in numerical terms, at least) to use enemy prisoners of war than to pay women volunteers. Yet, the figures given by Hitchings, Lawrence, Moss and Wilkins in their article show that the acreage devoted to labour-intensive crops such as wheat, cereals and potatoes all expanded by 1918, compared to pre-war levels, while the numbers of livestock had also recovered, despite a significant reduction in the area devoted to grassland and fodder crops. These changes were relatively modest in scale (increases in the area devoted to wheat of about 3 per cent on pre-war levels), and food shortages and price rises hardly abated. Even so, it was a significant achievement to maintain agrarian production levels when the workforce was reduced by a quarter! This required many people to make the kinds of sacrifices of time and effort that the leaders of the country repeatedly exhorted them to contribute, and (probably) required significant amounts of unpaid and unrecorded labour by women and children. Occasionally, therefore, dry statistics on employment, acreages and outputs can be as eloquent as the reports in the local press about recruitment drives, fund-raising charity events, Belgian refugees or the war wounded, as well as the reported instances of shortages, unrest, strikes and the black market.

This example illustrates the value of the subjects, and the sources, covered by the articles within this issue, and (above all) the benefits of taking a local approach in which national or county trends can be understood more fully within a specific context. Penny Lawrence's article describing the methodology for analysing the MAF68 Annual Census Returns of Agricultural Production is an important starting point. These 'June Returns' (the census date was in

early June each year) are held by The National Archive in Kew, and are not necessarily well-known to local historians. They record the annual estimates for output in each parish, covering arable acreages cropped, livestock numbers, and an ever-increasing array of sub-categories of production. They were begun in the wake of the devastating 'cattle plague' (rinderpest) outbreak of 1865–6, and returns were made compulsory during the First World War.[13] As Lawrence explains, this source has its deficiencies. The war multiplied the categories into which agricultural production was organised, which makes it difficult to compare every aspect of these returns from 1914 to 1918 or beyond. It is true that there are more exciting historical documents. It is also true that the only way to really extract meaningful material from them is to record the data within computer spreadsheets. Yet, once this tedious task is completed, the researcher has results that can be compared instantly to other parishes within the county, to the county figures as a whole (which were collated and published annually in reports to parliament), and to the whole country as well.

Penny Lawrence's discussion of the methods by which results can be extracted underpins the analysis of these returns presented by Edward Hitchings, Penny Lawrence, Judith Moss and Roger Wilkins. This illustrates the value of this material to the local historian. On the one hand, it locates the changing patterns of production within the county squarely within the national context, which has been described very effectively by Peter Dewey.[14] Devon's experiences tallied with those of the other pastoral counties of the west of England.[15] The First World War temporarily reversed the long-term trend towards specialisation in beef and dairy herds, and a corresponding shift from arable production to grasslands. These changes had mitigated the effects of the nation-wide 'Agricultural Depression' after 1873, which resulted from the influx of cheap grain produced on the US and Canadian prairies, and was compounded from the 1890s by imports of refrigerated mutton and beef from the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina. By 1914, the arable acreage in Devon was much diminished, the proportion of county's population engaged in agriculture had halved, from 15 per cent in 1851 to 7 per cent in 1911.[16] While the war did not reverse this decline in the rural workforce, it did halt, and even reverse, the decline in arable production, particularly after the introduction of the Corn Production Act in August 1917. As in other pastoral counties in the north, west midlands, north-west and south-west, this increase was achieved primarily by ploughing up 'permanent' grassland (that may have dropped out of arable cultivation in the late nineteenth century), reducing the acreage of fodder crops, but perhaps growing them more intensively, and generally running down the

numbers of livestock through to 1917, with a gradual increase in 1918.[17] At the same time, great effort was put into the production of potatoes, so that small increases in acreages helped create large increases in yields, as long as blight was prevented. However, despite these efforts, prices rose rapidly after 1915, particularly in the spring of 1917 when grain imports from America were reduced. Similarly, the county never properly reconciled the competing demands for men for the army versus agricultural production, and although women workers made important contributions, their numbers were always inadequate.

This research also draws attention to the variations in the experiences of parishes within the county. The differences in geography, soil types, elevation, rainfall, drainage, market-access and local expertise were profound in such a large and diverse county as Devon. The broader imperatives of the 'plough-up' campaign could only be interpreted and implemented on a parish-by-parish basis. For example, on Dartmoor, although farmers experimented with wheat, they soon reverted to their medieval and early modern staples of oats and barley which suited the climate, supplemented by substantial increases in the potato crop. Conversely, the largest declines in the acreages devoted to fodder crops were precisely in those parishes in the Blackdown Hills where specialisation in dairy production had been greatest prior to the war. The same imperative also led to a decline in the numbers of pigs, which were fed on dairy by-products in the Blackdowns, and elsewhere ate grain that increasingly was reserved for human consumption. It is also interesting to note that pre-war patterns of production reasserted themselves in many parishes by 1920. These variations illustrate that although average figures can be very revealing they are obviously a composite, in which local peculiarities, variations and historical experiences, are smoothed out and obscured.

If the county's farmers coped to varying degrees with the war and its consequences, Samantha Little's research in the Brixham fishing fleet demonstrates that the war hit seafaring communities much more heavily. Brixham's fleet was reduced from 210 vessels in August 1914 to only 125 by 1919. The war dealt three powerful blows to the fishing industry. Firstly, within the first few days of war, a significant portion of the fleet's workforce were mobilised as naval reservists, reducing the size of the crews available. Secondly, the Admiralty were quick to block off large areas of the fishing grounds of the inshore fleet in Start Bay and the wider Lyme Bay area, which imposed unworkable restrictions on this fishery. Thirdly, after the introduction of conscription in 1916, there was a further process of attrition, as naval recruiters and military tribunals cut back the exemptions available to fishermen. Many of those who remained in the industry were used as directed

labour, and sent to man trawlers in Irish Sea or the North Sea. This story is one of the least well-known histories of the Home Front, and it demonstrates powerfully that the privations of war could be felt very acutely in some communities, while those ten miles inland might have an entirely different experience.

These three articles set the scene for four further articles which consider the consequences of war within local government, within the gardens of the 'great estates', in the Home-Front kitchens, and in the lives of two young girls on the edge of Dartmoor. It is fair to say that one seldom encounters the phrases 'war-time heroism' and 'the county council' in the same sentence! However, as the previous articles on farming and fishing illustrate, at a county level throughout the war the fundamental problem of government remained how to reconcile the competing demands of the metropolitan 'military-industrial complex' with the needs of the county. It fell to the county council to try to square this increasingly irreconcilable circle, and as Julia Neville's essay demonstrates very clearly, the council's shortcomings in the face of this impossible task accelerated a process of political change in the county's 'natural rulers'. She demonstrates that in line with many other rural counties, such as Suffolk, the late Victorian creation of county councils had provided a new outlet for the governing instincts of the traditional 'squirearchy', buttressed by a range of legal, medical and other professionals.[18] The educational reforms after 1900, and social reforms instituted by Liberal governments after 1906, required county councils to assume greater responsibilities for schools, public health, welfare provision and infrastructure. Consequently, even before 1914 county councils had to trade the demands of central government against the fiscal protests of ratepayers, the conservatism of some rural landowners, or the demands for further action from some working-class urban voters. The war produced enormous increases in the demands from the centre of government, for war recruits, the imposition of security controls, and the creation of wartime infrastructure. After 1916, the increases in powers claimed by central government had to be implemented within Devon by the county council, which inspired considerable local opposition, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Corn Production Act, organisation of War Agricultural Executive Committees, imposition of price controls and (eventually) rationing. As Neville's article demonstrates, this created a 'blame-game' in which many of the landowning elite on the county council criticised tenant-farmers for dragging their feet, while farmers pointed out obvious examples of hypocrisy among landowners in the implementation of these edicts. These tensions may have contributed to the long-term decline of landowners as the dominant political group on the county council.

The demands for soldiers and sailors also accelerated another aspect of landed decline, as shown by Claire Greener, Anne Kaile and Julia Neville's research on the changing function of estate gardens during the war. Landed incomes had been under pressure since the onset of the agricultural depression, although they held up better in the south-west than in arable East Anglia. In addition, landowners faced substantial increases in taxation. Death duties rose from 1894. After 1908, Lloyd George also increased supertax on higher earners, and in 1910 introduced Incremental Value Duty, which was (in essence) a 'capital gains tax' on increases in land values, aimed at landowners who had benefitted from rises in land prices caused by the suburban 'ribbon development' around towns – the Killerton valuation is discussed in the article (the source, National Archives IR [Inland Revenue] 58 is another excellent, and little-known resource for local history).[19] This was compounded by the Parliament Act of 1910, which removed the House of Lords' power to veto parliamentary legislation. These moves were regarded by Devon landowners, such as Lord Poltimore, as an all-out assault on the 'landed interest'. They sparked an increase in land sales by estates (notably the Bedford estate in West Devon) between 1910 and 1914, as landowners sought to reduce their taxable liabilities (and, often, their mortgages as well).[20] This foreshadowed the flood of estate sales between 1919 and 1922. The war began against this background of pressure on landed incomes and financial retrenchment. As this article shows, estates sought to turn kitchen gardens over to food production, make land available for 'plough-up' campaigns and release men of service-age for the war. As long-term leaders of the county, and current county councillors, the Aclands, Bampfyldes, Fortescues, Clintons and Stucleys needed to emphasize their contribution to what Bonnie White has termed the 'equality of sacrifice' on the Home Front. However, it was also evident that estates sought to protect valued employees (as at Killerton) or manoeuvred to preserve garden or parkland features (such as the deer-park at Poltimore), causing complaints to military tribunals and War Agricultural Executive Committees. As has been noted, the war caused a rapid acceleration in the sale of estates, and wartime wage controls (and statutory increases) sparked further reductions in garden employment after 1918, despite previous promises that jobs would be kept open. This article provides further interesting evidence that the war speeded up social, economic and political trends that had already begun in the first decade of the century.

'Equality of sacrifice' was a particularly important, and fraught, message to inculcate in the kitchen, when basic commodities rose in price with alarming and disorienting rapidity after two generations of remarkable price

stability since 1870. Paul Cleave's article on food supply, recipes and local initiatives offers an insight into the ways in which local communities sought to put into practice the patriotic injunctions of government and food writers, to substitute cheaper commodities for expensive imported goods, create surpluses that could be given to the armed forces, and make increasingly meagre supplies go further.[21] His survey of parish and diocesan magazines uses an interesting set of source materials, which get beneath the exhortations of county leaders like earl Fortescue, or the bishop of Exeter, and illustrate how 'local worthies' tried to translate these requests into practical advice, and palatable recipes, at a time when supplies were often short, and queues increasingly long.

Ultimately, perhaps the best way to appreciate the combined effects of global war, national policy, local implementation, parish initiatives, and household struggles, is to examine how they intersect within the experience of particular individuals. Judith Moss' examination of the diary of Faith Lowe, working on her father's farm in 1918, helps us appreciate how these different spheres of politics, policy and power, bore down on the daily life of a young woman, who lived apparently miles from any immediate influence of wartime. Lowe's diary illustrates the sheer hard work, the aching back, the frozen fingers, the muddy boots and (perhaps also) the sense of contribution for a woman given the unexpected task of farming the land. As Moss also explains, Lowe's example also illustrates the feathered edges of female involvement on the land, outside the formal structure of the Women's Land Army. If the Land Army's contribution was small, in terms of actual numbers, during the First World War, Faith Lowe's slightly equivocal relationship to the auxiliary Women's National Land Service Corps, may indicate that many more women contributed to the agrarian war effort than were ever recorded in the official statistics. This helps to fill in the apparent gap between the size of the agricultural labour-force, and the relative stability of production in the county.

These articles offer a variety of new perspectives on the First World War in the county. They illustrate how statistical sources can be used to provide a historical context against which to assess the competing claims of landowners, farmers, military recruiters and committee members reported in contemporary newspapers, tribunals and committee minutes, and to assess Devon's performance against that of neighbouring counties or the whole country. Similarly, they also illustrate experiences that have tended to be overlooked, such as the plight of fishermen, the role of the county council, or the effects on the great estates. While most of the drama of the war was played out overseas, and much of its tragedy experienced within the family, much of the impact of war was felt through relatively understated but sometimes

profound changes in the fabric of daily life, many of which were unintended. The local study provides a very powerful lens through which to examine these, assess their effects, and consider their significance, and we hope that the case-studies presented here will stimulate further research on the effects of the First World War in other locations within the county, to recover other forgotten histories.

NOTES

1. See <http://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk/research/food-farming-fishing-devon-first-world-war/>.
2. See for example J. Winter, 'The Practices of Metropolitan Life in Wartime', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Roberts (eds), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919. Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-20; Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jerry White, *Zeppelin Nights: London in the First World War* (London: The Bodley Head Ltd., 2014); S. Goebel and J. White, 'London and the First World War', *London Journal*, 41:3 (2016), 199-218; D. Thornton, 'Leeds and the First World War', *Thoroton Society Miscellany* (Thoresby Society, 2, ser. 24, Leeds 2014); *Blaenavon and the First World War, 1914–1918: A Welsh Industrial Town at War, Home and Abroad* (Blaenavon Community Heritage Museum, 2014).
3. P. Purseigle, 'Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War', in Jenny Mcleod and Pierre Purseigle (eds), *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 95-123.
4. Lucinda Gosling, *Great War Britain: The First World War at Home* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014); Maggie Andrews and Janis Lomas (eds), *The Home Front in Britain: Images, Myths and Forgotten Experiences Since 1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Terry Charman, *The First World War on the Home Front* (London: André Deutsch, 2014).
5. H. Crowe, 'Social and Economic Life in Cumbria during the First World War', *Transactions of the Cumbrian Archaeology and Antiquarian Society*, 3rd ser., 16 (2016), 5-8; G. Thomas, 'Female Agricultural Workers in Wales during the First World War', in Andrews and Lomas (eds), *The Home Front*, 92-107; N. Verdon, 'Left out in the Cold: Village Women and Agricultural Labour in England and Wales during the First World War', *Twentieth-Century British History*, 27: 1 (2016), 1-25; Bonnie White, *The Women's Land Army in First World War Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); K. Grieves, 'The Quiet of the Country and the Restless Excitement of the Towns: Rural Perspectives on the Home Front, 1914–1918', in M. Tebbutt (ed.), *Rural and Urban Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Regional Perspectives* (Manchester:

CORAL, 2004); Pamela Horn, *Rural Life in England in the First World War* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1984).

6. David Parker, *The People of Devon in the First World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2013); B. J. White, 'Food Protests and the (In)equality of Sacrifice in First World War Devon', *Local Historian* 45:1 (2015), 19-32; Idem, 'Wigwams and Resort Towns: The Housing Crisis in First World War Devon', in Nick Mansfield and Craig Horner (eds), *The Great War: Localities and Regional Identities* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 97-114; P. Christie, 'We Bain't Going Till we be Fetched. Military Tribunals in North Devon during the First World War', *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 146 (2014), 145-172; Richard Batten, 'Devon and the First World War', University of Exeter Ph.D. Thesis, 2013, <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/14600/BattenR.pdf?sequence=1>; B. J. White, 'Sowing the seeds of patriotism? The Women's Land Army in Devon, 1914–1918', *Local Historian* 41:1 (2011), 13-27; Idem, 'Feeding the War Effort: Agricultural Experiences in First World War Devon, 1914–17', *Agricultural History Review* 58:1 (2010), 95-112; Idem, 'Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914-December 1915', *Historical Journal*, 52:3 (2009), 641-66.
7. White, 'Volunteerism', 648-54; Batten, 'Devon', 92-118, 136-64, 214-42, 282-332.
8. Batten, 'Devon', 139.
9. White, 'Food Protests', 20-25.
10. Batten, 'Devon', 282-332.
11. Peter Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989), 216-7.
12. White, 'Feeding the War Effort', Table 2, 102.
13. *A Century of Agricultural Statistics. Great Britain 1866–1966* (HMSO, 1968), 2-4.
14. Dewey, *British Agriculture*, 201-10.
15. S. Wilmot, 'The South-West: Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall', in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales. Volume VII 1850–1914 (Part I)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 411-26.
16. B. Afton and M. Turner, 'The Statistical Base of Agricultural Performance in England and Wales, 1850–1914', in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales. Volume VII 1850–1914 (Part II)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Table 40.4, 1950.
17. This was not always popular. See H. Crowe, '"Murmurs of discontent": The Upland Response to the Plough Campaign, 1916–18' in Richard W. Hoyle (ed.), *The Farmer in England, 1650-1980* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 263-93.
18. See Edward Bujak, *England's Rural Realms. Landholding and the Agricultural Revolution* (London and New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 2007), 106-26.
19. See Brian Short, *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1997); Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750–1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

20. David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 110.
21. See also K. Hunt, 'A Heroine at Home: The Housewife on the First World War Home Front', in Andrews and Lowe (eds), *The Home Front*, 73-91; M. Andrews, 'Idea and Ideals of Domesticity and the Home Front during the First World War', in Idem, *The Home Front*, 6-20; S. Hockenhull, 'Everybody's Business: Film, Food and Victory in the First World War', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 35:4 (2015), 571-95.

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Changes in Crop Areas and Livestock Numbers in Some Devon Parishes in Response to World War I

EDWARD HITCHINGS, PENNY LAWRENCE, JUDITH MOSS and ROGER WILKINS

Introduction

This article examines changes in crop areas and livestock numbers in some Devon parishes in response to World War I, using data extracted from Agricultural Returns from 1912 to 1920 for ten parishes in east and mid Devon. Agricultural returns made by farmers for 4 June annually provide an excellent record of crop areas and livestock numbers, and information aggregated to the parish level, available at The National Archive, provided the basis for the current study.[1] In an overview of changes in Devon farming during World War I, Paul Brassley highlighted the massive imports of food into Britain before the war.[2] Peter Dewey noted that for the 1909–13 period home supplies provided only 42 per cent of total food supply and only 19 per cent of wheat.[3] The increasing concern about food supply was exacerbated by poor harvests and the impact of submarine warfare on imports. Feeding the population was a crucial part of the war effort, and concerns led to the 1917 Corn Production Act which guaranteed the prices of wheat and oats for four years. County Councils were required to set up War Agricultural Executive Committees (WAEC) with a primary task of increasing the output of cereals and potatoes, through conversion of grassland to arable production. Earl Fortescue's Devon WAEC set a target of increasing the arable area to that in 1870, a time before massive imports led to a fall in grain prices. Brassley

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pointed out that there were no radical changes in crop areas and livestock numbers in Devon during the early part of the war, but considerable changes occurred in 1918 following the 1917 Act and directions from the WAEC.

Information from ten parishes, representing three distinct areas of Devon, was collated and compared with that for Devon and for England and Wales as a whole.[4] The objectives were to ascertain the extent to which responses at the county and national level occurred in these individual parishes and to account for reasons for any discrepancies from the general trends.

The parishes studied

The parishes studied are illustrated in Figure 1 and major features relating to topography, soils and rainfall are given in Table 1.

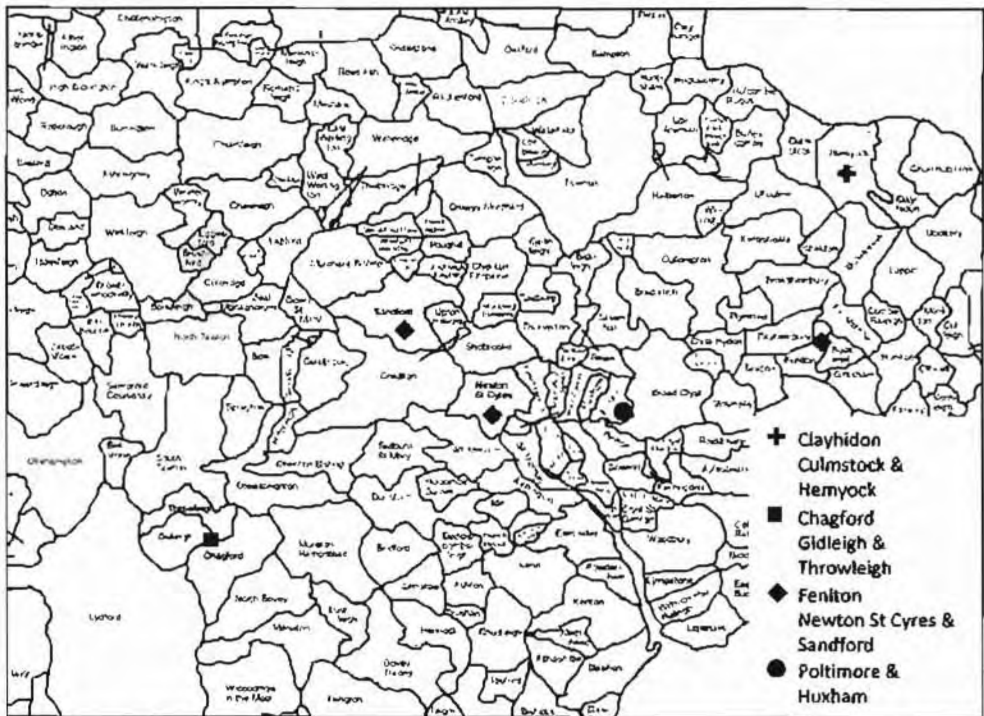

Figure 1. The parishes studied.

Table 1. The parishes studied.

	Annual rainfall (mm)	Altitude range (m)	Soils and terrain
'Lowland'			
Feniton	900	60-140	River valleys and gently rolling slopes. Considerable areas of free draining red sandstone soils, but some heavier areas with impeded drainage.
Newton St Cyres	800	20-200	Three distinct areas with (i) alluvial soils of the Creedy flood plain (ii) free-draining fairly flat red sandstone soils and (iii) poorly-drained clay and shale soils with uneven terrain.
Poltimore/Huxham	800	12-120	North – slightly acid loam and clayey with impeded drainage; south - freely draining slightly acid; eastern intrusion - loamy & sandy with high groundwater and peaty surface.
Sandford	800	40-160	Mainly fertile rolling free-draining red sandstone soils, with some river valleys.
Blackdown Hills			
Clayhidon	1,100	130-270	Soils on the Blackdown plateau and high ground, derived from the clay-with-flints and Upper Greensand, are generally poor and acidic ranging from brown earths to stagnogleys. They are often classified as Grade 4, either because of the steep slope, or because they are slowly permeable, seasonally wet and in some areas peaty. The valleys are cut through into the red Triassic Mercia Mudstone, giving rise to more fertile brown earth and brown clay soils. These are mostly Grade 3, but are still often clayey with impeded drainage. In Culmstock parish there are better quality brown earths in some areas with more sandy Triassic strata, and conversely poorer peaty soils in the area of Maiden Down.
Culmstock	1,100	90-250	
Hemyock	1,100	105-260	

Dartmoor 'Fringe'			
Chagford	1,400	140-390	Mainly coarse loamy soils over loamy subsoil, but with areas of finer material. Valley bottoms tending to waterlogging going up to well drained gentle slopes and steep rocky soils on open moorland with many springs.
Gidleigh	1,400	180-420	Similar terrain and soils to Chagford, but with greater proportion of very bouldery and rocky ground. There are peaty soils with seasonal waterlogging on the moorland edge.
Throwleigh	1,400	200-500	Generally similar to Chagford , but with greater proportion of coarse loamy material over loamy subsoils, seasonal waterlogging and many springs. Less steep than Chagford and Gidleigh.

A broad comparison of agricultural land quality between parishes is given by the Agricultural Land Classification and this is aggregated for the parishes in Table 2. Boundaries of individual parishes from the Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region were superimposed on relevant sections of the map, and a transparent grid overlay used to record the extent of individual land classes.

Land was allocated to one of five grades according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics and climate posed limitations on agricultural use:

Grade 1 – excellent quality Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown. Yields are high.

Grade 2 – very good quality Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can usually be grown, but on some land in the grade there may be reduced flexibility.

Grade 3 – good to moderate quality Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield.

Grade 4 – poor quality Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass.

Grade 5 – very poor quality Land with very severe limitations which generally restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing.[5]

Table 2. Agricultural Land Classification for parishes.

	Land class %				
	1	2	3	4	5
Feniton	23	33	43	2	0
Newton St Cyres	15	16	65	2	0
Poltimore/Huxham	56	0	30	14	0
Sandford	0	27	68	5	0
'Lowland'	*23*	*19*	*52*	*6*	*0*
Clayhidon	0	0	67	33	0
Culmstock	6	10	69	15	0
Hemyock	0	0	74	26	0
Blackdown Hills	*2*	*3*	*71*	*25*	*0*
Chagford	0	0	12	56	32
Gidleigh	0	0	0	29	71
Throwleigh	0	0	25	43	33
Dartmoor 'Fringe'	*0*	*0*	*12*	*46*	*43*

Although the parishes studied reflected the interests of the authors and their localities, they nevertheless give contrasts in climate, soil and terrain and collectively encompass many of the contrasts in Devon. There are three parishes (Clayhidon, Culmstock and Hemyock) with moderate to high rainfall and hilly terrain in the Blackdown Hills, three parishes (Chagford, Gidleigh and Throwleigh) on the eastern fringe of Dartmoor with high rainfall and hilly terrain termed Dartmoor 'Fringe'. The final group of parishes is rather more diverse and has been termed 'Lowland', with lower rainfall and much more land than in the other groups being indicated by the Agricultural Land Classification as suitable for cropping. The parishes in this group were Feniton, Newton St Cyres, Sandford and Poltimore/Huxham (Huxham is a very small parish directly adjacent to Poltimore and the figures for the two parishes were amalgamated).

Crops and livestock

Figures were taken from the Agricultural Returns for the period from 1912 to 1920, with the exception of 1915, because information for that year was not available in The National Archive for most of the parishes. In order to provide a robust base-line to reflect the situation before the start of the war, a mean figure was calculated for the three years 1912–14, and changes during and immediately after the war were related to this figure.

The crop areas used were for wheat, other cereals (the sum of barley and oats), potatoes, fodder roots (the sum of mangolds, swedes and turnips) and grass (the sum of temporary and permanent grass used for cutting or grazing). The total of these categories was considered to be the total farmed area. Some crops, e.g. beans, peas, cabbages, orchards, were excluded from this classification, but, with the exception of orchards, these occupied very small areas. The total of wheat, other cereals, potatoes and fodder roots was considered to be the area of arable crops. Note that with this categorisation, temporary grass was not included in the arable area. Rough grazing and common land was also excluded from consideration. Much of this would not be included in the Agricultural Returns and this land would be unlikely to be converted into arable cropping, although some might have been improved to permanent grass.

For livestock, the figures used were horses for agricultural use, and the totals for cattle, sheep and pigs.

Crops

The areas occupied by each crop for individual parishes, for Devon and for England and Wales between 1912 and 1920 (not including 1915) are presented in Appendix 1. Cropping at the beginning of the war is shown in Table 3.

The area of wheat in the parishes varied from 0 in Gidleigh to 11.1 per cent in Sandford, with only Sandford being above the national average of 6.9 per cent. All three Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes had less than 2 per cent of wheat, lower than all other parishes. Other cereals (barley and oats) varied from 7.1 per cent in Hemyock to 19.0 per cent in Poltimore/Huxham, with mean figures very similar to the national average, although the area was somewhat lower for the Blackdown Hills. A notable feature of the potato acreage was the substantial area of 3.4 to 3.7 per cent for the Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes, above the national average of 1.8 per cent and well above the figure for all the other parishes. There is a long tradition of potato growing in these Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes with Tanner noting in 1848 that potatoes were established

Table 3: Cropping in 1912–14 (as per cent of total area in cereals, potatoes, fodder roots and grassland).

	Wheat	Other cereals	Potatoes	Fodder roots	Grass
Feniton	4.0	18.7	0.4	7.8	69.1
Newton St Cyres	3.9	12.3	0.6	7.5	75.7
Poltimore/Huxham	2.0	19.0	0.4	8.5	70.1
Sandford	11.1	15.8	0.7	9.5	62.8
'Lowland'	*7.1*	*15.8*	*0.6*	*8.7*	*67.8*
Clayhidon	3.3	9.8	0.3	4.6	82.1
Culmstock	3.7	12.3	0.4	7.1	76.6
Hemyock	3.2	7.1	0.5	4.3	84.9
Blackdown Hills	*3.3*	*9.2*	*0.4*	*5.1*	*82.0*
Chagford	0.8	12.8	3.7	8.2	74.4
Gidleigh	0.0	12.6	3.4	7.3	76.7
Throwleigh	1.3	17.8	3.5	9.7	67.7
Dartmoor 'Fringe'	*0.8*	*13.7*	*3.6*	*8.4*	*73.4*
Devon	3.8	13.8	0.9	6.7	74.9
England and Wales	6.9	13.6	1.8	5.8	71.9

as field crops in the Moretonhampstead area soon after their introduction from America late in the sixteenth century.[6] The deep soils of the Furlong Series, prevalent in that area[7], suit the crop. All parishes had substantial areas of fodder roots, with only Clayhidon and Hemyock being below the national average. Fodder roots made important contributions to the provision of high-quality feed for the large number of cattle and sheep in the parishes.

Grass occupied from 62.8 per cent (Sandford) to 84.9 per cent (Hemyock) of the total and was above the national average for seven of the ten parishes, associated with the moderate to high rainfall giving grass a relative advantage over the arable crops. The figures for the Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes for grass would have been much higher if rough grazing had been included as grass.

There were only small changes in cropping in Devon in the early part of the war. There were much larger changes in 1918. These would have resulted from the Corn Production Act in 1917 giving guaranteed prices for cereals,

and the actions of the WAEC in setting quotas. The changes were most marked for wheat and potatoes, the crops most targeted for increase to satisfy national requirements. There were also increases in the areas of other cereals, whilst areas of fodder roots and grass fell.

Figure 2 illustrates the changes in wheat area for the three groups of parishes, showing the substantial increase from 1917 to 1918. A similar pattern was followed for potatoes (Figure 3). With both crops, the areas had fallen towards pre-war levels by 1920.

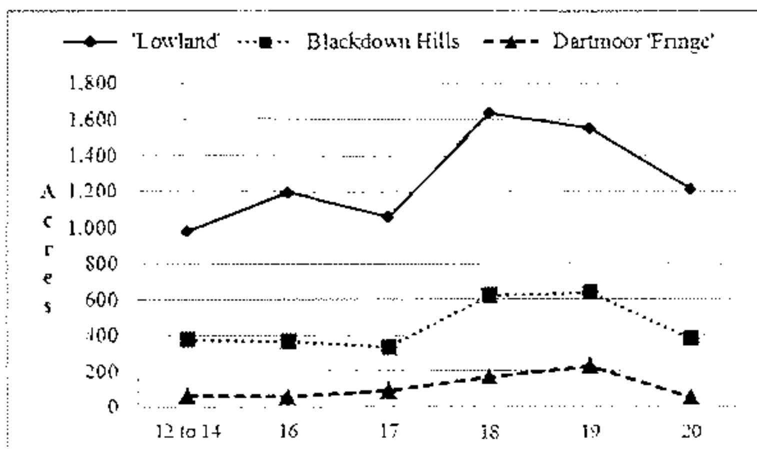

Figure 2: Wheat area (acres) in groups of parishes, 1914 to 1920.

Source: calculated from parish agricultural returns.[7]

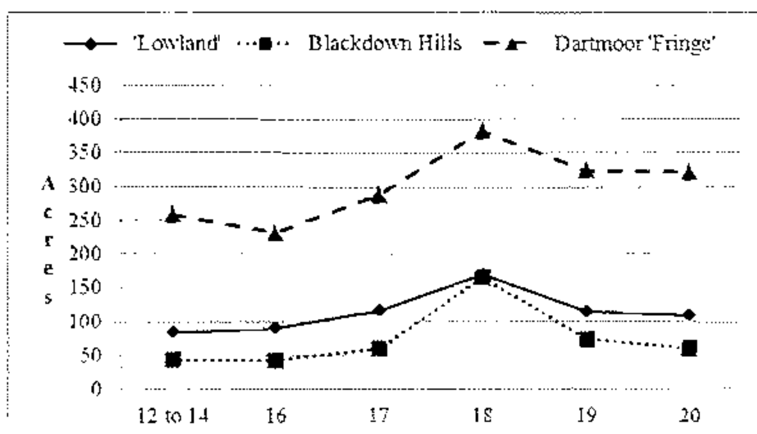

Figure 3: Potato area (acres) in groups of parishes, 1914 to 1920.

