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Front cover image: The Roodscreen at Lapford
(photograph by Michael Aufrère Williams).

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Abbreviations

DCNQ	*Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*
DHC	Devon Heritage Centre
EPG	*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*
NDJ	*North Devon Journal*
NDRO	North Devon Record Office
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
TDH	*The Devon Historian*
TNA	The National Archives
WMN	*Western Morning News*
WT	*Western Times*

The Devon Historian, vol. 87, 2018

The Escheators[1], their Duties and Role in the Heritage of Devon's Landed Families

CHARLES SCOTT-FOX

Although the escheator outlasted feudalism and feudal officialdom in Britain, he remains a somewhat overlooked and under-researched officer. Unlike his contemporaries, the sheriff, coroner and commissioners – tax collectors, customs officers, justices of the peace – all of whom survived to the modern period with broadly similar responsibilities, the 1660 Act of Liveries and Wards abolished the Sovereign's escheats and the appointment of officers tasked with their compliance. For those officials who continued to fulfil traditional roles, historians have realised the importance of studying their offices, and portraying the relationship that developed with the society from which they had been drawn, from the medieval period to the present; for the escheator, this contact with the modern era does not exist.

This paper, which follows on from research for a dissertation on the heritage of Devon's landed families in the Norman and early Plantagenet years, records an investigation into the role of the men selected to serve as escheators in the county of Devon, which was usually combined with Cornwall, between 1351 (when the office was permanently separated from that of sheriff), and the nomination of Scipio le Squire in April 1643, who was destined to become the last appointee for this county. It summarises the history of the office, the statutory duties of an escheator and investigates the background of men nominated to serve as escheator and their influence on the heritage of the higher echelons of Devon's medieval and early modern society.

The background and early years of the office 1189–1351

Following the Conquest and introduction of a feudal regime, Anglo-Saxon traditions of inheritance were generally replaced by Norman laws and customs, with the most important change being that the king alone held land, and his subjects were in varying degrees of tenancy or subtenancy. This fundamental shift led to the involvement of officers of the Crown in all transfers of possession of land held directly from the king, that is any estate or part of an estate held *in capite* ('in chief'), being one for which a fief, homage and/or a military fee, was owed to the king. These dues were required to be re-affirmed by the accredited heir following the death of the tenant.

In modern parlance, the word escheat has retained the import of its medieval origins, as a legal term for the reversion of ownership of property to the Crown or State in the absence of legal heirs, but in the years between 1066 and 1660, in addition to the king, escheats also fell to an overlord on the death of a sub-tenant by his or her heir. Failure to follow this feudal practice risked the loss of that inheritance, either by reversion to the Crown or to one of the king's tenants-in-chief. This law also applied to ecclesiastical holdings; escheats of tenancies and advowsons[2] of churches, whether held by clerics or laymen, owing their allegiance to bishops, or abbots or priors.

By the mid-twelfth century the feudal regime introduced by William the Conqueror was well established. Justice, inheritance and taxation were administered in the shires by Crown officials, of whom the generally acknowledged leader was the sheriff, many of whose responsibilities survive to the present day, as do those of coroners and justices of the peace. However, in the early years of the reign of Richard I (1189–1199), a new post would be added to the list – a unique official, whose role and existence would survive the ending of feudalism – later to be termed the escheator. During the latter years of the reign of Henry II (1154–1189), the Crown had become concerned that following the death of a royal tenant, fees were not always paid, and that pressure was being brought on sheriffs in some counties by interested parties not to report these deaths, particularly when the heir was known to be a minor, who could be liable to be made a royal ward. This would lead to the appointment of an independent crown official, who could address these concerns directly.