Source: calculated from parish agricultural returns.[7]

Changes from 1912–14 to 1918 are given for individual parishes, for Devon and for England and Wales in Table 4. There were increases in the areas of wheat, other cereals and potatoes in all parishes, with the increases exceeding the response nationally in eight, seven and nine of the parishes for wheat, other cereals and potatoes respectively. The areas of fodder roots and

grass declined, with the response for fodder roots being greater than that nationally in eight of the parishes.

Table 4. Changes in areas of crops and grass from 1912–14 to 1918. *Main table gives 1918 area as per cent of 1912–14 area of the crop, whilst figures in parenthesis give the value of the increase in the percentages of the farmed area occupied by a particular crop from 1912–14 to 1918.*

	Wheat	Other cereals	Potatoes	Fodder roots	Grass
Feniton	173 (2.5)	120 (2.7)	150 (0.2)	72 (-2.4)	100 (-3.0)
Newton St Cyres	226 (5.2)	133 (4.6)	235 (1.0)	73 (-1.8)	85 (-8.9)
Poltimore/Huxham	105 (0.1)	104 (0.6)	336 (0.8)	80 (-1.8)	101 (0.2)
Sandford	159 (6.1)	123 (3.0)	172 (0.5)	65 (-4.1)	93 (-6.0)
'Lowland'	*167 (4.6)*	*120 (3.0)*	*203 (0.6)*	*70 (-2.7)*	*93 (-6.0)*
Clayhidon	138 (0.9)	160 (4.5)	630 (1.3)	61 (-2.1)	102 (-4.7)
Culmstock	228 (4.6)	114 (1.7)	338 (0.8)	55 (-3.2)	95 (-4.0)
Hemyock	147 (1.4)	184 (5.5)	285 (0.9)	65 (-1.6)	96 (-6.1)
Blackdown Hills	*166 (2.0)*	*153 (4.3)*	*375 (1.0)*	*60 (-2.2)*	*98 (-5.2)*
Chagford	282 (2.0)	132 (7.5)	148 (2.7)	77 (-0.7)	71 (-11.4)
Gidleigh	# (1.1)	149 (8.9)	134 (1.9)	94 (0.5)	73 (-12.8)
Throwleigh	229 (1.4)	134 (4.4)	158 (1.6)	88 (-1.8)	99 (-5.6)
Dartmoor 'Fringe'	*278 (1.8)*	*134 (7.2)*	*148 (2.4)*	*91 (-0.8)*	*76 (-10.5)*
Devon	187 (3.3)	136 (5.1)	185 (0.8)	73 (-1.8)	89 (-7.5)
England and Wales	143 (3.1)	122 (3.2)	139 (0.7)	87 (-0.7)	90 (-6.3)

No wheat in Gidleigh in 1912–14

For wheat, the percentage increase varied from only 5 for Poltimore/Huxham to 182 for Chagford (excluding Gidleigh, where there was no wheat in 1912–14), compared with 43 per cent nationally. When, however, the increases were expressed as the increase in the percentage of the farmed area that was occupied by wheat, the largest responses were in Sandford and Newton St Cyres, with wheat increasing from 11.1 to 17.7 per cent of the farmed area in Sandford and from 3.9 to 9.1 per cent in Newton St Cyres, representing substantial changes in land use. These parishes had particularly

high proportions of land graded 1 to 3 and only moderate rainfall, making them well suited for increased wheat production.

The increases in wheat and other cereals in Poltimore/Huxham were particularly small at only 4 and 5 per cent respectively. In this case the parish statistics are at variance with published conclusions of the St Thomas War Agriculture Committee that boasted much increased wheat production in Poltimore.[8] It has not been possible to resolve this discrepancy. Either the parish returns fail to record land use correctly, or the War Committee was being misled. During the war, as discussed by Edward Hitchings,[9] the primary landowner in these parishes, Lord Poltimore, gave up his agricultural interests in Poltimore in favour of concentrating his activities on his North Molton Estate. This may have given rise to less pressure on his tenants to convert to wheat. He also declined to see any of his deer park ploughed, despite 80 acres of it having been farmed as recently as 1840. Nevertheless, some cattle grazing was permitted and the deer herd was regularly culled during the war to boost local meat supplies.

For potatoes the percentage increase varied from 34 in Gidleigh to 530 for Clayhidon, with the largest percentage increases often occurring in parishes where only a few acres of potatoes were being grown at the beginning of the war. As with wheat, there was a rather different picture when changes were considered in relation to the farmed area. On this basis, the increase in potatoes as a percentage of farmed area was greatest for Chagford, from 3.7 to 6.4 per cent, and substantial for the other Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes, whilst for Clayhidon the increase was from 0.3 to 1.6 per cent, rising only to a figure that was still lower than the Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes at the beginning of the war. As noted previously, there are suitable soils and a long tradition of growing potatoes in these Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes, so that farmers would have been well equipped and knowledgeable about growing this crop, in contrast to other parishes with no tradition of growing potatoes. Also, much encouragement was given by the Chagford Parish Council for potato production to be increased. The Council acted as a broker, putting small producers wishing to grow potatoes in contact with farmers having available land. Furthermore, the Council itself took on the cultivation and production of potatoes on five acres of land that had been earmarked for housing (and made a small profit from the operation).[10] Thus, at least in this area, increased production arose not only from mainstream farms, but also from other community actions.

The increases in cereals and potatoes occurred at the expense of fodder roots and grass. Fodder roots were widely grown in all the parishes at the beginning of the war. The area of fodder roots declined in all parishes, with

the decline being greater than that nationally in seven of the ten parishes. The decline was greatest in the Blackdown Hills parishes (40 per cent) and least for the Dartmoor 'Fringe' (9 per cent). Fodder roots are crops with a particularly high labour requirement. The reduction in fodder roots would have made an important contribution to the ability of the farmers to increase cereal and potato production through releasing cultivable land, labour and horse power. This change would, however, reduce the feed available for cattle and sheep. The reduction in the area of fodder roots was equivalent to 21, 25 and 30 per cent of the extra land used for cereals and potatoes in Dartmoor 'Fringe', Blackdown Hills and 'Lowland' respectively.

The area of grass fell in seven of the ten parishes, with the declines being particularly marked for Chagford and Gidleigh. There were though declines in the calculated farmed area of 16 per cent for Chagford and 13 per cent for Gidleigh, suggesting that some areas returned as temporary and permanent grassland in 1912–14 were reclassified as rough grazing and thus excluded from the calculated farmed area for 1918.

It seems unlikely that sufficient grassland was ploughed up for arable to satisfy the target set by Earl Fortescue, because nationally the area of arable crops, although increasing from 10.23 m acres in 1916 to 12.36 m acres in 1918, was still substantially below the peak figures of 13.75 m acres in 1875 and 13.71 m acres during World War 2 in 1944.[11]

Crop areas for 1920 as a percentage of the 1912-14 area are given in Table 5. There were in almost all cases reversions from the 1918 areas towards the pre-war situation, matching the pattern for Devon and England and Wales.

For wheat, the reduction in area was most marked for parishes in the less-favoured areas, with acreages in 1920 as percentage of 1912–14 being 84, 101 and 124 for Dartmoor 'Fringe', Blackdown Hills and 'Lowland' respectively. Challenge from poor climate and reduction in Government pressures would have contributed to this pattern. Also, when grass is ploughed up, nutrients released from the breakdown of organic matter contribute to high initial cereal yields, but this effect becomes less over time,[12] reducing the economic attraction of continuing to grow cereals. Added to this, the WAEC did not impose quotas after 1919. The area used for growing potatoes fell from 1918 to 1920 in all parishes, but remained above pre-war areas in all parishes other than Feniton and Hemyock. The fall was greatest in the Blackdown Hills (64 per cent), intermediate for 'Lowland' (36 per cent) and least for Dartmoor 'Fringe' (16 per cent). The long tradition of potato growing in the Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes would have contributed to the potato remaining an important crop there.

Fodder roots increased from 1918 to 1920 in all ten parishes, with the

Table 5. Area of crops and grass in 1920 as per cent area in 1912–14.

	Wheat	Other cereals	Potatoes	Fodder roots	Grass
Feniton	143	124	92	99	112
Newton St Cyres	186	160	138	91	87
Poltimore/Huxham	134	112	168	81	101
Sandford	111	129	122	88	92
'Lowland'	*124*	*131*	*129*	*89*	*95*
Clayhidon	101	103	193	106	104
Culmstock	113	98	197	80	90
Hemyock	94	121	87	102	103
Blackdown Hills	*101*	*107*	*135*	*96*	*101*
Chagford	79	101	122	83	71
Gidleigh	#	103	132	97	73
Throwleigh	65	109	134	102	103
Dartmoor 'Fringe'	*84*	*103*	*125*	*88*	*77*
Devon	116	111	127	92	90
England and Wales	105	112	120	92	92

#No wheat in Gidleigh in 1912–14

recovery being most marked in the Blackdown Hills parishes, with Clayhidon and Hemyock having slightly more fodder roots in 1920 than in 1912–14. The area of grass, in general, increased only slightly from the 1918 figures.

Livestock

The total numbers of agricultural horses, cattle, sheep and pigs for each parish, for Devon and for England and Wales for 1912–4, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919 and 1920 are given in Appendix 2. There were considerable differences between the groups of parishes in the relative importance of sheep and cattle, with the ratio of sheep to cattle numbers in 1912–14 being 0.71 for Blackdown Hills, 2.32 for 'Lowland' and 4.17 for Dartmoor 'Fringe', compared with the figure of 2.62 for Devon. The number of pigs in the Blackdown Hills was higher than in the other groups of parishes, pig farming having been well

established for many years in the Hemyock area. The availability of skim milk from the Culm Valley Dairy Company's butter production at Hemyock would have made an important contribution to pig feeding in that area, as discussed by Penny Lawrence.[13]

Livestock numbers in 1918 expressed as per cent of those for 1912–14 are given for individual parishes in Table 6 and Figures 4 to 7 indicate the changes in the numbers of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs respectively over the period from 1912–14 to 1920.

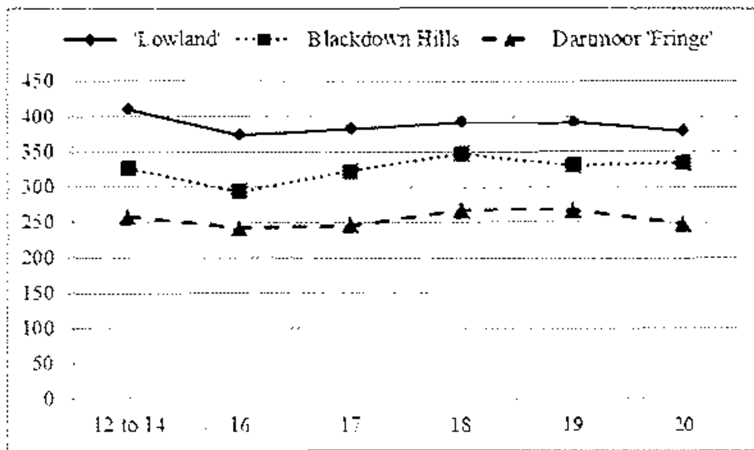

Figure 4. Number of agricultural horses in groups of parishes, 1914–1920. *Source*: calculated from parish agricultural returns.[1]

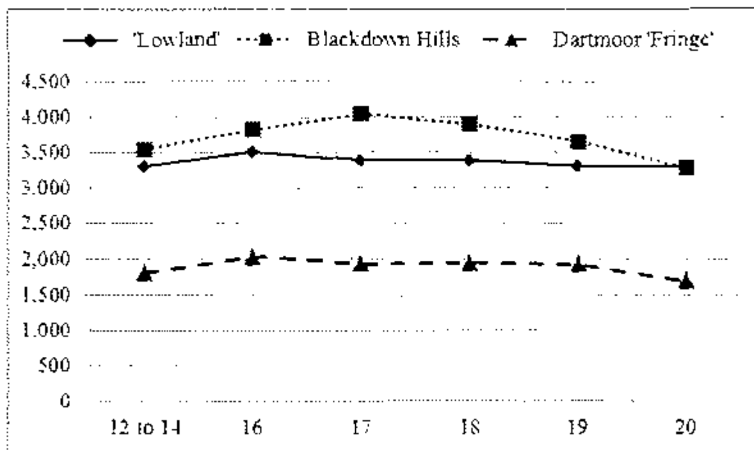

Figure 5. Number of cattle in groups of parishes, 1914–1920. *Source*: calculated from parish agricultural returns.[1]

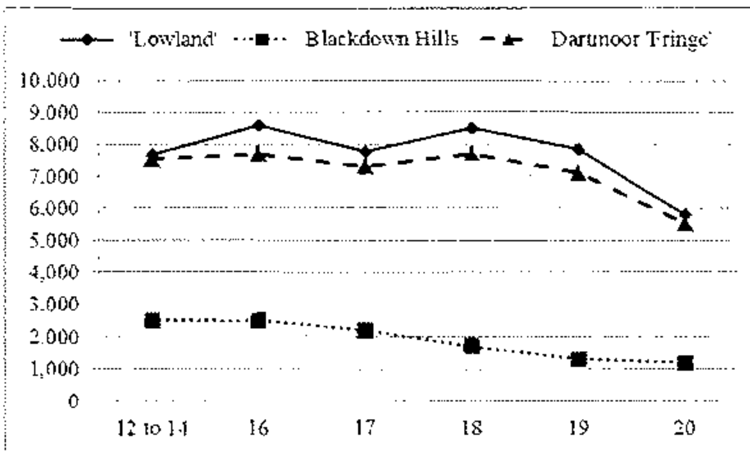

Figure 6. Number of sheep in groups of parishes, 1914–1920. *Source*: calculated from parish agricultural returns.[1]

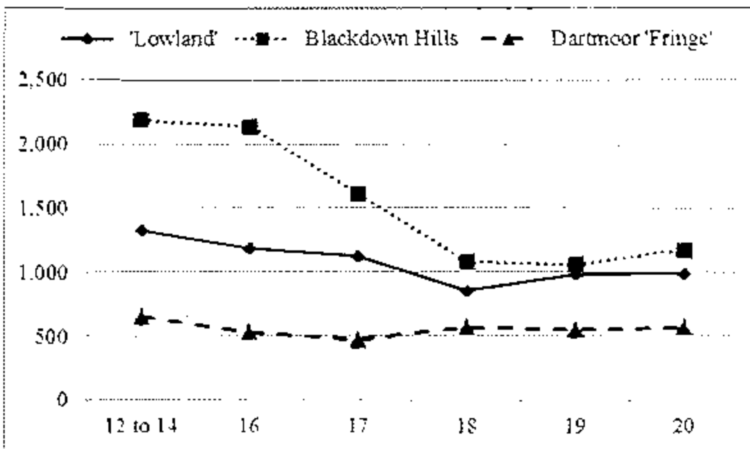

Figure 7. Number of pigs in groups of parishes, 1914–1920. *Source*: calculated from parish agricultural returns.[1]

There was little difference between these years in the number of agricultural horses, although there was a small reduction early in the war. The total number of horses in these parishes in 1916 was 909 compared with 994 in 1912–14 and 1006 in 1918. The numbers were lower in 1916 than in 1912–14 in every parish, presumably reflecting the requisitioning of horses for military service. There would though have been a large demand for horses for farm work, with the increase in arable cropping at the expense of grassland increasing the need for horse power at a time when tractors were still unimportant.

The number of cattle in 1918 was very similar to that in 1912–14, as was the case for Devon and England and Wales. The changes varied from a reduction of five per cent in Gidleigh to an increase of 24 per cent in Culmstock.

There were considerable variations in the changes in sheep numbers. All of the Blackdown Hills parishes showed reductions, with the number in

Table 6: Livestock numbers in 1918 and 1920 as per cent numbers in 1912–14.

	Horses		Cattle		Sheep		Pigs	
	1918 as % 12-14	1920 as % 12-14	1918 as % 12-14	1920 as % 12-14	1918 as % 12-14	1920 as % 12-14	1918 as % 12-14	1920 as % 12-14
Feniton	85	90	103	116	140	95	62	66
Newton St Cyres	99	102	97	105	121	79	73	70
Poltimore/Huxham	85	74	106	90	71	73	46	81
Sandford	100	95	105	94	98	72	62	80
'Lowland'	*96*	*92*	*103*	*100*	*105*	*76*	*64*	*74*
Clayhidon	117	100	105	96	48	32	45	47
Culmstock	99	103	124	94	88	47	64	57
Hemyock	103	105	106	90	66	56	46	57
Blackdown Hills	*106*	*103*	*110*	*92*	*69*	*47*	*49*	*54*
Chagford	109	95	113	93	114	80	92	89
Gidleigh	106	106	95	109	81	107	78	92
Throwleigh	87	94	98	89	83	50	73	73
Dartmoor 'Fringe'	*104*	*96*	*108*	*94*	*102*	*73*	*87*	*86*
Devon	98	94	104	93	101	83	71	78
England and Wales	98	94	107	95	94	77	72	84

Clayhidon being reduced to less than half of the pre-war number. In contrast, sheep numbers increased by more than 20 per cent in Feniton and Newton St Cyres.

The most pronounced change in livestock was the reduction in the number of pigs, which occurred in all parishes, and was in line with changes nationally as indicated in Table 6. The reductions were greatest in the three Blackdown Hills parishes and in Poltimore/Huxham. The main driving force for this reduction was the need to divert the available grain from feeding pigs to feeding humans, with the reduced number of pigs becoming more reliant on waste and by-product feeds.

Livestock numbers in 1920 are also shown in Table 6 and Figures 4-7. There was little change from 1918 in the number of horses. Cattle numbers fell in seven of the ten parishes, with a decline also occurring for Devon and

nationally. Sheep numbers declined in eight of the ten parishes, with Gidleigh and Poltimore/Huxham being the exceptions. The magnitude of the declines was of the same order as those that occurred for Devon and nationally. The number of pigs remained generally similar to those in 1918 with six of the ten parishes showing increases. A slow recovery in pig numbers also occurred in Devon and nationally.

Figure 8: Miss Collett ploughing at the time of World War 1.

Source: the Hunt Collection held by the Dartmoor Trust Archive. © The Dartmoor Trust Archive (Hunt Collection).

Conclusions

The responses in the ten parishes in terms of changes in crops and livestock were broadly similar, although with some exceptions, discussed above. The changes were in the same direction as those that took place nationally, but, for crops, the responses were generally greater than the national changes, as was the case for Devon as a whole. This probably reflects the substantial areas of fodder roots and grassland which could be converted from production of animal feed to the priority targets of cereal and potato production in order

to increase supply of food for humans, and the availability in most of the parishes of land of reasonable quality.

In the 'Lowland' parishes, 42 per cent of the land was classed in grades 1 and 2 with little impediment to arable cropping, with a further 52 per cent in grade 3, with moderate limitations to arable cropping. To put these figures in context, only 32 per cent of the land was occupied by arable crops in 1912–14, with this increasing to 38 per cent in 1918. For the Blackdown Hills parishes only 5 per cent of the land was in grades 1 and 2 but there was 71 per cent in grade 3, whilst the arable area for these parishes was 18 per cent in 1912–14, increasing to 23 per cent in 1918. The area in arable crops was remarkably high in the Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes, where there was no land in grades 1 and 2, only 12 per cent in grade 3 and rainfall higher than in the other areas. Arable crops increased from 27 per cent in 1912–14 to 38 per cent in 1918. These figures may have been influenced by much poor land in the Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes being occupied by rough grazings, that were excluded from the sum of cereals, potatoes, fodder roots and grass (permanent and temporary) considered here as the farmed area. Also, the parish statistics indicate a reduction by 1918 for the Dartmoor 'Fringe' parishes of some 10 per cent in the total land occupied by arable crops and grass compared with 1912–14. This could have resulted from some re-classification of grass to rough grazing, as this distinction is difficult to make.[14] This 'loss' of grassland would have inflated the calculated increases in the area of arable crops. Nevertheless, the acreages of arable crops in these parishes increased substantially during the war.

The maintenance of cattle numbers and, in most parishes, sheep numbers, is quite remarkable, although there was the same pattern nationally. This occurred despite the reductions in the areas of grassland and fodder roots that would have been used principally for feeding these ruminant animals. Furthermore, imports of concentrate feeds, used to supplement forages, were also reduced during the war and supplies of fertiliser (to increase grass production) were reduced. Many studies have though shown large differences between farms in the utilised output from grassland, with wastage varying from 15 per cent to over 50 per cent.[15] The evidence suggests that with increased pressure, resulting from reduced availability of other feeds, grassland was used much more efficiently during the war through increased stocking rates and improved management. Peter Dewey, however, drew attention to the drop in milk yield that occurred nationally during the war from an average of 560 gallons/cow in 1909–13 to 436 gallons/cow in 1918, presumably due to reduced availability of concentrate feeds, and a reduction in slaughter weights for cattle, sheep and pigs.[16]

Acknowledgements

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Crop areas in the parishes, Devon and England and Wales from 1912–14 to 1920 (acres)

CROP AREAS			Acres			
	1912–14	16	17	18	19	20
WHEAT						
Feniton	60	79	75	104	104	87
Newton St Cyres	132	243	180	298	354	244
Poltimore/Huxham	46	52	50	48	119	61
Sandford	744	820	757	1,184	972	827
Clayhidon	120	101	83	166	164	121
Culmstock	101	121	93	230	204	114
Hemyock	155	142	157	228	250	145
Chagford	43	41	64	121	173	34
Gidleigh	0	0	0	7	6	6
Throwleigh	17	12	22	39	48	11
Devon	44,249	49,032	47,892	82,707	77,843	51,427
England and Wales (thousands)	1,791	1,912	1,918	2,557	2,221	1,875
BARLEY						
Feniton	106	68	91	146	146	145
Newton St Cyres	217	171	164	266	171	293
Poltimore/Huxham	248	235	266	249	290	253
Sandford	236	168	264	212	220	236
Clayhidon	59	37	40	100	37	19
Culmstock	101	57	81	116	71	81
Hemyock	31	21	61	93	63	45
Chagford	70	77	107	130	77	78
Gidleigh	1	9	24	8	4	1
Throwleigh	47	21	28	27	17	16

Devon	38,502	34,319	42,075	36,139	40,482	40,312
England and Wales (thousands)	1,507	1,332	1,460	1,501	1,510	1,637
OATS						
Feniton	179	217	181	196	202	209
Newton St Cyres	199	197	284	286	339	370
Poltimore/Huxham	178	164	140	192	173	224
Sandford	821	802	945	1,083	1,144	1,125
Clayhidon	297	241	311	468	413	347
Culmstock	238	288	310	270	273	251
Hemyock	311	270	291	536	452	369
Chagford	572	560	593	714	620	568
Gidleigh	88	80	80	125	97	90
Throwleigh	183	194	188	282	184	236
Devon	123,580	118,977	135,592	183,772	158,385	139,155
England and Wales (thousands)	1,992	2,085	2,259	2,780	2,564	2,272
POTATOES						
Feniton	7	6	8	10	8	6
Newton St Cyres	22	32	36	51	37	30
Poltimore/Huxham	8	10	15	28	15	14
Sandford	47	42	56	81	54	58
Clayhidon	10	10	18	63	27	19
Culmstock	10	13	19	33	15	19
Hemyock	24	20	23	69	32	21
Chagford	187	167	205	275	247	227
Gidleigh	24	23	28	33	27	32
Throwleigh	47	42	56	74	55	63
Devon	10,742	10,024	13,496	19,892	13,504	13,661
England and Wales (thousands)	456	428	508	634	475	545

SWEDES, TURNIPS, MANGOLDS						
Feniton	119	102	98	86	100	118
Newton St Cyres	254	228	198	186	216	232
Poltimore/Huxham	189	175	192	152	189	154
Sandford	639	615	556	418	563	562
Clayhidon	166	112	119	101	128	176
Culmstock	196	140	143	107	127	157
Hemyock	205	167	162	133	161	209
Chagford	420	384	415	322	370	348
Gidleigh	51	46	53	48	51	50
Throwleigh	130	107	126	115	116	133
Devon	78,421	68,804	68,631	57,127	69,872	72,312
England and Wales (thousands)	1,504	1,316	1,361	1,312	1,379	1,377
GRASS (excludes rough grazing)						
Feniton	1,050	1,149	1,095	1,054	1,110	1,178
Newton St Cyres	2,564	2,141	2,423	2,184	2,301	2,229
Poltimore/Huxham	1,566	1,643	1,643	1,584	1,440	1,579
Sandford	4,205	4,453	4,308	3,920	3,775	3,890
Clayhidon	2,993	3,271	3,223	3,065	2,991	3,109
Culmstock	2,111	2,076	2,111	2,001	1,842	1,904
Hemyock	4,085	4,201	4,254	3,924	4,043	4,224
Chagford	3,792	3,305	3,053	2,707	2,613	2,692
Gidleigh	542	482	408	393	375	394
Throwleigh	910	1,027	991	905	1,053	936
Devon	881,254	905,716	881,282	784,631	764,920	792,940
England and Wales (thousands)	18,531	18,573	18,385	16,724	16,736	16,980

Appendix 2: Livestock numbers in parishes, Devon and England and Wales, 1912–14 to 1920

ANIMALS	Numbers (England and Wales in thousands)					
	1912–14	16	17	18	19	20
HORSES (AGRIC)						
Feniton	48	39	38	41	42	43
Newton St Cyres	95	89	85	94	93	97
Poltimore/Huxham	65	56	61	55	53	48
Sandford	202	189	198	202	204	191
Clayhidon	102	99	108	120	110	102
Culmstock	84	72	83	83	78	86
Hemyock	140	123	131	144	142	147
Chagford	175	166	168	190	183	166
Gidleigh	27	26	27	29	30	29
Throwleigh	55	50	50	48	50	52
Devon	34,436	31,255	32,198	33,704	33,599	32,396
England and Wales (thousands)	835	773	796	822	814	789
CATTLE						
Feniton	456	488	474	470	500	528
Newton St Cyres	890	910	847	868	873	931
Poltimore/Huxham	396	405	414	420	343	357
Sandford	1,558	1,708	1,647	1,632	1,584	1,469
Clayhidon	975	1,107	1,179	1,019	1,060	932
Culmstock	903	1,005	1,052	1,119	1,045	849
Hemyock	1,661	1,712	1,821	1,761	1,545	1,487
Chagford	1,192	1,401	1,322	1,352	1,370	1,106
Gidleigh	194	207	187	185	194	211
Throwleigh	421	421	415	412	364	373
Devon	303,381	324,722	323,390	316,157	315,274	283,347
England and Wales (thousands)	5,812	6,216	6,227	6,200	6,195	5,547

SHEEP						
Feniton	731	967	781	1,027	840	692
Newton St Cyres	1,687	1,756	1,684	2,041	2,110	1,333
Poltimore/Huxham	701	766	810	500	861	512
Sandford	4,560	5,127	4,505	4,488	4,019	3,262
Clayhidon	635	536	570	303	257	201
Culmstock	825	823	641	727	511	392
Hemyock	1,040	1,133	990	684	530	580
Chagford	4,734	4,777	4,610	5,386	4,885	3,781
Gidleigh	624	776	657	508	516	668
Throwleigh	2,172	2,149	2,035	1,804	1,703	1,083
Devon	797,633	869,211	844,254	806,421	747,755	661,071
England and Wales (thousands)	17,481	17,951	17,170	16,475	15,124	13,383
PIGS						
Feniton	273	284	239	168	174	180
Newton St Cyres	393	327	325	285	269	275
Poltimore/Huxham	86	72	58	40	56	70
Sandford	577	502	504	359	483	464
Clayhidon	688	668	456	306	200	321
Culmstock	487	482	522	311	336	277
Hemyock	1,011	986	636	463	518	576
Chagford	455	385	360	420	369	403
Gidleigh	79	39	40	62	71	73
Throwleigh	116	105	72	85	104	85
Devon	101,875	94,331	85,494	72,557	74,258	79,292
England and Wales (thousands)	2,360	2,168	1,919	1,697	1,798	1,994

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Methodology of Investigating Changes on Farms in Some Devon Parishes in World War I

PENNY LAWRENCE

Introduction

This article discusses the methodology for data analysis used in the previous paper in this volume, 'Changes in Crop Areas and Livestock Numbers in Some Devon Parishes in Response to World War I', outlining some limitations of the data, and highlighting additional sources which provided contextual information. Prior to 1866, agricultural statistics were assembled on a relatively ad hoc basis by the Home Office. The Board of Trade commenced data collection relating to cropping and livestock on an annual basis from individual farms in 1866, producing annual volumes of *Agricultural Statistics, England and Wales*. From 1899 the returns were made to the newly formed Board of Agriculture; collection by the Board and its subsequent incarnations continued until 1988. From 1917 it was compulsory to provide the figures and these are probably more accurate. The information was aggregated into parish summaries of agricultural returns, which form the MAF 68 dataset, available at The National Archives.[1] The data relates to the same date each year, 4th June, commonly known as the June Returns.

Data extraction and analysis

The statistics assembled in the MAF 68 dataset are presented under several headings:

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Schedules (5 columns). Details were recorded of whether the respondents returned their forms with or without a reminder, needed a visit to obtain the data or required the data to be estimated.

Size of holdings (17 columns). Details of differing sizes of holdings and whether owned or rented.

Number of acres of crops and grass (35 columns plus 9 supplementary columns).

Number of livestock: horses, cattle, sheep and pigs of various ages. Orchards (24 columns, including totals).

Figure 1. MAF 68, From the Devonshire June returns 1914: Schedules, Holdings, and Acres.
Source: TNA, MAF 68.

In 1914 there were 90 columns in all, capturing answers to questions on every type of holding, both agricultural and horticultural. Fortunately, therefore, not all the columns were needed for every parish examined in the 'Crops and Livestock' paper. However, the pages are very wide requiring two photographs to capture the information at a useable resolution. A large size computer monitor was essential in order to decipher the correct figures to record on a spreadsheet. One way of making the extraction process considerably simpler was by installing a second monitor, allowing the photographs (jpegs) of the records to be visible at the same time as the spreadsheet. The use of software which enabled magnification of images was helpful in data interpretation. A spreadsheet was an ideal tool for transcription; over the years different information was required, so columns

Figure 2. MAF 68, A section from Cullompton District June returns 1914.
Source: TNA, MAF 68.