The early history of the escheator's office and responsibilities has been well charted.[3] In summary, the key dates for this period, when the office for most of the time was a national crown appointment, start in 1193, when Richard I entrusted most lands then in royal custody to two individuals, but sheriffs still had custody of some escheats in their counties, and wardships

were handed over to other keepers.[4] In 1218 Henry III established custodians of escheats in each county, then in 1232, as part of widespread reforms of the Exchequer, two escheators were given responsibility for the areas to the north and to the south of the River Trent, with authority over thirty-four (sub-)escheators for the counties. In 1234–36 supervising authority was again divided between areas north and south of the Trent, but then, in 1275, responsibility returned to the sheriffs. This see-saw between central and county administration continued until 1283 when Edward I abandoned that experiment by reinstating the appointments *citra* and *ultra Trentam*; sheriffs effectively became their sub-escheators. This decision would remain in place for the succeeding forty years. In 1301 the *Statutum de Escaetoribus* was issued by Edward I giving the office formal parliamentary recognition.[5] Between 1323 and 1341 Edward II and Edward III continued to experiment with central and devolved responsibility, but in 1340 Edward III decided that counties, sometimes in combination, should undertake the task.[6] For the succeeding ten years sheriffs were also required to undertake the duties of escheator, though after 1351 appointments were separated.

Historic duties of the escheator

An escheator's duty stems from the instructions set out in the *Capitula Escaetrie*, or Articles of the Escheatorship, preserved in the *Great Chartulary of Glastonbury* for an inquest in 1262.[7] One of the later copies, the Wiltshire articles of 1284, states their purpose as 'pertaining to the king's escheator which he ought to inquire through each hundred upon his first appearance'.[8] These duties were summarised for the Thirteenth Century England Conference in 1993 as concerning:

> Ancient demesne lands, lands held in-chief, purprestures,[9] advowsons, lands of Normans, serjeanties[10] and escheats, wardships, widows and reliefs. In addition 'Glastonbury' looked into the conduct of local escheators and sheriffs, what lands, wardships and escheats had been taken into custody, whether they had seized lands not held in-chief, whether escheators made satisfactory extents[11] of lands, and if escheators had been ejected from lands they held in custody.[12]

Historically, the most commonly recognised duties of an escheator were, in response to Chancery writs, to convene and preside over an *Inquisitio post mortem* (IPM) for a royal tenant, or for an inquest for proof of age to enable a ward to prove that he or she was entitled to inherit. Writs were also issued to

escheators to 'take into the king's hands' and administer estates pending the outcome of the IPM, or to allocate dower for a widow and/or for division of an estate between heirs or heiresses; both of these could be time-consuming and highly demanding tasks. Although IPMs were presided over by a judge they were, to a large extent, procedural, with legal knowledge being limited to an understanding of property inheritance rights. However, state records show that, in addition to these statutory responsibilities, Devon's escheators were frequently called upon to undertake additional official duties, which suggests that holders of this position probably had more authority and standing in Devon society than previously considered.

Historians' opinions of the Escheator's standing after 1351

Stevenson's assessment of the escheator's relative status in the years leading up to the final devolution of authority to the counties posed the question 'were they of the civil service type, clerks in royal service, or did they belong to the class of substantial country gentlemen or were they drawn from the small class of farmers?'[13] His examination of the Close Rolls led him to suggest that these men came from the ranks of the 'well-to-do' landowners, which accords with a more recent study of escheators in the south-west counties that found 'holders of this office came from the local gentry'.[14] Research into escheators in fourteenth century Gloucestershire found that while 'it was not the most prestigious office in the shire in the eyes of the local gentry', escheatorship was an important office for the king who needed 'to have men just as reliable as those who were appointed sheriff or elected to Parliament'.[15] This suggests they were professional clerks and administrators, which Waugh had concluded applied to appointments in the fourteenth century, when

> escheators were drawn from the growing pool of professional administrators, who served in a wide variety of positions in both royal and baronial administrations. They were not trained specifically for the job of escheator, but rather drew on a variety of legal, ministerial and financial skills that could be applied to their feudal duties.[16]

Alexander's brief introduction to a list of Devon's mid-fifteenth to seventeenth century escheators agrees, regarding them to be 'politically and socially less conspicuous ... Several of them seem to have been the younger sons of county magnates, who, unable to provide more than one son with a landed estate, had trained them for careers in law and commerce'.[17] Stevenson had come to the same conclusion stating that escheators were primarily Crown agents,

who together with their feodaries and bailiffs were collecting rents, net of any expenditure, and acting as custodians of property.[18]

There was one dissenting view, which came from a study of Warwickshire's landed society in the fifteenth century that concluded the office of escheator was

> indubitably the least significant in social and tenurial terms. On both counts ... escheators ranked below the holders of other offices ... in most instances escheatorship was their first office, an apprentice post. They were never again appointed to it once their experience and local status had enabled them to outgrow it.[19]

Gloucestershire being the only other county to have been subject to research into the selection of men to undertake the duties of escheator and which came to a very different conclusion, the inevitable question arises, were Devon's escheators apprentices, or men of greater standing on whom the king could rely?