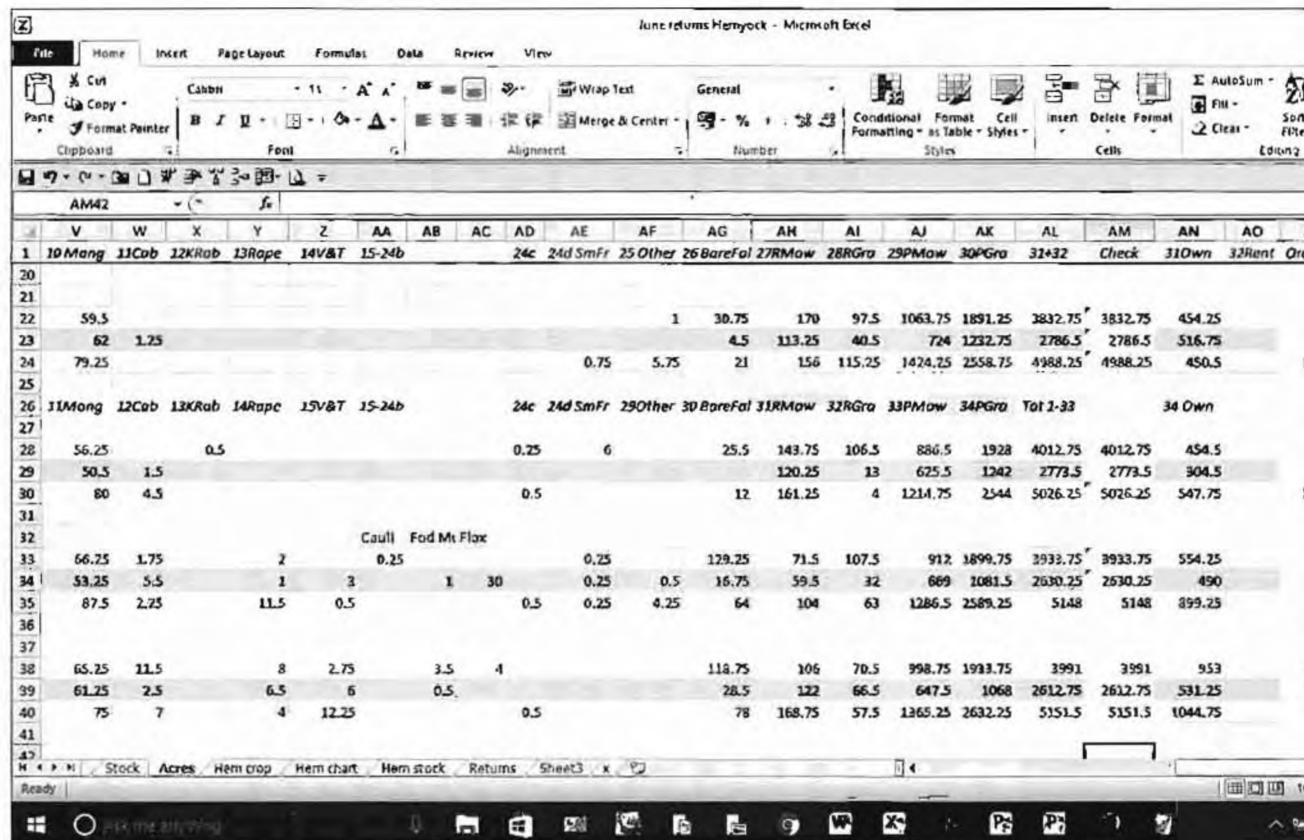
had been added or removed, and these changes were accommodated easily using the spreadsheet functionality to insert columns. The use of freeze panes (the process of freezing rows or columns on a data set to keep them visible while looking through the remaining information) kept the headings visible. The distinct headings, and the use of a light background colour for selected cells, were useful in enabling a clear differentiation of the extracted data, which was assembled for three parishes in the Blackdown Hills: Culmstock, Hemyock and Clayhidon (Figure 3).

The original MAF 68 tables included a figure for total acreage, and auto sum, a built in feature on Excel for adding numbers, was used to check the total of the extracted figures against the original, amending as necessary. Sometimes the original writing was not easy to decipher, particularly with fractions of acres.

The next step was to consolidate the figures into a more manageable state; the way in which this was done is evidenced in the Crops and Livestock section of 'Changes in Crop areas and Livestock Numbers in Some Devon Parishes in response to World War I'.[1]

Interpretation

The first point is that the MAF 68 records show a response to the pressure and incentives to produce more food for human consumption in Devon during World War One, but this cannot be taken as a direct correlation with



	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE	AF	AG	AH	AI	AJ	AK	AL	AM	AN	AO
1	*10Mang*	*11Cab*	*12KRab*	*13Rape*	*14V&T*	*15-24b*			*24c*	*24d SmFr*	*25 Other*	*26 BareFal*	*27RMow*	*28RGra*	*29PMow*	*30PGra*	*31+32*	*Check*	*31Own*	*32Rent*
20																				
21																				
22	59.5										1	30.75	170	97.5	1063.75	1891.25	3832.75	3832.75	454.25	
23	62	1.25										4.5	113.25	40.5	724	1232.75	2786.5	2786.5	516.75	
24	79.25									0.75	5.75	21	156	115.25	1424.25	2558.75	4988.25	4988.25	450.5	
25																				
26	*11Mong*	*12Cab*	*13KRab*	*14Rape*	*15V&T*	*15-24b*			*24c*	*24d SmFr*	*29Other*	*30 BareFal*	*31RMow*	*32RGra*	*33PMow*	*34PGra*	*Tot 1-33*		*34 Own*	
27																				
28	56.25		0.5						0.25	6		25.5	143.75	106.5	886.5	1928	4012.75	4012.75	454.5	
29	50.5	1.5											120.25	13	625.5	1242	2773.5	2773.5	304.5	
30	80	4.5							0.5			12	161.25	4	1214.75	2544	5026.25	5026.25	547.75	
31																				
32						Caull	Fod Mt Flax													
33	66.25	1.75		2		0.25				0.25		129.25	71.5	107.5	912	1899.75	3933.75	3933.75	554.25	
34	53.25	5.5		1	3		1	30		0.25	0.5	16.75	59.5	32	669	1081.5	2630.25	2630.25	490	
35	87.5	2.25		11.5	0.5				0.5	0.25	4.25	64	104	63	1286.5	2589.25	5148	5148	899.25	
36																				
37																				
38	65.25	11.5		8	2.75		3.5	4				118.75	106	70.5	998.75	1933.75	3991	3991	953	
39	61.25	2.5		6.5	6		0.5					28.5	122	66.5	647.5	1068	2612.75	2612.75	531.25	
40	75	7		4	12.25				0.5			78	168.75	57.5	1365.25	2632.25	5151.5	5151.5	1044.75	
41																				

Figure 3. The June returns for Hemyock 1914.

Source: Spreadsheet compiled by Penny Lawrence.

what was actually produced. Some indication of likely output can be found in the MAF 82 regional reports, which give details each month of the state of agriculture in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. The following headings were used, varying with the seasons:

Appearance of crops, Autumn cultivation, Pastures, Hay.
Seeds, Turnips and Swedes, Potatoes, Corn, Fruit.
Ewes and other stock, Lambing prospects, Condition and progress of stock.
Labour.

The MAF 82 reports cover the area from Lands End to Bristol, a distance of approximately 200 miles, and range from sea level to the top of Dartmoor; the information was thus at a broad level. However, there were some specific references within the counties, as the MAF 82 report for September 1918 (Figure 4) shows.

Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset.

Corn.—Nearly all the wheat has now been harvested, and secured in good condition. A considerable part of the barley crop has been cut, but not so much has yet been carried as in the case of wheat. Some samples in the north-east of Devon are stained where laid by the heavy rains last month. In the early districts most of the oats are cut but a good deal remains to be cut in the later districts. The yield of wheat is expected to be more than 5 per cent. over average, that of barley a little above average, and of oats nearly 5 per cent. more than usual. The yield of beans is about average, but that of peas nearly 5 per cent. under average.

Potatoes.—The crop promises to be good, but some disease, though not serious at present, is reported in several districts. The yield is likely to be nearly 5 per cent. above the normal.

Roots.—Turnips and swedes are now making some progress, but are backward and patchy. Many fields are foul with weeds and hoeing is much needed. Mangolds are improving, but are also thin and patchy. The yield of turnips and swedes is expected to be from 5 to 10 per cent. less than usual, and that of mangolds nearly 5 per cent. below the average.

Fruit.—The yield of apples, plums and pears is everywhere very small.

Pastures and Live Stock.—Pastures are generally full of grass, and all classes of stock are reported to be in good condition and thriving well.

Labour.—The supply of labour is short, but the good harvest weather has eased the situation. Help is being rendered by women, soldiers, and German prisoners.

Figure 4. MAF 82, September 1918.
Source: TNA.

However, the Honiton War Agricultural Committee was experiencing a different situation. Under the heading 'Corn Rotting in District through Shortage of Labour' the Chairman, Mr S. Tuke reported that:

Mr Burrows of Sheldon, had told him the condition of affairs in his parish in regard to the harvest. Mr Burrows was the only one who had carried his corn, and the farmers said they had no labour, and there would be difficulties about the quota for next year. (...) They wanted immediate help and advice. Mr Hooper: They have German prisoners at hand. The Chairman said he

told Mr Burrows that, and he said the German prisoners were too far away. Sheldon was a late district, and evidently they wanted help, and as they had asked for help the Committee should give them some. A member said that a deal of the corn was rotting. The Chairman: That is the fault of the weather and not due to want of labour. Mr Cruwys remarked that it had been stated to him that farmers had many pigs, and as the corn was rotting could they not keep the pigs on it for the time being? (…) Mr Cruwys said that he went to a place the previous day and saw a number of pigs practically starving. (…) Mr Cruwys proposed "That in the opinion of this committee, as so much corn in the late districts has not been harvested, and it is practically useless for human consumption, could it not be used at once for feeding purposes, as a large number of stock, especially pigs, are being kept short of food? The Committee request that the authorities give immediate attention to the matter." Mr Farrant seconded and the resolution was carried.

It was decided to write to Mr Pollard (Chief Executive Officer) to go to Sheldon and make inquiries into the complaints of the farmers. Mr Cruwys promised to go with Mr Pollard to assist him.[2]

At the Honiton meeting on Saturday 12th October Mr Pollard's inspection was discussed

The total area of corn in the parish was 260 acres on 13 farms, an average of 20 acres each. Consequently there could scarcely be any difficulty as to labour. The largest area on one farm was 65½ acres, and this was all carried and thatched. On another farm of 53 acres some of the corn had been carried, and a few acres remained to be cut. But all of it was of a very inferior character; in fact the worst crop he had seen in the whole of his inspections. There was ample labour on the farm to deal with it and, as far as he could see, the position in the parish was not worse than in hundreds of other parishes in the country. The weather and the lateness of ripening, due to the elevation varying from 500 to 900 feet were the main reasons why the harvest was not completed.[3]

Secondly, the MAF 68 records were a farm record, so commons were not included, a fact confirmed by checking the total acreages against the tithe survey of 1841. However, in March 1916, Mr J. Clist informed the Parish Council that 'a part of his common had been broken up and planted with potatoes, with the most satisfactory result'.[4]

In addition to national and regional pressure, there were local influences. Farming in the Upper Culm had been changed by the establishment of the

Culm Valley Dairy Company in Hemyock in 1886 to produce a better quality and more uniform butter. Local farmers delivered their milk every day to the company of which four per cent was separated off as cream for the butter production. The farmers could wait to have the 96 per cent skim milk back or sell it to the company who set up their own pig fattening operation.[5] In 1906, F. J. Snell wrote that 'it is impossible to forget that Hemyock is a famous mart for pigs. The whole district is piggy, and the sleek black animal with the curly tail is as highly respected, in life and in death, as his congener in that porcine paradise, Erin.'[6]

Another factor affecting pig production in 1918 was reported to Barnstaple District War Agricultural Committee:

> Letters were read from the Board of Agriculture stating that barley was absolutely prohibited from being used for purposes other than human food. Under these circumstances, mixed crops containing this cereal might not be used for feeding stock, unless these were so damaged as to be unfit for milling purposes for human consumption.[7]

This throws further light on the 30th September 1918 report of Honiton War Agricultural Committee mentioned above.

During World War I the production of cheaper margarine increased. The demand for liquid milk rose and its rising price made it difficult to compete for supplies with which to make butter. In 1916 the Culm Valley Dairy Company was taken over by Wilts United Dairies; it stopped butter making and sent liquid milk away, with any surplus made into cheese.[8] It was reported that 'The Dairy Company are about to erect an additional building on their premises at Millhayes for the storing of cheese'.[9] The Culm Valley Dairy was still trading in butter however, advertising in 1918 for farmers to supply home produced butter and milk.[10]

Poultry are notably excluded from the June returns and would have been important in the Culm Valley where Alfred Wide was the local egg and game dealer who had depots in Langport, Ilminster and Chard. In August 1916 he advertised for 'Tons of new laid eggs and well fatted chicken and ducks',[11] and for 'several good broods of well fatted turkeys' in November.[12] Alfred Wide was in competition with collections of eggs for good causes. In Hemyock in June 1916 Miss Nellie White 'collected 200 eggs for the wounded soldiers'.[13]

Additional sources

The Hemyock Parish Council minute book contained very little reference to the war until the request for allotments was raised in 1917.[14] The Hemyock School log book supplied some weather information, noting occasions when the children were unable to get to school, and also detail on their absence due to helping on farms.[15] Press cuttings included reports on the weather, a matter of great importance to farmers, and other items of information. In July 1914 'The heavy downpour of rain on Sunday did much damage, washing away hay and manure, ruining uncut grass with mud and gravel, and carrying away rails and poultry'.[16] A year later 'On Sunday afternoon Hemyock was visited by a thunderstorm of considerable violence. Hail of unusual size fell, some of the stones being two inches in circumference. Cabbages and other vegetables in many cases appeared as if they had been riddled by bullets'.[17]

The report on Hemyock Show in September 1920 for example, starts by mentioning the high quality of stock forward despite 'the slaughter of an exceptionally large number of calves and lambs – one of the most disquieting features of agriculture during the past year'.[18] The number of Calves under one year in Hemyock peaked at 433 in 1917, in 1920 there were 248. Lambs peaked at 569 in 1916, and in 1920 there were 264.

Discussion

The June Returns provide nationally collected data from which to analyse the response of the farmers to the need for more food to be produced in World War One. The figures cannot be relied upon completely; 11 acres of rhubarb were recorded in Clayhidon in 1916, but no other record of rhubarb was made before or after. One area where there are inconsistencies is in the statistics for 'Owned or mainly owned' and 'Rented or mainly rented' acreage. These were outwith the remit of the study but the details are aggregated into 'Acreage Owned' which is shown immediately after the 'Total Acreage' and is the column immediately before the commencement of the livestock details. The 1917 Corn Production Act, which guaranteed prices for four years, did not allow for rents to be raised proportionately and, in any case, landowners were disinclined to do so. This resulted in a rise in farm values and it is estimated that approximately one-tenth of the country's agricultural land was bought by occupiers in the years 1918–1920.[19] The data for Clayhidon and Hemyock show an increase in land owned from 1917 onwards and in Culmstock from 1918 onwards however, prior to that, there are variations. These could be

due to the question including the word 'mainly', with fields put up for annual rental, or to less diligent data entry. It is hoped that further investigation using the IR58 Valuation Office records, examination of auctioneers' records at The Devon Heritage Centre, and auctioneers' adverts in the local press will shed further light on this.[20]

Conclusion

Contextual information from the press, MAF 82 records, minute books and log books adds weight to the evidence from the June Returns, as indicated above. However, an inapplicable report was sometimes given when there were unfavourable statistics, as information relating to Poltimore and Huxham presented in the previous article in this volume revealed. Once the data are recorded in a spreadsheet and totals checked, there are a number of tools available for presentation and analysis. The simplest is presentation in a table; this allows the reader to see the actual figures and can be particularly useful when there are small variations. A subsequent step is the use of chart tools within the spreadsheet package; column, line and pie charts give a visual representation more suited to some readers. Unfortunately no records exist for 1915, but this can be accommodated by leaving a blank column in the spreadsheet which, on a chart, makes it obvious that there are no records.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to James Wallis for copying Agricultural Returns at The National Archives and to Julia Neville for her support and encouragement during the project.

NOTES

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2. *Western Times* (*WT*), 30 September 1918, 3.
3. *WT*, 18 October 1918, 2.
4. *The Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 31 March 1916, 12.
5. Chris Dracott and Brian Clist, *Hemyock, A Village History* (Privately published, 1986), 18.

6. F. J. Snell, *The Blackmore Country* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906).
7. *WT*, 22 February 1918, 2.
8. Brian Clist and Chris Dracott, *The Book of Hemyock* (Tiverton: Halsgrove 2001), 60-61, 63-64.
9. *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (*EPG*), 5 October 1917, 7.
10. *WT*, 17 June 1918, 1.
11. *Western Gazette*, 18 August 1916, 2
12. Ibid., 17 November 1916, 4.
13. *EPG*, 14 July 1916, 15.
14. Hemyock Parish Council, Minutes of Parish Council Meetings, 15 April 1907 to 11 May 1935, held by the Parish Council
15. Clist and Dracott, *The Book of Hemyock*, 98.
16. *WT*, 27 July 1914, 4.
17. Ibid., 9 July 1915, 10.
18. Ibid., 23 September 1920, 2.
19. Roland Prothero, Baron Ernle, *English Farming Past & Present*, 6th edn (London: Heinemann Educational books Ltd and Frank Cass and Company Ltd, 1961), 415.
20. TNA, IR 58, Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office: Field Books (the Field Books contain descriptions of more than 9 million individual houses, farms and other properties).

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Two Girls on the Land: A 1918 Diary

JUDY MOSS

Diaries are usually objects which generate excitement in historians, and so the discovery of a diary for 1918 apparently written by a Land Army girl living and working in Throwleigh, a village located on the north eastern edge of Dartmoor National Park, Devon was of great interest to the 'Food Farming and Fishing in Devon During the First World War' project. The diary of Faith Lowe, aged twenty at the time, first came to light during an interview with Faith's son by Michael Paget (researching on behalf of The Throwleigh Archive) in 2005. Only a few pages were recorded at that time, with some extracts being published in 2006.[1] The whole diary was recorded and transcribed by this author ten years later: copies are lodged in both The Throwleigh Archive and the Devon Heritage Centre. Faith's diary records the farm and gardening work done by her and her sister Patience, with help from other women and some local men, and an analysis of this work is presented and discussed here. The diary also offers much social information, as, since the sisters were the daughters of the rector in Throwleigh, they had other interests and duties which the diary records. The girls were pictured in a photographer's studio in what appears to be Land Army uniforms (Figure 1), leading to the initial assumption that they were indeed Land Girls; this would be an exceptional historic record if that were so. This article presents research and discussion to reach a conclusion on the question of their status as Land Girls.

The sources include the written account of Olive Hockin, who worked on a Devon farm throughout 1916. She is considered by many to have been a Land Army girl, but the reviewer of her book in 1918 and Simon Butler in 2016 suggest otherwise.[2] Taped interviews with Mary Lees, a Land Army girl who worked in Devon and Somerset, a recorded interview with Faith's son,

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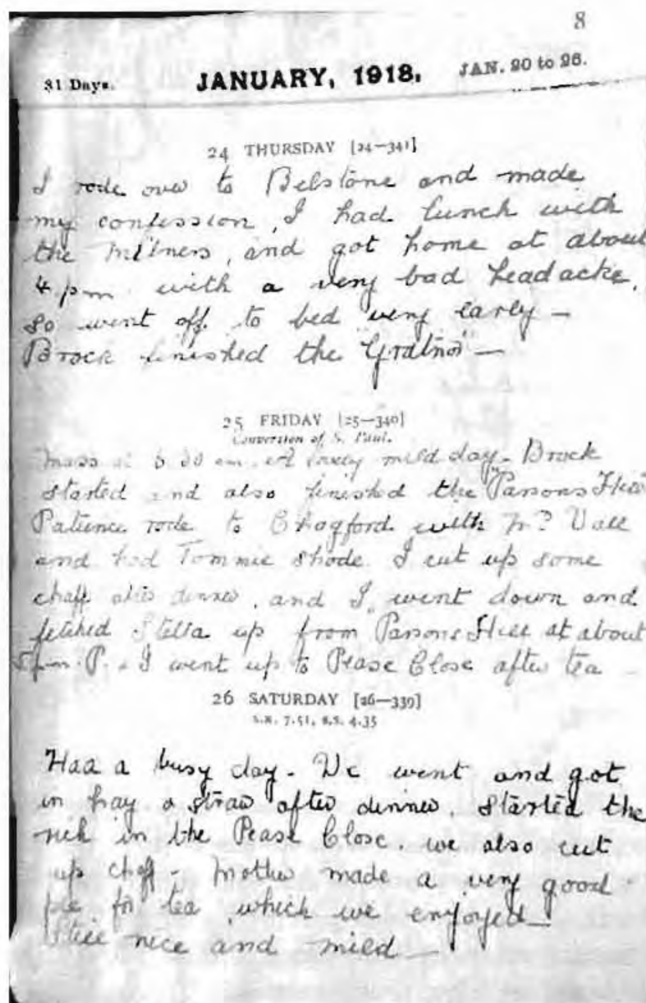
Figure 1. Faith and Patience Lowe. Reproduced courtesy of The Throwleigh Archive.

newspaper articles, and close examination of some accounting information in the end pages of Faith's diary provide further information.[3]

The Nature of the diary

The Diary is a small book, about ten by fifteen centimetres, a week to a page. The cover is lost and the remaining leading and end pages record both personal accounting and dairy produce sales in Throwleigh village in 1918. The diary entries are succinct, none running to more than a couple of sentences (Figure 2).

An accurate analysis of the work that the girls did cannot be elicited from the diary. For example it becomes apparent that Faith was looking after stock that was indoors, but only because she referred to it when somebody else did it on her behalf, such as when she and her sister stayed overnight in Exeter on a social visit, or from a comment that because of bad the weather the cows were kept in. Looking after housed stock in the mornings and evenings, variously referred to as 'tending up', 'outdoor work', 'evening work', 'did the animals', does not feature in the analysis below, but was probably something


8

31 Days. **JANUARY, 1918.** JAN. 20 to 26.

24 THURSDAY [24–341]

I rode over to Belstone and made my confession, I had lunch with the Milners, and got home at about 4 pm with a very bad headache, so went off to bed very early – Brock finished the "Gratnor" –

25 FRIDAY [25–340]
Conversion of S. Paul.

Mass at 6.30 am. A lovely mild day. Brock started and also finished the Parsons Hill. Patience rode to Chagford with Mr Vall and had Tommie shode. I cut up some chaff after dinner, and I went down and fetched Stella up from Parsons Hill at about 5 pm. P. & I went up to Pease Close after tea –

26 SATURDAY [26–339]
S.R. 7.51, S.S. 4.35

Had a busy day. We went and got in hay & straw after dinner, started the rick in the Pease Close, we also cut up chaff – Mother made a very good pie for tea, which we enjoyed! Still nice and mild –

Figure 2. Example page from the diary.

that was done every day, twice a day. It is very likely that much other farm work is similarly unrecorded.

Family background

Faith and Patience were the daughters of G. L. Gambier Lowe, the rector of Throwleigh from 1895 to his death in 1934. The fields that are mentioned in the diary are shown in Figure 3. The land to the east was a portion of the original glebe which was bought by Gambier Lowe's aunt and given to him.[4] The land to the west was a portion of a farm called Wooda bought by Gambier Lowe in 1898;[5] his brother Willoughby bought the other portion in 1901, and built a house there.[6]

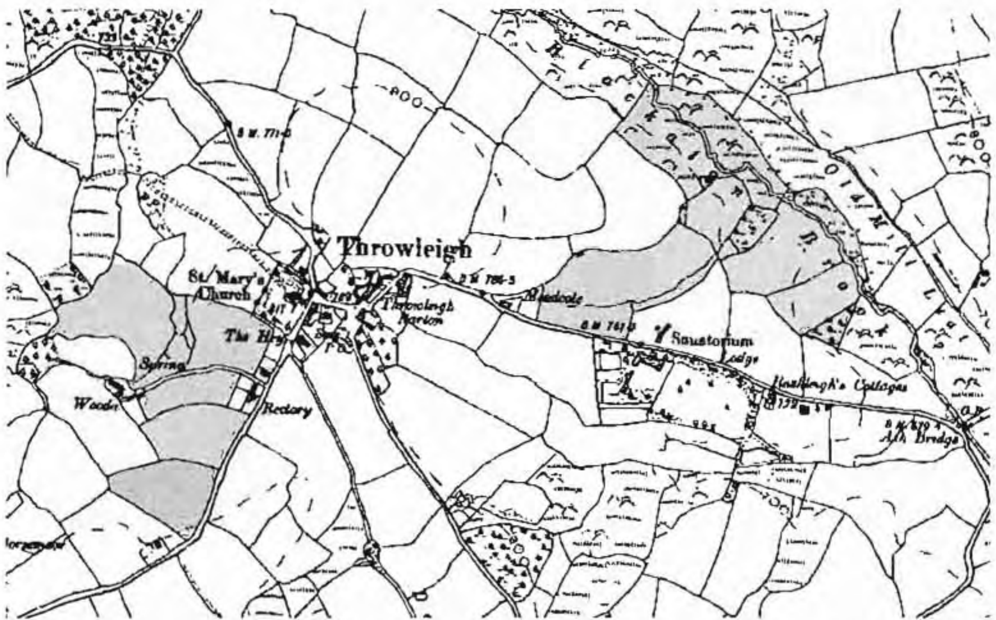


Figure 3. The fields mentioned in the diary. To the east was what remained of the original church glebe, to the west part of Wooda Farm purchased by Father Lowe in 1898.

The diary also mentions working in two gardens, with another established in one of the fields. This indicates that the building marked as Wooda and another very nearby that Gambier Lowe built for himself and was the family home were also part of his property. Both the Lowe brothers were great improvers of Throwleigh, building new houses on their property along the lane running south-west from Throwleigh village. Aunts, uncles and grandparents were housed in various properties nearby. The Lowe's children were Mary born 1891, Trelawny born 1894, Patience born 1896, Faith born 1898, and Cecily born 1900 (who died in 1911 of appendicitis): the diary has nine entries between March and August concerning tending 'the grave'. Trelawney was a second lieutenant in the ninth battalion of the Devonshire Regiment at the time of his marriage in October 1916 to Dorothy Kitson of Brixham in Devon.[7] He was injured during the war and carried shrapnel in his lung until advances in surgery allowed it to be removed about twenty years later.[8] The diary records several visits by him to the family home in Throwleigh, arriving by car or motor bike, and often staying only a day or two before being summoned by 'a wire' to return to duty. The last diary entry about him before the end of the war concerned him travelling to Belfast in August.

Farming task analysis

The diary refers to many animals by name, and only by context or reading further can one work out which type of animal was being referred to: in some cases it isn't possible to fathom, and so the work cannot always be classified. For example, there were three cows, and these must have been milked daily, though this is rarely mentioned. More butter making would have taken place than is referred to in the diary, as the account pages record sales of more butter (and cream) than the diary records making. Whilst classifying the work, 'yearlings' have been assumed to be equines. With many references to colts and foals, horse breeding is assumed to have taken place.

The task analysis tables in Figures 4 has been achieved by counting the number of times a farming task or other activity is referred to in the diary, and shows the work done by Faith, Patience or a female helper in the village. The analysis indicates that the girls were working a typical mixed Devon upland farm, additionally breeding horses: the equine tasks concern looking after foals, yearlings and colts. Transport tasks include cleaning harness and the carriage, riding both to complete other tasks and for pleasure, driving themselves or other people in the carriage, or other members of the family using the horse transport. This was obviously something that took up much of the girls' time. There are however several examples of very short rides taken to complete farm tasks, which suggests that Faith rode as often as she could. Her sister Mary was described as 'horse mad' and 'indulged by her father' by Faith's son, and so it is quite possible that this applied to the other girls too.[9] Regular journeys were made to Chagford, a return trip of about thirteen kilometres, visiting the blacksmith to get the horses shod. Why they didn't use the Throwleigh village smithy is something of a mystery.

The next most frequent task was related to cows and dairying, and this offers an example of this document being a diary and not a farmer's Day Book (the latter would meticulously record, for example, how much butter was made, who it was supplied to and what was paid or owed for it). The diary entry on 10th January states that Faith made butter, yet there is no earlier mention of milking a cow. Not until the beginning of March are cows mentioned, and then because of bad weather they were being kept in. At the beginning of April two animals' names are given, 'put Dorcas and Daisy up the drive', but only in the entry for the following day is it obvious that these are cows, when one of them calved. The other calved a few days later, and initially both calves are reported to 'be doing well', and later referred to as Primrose and Ambrose. Later in April a heifer calf was purchased. At the end of April comes the first sign that there may be problems, with 'Primrose

not well' and early in May both 'Primrose and Ambrose rather bad'. Within a couple of days Primrose had died, and the other 'calves rather worse'. Faith is in the meantime making plenty of butter. Someone called Dunstan comes to see the calves at the end of the first week in May, and they improve. By the middle of May the calves are being kept in the pig house, and at the end of May 'Wildrose' is 'put on' to Queenie the goat. The impression given is that the girls were not very experienced with raising calves, and that as a result the calves may have been separated from their mothers too early and not given the correct bucket feeding; 'Wildrose' though was still thriving later in the year (October). Otherwise the diary suggests that the girls had some confidence that they knew what they were doing.

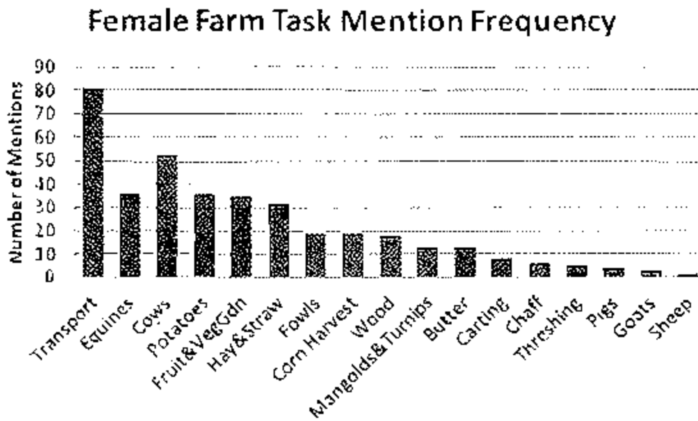


Figure 4. Female farm task analysis.

The end pages record the sale of five pounds of butter in the last week of April, twelve and three quarter pounds in May, eight and a half pounds in June and four pounds until the nineteenth of July, and the diary only records butter being made over this time interval. Earlier in the year butter was bought in, and it is not mentioned for the second half of the year.

The Lowe's farm was likely to have responded to the government's exhortation to produce more food, especially potatoes and wheat. The Local War Agricultural Committee had appointed surveyors to the twenty-three Okehampton parishes to encourage farmers and ensure an increased acreage of potatoes.[10] Though potato tasks are not the most frequently mentioned, the diary records that the work was long and arduous. For single days in late January and February and three days in March the girls were working at 'picking up' potatoes with Powlesland, this was a 'very cold job', and nine bags were carted away by Powlesland to sell. Olive Hockin gives a more

graphic account of the unpleasantness of this task of retrieving often rotted potatoes by hand kneeling in and beside a cold and muddy clamp, with only an old sack for protection from the mud and muck.[11] In April the Lowes tilled the next crop in Parsons Hill; this was approximately three acres, about four percent of the 1918 potato production in Throwleigh parish.[12] On Hockin's farm, potato planting wasn't started until May, when she notes that the ten acres grown the previous season could not be tended through lack of labour, and only four would be grown this season (1916). She describes the planting process: an initial pass with the plough, followed be one person manually scattering manure, then another manually planting the potatoes, to be followed by a second pass with the horse team to cover the potatoes.[13] The more succinct record of potato work made by Faith was as follows.

April 12th	We started to put potatoes in Parsons Hill at about 12pm, worked on very late, did not get to bed until about 10.30pm.
July 9th	Went with Brock all day earthing up the potatoes in Parsons Hill, finished 6pm, very tired.
October 14th	Went off potato digging at 9.30, took our dinner down with us, v. warm working, got on well, did not get up until 5.30.
October 16th	Went digging all day.

This digging of potatoes carried on with a further six days work over the next week or so, then they started pulling mangolds.

Though the government also wanted more wheat to be grown, officials recognised that 'a good crop of oats . . . was better than half a crop of wheat',[14] and there is no indication that any wheat was grown on the Lowe's farm in 1918. Oats are taken from the previous year's rick and threshed in January, oats and barley in February, seed oats obtained from Uncle Willoughby in March, and two ricks of the current year's barley taken to another farm in December, possibly to be threshed. Much work was involved in harvesting corn and hay, even taking the latter from the churchyard. In September the girls even worked on a Sunday to 'put some of the corn in little ricks', and several days were spent tying up, untying and re-tying corn, presumably the stooks as they were drying before being put into ricks. 'We unbound most of the corn in the Church Park, beautiful drying wind & sun, bound it up again in the afternoon'; this field was also about three acres. Figure 5 illustrates hay being gathered into 'little ricks' prior to full ricking. The amount of work

Figure 5. Hay being gathered into small ricks.
Reproduced courtesy of Totnes Image Bank and Rural Archive.

done bringing hay, straw and mangolds 'in' is further evidence that stock was housed and needed tending: 'we went and got in hay and straw after dinner. Started the rick in Pease Close' and 'Patience got a load of mangolds after dinner'.