Selection of Escheators for Devon

Over the succeeding three centuries, between 1351 and 1643, two hundred and sixty men, primarily from Devon, but not infrequently from Cornwall, were appointed as escheators for Devon or for the two counties. This figure can be reduced to two hundred and thirty by elimination of those appointed more than once and those who resigned or died in office and so rendered no accounts. Examination of the two *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries* escheator lists, shows that many of these officers, in the Plantagenet and earlier Tudor years, came from the higher levels of the landed gentry that included, amongst others, representatives of the Chambernoun (1), Copplestone (3), Courtenay (3), Fortescue (8), Fulford (2), Moeles (1), Prideaux (3), and Trevelyan (3) families.[20] These lists include two knights, James Chuddelegh (1391) and Simon Talbot (1405 and 1417), and twelve former or serving Members of Parliament, three elected for the City of Exeter, seven for the Devon boroughs of Barnstaple (2), Plympton (1), Tavistock (2) and Totnes (2), and two for the Cornish Boroughs of Bodmin and Liskeard. After 1412, with the appointment of Henry Fulford, many more had the title of esquire or gentleman that indicated they too came from the more influential ranks of Devon's landed gentry. There are notable exceptions, with no escheators named Acland, Ayshford, Bluett, Bonneville, Chichester, Drewe or Pollard, but their absence does not necessarily equate with objection

to the appointment. Towards the end of the Tudor period this association with the landed waned and there was a gradual but inexorable shift to the legally qualified, attorneys and town clerks including John Rattenbury from Okehampton, Walter Orchard from Liskeard and John Perryman of Bodmin. Such a shift could well be explained by the increasing availability of education and a growing secularised number of trained administrators. In the Stuart era, in addition to this switch from the landed to attorneys, the proportion of men of Cornwall appointed as escheator increased to near parity with those from Devon.

Now that we have determined that from 1351, for the next two centuries, escheators in Devon were being appointed from the landed gentry, including many notable families and men with experience of public office, escheatorship in this county cannot be described as an apprentice post, but may be compared to Saul's findings for Gloucestershire. However, the rationale for the transition to men with a legal background requires explanation, which it is considered is to be found in the escheator's role in the implementation of Crown escheats.

The challenge to inheritance

The creation of the office of escheatorship, owing allegiance directly to the Crown, stemmed from the need to ensure that the king's escheats, an important source of income for the treasury, were being respected and paid. Primarily, as established by an IPM, they were the fees that arose on the death of a tenant-in-chief, including 'relief' for the transfer of his inheritance, wardship for heirs who were minors, and the income from estates until the right to inherit was proven. Over time, some of these Crown landholdings were distributed to members of the tenant-in-chief's family, for which Crown authority was required with a penalty in addition to the fee, if approval had not been obtained at the time. Where the deceased had several lords it was the lord holding the most important fief, who would be responsible for the lordship. However, if the deceased held a fief from the king, an escheator would conduct the IPM and the wardship would belong to the king; 'whether or not he has other lords; for the lord king can have no equal'.[21]

The principal responsibilities of the escheator became more complex as the years passed and as lawyers created a succession of legal measures to protect inheritance and avoid wardship. These included charters, primarily produced (or sometimes 'created') by the church, often to protect their lands tenanted by laymen, or devices such as the creation of socage[22] or an estate in *feudum talliatum* (fee tail), which committed an estate to nominated heirs. Two legal devices known as jointure and 'uses' became common and popular

as, by handing property to trustees, they allowed successive heirs to enjoy the property and its income without owning it, thereby avoiding wardship and relief.[23] Both have survived to the modern era in the form of entail and trusts. However, there were drawbacks: for the donor, the risk that the trustees would not honour the terms of the settlement, and for the Crown, losing a major source of funding. These developments, coupled with the dilution of landholdings, would require escheators to undertake ever more detailed investigation into the history of both ownership and legal status of every part of an estate, to ensure that despite these measures the king received the revenue from his escheats and entitlement to wardships where due.