There was other work done by men, referred to by their surnames. Powlesland, Brock and Olver are mentioned doing the ploughing, preparing land for and planting potatoes, and harvesting and ricking hay and straw; this work is analysed in Figure 6.

Powlesland is mentioned nineteen times doing digging and carting, and is most likely to have been William George Powlesland, a gardener aged 50 living in a house owned by the rector: Richard Olver occupied the house belonging to the churchwardens, and was censused as the rector's gardener, aged 52. Brock was probably Charles Brock, aged 39, farming Willoughby Lowe's portion of Wooda and housed there.[15] John Powlesland, mentioned twice doing ploughing, planting corn and dragging a field has not been identified. It is unclear who was running the farm, since the diary gives no impression that someone was directing the girls' or men's work. There is no

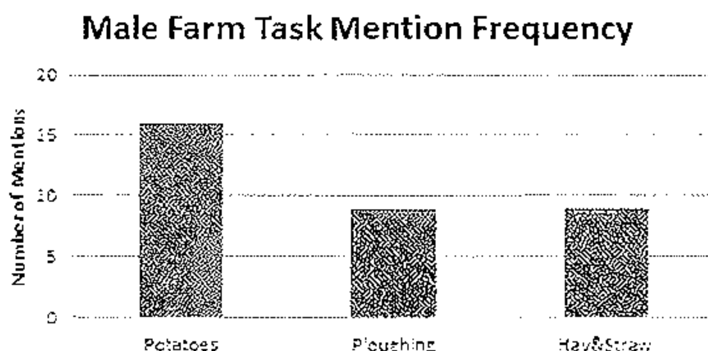


Figure 6. Male farm task analysis.

one referred to as 'maester', a form of address used by Hockin and Lees in their accounts of working on Devon farms.[16]

Family and social interaction

Figure 7 presents the analysis of non-farming activities that the diary records, including mentions of illness and exhaustion. Being the daughters of a high church rector, going to mass several days a week plus other services on Sundays, and running a Sunday school, the high frequency of Church tasks recorded is unsurprising. Services were often at 6.30 or 7 a.m., and could be as late as 8 p.m. Faith notes when one or other of the girls did not attend due to illness. This was typically due to heavy colds, but both girls also suffered from frequent headaches, which sometimes debilitated them. The 262 mentions of church included doing the flowers, cleaning brass and

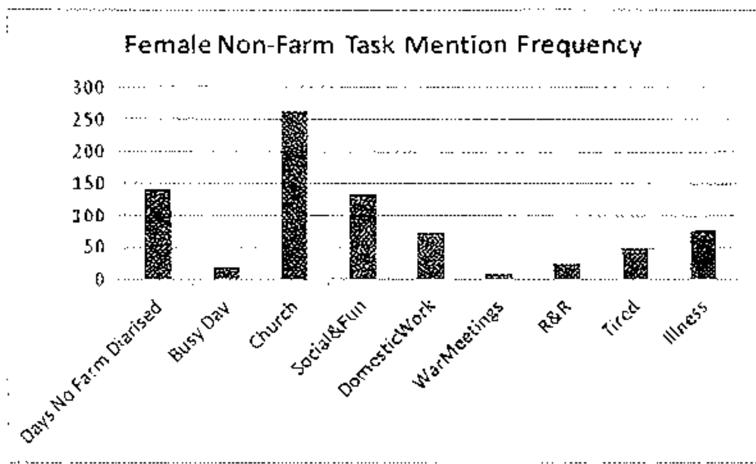


Figure 7. Non-farming task analysis.

tending the young sister's grave. Forty percent of diary days make no mention of any farming or gardening activity, though it is likely that some significant proportion of these days would have involved at least morning and evening 'tending up'. The phrase 'busy day' occurs 22 times: this is often on days when 'very tired' or 'went to bed early' are also diarised, and are associated with indoor domestic as well as outdoor work, but also after trips to Exeter. Over 50 percent of Faith's domestic work was cooking, closely followed by housework and washing, at 22 percent.

There are 134 mentions of social interaction and fun activities, and 25 of rest and relaxation. The latter included taking a bath, washing hair, resting (e.g. 'sat on the lawn all afternoon and read'), and what Faith termed 'slacking', this was usually in association with having a headache or 'feeling rotten'. Letter writing and receiving were noted twenty times. It is the range of social activity that gives a window on First World War middle class society, and also demonstrates the stark contrast with Hockin's and Lee's much more restricted lifestyle whilst working at least twelve hour days, seven days a week as Land Army girls on Devon and Somerset farms. There are 67 diarised occurrences of social visits by or to village neighbours, frequently partaking of tea and occasionally lunch or dinner. Over and above this are fifteen similar visits to the Varwell family. Two Varwell sisters (one of whom wrote *Throwleigh: The Story of a Dartmoor Village*) lived in a house owned by Faith's mother, though probably built by Gambier Lowe; other Varwells lived about eight kilometres away across the moor in Chagford parish, to which Patience and Faith thought nothing of riding for a day out picnicing on the moor. Additionally there were twelve family interactions within the village. The girls enjoyed dressing up and playing practical jokes on family and the Varwells, and during November and December there are 24 rehearsals for a play. There were nine trips to Exeter sometimes with an overnight stay there in an hotel.

Hockin's account for June tells of rising at 5.30 a.m. to be out by 6.30 a.m. to do three hours work before stopping for breakfast. During hay making these two girls worked fourteen or fifteen hour days for a fortnight, until they took an alarm clock into the fields to alert them at six or six thirty p.m., once they realised that that was long enough 'for any labouring human'. The 'maester' farmer begrudged a proper amount of time off for lunch. The mental stagnation of repetitive and back breaking work, such as hoeing acres of root crops or weeding corn fields was met by no relief as they 'had no time for the ordinary civilities of life' – reading, writing letters, seeing friends or exploring the countryside; in the evenings they 'eliminated all amusements and did only barest necessities' due to exhaustion. Initially they tried to establish at least

half a day off on Sundays, to take a packed lunch somewhere and get a chance to relax, but this arrangement tailed off until by September they were both so overworked and tired out, they went on strike for two days to get alternate Sundays off.[17]

Mary Lees had six week's basic training at Seale-Hayne college near Newton Abbot, in Devon. Seale-Hayne was the first purpose built agricultural college in the country, used as a centre for training Land Girls during the wartime period. Following her training, Lees did stints as a Land Army Girl on first a Devon farm, then an Exmoor farm in Somerset, before going to Wales. At her first post somewhere near Cornworthy the only other labour on the farm was a horseman; she had 12 cows to milk, calves and pigs to look after, and 200 cattle to cart root crops to. She started work at 5a.m. and 'never saw the cows in daylight'. She walked out of that farm after nine months because she 'couldn't stick it'. She was then sent to Herbert Farm near Dulverton, where she ran the farm with three raw recruits, establishing a hostel near the River Barle for them. At the Devon farm she had had to insist on a bedroom to herself, and the Hockin girls similarly had discomfort in the farmhouse and established themselves in a separate cottage. Lees says that she didn't feel tired working 5 a.m. to 6 p.m., but then she did have most of Sunday off every week, though still having to milk several cows twice. She felt she did the work of two or three people.[18] The social isolation experienced by Lees and Hockin and their relentless work with little or no rest is in stark contrast to the relatively charmed life led by the Lowe girls.

Land Girls?

The contrasts between the experience of Faith and Patience Lowe and Land Girls Mary Lees and Olive Hockin in Devon are indicators that the Lowe girls were not in fact Land Girls, as Michael Paget suggested.[19] The general experience of exhaustion, isolation and social deprivation suffered by Land Army Girls adds to the evidence against the Lowes being part of that Army. Faith and Patience, though exhausted some days, could rest, recover and have fun. Land Girls worked away from home on farms to which they had been allocated by the local War Agricutural Committees, or to which they had applied after training via the Labour Exchanges, whereas the Lowes were living at home and working on the family land. White provides background information on the WLA in her book *The Women's Land Army in First World War Britain*, and some insight to women's motivation for joining the Land Army and their experience of it can be found in her article in *The Local Historian.*[20]

The photographic evidence (Figure 1) regarding the Lowes' perceived status as Land Girls is equivocal. It could be interpreted in the context of the Lowe girls' fondness for practical jokes and dressing up, the portrait obviously set up in a photographer's studio. However, it was not unusual for service personnel to have themselves photographed in uniform, and other girls also had studio pictures taken of them in uniform; Figure 8 offers some examples. Thus the Lowes' photograph was not unusual: the difference in colour of the

Figure 8. Studio photographs of Land Girls.[22]

uniform is explained by light coats being issued to dairy workers, and darker ones to land workers.[21]

There is also the question of the authenticity of the uniforms. The style detail of the Lowes' coats do not correspond with those illustrated in Figure 8: their collars are rounded, their pockets do not have flaps, and they wear a separate leather belt whereas the authorised description of Land Girl uniform mentions an integrated belt which buttoned.[23]

Newspaper sources indicate that there was another tier to the to the female agricultural workforce, organised through The Women's National Land Service Corps (WNLSC), under the Board of Agriculture. It did however report to the local Women's War Agricultural Committee (WWAC) meetings held at Exeter Castle. The WNLSC came into being in early 1916 when the agricultural labour shortage became acute,[24] and recruited full and part time women who lived in the villages, with the aim of providing trained women available to farmers who were losing their labourers to conscription. In the spring of 1917, farmers were pleased with this labour force and hoped more women workers would be forthcoming.[25] A Women's War Agricultural Committee meeting reported two instances of farms being run by women and with little male support (in Down St Mary and on 80 acres at Okehampton), recording that this was not exceptional: it was suggested that they should 'come forward' to be recognised and certificated.[26] Only a few days later Miss Calmady-Hamlyn was speaking in Torrington to recruit more part time women.[27] Crucially for the story of the Lowe girls, under the report for the WNLSC to the WWAC there was a discussion about the supply of boots. Seventeen shillings, the suppliers price, was considered too much to charge, and there were suggestions that the Board of Agriculture should pay one third of the cost or contribute five shillings; it was emphasised that these boots under discussion were for the village women and not the WNLSC, who had uniforms whilst village women did not.[28] By the end of 1917, 2000 pairs of boots had been supplied.[29] It appears that the WNLSC organised two groups of women, those registered as village women who were available part time and those registered as WNLSC members, and in mid 1917 there were 2088 of them compared to between 40 and 50 Women's Land Army (WLA) placements in Devon.[30] The authorities generally had problems classifying women's agricultural work.[31] When these newspaper Committee reports are placed alongside some of the detail found within the diary, a proposal for Faith and Patience's position as World War One 'Land Girls' can be made. The diary mentions receipt of new boots on January 5th and 18th May, and records twelve shillings being paid for them on 13th May on the accounting end papers. Two pairs of boots per year was standard issue to

WLA girls,[32] and may have been the same to WNLSC girls. Twelve shillings was the price discussed by the WWAC – five less than the supplier price of 17 shillings – for village women's boots. Consideration may reasonably be given to the uniforms that the girls were wearing when photographed was that of the WNLSC (though no illustration of specific WNLSC uniform has been located), and that they probably registered with the WNLSC and wore uniform to demonstrate their contribution to the war effort and support for their brother in the army.[33] Two other diary entries indicate that Faith and Patience were registered with the WNLSC: on 4th January 'We had a meeting in the barn re the N L S, quite a lot of people there' and 24th May 'Patience and I went to Exeter for the Women's Land Army Rally'.

As White states, many women had worked on local farms before the war and were capable of many farm tasks.[34] At age twenty and twenty-two respectively, Faith and Patience are likely to have been living at home since the completion of their formal education, and would have accumulated farming experience on their home farm of around 52 acres, no doubt with the encouragement of their father. This would not preclude them also taking courses organised by WWAC, and the 1918 diary records their second poultry keeping lecture in March. The diary frequently records another woman assisting them or doing their work:

January 30th	Mrs W. and I cut up chaff and she helped me with the animals etc.
February 23rd	Mrs Wall came down and gave me a hand with the evening work
March 15th	Mrs Wall did the animals for us.

This could be interpreted as Mrs Wall being a part time village woman, but she and Faith often socialised, for example going riding together, indicating that there was a more friendly relationship between them.

In conclusion, this interpretation of Faith's diary, the photograph of the two sisters in uniform, and the other evidence cited above leads to the inference that the Lowe girls were probably registered with the Women's National Land Service Corps, because they were working on their family farm in their own village. They could not have been Land Army Girls, who were always placed on farms away from their homes, and who led far more rigorous working lives than Faith and Patience Lowe.

NOTES

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3. Imperial War Museum: 506 Reel 1, Interviews with Mary Lees, 30 November 1974, at <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80000502>, accessed 9 February 2016.
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6. Paget, *Throwleigh*,169.
7. *Reading Mercury*, 7 October 1916, 7.
8. Theodore Landon, (Faith Lowe's son), Interview Transcript, Throwleigh Archive 2005.
9. Ibid.
10. *Western Times* (*WT*), 16 January 1917, 5.
11. Hockin, *Two Girls on the Land*, 19.
12. DHC, Tithe Apportionment, Throwleigh Parish.
13. Hockin, *Two Girls on the Land*, 42.
14. *WT*, 16 January 1917, 5.
15. Find My Past http://www.findmypast.co.uk/, Throwleigh Census 1911; Throwleigh Poor Rate Book 1915 (Private Hands).
16. Imperial War Museum: 506 Reel 2, Interviews with Mary Lees, 30 November 1974, at <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80000502> accessed 9 February 2016; Hockin, *Two Girls on the Land*, 48, 109-110.
17. Hockin, *Two Girls on the Land*, 32, 42, 62-2, 65, 78, 81-3, 85, 109.

18. Imperial War Museum: 506 Reels 2, 3 and 4 Interviews with Mary Lees 30 November 1974 at <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80000502>, accessed 9 February 2016; Hockin, *Two Girls on the Land*, 35-39.
19. Paget, *Throwleigh*, 99.
20. White, 'Sowing the Seeds of Patriotism', 23-25.
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25. *WT*, 28 April 1917, 3.
26. Ibid., 24 April 1917, 3.
27. Ibid., 10 May 1917, 3.
28. *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (*EPG*), 19 May 1917, 2; Nicola Verdon, 'Left out in the Cold: Village Women and Agricultural Labour in England and Wales during the First World War', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27, No. 1 (2016), 1-25, 24.
29. *WT*, 18 December 1917, 2.
30. *WT*, 18 May 1917, 3; *WT* 16 June 1917, 2; *WT* 22 June 1917, 2; *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 22 June 1917, 3.
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32. <http://www.womenslandarmy.co.uk/first-world-war-womens-land-army/uniform/>, accessed 24 March 2017.
33. Verdon, 'Left out in the Cold', 23.
34. White, *War and the Home Front*, 148.

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Devon County Council and First World War Food Production Policy: A Challenge to Landlordism and Squirearchy?[1]

JULIA NEVILLE

Introduction

Devon County Council appears as a player in articles presented in this volume. The council is shown to have been responsible for the committees charged with surveys of labour and the implementation of the Corn Production Act (1917); as an employer of agricultural and horticultural advisers and agent for training new land workers, such as women; and as the supplier of seed potatoes and potato-sprayers. In this article Devon County Council is the subject of the investigation. The effect of the additional wartime responsibilities for increasing food production on the council is explored using as principal primary sources the records of the council itself, those of Earl Fortescue, chair of the county council at the outbreak of war, and reports in local newspapers. The developing challenge to landowner dominance on the council is identified and the article seeks to identify the grounds for this and whether the effect was long-lasting.

The County Council in 1914

In 1914 county councils were relatively new organisations. They had been introduced by an Act of Parliament in 1888 as elected bodies assuming some

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of the administrative responsibilities previously exercised by the Courts of Quarter Sessions, such as the maintenance of highways and bridges. In 1902 their sphere of influence had been considerably extended by the transfer to them of responsibilities for education. The reforming Liberal government of 1906 added to the county councils' social welfare responsibilities through legislation such as the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906; Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907; the Children Act, 1908; the provisions for tuberculosis in the National Insurance Act of 1911; and the Mental Deficiency Act 1913.

County councils had been responsible since their earliest days for the provision of technical instruction, and in a rural county such as Devon much of their effort was focussed specifically on agriculture. In 1914 there were seven full-time staff: an organiser, five instructors (two in agriculture, one unspecified who also acted as the assistant analyst, overseen by a London-based County Analyst, one in horticulture and one in poultry-keeping) and a clerk.[2] This core staff was supplemented in the summer when other courses, such as the dairy schools, were ran by sessional instructors. Instruction for students over the age of 16 was the responsibility of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, but their decision to place a new Agricultural and Technical College, named after its benefactor, Charles Seale-Hayne, within the county offered opportunities for collaboration over technical instruction which were to be used during the war.

By 1914 the county council (once East Stonehouse, which had become part of the new town of Plymouth, was removed) consisted of 74 single-member divisions, elected triennially, and 26 aldermen elected by their peers for a six-year renewable term of office. W.G. Hoskins quotes the *Devon Weekly Times* on the membership elected in 1888: 'landlordism and squirearchy were in considerable force', and the roll of aldermen in 1913 still consisted almost entirely of landowners, major ones such as Acland, Clinton, Fortescue, Morley and Stucley; and lesser ones, such as Moore-Stevens of Torrington and Shelley of Shobrooke Park.[3] Of the 98 individuals named as aldermen and councillors in Kelly's 1914 Directory, 32 per cent were landowners, and 30 per cent were farmers, yeomen or in occupations associated with farming and the land, such as auctioneers and land agents.[4] There were a few doctors, solicitors and clergymen but most of the rest were entered as 'private residents' in Kelly, indicating that they were living on private means.[5] The county council met during the day, and in Exeter, so that private means and leisure to travel were prerequisites for councillors. In 1914 the council was chaired by Earl Fortescue, who had been chair since 1904. Fortescue was also lord lieutenant of the county and president of the Territorial Forces Association.

The increased responsibilities the war placed on him in these three roles proved too much for him and in early 1916, on his doctor's advice, he decided that the role of chair of the council was the one to give up; it was, he said, the least personal.[6] His place was finally taken at the end of 1916 by Sir Henry Lopes, a West Devon landowner and barrister who had served as an MP but failed to get a Devon seat and had since devoted his time to county business.[7] Fortescue remained a county alderman and indeed continued to play a major role in the county's agricultural affairs.

Figure 1. Earl Fortescue, Devon County Council chairman in 1914, by Walter Stoneman

© National Portrait Gallery, London.

Devon County Council and food production during the war

As P. E. Dewey summarises, the government's efforts to feed the nation and the associated imperial forces during the First World War focused on maintaining imported food supplies where possible, increasing domestic production of food and controlling, ultimately through a rationing system, the food consumed.[8] As the level of national government intervention in domestic food production increased, so did the response required of the county council, which was not well prepared to take on additional executive roles.[9] As Fortescue grumbled when he resigned the chairmanship, 'Every week the government finds something fresh [for me] to do'.[10]

For the first year of the war, while the national emphasis was on securing imports, it was practically 'business as usual' for the council. Their pre-war role in agriculture had been to improve quality and safety. They were the agents for preventing animal and plant disease, the point of reference for analysis of samples of fertilisers and feeding stuffs, and they provided education inside and outside schools. These duties were shared between the Executive, Agricultural and Education Committees, although in March 1915 the Executive and Agricultural Committees were amalgamated into a single Executive and Agricultural Committee. Most of the committees' expenditure was incurred on agricultural education on which in 1914 they anticipated a spend of £3,650, some of which was subsidised by a grant from the Board of Agriculture.[11] The main impact of the 'European War', as it was called at this stage, seemed to be for the council to assist in military recruitment and welfare. The 'economists' on the council, those who were particularly concerned about the impact of council commitments on the level of the rates, naturally took the opportunity to vote to postpone what they regarded as unnecessary expenditure, such as the building of new schools.[12]

In the autumn of 1915, however, county council responsibilities were formally changed. At the prompting of the Board of Trade the county council had in June set up a small committee on the 'Organisation of Agricultural Labour' to ascertain whether there was any shortage of labour, no small task when it was calculated that there were 7,200 farms in the county.[13] This committee, consisting of five county members (a landowner, three farmers and an auctioneer/land agent) and five members nominated by the Devon Farmers Union found their role was superseded, however, following a briefing given by the Board of Agriculture in early September. County councils, seen as useful intermediaries between the Board of Agriculture and the farming community, were required to set up War Agricultural Committees (WACs) to assist with the organisation of labour, report on shortages, and gather information about food production and its associated problems.[14] In larger counties these committees were supplemented by subcommittees for individual localities. The Devon WAC was composed of the existing members of the Executive and Agricultural Committee, the three surveyors, together with representatives of the Devon County Agricultural Association and the Devon Farmers' Union, the Principal of Seale-Hayne College and the county Agricultural Organiser, and was chaired by Mr W. Tremlett, County Alderman and Chairman of the Devon Farmers' Union.[15] The committee also had powers of co-option which were used initially to appoint the chair and secretary of the new Women's War

Service Committee.[16] By March 1916 the WAC comprised 26 county council members plus ten additional members, including women, additional tenant farmers, and professional staff. Sixteen district committees were also set up to cover the county and report to the WAC.[17] The co-option of women was further extended in December 1916.[18]

As Howkins has pointed out, the impact of these early WACs was minimal; the committee had no statutory powers, nor were they able to appoint additional staff to undertake any work. [19] In Devon the district committees made an effort to ascertain the availability of labour through parish enquiries, but it was generally agreed that the returns, even where completed, were of poor quality and inadequate as the basis for decision-making. The council placed advertisements to promote farmers to renew registration for exemption when conscription was introduced in May 1916.[20] But some district committees 'hardly ever met'[21] and the toothlessness of the WAC is indicated by their meeting in June 1916, when they could do no more than to pass a resolution, 'to strongly deprecate the recruitment in agricultural districts of men passed only for service at home'.[22]

When Lloyd George became Prime Minister in December 1916 he appointed Lord Rhondda as Minister of Food, and a new Minister of Agriculture, Rowland Prothero, accountable to Rhondda for domestic food production. Prothero was given a freer hand than his predecessor to design workable structures, and he determined that what was required in each county was not a large committee, but a small executive group, accountable directly to him. Devon reshaped its arrangements to create a War Agriculture Executive Committee (WAEC)[23]. This comprised the chair of the Executive and Agricultural Committee, county alderman, farmer and president of the Devon Farmers' Union, Mr Tremlett; the county vice-chair (given the brief for pigs and potatoes, areas of principal interest to small cultivators); four councillors, themselves landowners, who were to chair geographical divisions which undertook work with local farmers, particularly on labour (soldier and prisoner of war labour) and on horses, petrol, agricultural machinery and tractors; and the chair of the Women's War Service Committee.

These new arrangements were reported to Devon County Council at the meeting in March 1917. The old arrangements were not dismantled, however. The WAC was retained as a body to which the WAEC would present reports, and non-executive issues such as the Addison report on reconstruction were referred to them by the main council. Other existing committees continued to make a contribution; in particular the Education Committee and the original Executive and Agricultural Committee, which dealt with training, in particular the establishment of local cheese-making, the supply of shortage

skills such as farriery, and demonstrations of best practice, for example in potato spraying.

By the middle of 1917 the passing of the Corn Production Act energised additional food production by guaranteeing a price of 60 shillings per quarter for wheat, establishing mechanisms to set a minimum wage for labourers, and setting quotas for corn production that required the ploughing up of grassland in order to sow extra acres of wheat. It gave the county council powers to take over farms that were not being well managed. The WAEC wrote to divisional and district committees indicating that they would be prepared, if necessary, to inspect any farms that were unsatisfactory in their returns with a view to taking them over.[24]

The Food Production Department was, however, alive to the growth of bureaucracy at local level. They noted that the district committees, unlike those in Lancashire, for example, were not accountable to the WAEC, which the department saw as their 'sole agent'.[25] The county was directed to transfer their accountability and the argument that the arrangement worked in practice was rejected.[26] These instructions were discussed at the WAC meeting in September 1917, and it was agreed that the accountability of district committees should be changed, but, in order to make the WAEC more representative, the county sought and received approval to add two more tenant farmers to the WAEC.[27]

From this point onwards the WAEC exercised the new leverage it had been given to commission surveys of farms and use the powers under the Cultivation of Lands Order to achieve the quota set by the government. In Devon this was an additional 130,000 acres of corn. By August 1917 quotas had been issued at parish level and divisional committees were seeking the WAEC's assistance to inspect farms that were 'unsatisfactory in their returns' in order to induce other farms to 'come into line'.[28] The first compulsory purchase order was applied for, but Sir Ian Amory, who chaired the eastern division, still 'hoped farmers would fulfil their promises' voluntarily which he said, seemed to him to be 'in accordance with English notions'.[29]

Amory promised that the committee would help farmers by seeking to resolve the continuing problems of supply of labour, and of horses and machinery, and so, in conjunction with the Board of Agriculture, Seale-Hayne College, their own instructors and the War Office, they did. Their efforts were considerable, and the results were noted by the secretary to the WAEC in July 1918. Cropping increases in Devon since 1916 represented 58,000 acres of oats, 39,000 acres of wheat, 15,000 acres of other corn, 9,000 acres of potatoes and 8,000 acres of barley.[30] Such an increase in productivity was not sustainable, however, and no additional quotas were set

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for 1919, in recognition partly that the war was drawing to a close and partly in acknowledgment that land was being over-extensively cultivated.

Discussion

Devon County Council changed internally during the war to respond to the new demands of central government. Lord Fortescue noted how at the end of 1914 they 'got rid of' the clerk (chief officer). He had only been in post since 1912 but, though hard-working, was incapable of delegation. His departure allowed the appointment of a more able man, Brian Miller, who had gained substantial experience at Birmingham city council, recognised as one of the most dynamic municipal authorities.[51] Miller's touch is recognisable in the immediate changes to committee work and the presentation of reports at council meetings. In 1916 the council also chose a new chair, Henry Lopes, who was unencumbered by other demands such as the Lord Lieutenancy and who, as he himself said, spared no pains to make himself 'as complete a master as possible of all the work of the county council'.[52] The council's experience of the challenge of increasing food production during the war, however, also left its mark on a change in attitude towards the council and its members.

Neither the WAEC nor the WAC were to survive for more than a few months after the war. County councils were told in February 1919 to disband them and were instead invited to nominate members for new agricultural committees, not part of the statutory committees of the councils themselves.[53] The discussion in the council on this proposition reflected the lessons the different participants had taken from their experiences during the war. The principal views expressed in that discussion, as recorded by the *Western Times*, were made by two members of the WAEC (Tremlett, the Chairman of the Devon Farmers' Union, and Fortescue, a landowner and northern divisional committee chairman) and by a third councillor, an active participant in the eastern divisional committee:

> Mr W. Tremlett vigorously criticised the way in which agriculture was being dealt with. He regarded it as the most rack-renting system ever adopted. If continued, land would ere long not be worth anything to cultivators and not even to consumers. No land could stand it for four or five years in succession. Farmers submitted to bureaucratic control during the war, but would not submit to it in the future.

> Mr Crawford said the discontent among farmers was the result of the people who were not experts being placed in control of agricultural affairs. The Council must make sure that the majority of the members of the Committee knew something about practical agriculture.
>
> Earl Fortescue hoped the Council would not exclude landowners from the members whom they nominated for the Committee, and it would, he suggested, make a good impression if they recognised the employed class, as well as the tenant farmers and landlords. Replying to Mr Tremlett, his lordship said it was not the time nor place to go into the controversy over the way in which the [WAEC] had carried out their unpleasant duties. If that Committee trod on people's toes they did not do it for the fun of the thing, but in an honest attempt to carry out the duties imposed upon them in a time of national necessity. At any rate he made bold to say their methods did not ruin agriculture, for occupying farmers at recent sales had been among the best purchasers of farms, had paid for them with ready money, and had not been under the necessity to borrow for the purpose.[34]

The debate shows Tremlett (whom Fortescue privately regarded as 'a rather slovenly farmer and quite useless for emergency')[35] condemning what he regarded as the over-intensive farming that the Food Production Department had required; Crawford making a case for valuing farming expertise, 'practical agriculture', i.e. not the knowledge that 'gentlemen farmers' had; and Fortescue, major landowner and chair of the WAEC, first in a positive inclusive light, accepting that the 'employed class' had a contribution to make, and then on the defensive, referring to the 'national necessity' which compelled them to tread on people's toes and finally pointing out that some tenant ('occupying') farmers had done very well out of the money they made during the war.

The points of view expressed had all been aired previously during the war. First there was the tension between the landowner and the tenant farmer. This was partly due to the perception, as Crawford expressed it, that the tenant farmer was an expert in practical farming while the landowner only understood it second hand. It was an age when professional expertise was becoming increasingly highly valued. As Harold Perkin described in *The Rise of Professional Society*, the nineteenth century dominance of landed interests and industrial entrepreneurialism was giving place to the dominance of accredited experts.[36] Farmers, Crawford suggested, needed a similar recognition. Such an argument was given credibility by the status accorded during the war to the National Farmers' Union in policy development, and

the county's actions during the war had mirrored this, with the engagement of representatives of the Devon Farmers' Union at every stage, as Graham Cox, Philip Lowe and Michael Winter have demonstrated.[37]

Deeper than the idea that the farmer was a practical expert, lay the shifting balance of power between classes. Farmers felt aggrieved by attempts to direct what they should do with their farms, particularly on the instruction of landowners. They looked for some intervention that would enforce an 'equality of sacrifice'. In September 1917 Mr Besley, county councillor and Stoke Canon farmer, proposed at his local district committee that the WAEC be asked to consider treating park land as agricultural land. Park land had not been surveyed, as it was considered as an amenity, not as productive land, but Besley said that 'he considered that owners of parklands should contribute their quota as well as the farmers. They came there and said what farmers must do, but they did nothing themselves'. The resolution was agreed.[38] Lord Fortescue, recognising that he was the only member of the WAEC who owned a deer park, felt obliged to respond to this and wrote a letter, published in local papers, explaining that he used the park not purely as an amenity, but for the grazing of stock and pointing out that the total land used for deer parks in the county was probably only about 3000 acres out of 1.6 million acres[39]. Nonetheless letters were written by the St Thomas district agricultural committee to local park owners, who sent their agents to discuss with the committee what could or could not be done. Compromises were reached but the concept of equality was recognised.[40]

Besley continued his quest for equality of sacrifice by raising the question of turning golf links into ploughland. Another incident that showed the feeling developing against squirearchy took place in East Devon that autumn. Elections for local authorities had been suspended for the duration of the war and, when a vacancy occurred, nominations from the division were invited, from which the county councillors and aldermen elected a representative to co-opt.[41] In December 1917 nominations were opened for the Ottery electoral division where the sitting councillor had died. Support was canvassed for two candidates, William Ellis, tenant farmer in Ottery St Mary, and John Kennaway, son and heir to Sir John Kennaway of Escot. In the discussion in Honiton Rural District Council one councillor remarked that 'what they wanted was a practical farmer ... there were too many members on the County Council representing the landed interest'. The council, and the neighbouring Ottery St Mary District Council, supported the nomination of William Ellis, the tenant farmer. When it came to the vote at the county council, landowner Sir Robert White-Thomson supported John Kennaway, saying that 'the landlord class were not adequately represented on the Council as compared

with the tenant class'. Voting on the first ballot was equal; the chair refused to use his casting vote, and on the second ballot Ellis was elected by 34 votes to 32.[42]

These examples show that attitudes to the council were changing. As in J. M. Lee's classic analysis of Cheshire County Council, the dominance of 'country gentlemen' in the early years of county councils, what he describes as 'social leaders' was being challenged. Unlike Lee's Cheshire, however, the challenge did not come from those who were 'public persons', those who developed their social standing by seeking and retaining public office, though there were a few such members on Devon County Council, such as Mr Windeatt, solicitor and member for the Totnes Division.[43] The challenge came from the middle class tenant farmer and, as David Cannadine has described, was part of a more general 'demise of hierarchy' that led after the war to a society where 'ordinary people no longer saw their society hierarchically, nor the place within it deferentially' and where 'politics was dominated by the middle class as never before'.[44]

Conclusion

The First World War caused so great a disruption to everyday life that most contemporary commentators believed that things would never be the same again, though some were fearful about this and others delighted. From 1916 onwards Devon County Council's ordered way of existence was disrupted, particularly, as the discussion above has shown, by the demands for the council to generate a major increase in domestic food production. As the council's historian, Jeffery Stanyer, points out, a county council is 'inevitably ... harassed from below by its districts and from above by central government' and thus requires to develop 'a style of government which enables them to balance central demands for efficiency ... with the values implicit in localism, some of which are definitely hostile to the ... ideology of the centre'.[45] In the case of the implementation of the food production policy, additional pressure was placed on both sides of what was already a fractious relationship, that between landlord and tenant farmer, and resulted in demands for equality of sacrifice and for representation on the council that was a better reflection of the different interests engaged in policy-making.