An example of the benefits and security of tenure that *feudum talliatum* allowed, is provided by the Gambons, a notable Devon family who, by the beginning of the thirteenth century had created an extensive farmland estate extending from South Molton Hundred to that of East Budleigh. The original document has been lost, so the date of its enactment is unproven, but it is almost certain to have been produced by Walter Gambon senior (1235–1295) as three extensive holdings, Blackpool, Gambuston and *Morston* (represented by Moorstone Barton) acquired *c.*1303, were excluded.[24] The surviving evidence of this entail is provided by an Elizabethan Wyndham family document that records the thirty-one Devon farms and manors transferred to the descendants of Elizabeth Sydenham, the last surviving member of the Gambon family with issue.[25] By the use of entail, preventing alienation of his estate, Walter Gambon protected the income and standing of his heirs until the Gambon name died out, some two hundred and thirty years later. All being adults when they inherited, none were threatened with wardship, for which the entail, being pre-1300, would have provided no protection; this did involve one of their neighbours, the Ayshfords.

In 1362, the manor of *Assheford* (Ayshford), part of the honour of Walter de Claville, was held of military fee by his heir John Ayshford. His only son William, had been born in July 1361, but within fifteen months the plague had claimed both his parents.[26] Twenty years later John de Aston, who conducted an Inquisition into Proof of Age (POA) for the return of William's estates, reported that in 1363 Thomas Cheyne had made William a royal ward and taken over his estates and its income

> Valued at 10s clear and with rents of 28s 2d … till 1 July 38 Edw. III [1364], when the King granted to Henry Percehay, the custody of the said lands, at a yearly rent of £2 13s 4d. [and that] the present King, 18 Oct. 1 Ric. II [1377] granted to the said Henry the marriage of the heir for £11 13s 4d together with the custody of the lands.[27]

Having no daughter of his own, Percehay evidently 'arranged' the marriage of the co-heiress daughter of one of his Somerset neighbours Robert Wollavington. Who instigated this match, and whether it was with William's agreement was of no consequence, Percehay's permission was required for which, inevitably, there was a price, ensuring his investment in the wardship was well rewarded. This case illustrates the twin perils of wardship, loss of income and independent choice of partner together with the role of the escheator in this process. Determined that the humiliation and loss of income that William's fourteenth century wardship had incurred would not threaten their family inheritance again, they took advantage of these legal devices as they were developed. In 1462, six years before his death, William's great-grandson John Ayshford signed a 'jointure' deed to protect his seven-year-old son William, who in turn in 1509 signed a 'use' deed for the benefit of his heirs, effectively combining use and entail to create a perpetual form of protection for his estate and from wardship.[28] Although the Ayshford inheritance included many properties held by military fee, requiring Devon's escheators to conduct the IPM, both Richard Clerck in 1469 and Philip Courtenay in 1511 accepted the validity of these deeds and that the Ayshford estate was free from any form of royal control.

Conclusion

The escheator, whose power and influence had often been crucial for the inheritance of the landed families in the middle to late medieval years, has no relevance today, being an historic office originally tied to a feudal regime that no longer exists. Nevertheless, the role that they undertook contributed in no small measure to the evolution of inheritance rights, some, including entail and trusts, surviving into this twenty-first century. Their remit to become involved in the affairs and ownership of land that was known to be, or was potentially, held 'of the king' was boundless and had to be undertaken regardless of rank or status. Their own status and standing in the hierarchy of county officials remains uncertain and probably varied over time, though few, if any, of Devon's escheators would seem to fall into Carpenter's 'apprentice post' category. The findings presented in this paper, of the holders of the post being former or serving Members of Parliament as well as men from the highest echelons of Devon's society, and their not infrequent re-appointment, would seem to be more in line with Saul's assessment of Gloucestershire's fourteenth and fifteenth-century escheators as professional and reliable king's men. However, further research into the background of Devon and Cornwall's two hundred and thirty escheators is now being undertaken, which it is hoped

will shed a little more light on their standing and position in society, and their reasons for accepting the responsibilities of the escheator's office.

NOTES

1. The terms escheat and escheator ultimately derive from the Latin verbs *cadere* ('to fall') and *excidere* ('to fall out/down'), and descended through Old French to the Medieval Latin *escaëre*. The English 'escheat' (both verb and noun) comes from a Latinisation of the past participle (*escaëtus*) of the OFr verb *eschoir*, namely *escheoite*. The Old French and Anglo-Norman forms were in use in England by the 13th century, representing a notion and an official position developed by the Anglo-Norman administration.
2. The right to nominate a cleric to a vacant ecclesiastical benefice.
3. S. L. Waugh, 'The Origins and Early Development of the Articles of the Escheator', in P. R. Coss & S. D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England, V: Proceedings of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Conference 1993* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 89-93; E. R. Stevenson, 'The Escheator', in W. A. Morris & J. R. Strayer (eds.), *The English Government at Work, 1327–1336, vol. 2 Fiscal Administration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1947), 109-67.
4. Waugh, *The Origins*, 106.
5. A. Luders et al. (eds.), *Statutes of the Realm: Magna Carta to the end of the reign of Queen Anne*, 11 vols. (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1810–28), i, 142-43.
6. Luders, *Statutes*., i, 283.
7. A. Watkin (ed.), *The Great Chartulary of Glastonbury*, 3 vols. (Frome: Somerset Record Society, vols. 59, 63-64, 1947-56), i, 232-35.
8. Wiltshire Record Office MS 1230, Statute Book, fols. 125r-126v.
9. An encroachment, intrusion or occupation of the land of another. A purpresture on royal land, including on the king's highway, was particularly serious.
10. A form of tenure on condition of the performance of a certain duty other than knight-service, usually the discharge of duties in the household of the king or a noble.
11. Extents are surveys of lands, usually in *Inquisitiones post mortem* (After-Death Enquiries) and include the extents of the estate, its rents and services and its values, among other things.
12. Waugh, 'Articles of the Escheator', 98.
13. Stevenson, 'The Escheator', 163-64. Presumably he means *firmarii* , that is those who hold by a *firma* (for a fixed revenue).
14. D. Luckett, 'Henry VII and the South-Western Escheators', in B. Thompson (ed.), *The reign of Henry VII: Proceedings of the 1993 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), 54-64.

15. N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 110, 137.
16. S. L. Waugh, *The Lordship of England Royal Wardships and Marriages in English Society and Politics, 1217–1327* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 111.
17. J. J. Alexander, 'Escheators of Devon and Cornwall, 1450–1643', *DCNQ, vol. XXI* (1940–41), 202.
18. Stevenson, 'The Escheator', 154.
19. C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 272.
20. J. J. Alexander, 'Escheators of Devon and Cornwall, 1300-1450' *DCNQ, Vol. XVI* (1930–31) 164-168; J. J. Alexander, 'Escheators of Devon and Cornwall, 1450–1643', 202-08.
21. G. D. G. Hall (ed. & trans.), *Tractatus de Legibus et consuetudinibus regni Anglie qui Glanvilla vocatur – The Treatise on the laws and customs of the realm of England commonly called Glanvill* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), vii, 84.
22. A form of tenure involving payment of rent or other non-military service
23. F. Pollock & F. W. Maitland, *The History of English Law before the time of Edward I*, 2nd edition, 2 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), ii, 21-22; P. Jefferies, 'The Medieval Use as Family Law and Custom: the Berkshire Gentry in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,' *Southern History, vol. 1* (1979), 45-69, at 47, 51; Waugh, *Lordship of England*, 102-03.
24. C. Scott-Fox, *Moorstone Barton: A Medieval Manor* (Devon: author for J. Maunder, 2009), 4-7
25. Somerset Heritage Centre DD/WY/3/38/24. Abstract of Entailed Lands in Devon held by the Gambon Family, *c.*1600.
26. C. Scott-Fox, *Ayshford's Heritage: Court, Chapel and Community* (Devon: author for the Friends of Friendless Churches, 2008), 4.
27. Included in TNA C136/24/3. IPM of John de Assheford (Ayshford): Devon.
28. West Country Studies Library. Transcripts of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Wills. Ashford.