Bonnie White acknowledges that the 'inequalities of sacrifice and the inconsistencies of wartime demands' experienced on the home front in the First World War created a period of disruption, but she points out that 'some wartime changes became permanent while others proved reversible'.[46] Friction between landlords and tenant farmers did continue after the war, but

its significance was muted by the fact that so many landowners sold all or part of their estates, and many tenant farmers bought their farms. The longer term change within the county council was the decline of agrarian interests more generally. In 1914 sixty-two per cent of councillors and aldermen were landowners, farmers or in associated occupations. By 1935 that proportion had fallen to forty-six per cent. A more enduring legacy of the war for the council was to be the experience they gained over the administration of policy set by central government.

NOTES

1. Phrase used by the *Western Daily Press* of Devon County Council in 1889, according to W. G. Hoskins, *Devon* (London: Collins, 1954) 194.
2. Dr Wynter Blyth had retained his part-time contract as County Analyst even when he moved from North Devon to a post in London in 1879.
3. Hoskins, *Devon*, 194.
4. *1914 Directory of Devonshire and Cornwall* (London, Kelly and Co., 1914).
5. Ibid.
6. *North Devon Journal* (*NDJ*), 23 March 1916, quoting Earl Fortescue's letter to the council.
7. According to the *Western Times* (*WT*), 15 December 1916, Lopes suffered from the disadvantage of being a Conservative in a time of Liberal ascendency in South Devon.
8. Peter Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London, Routledge, 1989).
9. This section draws on the minutes of Devon County Council, supplemented by reports in the *Western Times* and *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, together with the general account of food production during the war in L. Margaret Barnett, *British Food Policy During the First World War* (London, Routledge, 2014, originally published 1985).
10. *NDJ*, 23 March 1916.
11. DHC, Minutes and papers of Devon County Council (DCC papers), 18 March 1915.
12. Ibid., Motion for discussion: That all capital expenditure should be postponed as far as practicable until the end of the war. *WT*, 19 March 1915 provides the discussion.
13. DHC, DCC papers, 24 June 1915; *Western Morning News* (*WMN*) 25 June 2015, 3.
14. *DEG*, 10 July 1915.
15. DHC, DHC papers, DCC Minutes, 30 September 1915.
16. DHC, DCC 149/1/1/2, December 1915 list of WAC members includes Mrs

Mildmay and Miss Dickinson. See also Dickinson's letter explaining co-operation, *DEG*, 21 Dec 1916.

17. These were based on Poor Law Union areas where networks of overseers already existed to assist with surveys and returns. The Poor Law areas were Axminster, Barnstaple, Bideford, Crediton, Holsworthy, Honiton, Kingsbridge, Newton Abbot, Okehampton, Plympton, St Thomas. South Molton, Tavistock, Tiverton, Torrington and Totnes.
18. DHC, DCC papers, 14 December 1916, Paper K.
19. Alun Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History, 1850–1925* (London, Harper Collins, 1991), 295.
20. *WT*, 28 April 1916.
21. *WT*, 16 December 1916, stated by Horne, the local Board of Agriculture Commissioner.
22. *DEG*, 23 June 1916.
23. This sometimes appears in the Fortescue papers (DHC 1262M) as the Food Production Committee.
24. *DEG*, 18 August 1917, report of the St Thomas War Agricultural Committee.
25. Dewey, *British Agriculture*, 97.
26. *WT*, 28 September 1917, Devon County WAC.
27. *WT*, 18 September 1917.
28. *DEG*,18 August 1917, report to St Thomas War Agricultural Committee.
29. Great Bidlake Farm, which was to become a 'women only farm', *WT*, 22 Sep 1917.
30. DHC, 1262M/O/LD/142/51-61, *Report to WAEC*, 16 July 1918. 'Good old Devon!, Woodcock, the secretary, remarked.
31. DHC 1262M/FH/42, *Fortescue Memoirs*, 33.
32. *Express and Echo*, 27 September 1934.
33. *WT*, 14 March 1919.
34. Ibid.
35. DHC, 1262M/FH/42, *Fortescue Memoirs*, 40.
36. Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London, Routledge, 1989).
37. Graham Cox, Philip Lowe, and Michael Winter, 'The Origins and Early Development of the National Farmers' Union', *Agricultural History Review*, 39 (1991), 30-47.
38. *DEG*, 18 August 1917.
39. *DEG*, 24 August 1917.
40. DHC, 1262M L160, Letter from Francis Fulford, Esq, 12 Jan 1918; *DEG*, 3 November 1917 for report at St Thomas WAC.
41. Under the *Casual Vacancies, Elections and Registration Act* 1915.
42. *DEG*, 14 December 1917.
43. J. M. Lee, *Social Leaders and Public Persons* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963).

44. David Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1998), 127-129.
45. Jeffrey Stanyer, *A History of Devon County Council, 1889–1989* (Exeter, Devon Books, 1989), 11.
46. Bonnie White, *War and the Home Front: Devon in the First World War, 1914-1918*, 2008, PhD thesis, McMaster University, 305-6, available at: https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/16691/1/White%20Bonnie.pdf. Accessed 28 Feb 2017.

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Challenges to Devon Estate Gardens during World War One

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Introduction

Before the First World War large landowners faced mounting financial pressures. During the period from 1870 to 1914 land values fell by two-thirds due to the agricultural depression which led to smaller returns from rental income. The 'People's Budget' of 1909, which aimed to make taxation fairer across society, raised the level of income tax, death duty and land tax. Landowners with a large acreage and an income of over £3,000 a year faced a massively increased tax liability, which put additional pressure on estate finances. The National Insurance Act of 1911 affected both employers and employees, and the contributions required from employers added to their financial burden. In response, some landowners began to sell or consolidate part of their estates.[1] Despite this there was little change in many estate gardens which continued to demonstrate a landowner's horticultural interests, wealth and prestige. Kitchen gardens were also a major source of food production for the family and local markets. This article considers some of the challenges facing the landed estates to increase food production during the First World War, with reference to three Devon case studies.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 some of the younger men signed up immediately to go and fight, but where there was a preponderance of older men, initially the war seemed to have little effect. It was not until the Military Services Act of March 1916, which imposed the conscription of all men

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between the ages of 18 and 41, together with the need for increased food production, that most estates were affected. Men could appeal to military tribunals for exemption from military service if their work was of national importance, but gardeners, especially those who worked in the pleasure grounds, were not considered to be in an exempted occupation.[2] However, many head gardeners did not go to war, many were too old as it was unusual for a man to become 'head' until he was at least thirty. Of 150 head gardeners of prestigious gardens in Devon, 92 were in their forties or fifties in 1914, 25 in their late twenties or thirties and 33 in their sixties or seventies.[3] Frequently, the only skilled men left on an estate were men like Charles Butt at The Pynes, Upton Pyne, who became responsible for overseeing the home farm as well as the garden.[4] Younger head gardeners were called up, although estate agents petitioned the Military Service War Tribunals to keep their skilled staff wherever possible. Many serving on the tribunals were landowners themselves which must have led to a conflict of interest. Frank Loosemoore from Downes and Alexander Massey, from Lupton were just two of the head gardeners who were killed in action.[5]

Tribunals had a varied response to retention of gardeners. Head gardeners with their life skills and experience were valued as knowledgeable men with man management skills. Many had worked on a variety of estates and in commercial organisations such as market gardens or nurseries. They were accustomed to producing food out of season and often in large quantities. However, at Bicton, East Budleigh, where the pleasure gardens were reported to be 'dismantled' and where food was grown by intensive methods to support the Bicton Auxiliary Hospital, the Head Gardener, Edward High, was sent for military service as it was deemed that 'the labourers employed at the gardens could carry on the work'.[6]

Many landowners were members of War Agricultural Committees and encouraged their staff to increase food production. Glasshouses were closed up to save on fuel and gardeners were seconded to help on farms. All gardeners in the case studies below increased output of vegetables despite shortages of staff. Those that were already producing food for families and local markets were increasingly sending food to the military or to local hospitals and institutions. Hospitals housed in mansions owned by wealthy landowners, included Bystock near Exmouth, Castle Hill (South Molton), Manor House (Moretonhampstead), Watermouth Castle (Ilfracombe) and Oldway Mansion (Paignton).[7] Estates struggled to retain skilled staff and advertisements were constant throughout the war for 'ineligible' men, 'experienced young' gardeners or who were 'unfit for military service', even for women gardeners.[8] Although food production had a high priority, it was not used as a reason

for a man to be kept at home. Men were told that their jobs could be done by older men, by women, or by Belgian refugees based on estates such as Killerton and Ugbrooke.[9]

Some head gardeners such as George Henderson, (Tracey, Awliscombe) and Frederick Cavill, (Flete, Holbeton) were co-opted onto local food committees or became Royal Horticultural Society Advisors. They wrote advice columns for parish magazines, helped to set up war allotments and instructed school children and their teachers how to turn school grounds into gardens.[10] Members of the Devon and Exeter Gardeners' Association, instead of reading papers to each other, gave lectures at the local Workers' Educational Association set up to instruct market gardeners, allotment holders and cottage gardeners on how best to grow and increase their crops.[11] They still acted as judges for cottage garden shows, but their role had changed to a more educational one, inspecting, praising and encouraging food production.

The Estate and Gardens at Killerton

Killerton House, Broadclyst, Exeter had been in the Acland family since the early seventeenth century. Sir Charles Thomas Dyke Acland (1842–1919) MP, inherited the estate from his father Sir Thomas in 1898. The house was in need of modernisation and the grounds were covered with dense masses of *ponticum* rhododendrons and laurel; the laurel being 40 to 50 feet high according to the head gardener at the time, Mr Coutts.[12]

Figure 1. Killerton House. *Photograph*: Clare Greener.

Charles's wife, Gertrude Walrond, was a great lover of gardening in the naturalistic style of Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson. Robinson was invited to Killerton in 1900 to give advice. He recommended a massive clearance of all the 'overgrown common stuff' and suggested 'effective groups' of new trees and shrubs and a broad herbaceous border at the bottom of the slope.[13] He designed a long terrace wall to divide the garden from the park and also proposed a rock garden which was made in the quarry behind the Bear Hut: this was so elaborate that it demanded the full-time services of four weeding women and it did not survive the First World War without damage.[14] Other parts of the garden did survive the war with many of the magnolias and azaleas dating from the early 1900s.[15]

In 1910 the District Valuer, tasked by the Board of the Inland Revenue with making valuations of property for estate duty purposes, assessed Killerton Mansion as having a house, gardens, parks, lodges and stable yard in a total of 202 acres.

Figure 2. The House and Surrounding Buildings at Killerton 1910 as drawn by the District Valuer.

Source: TNA, IR58-30182-1.

Killerton House is marked as 'A' in the top left hand corner of Figure 2; 'B' is listed as 'Gardeners Shed and Potting House, loft over old and poor'.[16] The Valuer also noted the existence of several large greenhouses in the gardens. Other buildings shown on the plan are stables, sheds for wheelwrights and carpenters, timber and sawing sheds as well as various implement sheds: some reported as being in fair condition, others as being 'old and poor'.[17] The Valuer also remarked that many tenanted cottages were in a poor state of repair.[18]

The timber that was in the park at the time was valued at £1,100; the fruit trees in the walled garden were valued at £100 and 'other things growing on the land' £300.[19] The Valuer also noted a large number of allotments in the village rented by the tenants from Sir Charles.

According to the Acland Family record Sir Charles was considered to be a good landlord and had an excellent knowledge of his estates: the main revenue of which came from farm rentals. He was very conscious of keeping a personal relationship with his tenants and thanks to his work with the Bath and West Society he was aware of all the latest developments in farming and farm buildings.[20]

He was appointed as MP for East Cornwall in 1882 just as Gladstone's government was about to start the committee stage of the Second Agricultural Holdings Act, which recognised farmers' rights to compensate for improvements and was a major first step in the protection of individual tenant farmers. This Act was something which his father had been associated with. Sir Charles was called to make a number of speeches on the subject and was able to demonstrate his wide-ranging knowledge of the issue.[21] By the end of his life Sir Charles was acknowledged as being 'an actual pioneer in the matter of land management'.[22]

He discussed farming matters with his nephew Francis Acland[23] and in a letter reflected the shortage of labour on the farms as a result of the War where he feared: 'that Devon and West Somerset are not made to suit tractors and I rather doubt tractors being made to suit them. My father tried a steam plough on the flattest hills about here once but no more than once and it cost a lot'.[24] By 1916 the effects of the loss of labour on the farms was being felt and women were taking the place of the men. The *Western Times* reported on a demonstration held at Budlake Farm, Killerton, where women agricultural workers from the county took part in competitions to demonstrate their skills for such tasks as ploughing, milking, and harrowing. Sir Charles Acland was in attendance for the demonstrations and the prize giving and Mr John Wilson, who was by then the head gardener, was reported as being on the Agricultural War Committee responsible for organising the event.[25]

Figure 3. Miss Alexandra Smith, aged 14, photographed at the Agricultural Demonstration at Killerton, Saturday 27 May 1916.

Source: *Western Times*, 2 June 1916.

Sir Charles encouraged his local men to sign up for the Reserve Corps expecting that they would not be sent to war as they worked on the land.[26] Although men could appeal to a tribunal for exemption, work on the land being one category for exemption, in many cases his men were sent to war, and when John Wilson was called up to serve Sir Charles intervened: anticipating,

> Wilson my head gardener who has produced some tons of fruit and vegetables for soldiers and sailors since the war began and planted a still greater production this year is promptly called up. I have written a letter to the Sub Commissioners but it is a queer way of keeping the promise made.[27]

This intervention clearly worked and Wilson continued as Head Gardener at Killerton until his death in 1928. During the war, he was a judge for the Cottage Garden Society's best gardens, and allotments in 1916 and in 1918 he was on the committee responsible for welcoming wounded soldiers from the Exeter hospitals to Broadclyst.[28]

Sir Charles took an innovative decision in 1917 (near to end of his life) to gift to the National Trust, on a 500 year lease, 7,000 acres of the Exmoor estate to preserve the land from development.[29] The Killerton and the

Holnicote estates were subsequently given to the Trust by his great nephew, Richard Acland in 1944.[30] Both of these transfers demonstrate the family's progressive tradition with regard to land management and were possibly partly prompted by the aftermath of two world wars.

The Gardens at Poltimore Park

Poltimore House, just outside Exeter, was well known in the Edwardian era for its gardens. The area around the house had been remodelled by the first Lord Poltimore in the 1830s and 1840s with an arboretum, pleasure grounds, a walled garden and greenhouses. The second Lord and Lady Poltimore had continued to develop the gardens throughout their long occupation of Poltimore House, most particularly in the 1900s when they reduced their public commitments and spent more time at Poltimore.[31]

In 1910 the District Valuer assessed the 44 acres attached to Poltimore House as gardens and pleasure grounds, and specifically mentioned over

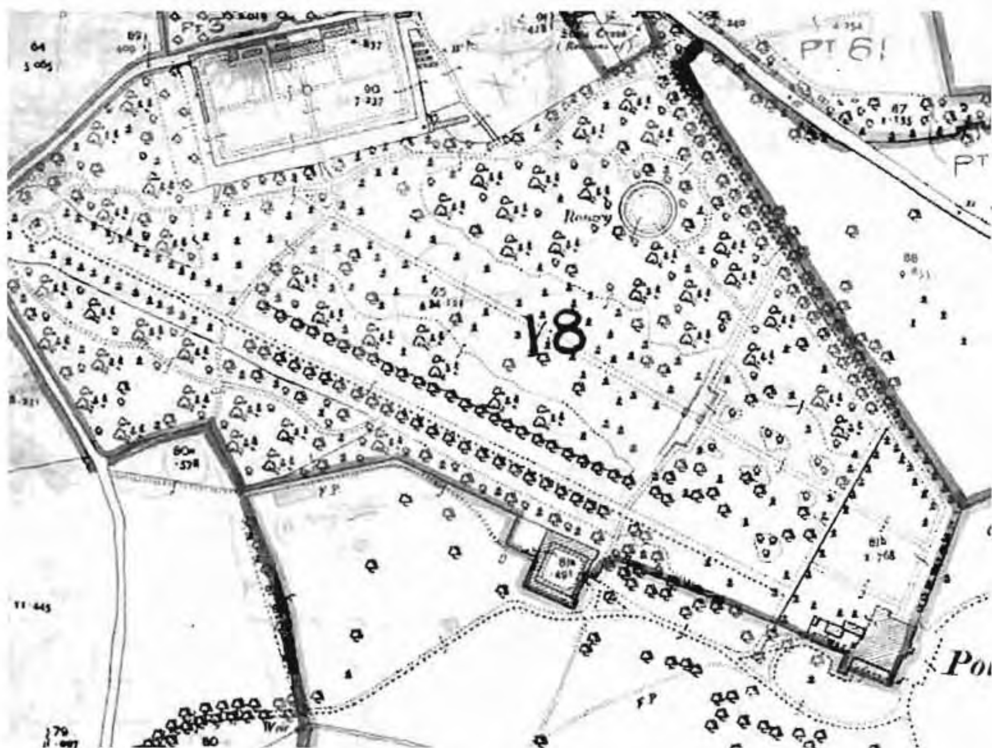

Figure 4. The Gardens at Poltimore House in 1910.
Source: TNA, IR128-6-003.

500 fruit trees growing there.[32] In fact, as his map shows, this calculation excluded the area south-west of the house which had been taken in to the garden additionally by the third Lord and Lady Poltimore. The extent of the garden as outlined on the valuation map is shown in Figure 4.

A tour, reported in 1907, described the gardens as containing avenues of trees, a flower garden with bedding plants, herbaceous borders, an arboretum, and a 'rosery'. There was an eight-acre walled kitchen garden, with fruit trees growing both inside and outside the walls, three peach houses, a fuchsia house, melon house, stove house, palm house and four vineries.[33] From the volume of vegetables grown (100 yards of peas, for example) and the 500 fruit trees that the District Valuer recorded it appears that the garden had always been used to earn money for the estate. In 1909 the third Lord and Lady Poltimore remodelled the south west corner of the gardens to create a water garden with a pond and a Chinese pagoda.

The 1911 census shows that there were fourteen gardeners employed at Poltimore Park. These included the head gardener, J. Charles Thomas, three

Table 1. The war time occupation of gardening staff who had been employed at Poltimore Park in 1911.[34]

Surname	Forename	Age (in 1911)	War-time occupation
Thomas	Joshua	47	In gardens throughout war
Hawkins	William	59	No reference after 1912
Turton	Isaac	36	In gardens throughout war
Westcott	John	41	In gardens throughout war
Rose	Charles	27	Known to have tried to enlist; service not traced
Tapper	Albert	18	No information
Moase	Francis	23	No information
Tickner	Herbert	23	No information
Sizer	Ernest	26	Moved to Starcross; joined army; killed in action April 1918
Bissett	Francis	20	Joined Army 1915
Western	Harold	18	Joined RAMC 1914
Melluish	Reginald	16	Had joined Navy in 1912.
Woodman	Ernest	15	Joined Army Service Corps 1914
Yeo	Charles	14	Joined Navy in 1915.

gardeners aged between 30 and 60, who were heads of household in the village; a group of four trainees living in the bothy, plus another three young men lodging in the village; and three boys aged 14-15. Charles Thomas had been recruited as head gardener in January 1909 at a wage of £100 a year with house, free coal, milk and vegetables. It is not clear what changes there had been to the gardening staff between 1911 and 1914, but it seems likely that some of the young trainees would have moved on. Table 1 shows what happened to some of them.

When war broke out young men in the Territorial Forces were called up at once. Thomas was told to manage with the help of schoolchildren until school restarted, when he should get the remaining men to work overtime. There was no curtailment of any garden tasks.

By mid-1915 Lord Poltimore and his steward agreed that estate expenditure should be cut. Lord Poltimore was a semi-invalid who preferred to live on his North Molton estate, which he considered better for his health. Although he never visited Poltimore after 1914, twelve men and a woman were still employed in the garden. The steward instructed Thomas to manage within a budget of £500 a year. Thomas suggested dismissing four staff, which he calculated should reduce the wages bill to £6 7s 6d per week or £337 per year (the weekly wage bill in 1912 had averaged £13). To keep within the £500 limit he suggested that sales should be increased and some of the greenhouses closed to save fuel.[35]

Four staff were laid off, including one man of military age who joined the army. Francis Bissett, although not on the list of those dismissed, also enlisted. The wages bill did not fall as far as £6 7s 6d, with payments remaining closer to £8 per week, partly because Lord Poltimore transferred two farm staff to the gardens team.[36] There is also reference to a Belgian workman who started at Home Farm in 1915 and later was transferred to the garden staff.[37] By July 1917 there were again ten garden staff: the three stalwarts, Turton, Westcott and Stark; 'old Bissett'; 'the Belgian'; and five boys aged under 17.[38]

Sales of produce increased: between October 1915 and May 1916 over £115 was made.[39] The sales were not only of fruit and vegetables, but of flowers, shown by reference to a wholesale florist in Covent Garden.[40] Some fruit and vegetables were also donated to the Exeter War Hospitals.

In 1917 problems began to arise over rates of pay. Thomas's own pay had risen from £100 in 1909 to £110 in 1915, and also included commission on sales, but other staff were less well paid.[41] Shortage of labour led to wage rises generally and the introduction of a minimum wage of 25s a week for agricultural workers. At this point the senior gardeners at Poltimore were paid 19s or 21s, together with a cottage rent free. The elderly Thomas Bissett

and the seventeen-year-olds were paid 16s or 17s and the boys 10s to 13s. A representative from the Agricultural Labourers and Rural Workers Union identified that Lord Poltimore was paying his staff less than the minimum rate and approached the estate clerk of works for the names of those involved.[42] A further pay rise was then agreed in May 1918.[43]

By the end of the war the character of the gardens at Poltimore had changed, with vegetable production replacing the flowers and a much stronger emphasis on commercial production. Staff in the gardens were reduced from fourteen in 1912 to eight in 1918. Even this was not the end. The third Lord Poltimore died in November 1918. The fourth Lord Poltimoe laid off the head gardener and most of the remaining staff. Maintenance of the gardens became the responsibility of the estate manager, and much of the work was done by labourers working on other estate duties.[44]

Endsleigh Gardens and Grounds

Endsleigh Cottage was built from 1810 for John, the sixth Duke of Bedford, and his second wife Georgiana as a summer holiday home and fishing lodge. Humphry Repton had, unsuccessfully, submitted a design for the house, however, he was invited to create one of his 'Red Books', the *Book of Endsleigh* with designs for garden and grounds, much of which was laid out from 1814 to his plans.[45]

Endsleigh is situated in the Tamar Valley and extends into Cornwall. It is a valley garden, of approximately twenty-six hectares with five hectares of ornamental meadows, and approximately ninety hectares of ornamental woodland with walks and carriage drives. The site has extensive, picturesque views along the Tamar Valley. To the south-west and south-east of the house there are formal gardens with terraces and lawns. A children's garden has a fountain and a circular rill where toy boats could be sailed. Away from the house is an early rockery, planted with ferns and small shrubs. The valley walk is ornamented with a series of leats and cascades. The kitchen garden is situated about 800 metres south-east of the house and 50 metres from Harragrove, the head gardener's house. In July 1898, following a visit from the Devon and Exeter Gardeners' Association, many specimen trees were listed and the garden was described as having:

> ... a lawn in the most perfect condition, overlooked by a terrace walk, canopied with Roses on an overarching trellis. Bold overhanging rocks are seen clothed with Rhododendrons, Ivies, and underwood of various species. A cascade, or rather a series of cascades, in a sequestered dell under "The

Cottage" gave a picturesque aspect to the place ... There is very little glass, Endsleigh depending upon its out-of-door effect for its attractions which are undoubtedly great.[46]

Figure 5. Endsleigh Grounds and Gardens.
Source: 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Map.

In 1914 there were 24 men working in the 'gardens and grounds', recruited from both sides of the Tamar and overseen by head gardener Mr Frank Yole.[47] The staff comprised ten gardeners, five garden labourers, six general labourers, mostly responsible for maintenance, one apprentice, one 'house-boy' who lived in Endsleigh House and helped where necessary in the garden, and one carter. The kitchen garden had its own dedicated staff of three, Lewis Rodd, Charles Westlake and George Hendy, responsible for producing fruit, vegetables and flowers for the house. The garden was open to the public, but closed when the duke and his family were in residence.[48]

The men normally worked six days a week but, for some this rose to seven days a week during the war. At the beginning of the war the average age of the men at Endsleigh was 38, Frank Yole, the head gardener was 66;

twelve men were over 40. When war was declared Charles Alford, 24, and Samuel Frise, 25, signed up immediately. Alford served throughout the war, but Frise was discharged in 1916 as medically unfit, returning to work at Endsleigh.[49] Thomas Frise, 38, enlisted in December 1915 as a 'horseman', but served the rest of the war as a traction engine driver.[50] John Northey, 28, enlisted in November 1915 but was discharged the following August as medically unfit due to a stomach ulcer.[51] Some staff left Endsleigh to work elsewhere, for example George Yole, left to work at Woburn in 1915. He enlisted in 1917 from Woburn and was killed in action on 1 August at Ypres.

A second Military Conscription Act passed in May 1916 saw changes at Endsleigh as conscription was extended to include married men. Following a tribunal appearance William Croote served as a Conscientious Objector in a non-combatant role in the Royal Army Medical Corps from April 1916.[52] Four other men left the gardens, but it is not known whether they enlisted. The men's wages increased as the number of staff diminished. They began the war earning 2s 10d per day which had been the rate since 1911; by 1918 they were paid between 5s 2d and 5s 4d a day. At the end of the war there were just seven men remaining in the gardens and grounds including Lewis Rodd and George Hendy, in the kitchen garden. Apart from time off for long-term illness, and Samuel Frise's military service, the men remaining in the garden, plus the Head Gardener, Frank Yole, worked at Endsleigh throughout the war.

Endsleigh nursery, which a hundred years before the onset of war had been home to almost 250,000 young trees, shrubs and fruit bushes was dug over for production of potatoes and mangolds.[53] The kitchen garden also increased production of potatoes and the kitchen gardeners, together with other garden staff, were seconded to help with haymaking and harvesting. Prior to the war the men had had their own specialisms; Walter Frise worked in the greenhouse, James Stephens was responsible for the water features and John Southcott spent most of his time 'mowing'.[54] Pleasure gardening had continued but to a very limited degree mostly keeping the area closest to the house cultivated and tidy. Walter Frise no longer spent the majority of his time in the greenhouse, where he had previously been assisted by a boy who washed pots and did much of the tedious work of potting up small plants. The emphasis in the garden had changed to production and storage of food crops especially potatoes and mangolds.

Surprisingly, despite the War Agricultural Committee recommending that women should be trained by head gardeners, there were no women employed in the gardens during the war at Endsleigh.[55] However, women from

the Women's Land Army were employed in the plantations and were even provided with their own special recreation room.[56]

Conclusion

The effects of the war depended, in part, on the attitude of the owner of the estate. Some fought to keep their staff while others encouraged their men to go to war, often to the detriment of running the estate. Younger members of staff were put in charge, whilst older men were recruited back into gardens or delayed retirement until the end of the war. Women, Belgian refugees and prisoners of war were all used as labour in gardens. When men returned from war, there was the challenge of finding appropriate jobs for those who had been given their posts during the conflict. Women advertised for positions, and employers endorsed the skills of their 'temporary' gardeners who were seeking new positions.[57]

Head gardeners who had remained at home and kept farms, orchards and kitchen gardens, producing food for the war effort despite the shortage of staff, were highly respected men both within local communities and nationally. However their contribution, and that of their staff, was only recognised towards the end of the war when the Local Government Board stated that, 'exemption should generally not be refused to an experienced kitchen gardener whose exemption was found to be essential for the production of large quantities of necessary food supplies'.[58]

One lasting effect of the war was on wages, which had increased substantially for some gardeners and agricultural labourers. Those who worked even longer hours than normal in gardens, taking on the work of the men who had left for the war were paid a war bonus or increased wages. By August 1919 when the war had ended there was a minimum wage for a 44-hour week fixed for members by the British Gardeners' Association. This varied from £3 12s 6d per week for head gardeners to £3 for all workers over 21. Overtime to be paid at time and a half for weekdays, double time for Saturday afternoons, Sunday and public holidays. In addition, at least seven days paid holiday should be given by employers.[59] However, despite increased wages staffing levels in many estate gardens never returned to their pre-war numbers, nor the gardens to their pre-war splendour. There were also fewer job opportunities for gardeners in estate gardens as many estates were broken up or their houses demolished following pre-war financial pressures and the effects of the first world war.

NOTES

1. See Pamela Horn, *Country House Society: The Private Lives of England's Upper Class after the First World War*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2013); Giles Worsley, *England's Lost Houses* (London: Autum Press, 2002).
2. Exempted occupations included clergymen, teachers, some classes of industrial workers and those who worked in the national interest or contributed to the war effort, for example in food production. This last category was used to include some kitchen gardeners especially if they were supplying food to the military forces or hospitals.
3. Information extracted from *Gardener Database*, compiled by Clare Greener.
4. *Western Times* (*WT*), 15 June 1916, 13 July 1917, 2 February 1918.
5. *WT*, 4 December 1917, 8 January 1918.
6. *WT*, 12 April 1917.
7. David Parker, *The People of Devon in the First World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2013), 126-7.
8. *Western Morning News* (*WMN*), 12 January 1916, 19 May 1916, 10 June 1916, 9 February 1918.
9. *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 13 October 1914.
10. *WT*, 8 March 1918.
11. *WT*, 21 January 1918, 2 December 1917.
12. Anne Acland, *A Devon Family: The Story of the Aclands*, (London: Phillimore, 1981), 140.
13. *National Trust Guide Book*, Killerton, 1991, 25.
14. *National Trust Guide Book*, Killerton, 1979, 11.
15. Acland, *A Devon Family*, 140.
16. TNA, IR58-30182-1.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid. The late 18th century walled kitchen garden is now used as a car park; also the fruit garden which is on the northern side of the walled garden. http://www.parksandgardens.org. (Accessed 23 March 2017).
20. He had belonged to this Society since 1873 and was a regular contributor to their journal. In his father's time the Society had used the farm at Killerton for crop trials. Acland, *A Devon Family*, 105.
21. Ibid., 118.
22. Ibid., 143.
23. Sir Francis was to inherit the Estate after Sir Charles' death and that of his father Arthur. Sir Charles and Lady Gertrude had no children.
24. DHC, 1148M/18/E1/5, *Letter* Sir Charles Acland to Francis Acland, 21 March 1915.
25. *WT*, 30 May 1916.