Charles Scott-Fox was born in1934, the eldest son of Sir Cyril and Lady Aileen Fox. He is a retired Royal Navy Commander, an author of his father's biography and local historian, whose publications include Holcombe Court and articles for *The Devon Historian*. He was granted 'life experience' status by Exeter for Post-Graduate History Degree 2014, and has been awarded an Honorary Fellowship in 2016 for his Devon Escheator status research.

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Devon Roodscreens after the Reformation: Destruction and Survival

MICHAEL AUFRÈRE WILLIAMS

The late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

After the initial rush to destruction from *c.*1547, many Devon screens survived mainly thanks to the royal order of 1561. The roodloft had to go, but the screen was to stay. The order is quite specific as regards the latter demand: 'that there remain a comely partition betwixt the chancel and the church, that no alteration be otherwise attempted in them, but be suffered in quiet. And where no partition is standing, there to be one appointed.'[1] This last sentence implies that the destruction of the entire structure had been accomplished in a number of parishes. There is little, if any, evidence to show that any new screens were 'appointed' if the old structure had been removed, at least not until well into the seventeenth century.

Nationally, visitation articles and injunctions in the 25 years or so following 1561 make it clear that the elimination of lofts was not done hurriedly or enthusiastically. However, after 1575 references to them in these articles and injunctions begin to die out, indicating that the subject was becoming less and less important, and, by *c.*1585 such references disappear completely. Unfortunately, there is limited information concerning enforcement of Reformation Injunctions in the Exeter diocese in that there is a lack of visitation evidence. That they were enforced and obeyed, if reluctantly, may be deduced from the existing churchwardens' accounts. This need not imply that the screens were no longer felt to be important, since by the early decades of the seventeenth century some episcopal visitors were again taking

an interest in them. Bishop Bridges of Oxford (1603/4–1618) demanded 'whether or not the chancel was fenced in by rails or pales'.[2] A little later, in 1638, Bishop Montagu of Norwich enquired 'is your chancel divided from the nave or body of the church with a partition of stone, boards, wainscot, grates, or otherwise?'[3] And in 1640 Bishop Juxon of London asked 'is there a comely partition betwixt your chancel and the body of the church or chapel, as is required by the law?'[4] Even so, such references are scarce, and Montagu's and Juxon's are the only two such in Fincham's two-volume *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, covering the period 1603–42.

What is the actual evidence for the survival of pre-Reformation screens at this time? Were many screens demolished as most lofts certainly were? Did many remain as the 1561 order required? William Harrison's comment of 1577 points to some losses, where he says that, 'finally, whereas there was wont to be a great partition between the choir and the body of the church, now it is either very small or none at all and, to say the truth, altogether needless'.[5] The partition now being 'very small' may refer to the remaining section of the entire structure after being partly demolished or transposed to accommodate the demands of the 1561 order. But what appeared to Harrison to be 'very small' may only be so in comparison with the structures he knew before the implementation of the 1561 order. They may have been simply screens as we know them today (i.e. without loft galleries). (see Figure 1).

The destruction – or retention – of screens varied locally. In Devon's 479 parish churches, although it has been possible to identify 120 currently extant screens (whole or in part) and 145 that have been destroyed (or for which only fragments remain) since the Reformation (all but thirteen since *c*.1755),

Figure 1. Lapford. A typical Devon roodscreen today.

this leaves a large total of 214 screens and lofts unaccounted for.[6] Of course, the lack of documentary evidence means that it is impossible to state when these screens disappeared. Their demise could have taken place at any time between the Reformation and the nineteenth century but it is not too great a speculation to suggest that some may have disappeared in the second half of the sixteenth century. There is evidence for the disappearance of three Devon screens at that time: Exeter (St. Petroc) in 1561/2, Morebath by 1562 and Shobrooke in 1577; while Axminster followed in 1660, Cornwood in 1650, Silverton in *c.*1649 and Thurlestone in 1685. In assessing the relatively large survival rate in Devon it must be borne in mind that the lack of a chancel arch in many churches rebuilt in the fifteenth century meant that the screen was the only means of demarcation between the chancel and the nave, thus increasing its functional importance. This was also true of many of the huge number of churches rebuilt in England between *c.*1400 and *c.*1530, for example in the Cotswolds and East Anglia. Unfortunately, the few surviving late sixteenth-century Devon churchwardens' accounts are not very forthcoming about screens.