26. Correspondence between the National Trust, Killerton and the author 22 February 2017.
27. DHC, 1148M/18/E1/5, *Letter* Sir Charles Acland to Francis Acland, 21 March 1915.
28. *Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette* (*DEDG*), 24 May 1916: *WT*, 31 May 1917.
29. Acland, *A Devon Family*, 149.
30. Ibid., 153.
31. B. Adams, A. Jervoise, J. Neville, and C. Shaw, 'Mr Slade and the Edwardian Gardens at Poltimore House', *The Devon Gardens Trust Journal*, Issue 4, June 2016, 21-25.
32. TNA, IR58-30492-033.
33. 'Famous Gardeners at Home', no. 264 – Mr T. H. Slade FRHS at the Gardens, Poltimore, Exeter', *Garden Life*, 20 July 1907, 262-264.
34. Poltimore Estate Research Society Records.
35. Ledger 34, 190, 13 July 1915; 206, 21 July 1915. All references to ledgers are to the Estate Letter books kept by Lord Poltimore's steward, Mr Riccard of Riccard and Son, South Molton. I am grateful to the present owner of the papers for permission to use material in this archive, to which there is no public access.
36. Ledger 35, 315, 14 September 1916; 335, 23 September 1915.
37. Ledger 34, 47, 16 April 1915: Ledger 36, 485, 13 May 1918.
38. Ledger 36, 51, n.d., July 1917.
39. Ledger 35, 54, 5 June 1916.
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Gooseberries for the Fleet: The Home Front Kitchen in Devon in World War I

PAUL CLEAVE

The significance of food, and food in wartime in particular, highlights a wide range of psychological, emotional, nutritional and political issues. Although the First World War proved to be a time of shortages, scarcity, and uncertainty over food supplies, the importance of food to the war effort meant that more had to be produced at home in order to meet the shortages. Many foods, including staples of meat, wheat, and sugar, had previously been imported from Europe, America, and Canada. Increased food production at home stimulated change, introduced new techniques, and motivated people to work together, and lessons were learnt which were to prove invaluable in the Second World War, barely a quarter of a century later. This paper draws on contemporary sources to show how local communities in Devon responded to the war effort in terms of food on the home front.

Devon and its food

By 1914 the county had a long established reputation for its high standards of food production, which were well known to its tourists, and to consumers in other parts of the country. When Daniel Defoe, and the Reverend John Skinner visited Devon in the eighteenth century for example, they described the food they had enjoyed whilst visiting fishing and farming communities in the county.[1] The contrasting coastlines, extensive moorland and countryside attracted many visitors, and Devon's healthy climate and good food featured

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in numerous guidebooks.[2] Farmhouse accommodation and hospitality were enjoyed by many holidaymakers (Figure 1), and postcards of country life

Figure 1. A strawberry tea at Wear Gifford in 1912.
Source: author's collection.

(Figure 2) reflected an interest Devon's farmhouses, cottages, and its domestic economy. Devonshire clotted cream was a speciality, and a popular souvenir, often sent home by post. Clotted cream, and butter were often made in the farmhouses. Devonshire butter was sold in Fortnum and Mason's in London, and would be included in hampers sent to officers during the war.

In contrast to the food enjoyed by its visitors, the diet of the rural labouring classes in Devon was recorded by Francis Heath in *British Rural Life and Labour*, and is typical of many farmhouses and cottages at the outbreak of the war,

> Weekdays, breakfast, home cured bacon and fried potatoes, tea. Dinner, meat (fresh or salt), suet pudding – if the men are near home; otherwise cold potatoes and meat pasty, cider. Supper, a pasty, fried fish and potatoes, tea, followed by cake and bread and treacle, or butter.[3]

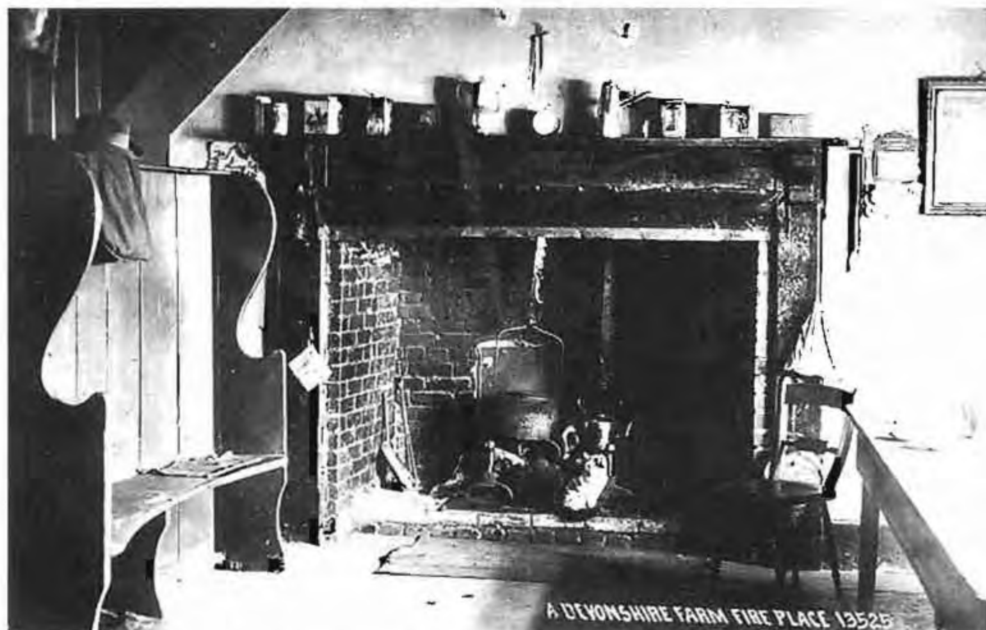

Figure 2. A Devonshire farm fireplace, postcard, *c.*1914.
Source: author's collection.

Heath remarks that Sundays were special, and for dinner there might be a small joint of fresh meat baked with potatoes, and other vegetables (probably from the cottage garden), and apple tart when in season. For tea, or tea and supper, there would be cake, bread and butter, 'and now and then cream'. The simple diet, and thrifty housekeeping of many cottages and farmhouses was captured in Emily Cruwys Sharland's evocative *Ways and Means in a Devonshire Village, A Book for Mothers' Meetings*, consisting of lessons in frugality important to the domestic economy. Various examples of sustaining economical soups, pies and puddings were provided, and practical advice, for example, 'jam's such a saving of butter where there's a pack of children'.[4] These guidelines were to prove invaluable during the war.

Wartime cookery books

At the outbreak of the First World War, Sir Jack Drummond (scientific advisor at the Ministry of Food, 1940–1946), indicated that an interest in the values of food and the application of nutritional science, had been accelerated by national danger.[5] This was evident in some of the wartime cookery publications. Cookery books provide an insight into society, identifying

prevailing food trends and tastes at a point in time. Aspects of regional food and diet in 1914 were presented in *The Barnstaple Book of Cookery* compiled for the Barnstaple Mayor's Samaritan fund. In addition to popular recipes contributed by local residents – for example, Mrs Shapland's honey cake, Mrs Vellacott's potato cake, and Mrs Comer Clarke's recipe for apple jelly made from 'peel and cores only' – the publication encouraged the use of local produce, and demonstrated how recipes could be shared to support charity. Some of the advertisements show examples of the kitchen equipment found in many Devonshire cottages and farmhouses (Figures 3 and 4).[6]

Figure 3. Brannam's pottery.
Source: author's collection.

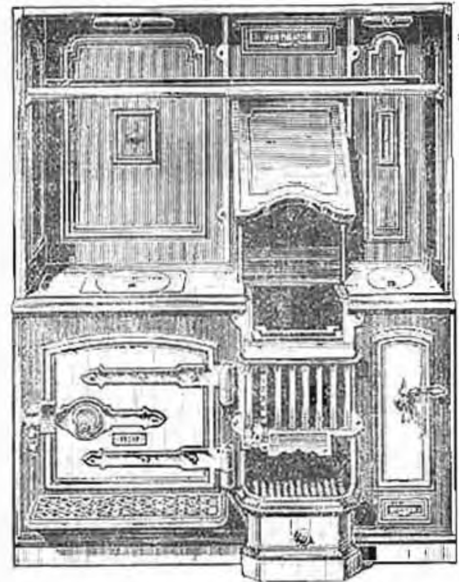

Figure 4. A kitchen range.
Source: author's collection.

Similar Devonshire fund raising publications from Tavistock (1914), and Plymouth (1909), showed how economical recipes and household hints might also be a good source of fund raising revenue, soon to be used in helping the war effort, whether for convalescent patients, or those in need at home. The practical recipes, most of which were inexpensive and suited to the wartime kitchen, made good use of seasonal, readily available ingredients.[7]

Food writers of the day show how food was important to morale, and numerous wartime cookery books encouraged middle class housewives, and cooks not to waste food, and to make the best use of limited supplies of ingredients and labour. This change is reflected in several of the cookery books for example, Mrs Constance Peel's, *Learning to Cook, the Book of How and Why in the Kitchen*, was written in 1915 'for the woman who must economise in material and labour' and perhaps had to do her own cooking as many women previously employed in domestic service as cooks and kitchen maids had taken up war work.[8] Similarly, in *Cookery for Every Household*, Florence B. Jack (1914), stated, 'The book is not merely a recipe book. Guidance is given as to the best ways of economising time and money. My aim is to furnish at the same time a good, and economical cuisine'.[9]

The *Best Way Cookery Book, No 3, c.*1916, was in contrast a modest publication, there are no references to cooks and kitchen maids. With economical recipes and household hints it included a section on cooking in wartime. It advised, and inspired housewives and cooks how to manage their wartime kitchens,

> Keep the home flag flying:
> that's the call we hear today,
> while our gallant lads in blue
> and khaki are away.
> Housewife do your bit as well,
> and fight against expense,
> as bravely as the menfolk give
> their all in our defence.

Readers were reminded of an observation made by John Ruskin that, 'There are soldiers of the ploughshare as well as of the sword'. The importance of food and home cooking was identified as vital to the war effort,

> Soldiers in the little homes all over England as well as soldiers in the trenches, housewife soldiers, with no deadlier weapon than frying pan and saucepan, yet with the true brave spirit, can help their country by saving every penny and making war-time meals as appetising as in times of peace, at half the cost.

Readers were instructed how to make eggless cakes and puddings, and not to waste any food. Cooks were advised, for example: how to make bacon go

farther, what you could make with one sheep's kidney, and how to use frost-bitten potatoes (especially important during the wartime potato shortage),

> To make frozen potatoes taste the same as sound ones, peel them, cut into pieces, and throw into a basin with a handful of salt. Let them remain for two hours, then put into boiling water with a little salt and a lump of sugar. When cooked and mashed with butter the frost bite will not be noticed.

In order to meet the scarcity, and high cost of butter, housewives were told that dripping was better than butter, and that it made better pastry and cakes. It was reputed to be especially good for pastry for meat pies and Cornish pasties. Spread on toast, it was recommended as excellent for growing children. To avoid waste, suggestions for utilising apple and potato peelings were provided, 'Oh, don't throw that into the dustbin! What use is it? Potato and apple peel, apple peel flavours a pudding, potato peel lights a fire'.[10]

Mrs Peel later recalled life on the home front in *How We Lived Then*. The book included contemporary accounts, and observations concerning the changing role of women. The significance of food was reflected upon in a selection of wartime recipes which had been issued by the Ministry of Food in 1917 and 1918. The recipes, whilst adapted to prevailing shortages of meat, butter, sugar, fat, flour (and the use of cottage cheese to overcome the cheese shortage), demonstrate ingenuity and imagination in making the best of available ingredients. A variety of substitute dishes were created, for instance – mock goose, trench cake, oatmeal rissoles, and, jam made with salt, or saccharin.[11] Elizabeth Craig (1883–1980), a prolific writer on food, cookery, and housekeeping, drew on recipes from the First World War for *Cooking in War-Time*, published in 1940. Cooks in World War II were reminded that in times of food shortages it was still possible to make appetising, and nourishing dishes as had been learnt in the World War I. *Cooking in War-Time* included First World War recipes sent to Elizabeth Craig from a soldier known as Rag time Joe, 'whose work in the cookhouse was as good as in the trenches'. His recipe for Trench Mortar pudding, made from plum jam and crushed army biscuits, and an economical eggless fruit cake were included in her cookery book. The '1916 Trench Cake' is shown in figure 5.

Recipe for Trench cake.

Figure 5. Trench Cake.
Source: authors collection.

½ pound flour
1 teaspoon vinegar
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ pint milk
3 oz. light brown sugar
4 oz. margarine
3 oz. cleaned currants
2 teaspoons cocoa
Grated rind of half a lemon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
Grease a cake tin. Rub the margarine into the flour. Add the cocoa, currants, spices, sugar, and soda dissolved in the vinegar and milk. Beat well. Turn into prepared tin. Bake in a moderate oven for about 1–1½ hours.[12]

Devon's plentiful hedgerows and countryside provided many wild foodstuffs, and foraging was advocated in Louis Cameron's, *The Wild Foods of Great Britain* (1917), shown in Figure 6, which drew on many traditional country recipes and remedies. Although not a cookery book per se it encouraged gathering food from field, sea shore, and hedgerow. It was suggested

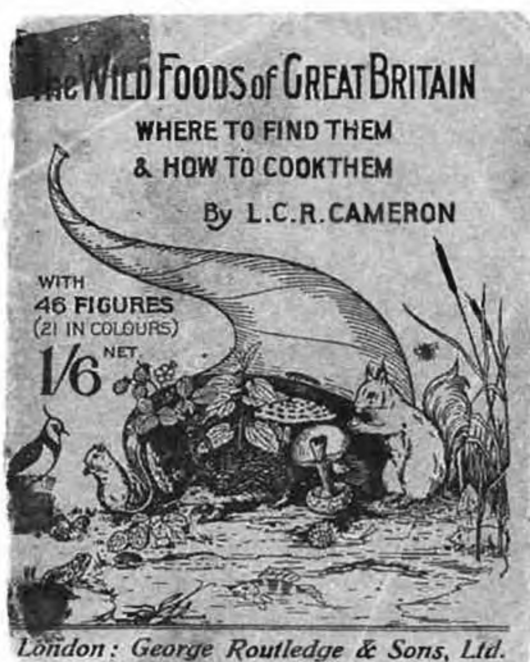

Figure 6. The Wild Foods of Great Britain.
Source: author's collection.

that herbs, mushrooms and berries were available to all at a time of food shortages and high prices. In Devon, the countryside provided a rich source of foodstuffs. Blackberries, whortleberries, wild strawberries, medicinal herbs, and mushrooms had long been gathered to supplement supplies, and were to prove invaluable during the war.

The introduction advised readers:

> The incidence of war has bought home to its inhabitants that an island like Britain is not self-supporting, and that scarcity, if not actual want of daily food is daily becoming more possible, if not probable. This little book makes no pretence to be anything but a severely practical guide for the use of the ordinary man, woman or child. It is not intended that everything contained in this manual will be to the taste of everybody. Neither is everything on the menu of Romano's or the Ritz Hotel always to the taste of all the patrons of these metropolitan refreshment houses.

Among the 'two hundred and sixty kinds of Wild Food to be gathered freely in Great Britain', Cameron described the merits of snails, edible frogs, and hedgehogs. Readers were reminded that seaweeds under the names of *Dulse* and *Laver* were highly nutritious. Laver bread (the cooked seaweed) was noted for its antiscorbutic qualities and had been offered for sale to summer visitors, 'even in the farmhouses of North Devon it is commonly eaten as a vegetable or salad'. Wild garlic (allium ursinum), commonly known as ramsons, was recorded as being common in woods and thickets, and could be used instead of cultivated, imported garlic. A substitute for tea was included, made from the dried flowers of the Lime tree, and said to produce, 'a pale delicately scented liquor, best drunk in tea cups with sugar, and a small piece of lemon, as tea is usually served in Russia'.[13]

Food shortages and the introduction of rationing

As the war progressed the food situation changed, and by 1917 the German submarine campaign had succeeded in creating a very serious shortage of food in Great Britain. 'Once more the King and Queen took the lead, still further reducing the already austere wartime standard of the Royal table'.[14] Queen Mary took a keen interest in all aspects of fundraising, and 'all ramifications of domestic science', encouraging many women to support the war effort whether making garments, helping with the food supply, and stimulating others to help.[15]

British food control had three main aims: to maintain supplies, to ensure fair distribution, and to keep prices as low as possible. A form of voluntary rationing of food was encouraged in the early stages of the war, but civilian rationing began on 1 January 1918 with a sugar allowance at 8 ounces per week. Gradually other foods were rationed, and fresh meat was rationed by price. Bread was not rationed, and the first 'War Bread' was introduced in November 1916. It is described by John Burnett in *Plenty and Want* as made using, brown flour mixed with five per cent barley, oat, or rye flour. Soya and potato flour were also mixed with it.'[16] Food controls and rationing continued until 1920–1921.

Magazines and newspapers

Throughout the war food featured regularly in many publications, sometimes in the form of recipes, or news of supplies and shortages. By 1917 potatoes had become a valued addition to the menu and ideas for using them were widely promoted, for example, in a letter from a 'Diplomee', to the fashionable magazine, *Country Life*:

> Sir, it is being rightly urged upon everyone to eat potatoes at every meal will mean the conservation of our wheat supply, but it seems to many people the advice suggests nothing but potatoes boiled or baked, or at best fried, as we are accustomed in England to serve them with meat. This by no means exhausts their usefulness.[17]

Potatoes were advocated as a substitute for dishes usually made entirely with flour, which was needed for War Bread. A recipe for a steamed potato pudding prepared with suet, ginger, golden syrup, and using oatmeal and potatoes in place of flour, was one example. Devonshire potato cake, (made from mashed potatoes, suet, and a little sugar, fruit and flour), also demonstrated how potatoes might alleviate the flour shortage. However, potato shortages were noted by Mrs Peel in, *How We Lived Then*, 'In London at one time, potatoes were so scarce that a rich man visiting friends to whom in pre-war days he would have brought expensive fruit, flowers or a box of chocolates, appeared with a bag of potatoes'.[18]

In Devon, the *Western Times*, (a daily paper, and rival to the *Express and Echo* and *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*), reflected upon the war on the home front in the county. Its regular columns reported news of the food markets, both national and local, and included *Patriotic Farming Notes*. On 12 May 1916 the paper featured a local author, and Exeter resident, Miss P. M.

Willcocks, supported by assistant lecturer Miss W. Storey, from the University College who offered, 'A lesson in domestic economy' by growing high food value broad beans in Miss Willcocks' front garden.'[19] Advertisements in the same edition for the Cathedral Dairy, as 'suppliers of butter, clotted cream and milk fed bacon, and Stone's Essence of Rennet', were a reminder of Devon's peacetime food production.

Parish magazines

Continuity and change were reflected in the Cadbury Ruridecanal records, and (un-paginated) parish magazines representing the Church of England in mid Devon. Cadbury Deanery west of Exeter, was an expansive region largely comprised of villages, hamlets and farming communities. These included, Crediton, and the villages of Shobrooke, Sandford, and Newton St Cyres, affirming Devonshire's reputation as eminently an agricultural county.[20] The magazines had a wide distribution to households in the parishes, offering much in the way of pastoral advice, and news for readers. They show how an essentially rural community supported the call for increased food production. Residents offered practical support on many fronts: help with egg collections, making feather pillows, and sending vegetables to the hospitals, which had been organised by the Red Cross. The magazines broaden our knowledge of the social history of a community in wartime, demonstrating how the war affected daily life for the duration of the conflict.

Following the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914, the September issue of the *Cadbury Ruridecanal Magazine* urged everyone at home to help the war effort, though, 'special prayer, money subscriptions', and contributions of needlework, clothing, bed and hospital requirements.[21] Reports in the October 1914 magazine recorded Crediton's harvest services as being very bright and well attended, 'the fruit and vegetables were sent the next day the soldiers who are in camp on Salisbury Plain'.[22] As the war progressed more activities supporting the war effort were documented, for example in Sandford, in July 1915 it was noted that the Central School children 'sent a large quantity of gooseberries to Harwich for the fleet'.[23] In addition to collecting produce there was an educational element to be considered. In August 1916 it was observed that in Sandford, and Stockleigh, successful cheese-making classes had been run, 'making a great many pounds of Cheddar and householder cheese' (poultry classes were also provided).[24] Figure 7 shows a cheese-making class held in the small village of Poughill in 1916, with class members enjoying their tea, served by a maid.

Parish magazines for 1917 indicate the importance of increasing food

Figure 7. A cheese-making class, Poughill, 1916.
Source: author's collection.

supplies as the Government was planning for the introduction of food rationing. A lecture on food supply was delivered by one of Devon County Council's lecturers in Sandford, in March 1917. Advice was given on corn and potato growing, the employment of women, and the advantages of cheese-making and poultry keeping. At the Sunday School Treats event at Sandford and New Buildings it was commented that the elder children had donated the value of their book rewards to the fund for Homes for the Serbian Orphans of the War. In Shobrooke, during March 1917, the school medical inspector examined the School, and appeared to be impressed with the children, whom he pronounced as being 'a nice clean and civil lot'! However, a healthier diet of porridge, roasted apples, brown bread, green vegetables, fat bacon and milk was recommended in place of pastry, pork and pickles, the dietary fare of their elders.[25]

In April 1917 A Branch Depot of the Vegetable Produce Committee for providing vegetables for the Navy was established in Colebrooke parish, and parishioners were advised that any gifts, however small, 'if only one or two carrots or parsnips, or a few cooking apples would be welcome'.[26] A War Food Exhibition, similar to those held in Exeter and Plymouth, initiated by Miss Smith-Dorrien, was held in Crediton in June 1917. The event was

a great success, attracting parishioners' and visitors from the surrounding neighbourhood. Twelve pounds was raised and sent to Lord Roberts Memorial Workshop Fund. During the summer, the School Garden in Morchard Bishop was noted as being in splendid order, tidy, and well-tilled, 'with every prospect of a heavy crop of potatoes' having been sprayed by Mr Bing, the Council Instructor. A similar garden was mentioned in Sandford where Sir William Ferguson Davie had granted the Central School an allotment and 'the boys were tending their ground in a very business-like way'. Sandford's Vegetable Show was announced, and Lady Ferguson-Davie had 'kindly consented' to award the prizes which were also to be given for wild flowers, honey and eggs.[27]

In September 1917 the magazine recorded 'an interesting departure from the ordinary conduct of Church services', with the introduction of Egg and Flower offerings for the Voluntary Aid Hospitals for wounded soldiers in Crediton. Posbury set the example in the national egg collection initiative 'by the contribution on Sunday, July 22nd, of 84 eggs'. At Sandford, the first Cottage Garden Show was held on 8 August 1917. Exhibitors donated the 'excellent display of vegtables' to the wounded soldiers' hospitals in Crediton. In Newton St Cyres Lady Audrey Buller had given permission for a 'Sale of Farm and Garden Produce, and other gifts', at Newton House, where 'our farmers and their wives, and others of our parishioners' were reported to be working hard to ensure the event was a success.[28] Gardening advice for farmers and householders was followed by accounts of village fetes, flower shows, and harvest festivals. These were important celebrations, and occasions where produce might be donated to needy causes. However, those at home were not forgotten, 'some beautiful grapes sent by Lady Ferguson-Davie were distributed amongst the sick poor', a great luxury, especially in wartime. Collections for the Devon and Exeter Hospital totalled £8 1s 0d (equivalent to nearly £400 in 2017).[29]

Wartime community spirit was evident in Shobrooke in July 1918, following detailed instructions for fruit bottling, a social evening in the Rectory gardens was announced. With golf, croquet and a little dancing, the evening aimed, 'to promote a kind and friendly spirit amongst us'.[30] At the end of the war in November 1918 Mrs Montague, from Crediton, (who had lost her two sons, Felix, and Paul in the war), addressed Shobrooke Mothers' Union, urging them to look to the future. She spoke of the importance of women to use their votes for the betterment of the world.[31]

The Ruridecanal' magazines might be considered to reflect national propaganda in the 'chatty' accounts of community initiatives in wartime, but they are nevertheless important in showing how food bound a community

together. Devon's farmers, as well as local communities, responded to Britain's food programme in World War I, and the magazines shed light on the role of local gentry, women, school children, farmers, and the cottage gardener, highlighting their efforts to make a contribution. National schemes and initiatives were followed, and many people were united in their efforts to help others, whether soldiers on the battlefields, or those in need at home. The actions of a broad range of people in rural areas, demonstrated a positive response to the huge commitment demanded of civilians on the homefront to the increasing difficulties of feeding a hungry populace. While voluntary efforts in themselves were not sufficient to cope with the problem of diminishing food supply, local initiatives contributed to the nation's collective war effort when food supplies were under increasing pressure. The lessons learned were to prove useful when similar challenges had to be faced only twenty years later, during the Second World War.

Acknowledgements

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The Brixham Fishing Fleet in the Great War

SAMANTHA LITTLE

Introduction

The south Devon town of Brixham, known as the 'Mother Port of Trawling', has a long history as an important fishery. In the late eighteenth century Brixham fishermen had developed a new type of trawling vessel, and pioneered the use of deep sea fishing methods, which spread to other British ports. Although subsequent innovations in the fishing industry, and the development of steam trawlers in particular, meant that Brixham sailing trawlers struggled to compete, it was the impact of the First World War and its aftermath which decimated the fishery, as this article will highlight. The problems encountered at Brixham were a reflection of the wider destruction of the fishing industry in Britain in the post-war period.

The outbreak of war

The declaration of the First World War on 4 August 1914 was described by King George V as 'this grave moment in our national history'.[1] The impact on the fishing port of Brixham was instantaneous and dramatic. The fishery, comprising 210 vessels with £148,000 invested in capital, boats and gear,[2] was abruptly depleted of men as Royal Naval and Special Fleet Reservists, with Naval Pensioners, departed for barracks at Devonport.[3] Prior to the conflict, the fishery had provided employment for 800 people in a thriving industry. It was remembered as 'the saddest day in history' by fourteen-year-old George Bridge (Figure 1), who had been sailing on trawlers for two years. Particularly impressed on his memory was the 'postman's knock on hundreds

Figure 1. George Loram Bridge (1900–77).

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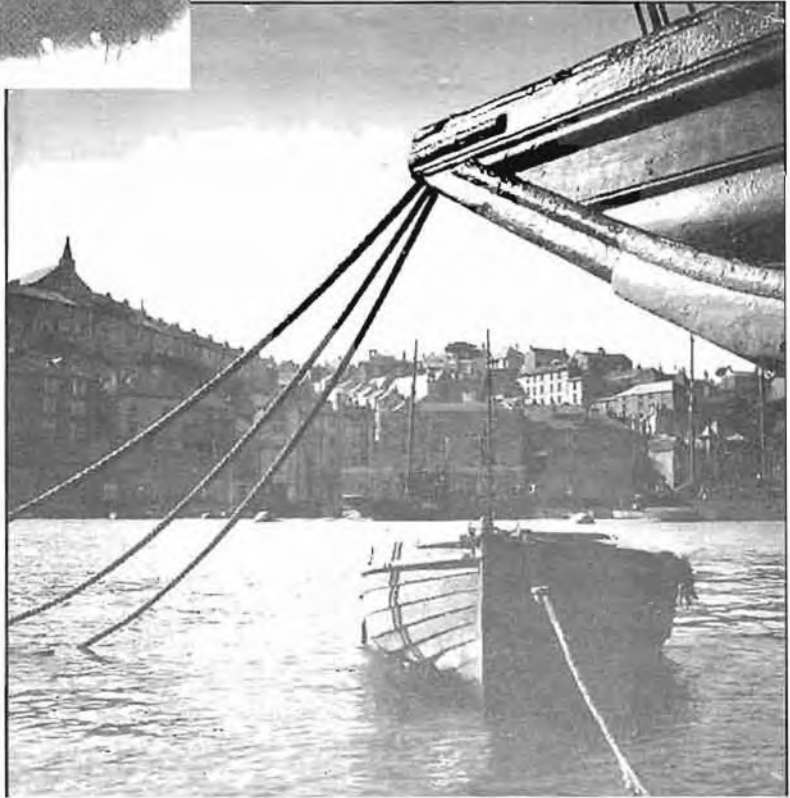

Figure 2. Brixham Harbour, close to George Bridge's birthplace; showing the distinctive outline of the Fishermen's Church, St. Peter's.

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of doors ... calling all Royal Naval Reserve men to the colours, which meant that the pick of the trawler crews were needed by their country, about 500 of them, half the number manning our ships'.[4]

W. G. Hoskins commented that 'The Brixham sailing fleet returning under full sail in the evening was one of the great sights of the west of England', and one which 'we shall never see again' (Figure 3).[5]

Figure 3. The Brixham fishing fleet in full sail.
Reproduced with the kind permission of Brixham Heritage Museum and History Society.

Bridge's unpublished memoir provides an excellent description of the fishing fleet in 1914:

> On going to sea there were three different class [*sic*] of trawlers, Cutters or 'Mumble Bees', 'Mules' or sloops, fifteen tonners, twenty tonners and the sloops of fifty tons, all built at Upham's or Jackman's shipyards at Brixham by local men, shipwrights who knew their work, the seaworthiness of the ships being unquestionable, and the crews that manned them the toughest men afloat. Brixham fishermen were very keen sailing men ... day or night sailing up the Channel against an east wind, which meant tack and tack, and dark as a grave, seeming to smell the land, and coming about in time to avoid it.[6]

This evocative description of the innate seamanship of the natives of the Mother Port of Trawling was balanced with reflections on the uncertain economics of the industry: 'Fishing ... was very precarious, catches realising very small prices', in fact, 'live whiting landed by the day haulers, such as the

Figure 4. Brixham fishing smacks.

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Cutters and Mules were left unsold … leaving it at the mercy of the seagulls, or anyone who wished to take some home'.[7] The situation was compounded by government requirements for fleets to record information about the movement of smacks (destination and return to port). This coincided with the reinforcement of a controversial bye-law, enacted by Devon Sea Fisheries Committee and applicable to Start Bay, which prohibited the fleet from trawling a lucrative and well-stocked fishing ground near the home port in efforts to preserve immature fish and also protect the livelihood of Dartmouth shell fishermen.[8] This damaging legislation was to prove contentious throughout the conflict, as crews were forced to fish further afield, later exposing themselves to great danger from German submarine warfare and mines.

First approaches to assist the fleet

Stephen Reynolds, Inspector of Fisheries for the South West (and a celebrated author of books set around the fishery in his home town of Sidmouth), arrived at Brixham in September 1914 to examine the effects of war on the industry.[9]

Convening a formal inquiry, he ascertained that there were 'about 1,200 sea-going fishermen in Brixham' and 'approaching 300 had already been called up', leaving most trawlers either short-handed or redundant. Questioning the need for night fishing, he was told that remnants of the fleet had 'barely earned 5s in the previous fortnight' and compulsion to fish in daylight hours meant families 'would practically starve'.[10]

Early in 1915, Brixham fishermen were instrumental in the rescue of sailors from H.M.S. *Formidable*, which brought national attention to the port.[11] Stephen Reynolds returned with confirmation of £2,000 in government money for experimentation with motor power in trawlers, including installation of a motor capstan for each vessel, meeting Mule-class owners who had expressed an interest in utilisation of their smacks for trials.[12] Later the fishery was subject to a further extension of government control under Defence of the Realm regulations, requiring vessels to hold a permit to work. Fishing in Lyme Bay from Hope's Nose to Portland was prohibited at night, and smacks could not fish within 10 miles of the entrance to a defended port. There was an outright ban on activity in specific areas between Berry Head and Start Point, despite Devon Sea Fisheries Committee petitioning the government for permission to re-open the ground that they had previously closed.[13]

As the government considered conscription and the toll on fishing crews became acute, Reverend Stewart Sim, Chairman of Brixham Urban District Council, became gravely concerned that endless recruitment would result in complete cessation of the industry and drastically affect the nation's food supply. Sim advocated that the employment of fishermen was 'of national importance' and crucial to the whole country, and he therefore raised the matter of exemption for fishermen with the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Earl Fortescue. Following his correspondence with Lord Derby, who was responsible for the 'group' enlisting scheme, Earl Fortescue received the reply that no such exemption was possible.[14] This response was surprising, as a statement contained in the Annual Report for Sea Fisheries (1914) emphasised that 'when the history of the war is written, the country will realise as it has never realised before, the supreme value to an island maritime power of an organised fishing industry and daring fishing population'.[15] A letter from the War Office to the Admiralty, which was made public, specified that fishermen 'constitute the only class ... with practical experience of the sea who are left to be recruited in any considerable numbers ... in the R.N.R. It therefore becomes imperative that the whole of this class should be available for service in the Royal Navy as required'.[16]

Impact of war on the fleet and the first military tribunals

Devon Sea Fisheries Committee held a meeting to discover the problems facing the residual fleets, which they intended to communicate to the government as a matter of urgency. The debate exposed some grim realities: decommissioning of significant numbers of vessels due to shortage of hands with owners incurring severe losses; bureaucratic difficulties preventing Belgian nationals from bringing Brixham crews to full capacity; depreciation of boats as an asset (a critical concern); and the tragic case of a fisherman's widow and family forced to apply to the parish overseers for relief from their poverty.[17]

The industry was further impeded by the introduction of the Military Service Act in January 1916, which imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, and contained provisions to exempt fishermen from Army service to retain their availability for the Navy.[18] When the Brixham Military Tribunal convened to hear appeals for exemption from conscription, they considered many cases of men in trades allied to the fishery.

Food supply and morale

Despite these hardships, the fishing community managed to maintain food supply, also donating fish to local hospitals for the nourishment of wounded and convalescing soldiers in the locality. They also raised the considerable sum of £650 through fundraising efforts and the establishment of the popular Brixham Fishermen's Choir. The money was used to provide a Red Cross ambulance that was eventually sent to the Somme battlefields.[19] One soldier, Private Joseph Shears, of the Royal Army Medical Corps, writing home to Brixham, said 'I salute every time I see it'.[20]

The positive effect on morale of serving personnel who encountered the ambulance could not be overestimated. A correspondent for the *Brixham Western Guardian*, Mr H. M. Smardon, who was also a local schoolmaster, received a letter in June 1916 from Mr F. E. French Harley, proprietor of the Globe Hotel in Brixham, who was serving overseas with the Army Service Corps, stating that:

> Four of us on the Staff of Headquarters visited the American Cosmograph here last evening and no doubt you will be agreeably surprised to hear we saw three photographs of the Motor Ambulance Car presented by our free, loyal and generous Brixham fishermen. The first film depicted the car with an inscription of the donors, the second produced a typical picture of the car

alongside the Fish Market [and] I noticed a man in the Market holding up a huge fish by its tail, presumably a cod or ling ... The third film displayed the car outside the Town Hall, from which an enormous show of bunting was fluttering in the Devon breezes ... I am enclosing a programme of the pictures. An explanation of the films is shown on a screen in three different languages, English, French and Arabic.[21]

The horror of enemy submarine attacks

During November 1916, the fishing fleet became the target of a violent submarine attack, a deadly threat during their exposure at sea. George Bridge gave a striking account:

> Ship after ship was being disabled, spars and sails being shot away galore, the submarine crew aiming to sink the whole fleet in the quickest time, but failed to do so. The *Diligence* ... was being peppered with shells, some striking her, sending up clouds of splinters as her decks were pierced with shrapnel, sails and spars falling in a mangled heap, whilst many others were already sinking, direct hits having found their water line and so admitting an inrush of water in their hulls, some plunging into the depths with sails set, and others vanishing in a tangled mess.[22]

Seven vessels were destroyed by constant shelling, subsequently directed at smaller boats in which the crews fled, many cutting their gear to escape. This hostile action led to disastrous financial loss as insurance premiums were prohibitive due to war risk.[23] George Bridge worked as Cook on the *Terminist* (Figure 5), which rescued the wreck of the *Diligence*, when U31 struck her with 20 shells during the 'Battle of the Eastern Scruff', the local name for the fishing ground where the outrage occurred. The submarine attacked the entire Brixham fishing fleet, but there was 'not a man lost'.[24]

Compensation was a contentious matter. Many fishermen expected recompense, particularly as financial help was forthcoming to victims of Zeppelin raids; however, the Brixham Fishing Smack Insurance Society decided that 'compensation was not payable for nets and equipment, as opposed to the loss of entire vessels'.[25] So grave was the matter, the *Brixham Western Guardian* commented perceptively: 'It is a financial blow that means crippling Brixham's industry for a generation to come'.[26]

Since lives had been lost at Gallipoli, most craft had sailed short-handed as successive groups of fishermen enlisted, the fishery accounting for half

Figure 5. The *Terminist*.
Reproduced with the kind permission of Brixham Heritage Museum and History Society.

the 1,700 men serving in HM Forces at this time – a quarter of the town's population. Those remaining at sea faced constant danger from mines in the trawl, collisions due to extinguished lights and competition from east coast trawlers that fished from the port, away from defended areas.

The following year a deputation of Brixham and Plymouth fishermen asked the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to provide better protection at sea. Colonel Charles Burn, the Member of Parliament for the Torquay Division, which included Brixham, led a deputation to meet the Under Secretary, Sir Richard Winfrey MP to urge that 'additional protection should be given to the Westcountry fisher fleet' to alleviate the threat of attack from German submarines off the Devon coast.[27] They would otherwise be confined to near grounds with poor yields, and were 'anxious to fish in new ground further out, where abundant fish is awaiting the net, if given adequate protection against the enemy'.[28]

Unintended effects of enlistment

The fishermen were also hampered in their work as those conscripted for naval service were kept in barracks at Chatham or Devonport for inordinate lengths of time when they could have remained with the fleet. Forty fishermen had been conscripted to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Y Section during the week that Colonel Burn raised the issue in the House of Commons. He asked whether the Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, Dr Thomas Macnamara MP, was aware that Brixham fishermen called up for service with the Royal Navy had been 'kept in barracks for many months', some since the outbreak of war. He requested that orders should be issued to ensure that 'in future fishermen are not called until required to serve in His Majesty's ships, so that they might pursue their own calling and add to the food supply of the nation'.[29]

Government regulation

As food supply became critical, further regulations that constrained the industry were applied from the beginning of 1918. The Fish (Distribution) Order was introduced by the Food Controller, Mr John Clynes MP, which provided for state allocation of fish, rather than allowing ports to send catches to their established markets. Fish Distribution Officers were appointed to implement the scheme, responsible to the Divisional Food Commissioners in each locality, Brixham falling within the area covering Weymouth to Bristol. Eventually, the arrangements proved impracticable and the Order was rescinded. Brixham Urban District Council, in the hopes of easing the food situation generally, apportioned land for allotments and implemented government requirements to ration commodities such as tea, butter and margarine; meat was also rationed.

While a local Fish Control and Distribution Advisory Committee was formed in February 1918 with some success, a further impediment was the Port Fishery Order applied to Brixham under Defence of the Realm (Consolidation) Regulations 1914. The Order required vessels to fish as an organised fleet, led by a skipper designated as an admiral, under the jurisdiction of the Port Fishery Officer. Consequently, activity inclusive of trawling, drifting, anchoring, longlining and the casting of nets was so extensively prohibited across major grounds that transgression of the law soon occurred with severe penalties imposed. The fleet was also forced to trawl further from port to avoid prohibited areas, while time at sea was limited and vessels had to return before the early closure of the Fish Market in accordance

with railway restrictions.[30] Problems were exacerbated in the final weeks of the war by poor weather conditions, and by the influenza pandemic of 1918–19 (which claimed the life of Stephen Reynolds). Boats remained in port as fishing smacks lay idle on the moorings, their entire crews incapacitated, such was the prevalence of the virus.[31]

Post-war

When the Brixham fishing fleet finally celebrated the Armistice with flags, flares and rockets, the celebration was short-lived as the community had fresh problems to surmount: namely the difficulty of fish distribution in the face of strikes, the threat of competition from government-funded trawlers and surging unemployment in the industry, leading to serious concerns that England's greatest fishing port would face a rapid and irreversible decline.[32]

Following the Armistice, a parliamentary election was announced. Charles Burn, the Coalition candidate (representing Conservatives and Liberals), praised the 'splendid service ... rendered by the men of Brixham as mine sweepers and manning patrol boats'. He also advocated a separate Ministry of Fisheries to support the industry.[33] The other parliamentary candidates (Asquithian Liberal and Labour), made no mention of the fishery.[34]

Early in 1919, the newly-elected Coalition government, released national figures for the industry, pertaining to the war years. Three thousand steam fishing vessels had been requisitioned, principally for mine sweeping duties, while those remaining contributed 400,000 tons of fish to the food supply of the nation for each year of the conflict. Destruction through enemy action affected 672 smacks and 416 fishermen lost their lives at sea. The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, stated: 'There have been no readier volunteers than fishermen and no industry has contributed a larger percentage of men to the fighting forces'.[35] Although Royal Naval Reservists were being demobilised,[36] and motor boats had been released to prepare for the home fishery,[37] heavy restrictions still applied.[38]

The *Brixham Western Guardian* published an account of the local Food Control Committee, which intended to pursue removal of State prices for sole, brill and turbot, after fishermen had gathered opinions from crews at Plymouth, Milford Haven and Swansea.[39] Charles Burn, the Coalition MP, had the opportunity to introduce a Private Member's Bill:

> That the House would welcome the early introduction ... of legislation to improve the method of transport and distribution of fish, to simplify and consolidate the fishery laws, and to terminate the confusion consequent

> upon the present administration of these laws by eleven departments of State. Also, in view of the great importance of securing favourable international agreements relating to deep-sea fisheries, this House is of the opinion that an effort should be made to negotiate such agreements during the Paris Conference and that this matter should at once be entrusted to a ... Minister of the Crown, assisted by an advisory body representative of the deep-sea fishing industry.[40]

A useful account of an industry meeting (with statistics) appeared in March 1919, which offered comparison with the industry in September 1914, revealing a significant decline from numbers at the commencement of hostilities (210).[41] The meeting was also reported in the *Western Daily Mercury*, and comments made at the event reflected the widely felt anger, frustration and resentment at the state of the fishery and the inevitable impact on the local economy.[42] One eye witness observed 27 unemployed men waiting for work at the Fish Market during the same month as the report was published.[43]

During April, the Admiralty published a chart of wreck sites (approximately 50-60), requesting that fishermen 'flag' any that could be suitably buoyed.[44] Hansard reports for May 1919 revealed that 458 trawlers and 227 drifters were built for the Admiralty during wartime, many of which were being sold on the open market, while proposals for 'dealing with the rest of them' were 'under consideration'.[45] The *Western Guardian* republished an item from *The Times* drawing attention to British (Falmouth) trawlers that were loaned to the American Navy during the war.[46] A later report, published in June 1919, gave details about the Treasury having vetoed an Admiralty scheme for demobilised fishermen to purchase surplus trawlers under 'co-operative' principles, following complaints about competition between 'state-aided' boats and private enterprise.[47]

The sources present a clear picture of decline in the Brixham fishery, and in the fishing industry in Britain more generally in the early twentieth century, changes exacerbated by the First World War and the aftermath. Nevertheless, despite deputations, representations and rhetoric, Brixham fishermen were increasingly obliged to take employment with companies trawling off Wales and the east coast of England.[48] Problems were compounded by a decrease in the price of fish, as well as a fall in demand,[49] and by the fact that some men did not receive overdue insurance payments until September 1919 for loss of gear due to submarine activity three years earlier.[50] Although measures were taken at both national and local level to address the issues, the drastic reduction of the fishing fleet in Brixham, and the negative impact of the decaying industry on associated trades, was a trend repeated across the country. The downward

trend continued in Brixham, until a resurgence of the ailing industry took place later in the twentieth century.

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NOTES

1. *Brixham Western Guardian (BWG)*, 6 August 1914, 3, His Majesty King George V to Admiral Sir John Jellicoe K.C.B., K.C.V.O., 'King's Message to the Fleet and Colonies'.
2. Ibid., 16 April 1914, 3.
3. Ibid., 6 August 1914, 8.
4. BHM, The memoir of George Loram Bridge (1900–77); Samantha Little, *Battling Onwards: The Brixham Fishing Fleet 1914–1918* (Brixham: Brixham Heritage Museum, 2016).
5. W. G. Hoskins, *Devon*, (London: Collins, 3rd edn, 1959), 214.
6. BHM, Memoir of George Bridge.
7. Ibid.
8. *BWG*, 16 April 1914, 3.
9. Stephen Reynolds, *A Poor Man's House* (London: Bodley Head, 1909).
10. *BWG*, 27 August 1914, 3.
11. Samantha Little, *Through Cloud and Sunshine: Brixham in The Great War* (Brixham: Brixham Heritage Museum, 2008).
12. *BWG*, 18 March 1915, 8. A 'Mule-class' trawler, is one of medium size, also known as a 'sloop'.
13. 'Notice to Mariners, Fishermen and Boat Owners, Article 38, Defence of the Realm Regulations, Consolidated', *Brixham Western Guardian* (*BWG*), 1 July, 1915, 2.
14. *BWG*, 25 November, 1915, 3.
15. Ibid., 25 November 1915, 4.
16. Ibid., 25 November 1915, 4.
17. *BWG*, 6 January 1916, 3.
18. The Military Service Act (1916); *BWG*, 17 February 1916, 3.
19. *BWG*, 13 January 1916, 8; 20 January 1916, 8; 10 February 1916, 8; 24. February 1916, 8; and 16 March 1916, 1.

20. Ibid., 15 June 1916, 6. Lance-Corporal G. James (Devonshire Regiment),
21. Ibid., 15 June 1916, 6.
22. BHM, Memoir of George Bridge.
23. *BWG*, 7 December 1916, 3.
24. Ibid., 7 December 1916, 3.
25. Ibid., 7 December 1916, 3.
26. Ibid., 7 December 1916, 3.
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28. TNA, BT,145/51, Board of Trade and successors/Returns of fishing boats/ England and Wales/Ports/Brixham.
29. *BWG*, 5 July 1917, 3.
30. Ibid., 8 August 1918, 2.
31. Ibid., 24 October, 3, and 7 November 1918, 3, and 20 February 1919, 8.
32. Ibid., 20 March, 1919, 8; 3 April, 1919, 8; 29 May, 1919, 8; 5 June, 1919, 8; 26 June, 1919, 8; 28 August, 1919, 8; and 21 October, 1919, 8.
33. Ibid., 5 December 1918, 3.
34. Ibid., 5 December 1918, 4.
35. Ibid., 2 January 1919, 3.
36. Ibid., 2 January 1919, 8.
37. Ibid., 20 March 1919, 3.
38. Ibid., 3 April 1919, 2, The Admiralty's 'Notice of Restrictions in Fishing Area (Portland Bill to Bardsey Island) around the South West Peninsula'.
39. Ibid., 26 March 1919, 4.
40. Ibid., 20 March 1919, 3.
41. Ibid., 20 March 1919, 3.
42. Ibid., 20 March 1919, 4.
43. Ibid., 20 March 1919, 8.
44. Ibid., 3 April 1919, 3.
45. Ibid., 29 May 1919, 8.
46. Ibid., 29 May 1919, 3.
47. Ibid., 5 June 1919, 4.
48. Ibid., 26 June 1919, 4.
49. Ibid., 28 August 1919, 3.
50. Ibid., 4 September 1919, 3.

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Book Reviews

Martin Bodman, ***Mills on the Teign: A Gazetteer of Water-Powered Sites on the Teign and Bovey and their Tributaries*** (Cullompton: Leat Press, 2015). Softback. 156 pages. Maps & half-tones. £16.

Before electricity and the use of steam, water power was at the heart of Devon's rural and urban economies for hundreds of years, providing the motive force needed to power a diversity of industrial processes. Although the waterwheels of all but a very few fell motionless by the last century, the legacy of the mills – in the form of buildings, water courses, redundant machinery, documents and contemporary photographs – remains to be discovered by those prepared to look. The search has been made very much easier in the Teign valley, thanks to Martin Bodman's book which, as the title suggests, provides a comprehensive gazetteer .

The abundance of material is divided between the River Teign and its largest tributary the River Bovey and all associated smaller tributaries, for which over 120 water-powered sites are described in the main body of the text. Locations for a further 48 sites are listed for the River Lemon and the estuarine tributaries of the Teign, but these are not discussed in detail.

In this book, the theme of water power covers a wide range of industrial purposes. As might be expected, a high number of these mills were grain mills, but also listed are fulling and woollen mills, flint mills, iron forging mills, saw mills, tin mills and turbines. A number of nineteenth and twentieth century mines are a also mentioned, where some of the largest waterwheels in these valleys provided power vital to ore dressing and underground pumping.

Simple line maps of the river courses show the approximate location of each site listed and eight-figure grid references are provided. For many, re-drawn first and second edition large-scale OS maps supply further context and detail, such as the course of the mill leats in some cases. An outline history for each of the mills draws on a range of primary and secondary sources and a fine collection of contemporary photography, depicting buildings and people, has been assembled. More modern images show a selection of the sites and

buildings as they have appeared in recent times, up to the present day in some cases. In total there are 127 half-tones and 59 illustrations, including maps and diagrams; all are produced to a very pleasing standard and the book itself is an attractive and professional product.

There is little in this volume to draw negativity from this reviewer but one consideration might be, that whilst it is appreciated that the gazetteer format comes with certain constraints, some reference in the introduction to the social and economic impact of water power within the area studied might have been included. Like so many industrial themed historical works, technological and chronological commentary are provided in spades, as they should be, but the communities whose lives were affected by these mills, are mostly overlooked. After undertaking so much research, surely the author has insight on these topics to share with us? That said, the book offers an excellent introduction to the subject and a valuable resource for researchers. Highly recommended.

Phil Newman

Smitten Down yet not Destroyed: A Record of the War Dead of Bovey Tracey, Its War Memorials and Those who Served (Bovey Tracey: Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust, 2016) 86 pages. Numerous photographs and one map. No ISBN. £15 + £4 post and packing. Available from the Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust's Treasurer at: 3 Summerhill Close, Liverton, Newton Abbot, TQ12 6JJ.

The result of many years' research, *Smitten Down yet Not Destroyed* (the phrase is taken from the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians), describes the war memorials of Bovey Tracey, followed by a detailed description of the lives and service careers of the men commemorated on the town war memorial who died in the Great War (56 men) and the Second World War (14 men and one woman), adding a list of the 24 men associated with Bovey Tracey who died during the Great War but whose names do not appear on the memorial, and the nine service personnel who are buried in the town cemetery (which adds information about four more men and one woman). The book concludes with a statistical analysis of the war dead by rank, year and manner of death, the average age at which they died, which service they were in and the proportion who served in the Devonshire Regiment (39 per cent of army personnel), and a list of 659 individuals who served with the armed forces in the Great War, taken from a manuscript list compiled anonymously in the

mid-1920s, the roll of honour from the Bovey Tracey National Church School and the Spring 1919 Absent Voters List.

Bovey had a population of 2,788 according to the 1921 census, so having eight separate war memorials, not to mention three separate plaques to individuals in the various churches, may be considered somewhat unusual. The initial chapter looks at all these memorials, and particularly at the discussions surrounding the town war memorial which was completed in 1921, but not until heated arguments, opposition from the vicar, and the resignation of the Memorial Committee had taken place. This chapter concludes with details of the unusual, yet entirely fitting proposal to name new roads in the Bradley Bends Estate in Bovey after the names of individuals who died for their country in the Great War.

The biographical sections give, wherever possible, date and place of birth, details of the person's family, education and occupation, where he enlisted, his career in the armed forces, the manner of his death, where else he may be commemorated (for example, Private Sidney Weeks's name appears on a memorial plaque in Canterbury Cathedral, although he was born in Plymouth studied and worked in Bovey and died in India), what medals he was awarded, and, occasionally what was the value of the estate he left behind. Although a great deal of research has gone into establishing these biographical details, occasionally it is not clear what the soldier's relationship to Bovey Tracey was (e.g. Private George Denton or Marine Lewis Cann). After the publication of the book, it became possible to estimate the approximate date of the soldier's start of service from the amount of the gratuity contained in the Registers of Soldiers' Effects. and a separate sheet had been published with this information for 33 of the names on the memorial along with three minor corrections to the text.

Comparing the Bovey memorial lists with the similar published studies for Lustleigh and Abbotskerswell (both reviewed recently in *The Devon Historian)*, it is interesting to note that, as in Lustleigh, but in contradistinction to Abbbotskerswell, over 20 per cent of the casualties were born outside the county and over 50 per cent born outside the parish boundaries of Bovey. It is also notable that employment opportunities were more diverse in Bovey than in the smaller villages, with several men working for commercial concerns such as Bovey Tracey Potteries and Candy & Co., or in white-collar jobs for solicitors in Newton Abbot. The roll of honour shows that around 20 per cent of the population of Bovey Tracey were involved in the armed forces, while the 56 who never returned from the Great War represent just over 2 per cent of the population.

This is a well-researched piece of biographical detective work, which

brings to light a huge amount of information about the participation of Bovey Tracey's men in both world wars, and how the men were memorialised in the town. (Just one correction: I suspect that Captain Cecil Bradford came from Sutcombe near Torrington, rather than Lutcombe near Petersfield). To conclude with the introduction by Mark Bailey, which seeks to explain why both conflicts took place, 'The cost of conflict being vastly greater and longer lasting than solely the consequential loss of life, it is important – in remembering the war dead – that we reflect on competition, cooperation and conflict, so that the lessons of history are learned and the latter is avoided' (p. 8). Amen to that.

Paul Auchterlonie

Simon Butler, *Land Girl Suffragette: The Extraordinary Story of Olive Hockin* (Wellington: Halstar, 2016). Xx + 144 pages. 162 illustrations. Hardback. ISBN 9781906690625. £19.99.

Land Girl Suffragette contains 'a complete and unedited copy' of Olive Hockin's own book *Two Girls on the Land: Wartime on a Dartmoor Farm*, originally published in 1918. This is a most welcome reproduction, since *Two Girls* is available in only a few libraries in the UK, including the West Country Studies Library in Exeter. Simon Butler has prefaced Hockin's text with a ten page biography. He draws attention to her artistic career which included training at The Slade between 1901 and 1911, and her active membership of the Suffragette Movement from 1912 (resulting in a 4 months prison sentence). Butler closes with a two page 'Postscript', reflecting that though some women got the vote in 1918, the equality and natural justice that Hockin aspires to in *Two Girls* was far in the future. There are inaccuracies in the family genealogy on page 11, and on page 141, the enfranchisement of *all* women over the age of thirty in 1918 is clearly imprecise. This unfortunately throws some doubt on the veracity of rest of the biographical detail, particularly as the text is unreferenced. Birth and census records indicate that Olive was born in early 1881, making her age 37 when her book was published.

Hockin's preface is dated May, 1918, from which one might presume that her account of working on a Dartmoor Farm covers January 1917 to January 1918. Hocking disguises the location of the farm and the real names of all concerned, and there is no statement as to the year that she worked at 'Bye-the-Way Farm'. There are however clues for it being 1916. She laments the introduction 'this year' of Daylight Saving which commenced on 21st May

1916. She reports that 'it was the famous year' when potato prices reached £50 per 4 ton truck, which occurred in 1916.

The 'Two Girls' are referred to as Sammy (Olive) and Jimmy (her friend), since they replaced male labour. Sammy had come to the farm in response to an advertisement for a horseman, whilst Jimmy looked after other animals and did milking, but both of them did general farm labour.

Two Girls on the Land is set out in fifteen chapters, working chronologically month by month: there are two chapters each for March and May. Each chapter generally focuses on one or two aspects of life and work on the farm. A few extracts illustrate Hockin's style and interplay between descriptions of the exceedingly hard work and social commentary, with several passages where her artist's eye leads her to describe her surroundings in lyrical terms. In the first March chapter Hockin gives an insight to the toil involved in growing potatoes

> Oh you readers in furnished dining rooms who only know potatoes on your table ... little do you reck [*sic*] ... of the toil; and sweat and aching backs of those who labour over them in the season through! Toil and trouble, dirt and heat and bitter cold, all seem to reach their climax in the potato field.

before going on to describe retrieving potatoes from a clamp

> The snow has got through, and the taties [*sic*] were wet, mucky, rotten, and altogether depressing. Instead of shovelling them steadily into baskets, shaking out dry soil from among them, needs must we go on our knees in the mud and with frozen fingers pick them up by hand sorting out the good ones, and Ugh! the bad ones! Does anyone know the smell of a really rotten potato, and the revolting squish of yellow, evil smelling custard that one's frozen fingers slide into?

The women moved out of the farm into their own small cottage in the spring. April's chapter is taken up describing settling into their own cottage and the pleasantness of their life style there compared to living in the farmhouse, being well away from 'our kind but loquacious hostess's unceasing chatter' and a grubby tablecloth that was changed only weekly. Hockin was decades ahead of her time with regard to female equality. Immediately the girls found they had no time for cooking and cleaning for themselves after the up to fourteen hour days they were working on the farm: they needed a housewife. Hockin takes the best part of a page to argue the poor position of a wife who supports a husband through unpaid housekeeping, contrasting it with their

position of needing to pay a housekeeper, and thus women's pay should not be less that men's.

In May, Sammy and Jimmy were the only hands on the farm and 'truly it was a desperate time as regards work'. Spring planting of potatoes, corn, mangolds, swedes, turnips, clover and rape had to be got through. 'Each in turn the fields were ploughed, harrowed, rolled and harrowed again before the seed was sown, and many a mile I tramped with my horses over the heavy ground', whilst Jimmy had the tedium of weeding out thistles. The first May chapter mainly concerns the pleasures and tribulations of her horsemanship, and offers a good example of her lyrical passages:

> It was uncertain but beautiful weather. We seemed to have a whole month of thunderstorms and rainbows. That month remains now in my mind summed up in one vivid memory – a rolling hill-top meeting the sky, and falling away on either side to the thundery blue of distant hills; gigantic clouds piled up everywhere; local rainstorms stalking like ghosts across the valley, and overhead a triumphant rainbow arch, through which my plunging horses charged with the harrows. The very top of the world. Sunlight, glinting across the blue: now blotted out by rain, now piercing and flooding the mist with gold; veils clearing filmily from the hills; and rainbows – always rainbows flickering over the valley.

June brought the fourteen or fifteen hour days of hay making, and another of Hockin's social observations, 'Those ... whose own work permits of leisured afternoons, or who arrive at evening with energy left, and time even, to dress for dinner – with mind comparatively fresh and a body not aching at every joint – cannot have any conception of the exacting nature of a labourer's work'. From Hockin's account, it appears that much of July was taken up with hoeing weeds from the root crops:

> Tired, languid, hot and dusty we laboured on. Day after day we went out to those turnipfields, and day after day and hour after hour we swung our hoes while the sun burnt down upon us, scorching the earth, blistering our necks, and parching our lips and skin. ... It is this continual stooping and the impossibility of getting any sort of rhythm or change into it that makes hoeing so particularly trying.

The women marvelled that a piece worker called Harry could chop away, hour after hour, day after day and was not bothered by the monotony, and that the deadliness of constant repetition never worried him: 'Oh it be all

the zame [*sic*] to me ... I likes anything that goes straet [*sic*] on like'. This is the cue for Hockin to compare the higher classes' educated upbringing which accustoms them to active thought and concentration. She contends that there is 'too much mental stimulation in our ideas of education', that the 'value and beauty of skillful manual work [is not] nearly sufficiently appreciated'.

August's chapter concerns the work of looking after sheep, including rounding up escaped sheep on steep hillsides and mending inadequately maintained fences and blackthorn hedging. 'We felt ourselves, in our heated exasperation, that to have thoroughly fenced or wired those fields would have meant less work ... than spending half one's day chasing the sheep and blocking the gaps'. September's text mainly concerns the gathering of firewood for winter: much space is given to artistic descriptions of woodland trees and undergrowth. This work was 'a wonderful break after our long toil in the open unshaded fields'. By this time, 'we had hardly had an hour off work since we came to the place ... and the long months of continuous and really heavy work was telling on us, body and nerves and tempers'. October and November brought the harvesting of root crops and the spreading of dung. October's narrative closes with another of Hockin's social commentaries. November's account majors on the picturesque aspects of the continuing root harvest – mangolds 'streaking the field with bright coloured rows'. Frosts came early that year, and more turnips and swedes were 'pitted' on the fields rather than being left in the ground, the root house and other sheds were filled, and some stored in 'caves' built up against the hedges. November chapter also closes with Hockin philosophising, this time on the issue of fattening and killing animals for food.

By December, 'the country lay bound in the grip of iron; silent, lifeless, and unmoving'. Days were filled with constantly carting hay and turnips to feed sheep, cows and calves. The weather deteriorated until roots left in the ground were ruined. Feed from caves and pits were started, and 'the turnip pits ... were covered in a cast iron sheath. By wielding a pick axe like a road maker we broke up the crust'. The weather continued to deteriorate; the water systems froze meaning water had to be bucketed up hill from a river; 'in this way, with two or three journeys, the strain of morning and evening work was doubled'. The need to get the sheep off the farm, from their high fields where they needed feed carted to them twice a day, and their food running out, was desperate. Finally, in January, the movement of sheep to another farm lower down was arranged. Hockin's book ends with the moving account of her shepherding the sheep, on horseback in freezing conditions with a broken finger and one sheep dog, to lower pasture. It took two days to move the flock fifteen or sixteen miles in two stages. After handing over the sheep and taking

a short rest, she then had to ride the whole distance back, slowly so her horse could take its time negotiating fresh snow and ice, with the wind 'driving the frozen snow like needle-points against my face', in the dark. Hockin was almost rolling off the saddle with tiredness by the time she got back to farm. This was a dangerous and courageous piece of riding. It was the final job she did, as whilst she was away, the Maester had negotiated with the local military headquarters to have two soldiers, former farm hands, to come and work on the farm in place of the girls.

Reviewing the text and copious illustrations that Halstar (an imprint of Halsgrove) has produced, there are issues to discuss. The book is in landscape format measuring 24.5 x 26 cms, and at a weight of over a kilo is an uncomfortable read. There are at least 26 copy editing errors ranging from misplaced punctuation, spelling errors in the text, and two instances of a place name in picture captions spelled incorrectly.

The 162 illustrations are a particular criticism. None of their sources are acknowledged, yet copyright is claimed on all of them. Many are recognisable from other publications produced in the last 30 years: for example *Dartmoor in the Old Days* (1984), *The James Bowden Story* (2015), *Throwleigh: Pictures and Memories from a Dartmoor Parish* (2006), *The Women's Land Army in First World War Britain* (2014). Some are in The Throwleigh Archive collection, for example. Images of advertisements, such as for land workers' clothing are available from newspapers and magazines, and many of the illustrations are available on the web. The assertion of copyright on such material that appears on the verso of the title page is questionable, to say the least.

Judy Moss

Nicky Campbell, ***To Buy a Whole Parish: Rousdon and the Peek Family*** (Colyton: Wheatears Books) 215 pages. Softback. No ISBN. Illustrations. £14.99.

Through the mid to late nineteenth century there was a critical heightening of debates surrounding what constituted the 'good' landlord and the 'bad' landlord, the value of the landlord-tenant system, and the role of the landed classes and the country house. Into this context was the late arriving Peek family. Nicky Campbell's study of *Rousdon and the Peek Family* is a comprehensive account of what was clearly a positive local narrative.

Campbell's work opens with a broader contextualisation, making

reference to contemporary concerns for the state of the countryside in Britain: poverty, working conditions, union organisation, agricultural depression, and out-migration. There follows an overview of the character of the local parish before the arrival of the Peeks; together with an appreciation of the family's humble origins, rapid success in business, life in London, social and political activities, and philanthropic motivations. Thereafter the book sets out the impact of the Peeks in this small part of the county through the later nineteenth century: physical and psychological; and social, cultural and economic.

For architectural, agrarian and social historians, there are to be found illuminating accounts of the creation of and lives of: the mansion, the church, schools, and cottages and farms. The life of the Peek family, and of the workers, are elaborated upon respectively. Moreover, discussion of the early and of the 'heyday' years are supported by the likes of oral recollection, correspondence, newspaper articles, and photographs.

The story closes with the impact of the First World War, and a chapter that pays due and timely tribute to those who fought in that conflict. Subsequently, there is the relating of the gradual withdrawal of the Peeks and the sale of the house and estate – a process that appears to have been just about as complete as had been the family's original acquisition and creation. Perhaps most striking is the estimate in today's (2014) value of the Peek's outlay in building their vision and 'model' estate, £27 million, and the corresponding sale price, of £1.8 million.

This book, therefore, is a micro-history of what was a broad national endeavour, which attracted, and distracted, the new wealth of the Victorian and Edwardian age. Some who embarked upon this course committed themselves extensively and intensively, and the Peeks at Rousdon undoubtedly form an example that resides at the more fulsome and whole-hearted end of the spectrum.

Andrew Jackson

Jannine Crocker, (ed.), ***Elizabethan Inventories and Wills of the Exeter Orphans' Court*** (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2016; 2 volumes) xxxvii + 467 pages. 33 figures. Softback. ISBN 9780901853561 & ISBN 9780901853578. £40.00.

The wills and probate inventories and valuations taken of the household contents, work equipment, crops, livestock, debts, and other goods of

deceased people are one of the great sources of information for the study of various aspects of English life between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. However, the destruction of the Diocesan Probate Registry in Exeter in 1942 means hardly any survive for Devon. The Devon and Cornwall Record Society (DCRS) has previously published two of the small collections of inventories which survived: 266 which were removed from Probate Registry because they were subject to cases brought to the Diocesan Consistory Court and edited by Margaret Cash for publication in 1966, and a similar number from Uffculme, the probate records of which never went to Exeter because the parish was a peculiar of the Diocese of Salisbury, edited by Peter Wyatt and published in 1997.

The publication by the Society of the Elizabethan part of the third main surviving body of Devon wills and inventories, those of the Orphans' Court of Exeter, is therefore to be welcomed. Responsible for the administration of the estates of all freemen of the City who died leaving children under the age of 21, the Court had to ensure the proper maintenance of the children, but could enjoy the rest of the fruits of the estates of the deceased in the meantime. The court's records survive amongst the Exeter City Archives, which were prudently removed from the City during the Second World War. The City Council supported the publication by the Society of edited transcripts of 105 wills and inventories dated between 1560–1601/2 of the 216 complete inventories which survive. The unpublished remainder, running up to the closure of the court in 1721, are held at the Devon Heritage Centre.

What survives is not representative of Elizabethan Devon as a whole, nor even of Exeter, for the freemen of the City were among the more prosperous of the citizens, a fact fully acknowledged by the editor. Nevertheless, there is much within the pages of these two volumes that illuminates life in the city and its surroundings. Furthermore, because many of the papers relate to the wealthier members of civic society it is possible to link them to other material on them as individuals and their houses, which the editor has taken the time and care to do. Biographical notes accompany many of the records, even portraits in some cases, and images of the kind of houses through which the appraisers tramped making their notes on contents. The home of Walter Jones, vintner, who died in 1578, lay in the block between the High Street and Cathedral Close, with its 'hangins of red say and greene with a Border of Payntid cloth' in the parlour. Perhaps it was one of the Tudor houses which still stand despite their proximity to the Royal Clarence Hotel fire of 2016. The extensive debts owed to merchant Henry Maunder and baker Nicholas Glanfield are accompanied by maps which locate their customers in the surrounding district.

The usual high standard of DCRS publications is maintained by the inclusion of a comprehensive glossary and index, useful maps of the city and an introduction by Todd Gray, the editor and John Allan, which sets in context the records, the people, and the goods and fittings they left behind. It is an excellent addition to the library of anyone interested in Exeter during one of its great periods of development.

Greg Finch

Alan Gardner, *Heart of Oak: Letters from Admiral Gardner (1742–1809)*, edited by Francis Davey (Broadclyst: Azure Publications, 2015) 206 pages. Illustrations. Softback. ISBN 9780956934642. £9.50.

This very interesting collection of 89 letters was formerly in the possession of the late Mrs Margaret Frederick of Meavy, Devon who gave a typewritten transcript to the editor some years ago (it is not clear where the originals are now). To this the editor has added facsimiles of five more letters held by the South West Heritage Trust at Sowton, Exeter.

The letters were mainly written by Alan Gardner, a distinguished naval officer, between 1785 and 1808 either to his sister Dolly Clayton or his son William, and have very little connection with Devon beyond their survival in the county. A few of the letters were written on board ship while sheltering off Torbay. Beyond that, their interest lies very much with the naval historian, and they add to the collection of letters by Gardner found in The National Archives, the National Maritime Museum, the National Library of Scotland, the British Library and the Beinecke Library, Yale University. These family letters, which are not recorded on The National Archives catalogue or in Gardner's biographical entry on the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* contain a wealth of detail about ships, about personalities and about the life of a senior officer in Nelson's navy.

The book is beautifully produced and illustrated, with good indexes (but no biographical introduction beyond details of Admiral Gardner's children and an abbreviated family tree) is (as far as I can see) a work of considerable scholarship on which the editor is to be congratulated.

Andrew Jones

Todd Gray, (ed.), ***Devon Parish Taxpayers 1500–1650, Volume One: Abbotskerswell to Beer & Seaton***, (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series vol. 58, 2016). 350 pages. Softback. ISBN 9780 901853578. £20.

Anyone who has wrestled for any length of time with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century hand-writing will know at once what a labour of love has been poured into this volume. And this is just the beginning. More volumes follow. Dr Gray can only be congratulated on making available to us such a treasure-trove of material for the church historian, the social historian and the family historian.

As this is a first volume, some of the issues I shall raise may well be tackled in the introductions to subsequent volumes, but (in the end) you have to judge a book for what it is. What this volume requires is the hand of a general or series editor. For example, it would be helpful to know why the alphabetical arrangement of parishes was chosen. There is a case to be made for a regional grouping, so that material from contiguous or neighbouring parishes is presented together.

Next, an independent editor's eye ought to have been cast over the text: protest*ent* twice on p. 147 borders on the unforgivable. There are several other such examples – the wonderful quotation on p. 2 is slightly undermined by a misplaced plural.

I think the most interesting part of the collection is the series of Easter Books; and of these, the most interesting is that for Awliscombe in 1577 (pp. 146ff). This includes a long list of parishioners examined (presumably, as Dr Gray suggests) prior to Easter (and receiving the sacrament). Here, again, we come up against the absence of an independent editor. It would be interesting and helpful to know why this and other Easter books survive in the State Papers (rather than locally). And we really do need to know the significance of the abbreviation 'med' and the word 'abolute'. Does the latter imply a successful outcome to the examination? We are told that the word *fere* occurs against a name. I cannot find this. On the other hand 'male' (after George Butler on p. 155) is surely Latin *male* and ought to have caught an editor's eye.

More generally, it would be very helpful to have some editorial guidance to the great mass of detail relating to tithe (at Awliscombe). To take just two examples: what were 'odde' lambs (p. 150) and 'odd' fleeces (pp. 151-2)? What is the meaning of 'bargayne' as applied to a farm or a holding? Their significance may well escape the general reader. (Tithe generally is such a minefield for the historian ...)

Finally, I suggest that an editor might well excise some of the superfluous

information in the parish introductions. Again, to take Awliscombe, there is no obvious connection between the cases of John Adams and of Osmund Hilling and the taxations lists that follow. They may well be interesting; they well be important in the parish's history; but they do not really belong here.

All this will seem so much quibbling. But, a volume such as this is a highly specialised piece of work and it deserves a really close scrutiny before it is published. Its usefulness depends heavily upon the willingness of the particular editor or of a series editor to insist on and abide by a series of editorial conventions and aids. I say this because many people who pick up this volume will not have the means to penetrate it unaided.

None of the above stops me from looking forward with an appetite to subsequent volumes.

Andrew Jones

Tom Greeves, (2016), *Called Home, The Dartmoor Tin Miner 1860–1940, Photographs and Memory* (Chacewater: Twelveheads Press, 2016). Hardback. 160 pages. 161 illustrations. ISBN 9780906294871. £16.00.

Tin has been mined on Dartmoor since the Bronze Age, and the scars left by different waves of the industry across the moor over many centuries are a familiar part of the historic landscape. Even as late as the nineteenth century Dartmoor's mines were typically small scale concerns, dotted around the upland wastes. A succession of companies brought sporadic investment to abandoned workings, spurred on by the perennial optimism of mining prospectors that a rich lode of metal ore was just feet away, worth pursuing despite the volatile and generally declining price of tin. Small isolated mines therefore continued to operate into the twentieth century, usually worked by just a handful of men. This was mining on a domestic scale, a human scale, where individual personalities could make a difference and leave their mark on a small corner of the moor.

Archaeologist and mining historian Tom Greeves has captured this spirit, these people, in the latest and much expanded edition of his 1986 collection of early twentieth century photographs and oral history *Tin Mines and Miners of Dartmoor*, long out of print and hard to find. *Called Home* has more than twice as many images as the original work, including extracts from letters, noticeably higher quality reproductions of previously published mining and surface working views, and – in particular- portraits of miners, labourers, managers and their families. The book's new title echoes a phrase used by

several of Dr Greeves' elderly interviewees in trying to put names to faces and, as the author says, sums up his hope to 'call many of these people home to … their proper place in the wonderful human story of Dartmoor.'

The focus is on three mines in the heart of the moor – at Vitifer and the wonderfully named Golden Dagger, both near the Warren House Inn, and at Hexworthy. Several of the miners and surface workers have been identified and their lives filled out with biographical sketches drawn from memories, census and mine reports/ letters, as well as those of managers and their families. It is striking how individual efforts and colourful events left their mark. Donald Smith, for example, came to Golden Dagger as an electrician in the 1920s, and was promoted to manager in 1927 after his womanising predecessor was dismissed. Smith's efforts kept the mine going until 1930 by which time he had reached the ripe old age of 23.

Alongside the biographical content, much of the text describes the sites as photographed, usually dominated by the great launders and wheels providing power still drawn from water. The surface machinery used to crush, dress and extract the ore is also described, the object of much experimentation by resourceful jobbing engineers seeking to improve the efficiency and yield of marketable material sent on for smelting in Cornwall.

This is primarily a record, a valuable record, of people, places, technology, hopes and fading dreams, rather than a narrative history of decline. It is unfortunate that the glossary provided in 1986 edition has been omitted by the publisher this time, and also a shame that the Vitifer/Golden Dagger map included then, showing these mines clearly in relation to each other and the surrounding landscape, has been replaced by separate smaller extracts instead. But these are minor quibbles with what is otherwise a worthy addition to Devon mining literature.

Greg Finch

Darren Marsh, *Exeter's Royal Clarence Hotel* (Devon & Exeter Institution, 2017). xiii + 166 pages. Numerous photographs and facsimiles of documents. Hardback. ISBN 9780993017223. £25.

The Royal Clarence Hotel was one of Exeter most iconic and significant secular buildings, and its recent destruction by fire is a tragedy from which the City has still not recovered. It is therefore all the more timely that Darren Marsh has produced this well illustrated and documented history of the building and its place in the life of Exeter.

Any history of a hotel, particularly one as old as the Royal Clarence, needs to be tackled from at least three angles – the archaeological/architectural (how has the building changed over time and what are its most significant features), the commercial (who owned the building and how did it operate) and the social (what part did the hotel play in the life of Exeter and who were its most significant visitors). The author has tried to incorporate all three elements into this book, but while the archaeological/architectural and social aspects feature significantly at the beginning and end of the history, the strongest part of the book, as befits the author's background in the hotel trade, is the reconstruction and analysis of how the hotel operated as a commercial enterprise.

The property belonged from mediaeval times to the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral, but the author does not really look at the pre-modern history of the site, just mentioning Ethel Lega-Weekes's *Some Studies in the Topography of the Cathedral Close* (Exeter: Commin, 1915) in passing. Furthermore, although he uses some excellent reconstructive drawings by Richard Parker (pp. 12-13), he does not subject the buildings to the sort of detailed analyses for Exeter buildings found in *West Country Households*.[1] He does, however, look in some detail at the history of the Rummer Tavern on the corner of St. Martin's Lane and Cathedral Yard (pp. 17-18) which John Mackworth Praed transformed, with his partners, into the Exeter Bank (and which was incorporated into the hotel in 1919). In addition, Praed seems to have had an involvement in creating an Assembly Rooms on the site next to the Exeter bank, for which Robert Adam, who worked on Ugbrooke House and Saltram House in the late 1760s, produced some plans. The story of the plans, which are published in this book for the first time, is a particularly interesting one, and the author and Dr. Frances Sands of Sir John Soane's Museum in London must be given great credit for bringing them to light. Adam's plans, were, sadly, never used, and 'the sequence of events relating to Praed's takeover of the premises, the drawing of the plans, and the necessary rebuilding works is unclear' (p. 25). Nevertheless, the author cites an article in the issue of *Trewman's Exeter Post* for 29 August to 5 September 1766, which mentions an 'Assembly at Mr Berlon's New Room', which 'is the earliest

[1]John Allan, Nat Alcock and David Dawson, eds, *West Country Households, 1500–1700* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015); specifically the articles 'The Transformation of the Building Stock of Exeter, 1450–1700)' by Richard Parker and John Allan, 'The Interior Decoration of an Elizabethan Marchant's House: the Evidence from 41-2 High Street, Exeter' by John R.L. Thorp and 'Presenting an Elizabethan Interior: the Reinterpretation of St. Nicholas Priory, Exeter', by Kate Osborne and John Allan.

known report of an assembly on the premises, indeed the first known mention of any sort of hospitality-related activity' (p. 25). Berlon is described as 'a French school master' (p. 3) and the photograph of the 1766 indenture for the building shows clearly the names of Praed and Berlon. Indeed, one of the most attractive features of this book is the number of documents and plans which appear as illustrations. Later advertisements in *Trewman's Exeter Post* talk of Mr. Berlon's 'coffee-house' (March 1768), and 'Lodgings for the conveniency [sic] of Gentleman and Ladies' (November 1768), and, most famously, of the 'new coffee-house, inn, and tavern, or, the Hotel' (September 1770). The author spends some considerable time, in a wide-ranging and judicious discussion about whether this was the first time that the word hotel had been used of an establishment in England and concludes 'in terms of purpose-built establishments, however, it is more than possible that the Clarence is indeed the forerunner of all similar hospitality businesses' (p. 29).[2] Certainly, in the splendid reproduction of the renewal of the lease in 1782, the word hotel can be seen to be used several times (pp. 31-2).

Peter Berlon was declared bankrupt in 1774 (p. 30), and the author traces the subsequent changes of ownership and tenancy carefully as well as discussing building developments (including changes at the Exeter Bank next door). He also to some extent tries to situate the hotel within the burgeoning culture of hospitality in late Georgian and Regency England. Notable visitors and gatherings are described, including the description of the hotel by the artist Joseph Farington (p. 34), the meeting which resulted in the founding of the Devon and Exeter Institution in 1813 (pp. 34-5), the transformation of the assembly room by new owner Samuel Foote into an "Egyptian room" decorated by Anglo-Italian painter James De Maria (p. 35-8), while the visit of the Duchess of Clarence to Exeter in July 1827 (and the Duke of Clarence's visit in December of the same year), enabled the new owner, Sarah Street, to have the hotel's name changed from Street's Hotel to The Royal Clarence Hotel in 1828 (p. 39-44). It is worth mentioning that some of the events, quotes and personalities mentioned above also appear in the anonymous booklet *The*

[2] The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* now gives the first use of the word hotel as that found in John Phillips' translation of J-B Tavernier's *Six Voyages* in 1678, but this was in the French spelling hôtel and referred to a grand town-house; the first reference to the word hotel in the English sense of somewhere to find lodgings is now given as 1687 when Aphra Behn uses the word in her *The Amours of Philander and Silvia*. The first use of the second sense of the word in a dictionary is in John Ash's *The New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1775 where the word 'hostel' is defined as 'an inn, an hotel'.

Royal Clarence Hotel, Exeter, which was printed and published by Pollards of Exeter probably in 1930 or 1931, and copies of which can be found in both Exeter University Library and the Devon and Exeter Institution. This booklet deals with the history of the hotel on pages 7-15, 43 and 55-67, and recounts, for example, the visit of Joseph Farington (p. 60 – p. 34 in Marsh), the cortège of the Duke of Kent (p. 64 – p. 40 in Marsh) and the visit of Admiral, Lord Nelson (p. 66 – p. 33 in Marsh).

Much of the rest of the history of the hotel during the nineteenth century is traced through surviving documents, such as auction catalogues, leases, invoices, maps and drawings, enabling the author to chart changes in ownership, and major building works, although there are still references to notable visitors such as Franz Liszt (p. 48), Beatrix Potter (p. 65) and Edwin Lutyens (pp. 75-6). The place the hotel occupied at the heart of Exeter society is less clearly delineated and the author seems to have made little use of the thousands of references in the local newspapers of the Victorian era to the hotel, its visitors, assemblies and gatherings.

The Exeter Bank moved out of its premises in 1906 to be succeeded by Deller's Café, which itself moved to larger premises in the High Street in 1916, leaving the site to be purchased at auction by the hotel's owner, who began restructuring works in 1919. It is during the Edwardian era that documents giving the cost of accommodation and meals at the Royal Clarence become available; in 1910 the Table d'Hôte dinner cost 5*s*., by 1917 the cost had risen to 6*s*., which was the same price as in 1936 and 1943, with a further rise in 1957 to 10*s*. 6*d*.; even in 1964 dinner still cost only *12s*. 6*d*. (although coffee and starters were extra), while an example of a menu from 1969 shows the price for a three-course dinner to be 19*s*. (pp. 76, 79, 91, 96, 100, 102, 109), all of which prices are interesting indicators of how slowly inflation rose during the first seventy or so years of the twentieth century, The author also discusses developments in the properties adjacent to the hotel, namely nos. 16 and 17 Cathedral Yard, which eventually together became the Well House Tavern (pp. 91-6).

The final pages of this history are dependent not only on an interesting selection of privately held documents and photographs, but also on interviews with current and former members of staff such as Andrew McLarin. They detail the sale of the hotel for the first time to corporate clients (pp. 98-101), the first time women were able to drink in the hotel in the bar (1966!, p. 103), the building works of the 1980s (pp. 112-23), the arrival of Michael Caines and current owner Andrew Brownsword (pp. 132-43, 154-55), and gives a glimpse into some of the more famous visitors of the late twentieth-century. The work concludes with a study of the stained-glass panels which adorned the

Café-Bar before the fire (pp. 143-53), a bibliography (pp. 163-5) and an index (p. 166), although the bibliography omits the booklet *The Royal Clarence Hotel, Exeter* mentioned above, and the article by Robert Dymond, "The Old Inns and Taverns of Exeter", published in the *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association* for 1880 (pp. 387-416), which discusses the Royal Clarence on pp. 414-16 and the Rummer Tavern on p. 395.

This is a valuable study of a much-loved building, which occupies an important place in the history of Exeter. It focusses very strongly on the development of the hotel as a commercial business, using a wide variety of documents, many of which are reproduced with commendable clarity. While the book's contribution to the architectural history of Exeter is strongest during the hotel's earliest period, these aspects of the building are never neglected and there are significant sections on the buildings which housed the Well House Tavern and the Exeter Bank. It is also impossible not to agree with the author that "it is unfortunate that, over time, so many historical features have been removed, destroyed, painted over or otherwise obscured for a variety of reasons" (p. 140). Possibly more could have been made of the hotel as a centre of the social, cultural and touristic life of the city, particularly during the Victorian period, but this is still a very important contribution to the history of Exeter and a significant study of an early example of a British provincial hotel.

Paul Auchterlonie

David Parker, *Edwardian Devon 1900–1914: Before the Lights Went Out* (Stroud: The History Press, 2016) 224 pages. Illustrations, maps. Paperback. ISBN 9780750961561. £14.99.

The author's previous book *The People of Devon in the First World War*, published in 2013 won the W. G. Hoskins Book of the Year award, and the present volume, a much-expanded prequel to that book, does not disappoint. It is a wide-ranging social history of the decade, packed with detail and written in an easy and approachable style. It opens with an impressive broad brush survey of the main developments of Victorian England, homing in to Devon when discussing the Boer War, which opened the Edwardian era.

This is followed by the second section on communications. The discussion of railways is mainly a summary of Victorian developments, but the maritime section is more focussed on early twentieth century fishing, shipping and the navy. Improvements in travel helped the development of the tourist

industry and there are case studies of Torbay and North Devon. This leads on to cycling, motoring and a brief note on the literature of the county. The industries of Devon, factories and mills, mines and quarries are discussed as well as the special features of towns: gas and electricity supply, the retail trade and improvements and planning issues.

The third section is on the large landed estates. This discusses the social hierarchy, the country house, the role of the estate in the community, field sports, garden parties and the celebration of family events, birth, coming of age and marriages with vivid descriptions to bring the events to life. The changing scene is not ignored, with mention of newcomers, mainly from trade and industry, who were joining the landed aristocratic and gentry families and also the break-up of the old estates, largely the effect of economic hardships faced by agriculture.

The countryside is covered in the fourth section, dealing with the question of farm size and structure, migration from the countryside and resulting labour shortages, the change from arable to livestock farming as an effect of cheap grain imports, and controversies over rural education. The poor condition of roads, fairs and markets, the self-sufficiency of rural communities and their celebrations and customs are also described.

The fifth section, on children, concentrates on education, including nineteenth century developments leading up to the 1902 Education Act, grammar schools, and the rise of technical education as well as special education for the 'feeble minded' although there is nothing on schools for the deaf or blind. Problems of attendance, school health and child labour are also tackled.

The sixth section on poverty traces developments during the Victorian period, leading up to workhouse provision in Edwardian years, mentioning children, tramps and vagrants, the complaints of inmates and the occasional treats offered to the poor. Relief outside the workhouse is also discussed, the role of charities and the birth of state pensions. Hospitals, institutions and asylums also feature in this section.

The seventh section deals with some of the more general controversies of the period: suffrage, especially votes for women, Irish home rule, a survey of the hotly contested parliamentary elections across the county, strikes and labour unrest and the military build up, leading into the final section on the declaration of war, preparations for combat, mobilisation and a brief note on casualties, the brief 'golden dawn' after the War and the continuing break-up of the great estates.

This summary gives an impression of the wide-ranging coverage of the book and it is well illustrated with photographs and some maps, mainly taken from the author's own collection, the Devon and Exeter Institution and the

Beaford Archive. It is possible to take issue with the emphasis and omissions: there is not enough emphasis on towns and their growth and coastal towns of East Devon are omitted from the section on tourism. A major visible legacy of the late Victorian and Edwardian era is the rows of terraced houses in many towns, but there is little on urban housing. While there is mention of drunken misdemeanours during festivities, there is nothing on more serious crime, policing or prisons. Nor is there a great deal on culture: theatres, cinemas, museums, libraries, learned institutions, reading rooms, literature and music have little or no mention. Hunting and cricket feature (unindexed) in the description of village life but the more urban and plebeian sport of football earns hardly a mention, although it was popular enough to merit two newspapers, the *Football herald*, established in Plymouth in 1899 and the *Football express*, an Exeter paper which started in 1906 – both were suspended during World War One. It might also have been helpful to place Devon's experience more within the national context. Such quibbles however do not materially detract from the great achievement of the book.

A more serious criticism relates to the lack of referencing. The author states that 'limited space has precluded a lengthy list of references, running to well over 1,000 for this book' and suggests that 'through the publisher the author would be pleased to discuss particular sources with readers wishing to pursue themes further'. The blame for this probably lies with the publisher. Based on the format of the index, the list of brief references would only have taken up another ten pages in two columns. There is a good list of sources but the layout of the index is confusing and it is not complete, for example none of the three writers of locally set novels, Eden Phillpotts, Sabine Baring-Gould and John Trevenna, mentioned on page 45, figure in the index. Another well-known novelist, Rider Haggard, produced a detailed report on Devon agriculture in 1902. He features in the index but not the list of sources. The Russian Prince Peter Kropotkin also recorded changes in Devon's countryside in visits in 1890 and 1912 (pp. 94-95). He features neither in the index nor in the list of sources, although in this case the reader is directed to a work by Jeffrey Porter which is included in the list of sources. Frustratingly in the body of the text, to keep the style flowing, precise dates are often omitted from examples of certain incidents, and this would not matter if there are footnote references to the issue of the newspaper. A solution might have been to provide a link in the book to a web page where references are provided. Perhaps this could still be considered; it would certainly make this remarkable achievement even more useful.

Ian Maxted

Bill Pratt, *A Visionary Friend: Exeter's School for the Blind, 1838–1965* (Exeter: West of England School Association, 2015) xix + 115 pages. Illustrated. Hardback. ISBN 9780993160103. £9.99.

The origin and development of Exeter's school for the blind covers the period from 1838, until its relocation to the present site at Countess Wear in 1965. It is written by Bill Pratt, a former pupil, and published by the W.E.S.A. An Archive Fund was launched in 2006 in order for research to take place into the school's long history. The methodology has focused on primary source material, including personal memories of former staff and pupils.

The introductory chapter sets out the historical context leading to what was essentially care for the blind in its early years. A reference to a recent history of early blind education in Britain would have been useful at this point.[3] The Exeter Institution was one of a number of institutions for the blind formed in the early years of the nineteenth century in a number of cities, including Bristol, London, Norwich, York, Newcastle, Nottingham, Manchester and Birmingham. Over the years, an institution for the blind could be considered one of the hallmarks of a respected Victorian city, alongside its town hall and railway station. The changes in emphasis at national level were replicated at Exeter, including the establishment of a common system for the teaching of literacy. Eventually, Universal Braille became the adopted system.

In the early years of the Exeter school, appeals for funds were a common feature of many public meetings. Almost from the outset appeals were made to erect an appropriate building. A large house on St David's Hill was offered at an advantageous price. The house and grounds were ideal. The new school opened on 1 March 1843. Much of the history of the school in the Victorian era revolved around the implication for the school of changes in education at national level. The 1870 Education Act and the subsequent Elementary Education Act of 1902 led to a steady increase in the number of pupils of school age. Thus, it became necessary to erect additional buildings for the sole purpose of elementary education. This raised questions about the future direction of the school. As workshops were converted the governing body had to consider the possibility of rebuilding.

As the twentieth century moved on the late 1940s saw dramatic changes for the school. Pressure from Central Government deemed it advantageous for blind pupils to be educated separately. At local level in 1946 it was decided

[3]John Oliphant, *The Early Education of the Blind in Britain c.1790–1900: Institutional Experience in England and Scotland* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellor Press, 2007).

that blind pupils would be educated at the Royal School for the Blind in Bristol. Moreover, by 1947, 23 blind pupils had been transferred to Bristol, leaving 75 pupils to be educated in Exeter. The Institution was renamed the West of England School for the Partially Sighted.

This well produced study is a brave attempt by Bill Pratt to assemble a history of the West of England School from its formation until 1965. Extensive use has been made of primary source material, adding a valued personal touch. However, it would have enriched the book if all the original quotations had been fully referenced with appropriate locations for these documents. A further criticism relates to the lack of a bibliography. Furthermore, a list of original photographs and index would have made the book more accessible for a wider readership, including researchers seeking to produce local studies on education for the blind.

Jackie Bryon

Pamela Vass (with contributions from Mark Glasker and David Hogan), *The Power of Three: Thomas Fowler, Devon's Forgotten Genius* (Littleham, Bideford: Boundstone Books, 2016) 242 pages. 42 Illustrations, some in colour. Softback. ISBN 9780956870957. £9.99.

Thomas Fowler (1777–1843) and Charles Babbage (1792–1871) each invented mechanical calculating devices, the operating principles of which underlie the modern digital computer. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* devotes seven pages to Babbage, but none at all to Fowler. The author, who lives in Devon, is part of small international team intent on reinstating Thomas Fowler's place in the history of the computer. The title of her book refers to Fowler's adoption of ternary (base 3) arithmetic in designing his Calculating Machine.

Fowler was born in Great Torrington, the eldest son of a cooper. Despite the restricted educational opportunities open to such a boy, he acquired an early interest in mathematics. After a reluctant apprenticeship to a fellmonger, Fowler turned to other employment and established himself as a printer and bookseller. He went on to obtain also a position in a bank and to enter local government. It was while Poor Law Treasurer that Fowler became frustrated by the complex error-prone tables used for financial calculations. Realising that calculation would be less demanding if the conventional decimal (base 10) system of arithmetic was replaced by binary (base 2) or ternary, Fowler drew up and published conversion tables for use by the Great Torrington Poor

Law Union. He then decided to construct an apparatus whereby the now simplified calculations could be carried out by mechanical means. Elsewhere, but for similar reasons, Charles Babbage, was working on his Difference Engine. When completed in the spring of 1840, Fowler's Calculating Machine was 6ft wide, 3ft deep and 1ft high. Smaller than Babbage's apparatus, it was made of wood and operated through a system of sliding rods rather than metal cogs and wheels. Furthermore, whereas Babbage utilised the decimal system, Fowler opted for ternary arithmetic.

Much of Pamela Vass's account is devoted to the reasons for Fowler's failure to convince the scientific community of the value of his invention. As well as the difficulties encountered by a provincial, self-educated Victorian innovator with no upper-class metropolitan connections, many scientists appeared to regard applying 'pure' science to practical use as akin to prostitution. Misfortune also played a part, as when the machine was delivered to the wrong building at the British Association's 1841 meeting in Plymouth. On the other hand, as Vass stresses, the dominant factor was probably Fowler's fear of divulging any information that could lead to his invention being copied. This stemmed from infringements of his patent for an earlier invention, the Thermosiphon (a means of heating using circulating hot water). The unhelpful response of his lawyer (whether through malice or incompetence remains uncertain) together with the authorities ignoring his plea to have the law changed left Fowler with a lifelong burning sense of betrayal.

Although the mathematical reasoning underlying the machine was well-received, reservations were raised over the need to use tables to convert decimal to ternary numbering before operating it (and *vice versa* at the end of the calculations). The major obstacle to Fowler's machine gaining influential backing was, however, his persistent refusal to provide any diagrams. It was largely because of this that he failed to gain what could have been powerful support from the Astronomer Royal, George Bidell Airy. It would have been no consolation that Airy also disliked Babbage's machine.

In the winter of 1841 Fowler began working on a second machine: one that obviated the need for the operator to consult decimal-ternary conversion tables. Ill-health overtook him, but while on his deathbed he dictated its specifications to a daughter. Thomas Fowler died on 31 March 1843, disappointed and disillusioned over his Calculating Machine not receiving the acclaim he felt it deserved. The author's narrative moves on to her tracking down of the deathbed paper. By contrast, she failed to find any remnants of Fowler's machine, the only known visual record being in a memorial window in Great Torrington Church. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of a working prototype has been possible. As to the 'power of three', there is a growing

opinion that the adoption of ternary mathematics instead of the present almost universal binary system could significantly accelerate the progress of computer technology.

The fifteen appendices include Hugh Fowler's account of his father and examples of Fowler's correspondence. They contain also much technical information, which the mathematically naive may be pleased was not presented in the main body of the text.

This book is engagingly-written, comprehensively referenced, and can be recommended as of wide general interest. The reviewer has, however, two relatively minor criticisms. Firstly, there is no list of contents or index; secondly, in many instances the illustrations are presented without captions. Instead, these are listed towards the end of the book. Another recently-read book did likewise. If this is a growing practice, it is not one that aids the reader.

Sadru Bhanji

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.

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A house style guide is available online at devonhistorysociety.org.uk/, or from the editor. The style guidelines include full submission instructions.

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

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