Screens entered the seventeenth century with a somewhat equivocal status.

Figure 2. Roodscreen at Washfield.

Arminianism, or at least the English version of that thinking, was concerned with promoting decorous worship. With the encouragement of both Charles I and the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, new churches were built in a style which deliberately imitated pre-Reformation architecture. Screens were still built, even though their importance was evidently not of much concern as only twice were they mentioned in visitation articles, as has been noted.[7] At Washfield, a new screen was erected in 1624.[8] This screen did not imitate pre-Reformation architecture but its richness and beauty is very much in line with the Laudian principles of beautifying churches. (see Figure 2). The fact that new screens were being built perhaps also implies that surviving pre-Reformation screens retained their usefulness, their main purpose being functional, and consequently there was no need for their destruction.[9]

The outbreak of the Civil War seems to have encouraged vandalism and iconoclasm. In April 1643 a committee 'for demolishing of monuments of superstition or idolatry' was appointed by the House of Commons. This was shortly followed by a parliamentary ordinance (Ordinance for Demolishing Superstitious Images) of 26 August 1643.[10] Although screens and lofts were not mentioned in this ordinance, an ordinance for the further demolishing of monuments of idolatry and superstition on 9 May 1644 specifically mentioned roodlofts and the organs which stood upon them, demanding that 'all organs, and the frames and cases wherein they stand, in all churches and chapels aforesaid, shall be taken away and utterly defaced'. It addressed the problem more comprehensively than the previous year's ordinance and probably meant that considerable damage was caused to the remaining lofts, which had survived because they housed organs, as well as to screen dado figures.[11] Nigel Yates in his *Buildings, Faith and Worship* (1991) comments that 'on the whole there seems to have been a preference to retain existing screens or to erect new ones in most churches up to the end of the seventeenth century'.[12] In Devon, there is only evidence that two screens, those at Cornwood and Silverton, disappeared during the Commonwealth (1649–60). Equally, there is no evidence that any screens were constructed in the county in the last decades of the sixteenth century, with the possible exception of Lustleigh. This screen is almost certainly not pre-Reformation, but it is uncertain whether it was constructed during the years of Mary, or perhaps as late as the early seventeenth century. It may have been 'appointed', according to the terms of the 1561 royal order and so constructed in the later decades of the sixteenth century. If so, it would be unusual.

The 1662 Prayer Book was also, like its 1559 predecessor, equivocal about the use of chancels and naves. It, too, allowed communion to take place in either area.[13] By this time, however, continental influences were about to

make themselves felt. In Europe, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, in different ways, introduced new liturgical arrangements to which churches had to be adapted. In the Lutheran medieval churches the screen and roodloft were retained initially and it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that screens began to be removed where they hid the view of the altar.[14] The medieval buildings inherited by the Calvinists required a much more drastic re-ordering, involving the fitting of a pulpit and seating (often deliberately reorientated north-south) and little else.[15] Catholic interiors, too, became characterised by open spaces.

On a similar but smaller scale, 'auditory' churches had begun to appear in England in the early and middle decades of the seventeenth century. These were constructed as a single rectangular room, with no screen to divide it into chancel and nave. No such early examples are known in Devon. However, in London, the Great Fire in 1666 presented an opportunity for the rebuilding of churches and their interiors, and most of the new churches built there by Christopher Wren did not have screens: Instead, Wren, influenced by continental developments, preferred the auditory plan and rarely included a screen into his London churches.[16] This taste continued in the Georgian period when the emphasis was on preaching, so there was a need for good vision and audibility. New Georgian town churches were wholly open in plan, with little or no chancel; indeed, sometimes the pulpit was placed at the centre of the east wall with the communion table in front of it. Screens were redundant in such churches, and this began to impact on medieval churches and how they were furnished and used, and it is in the eighteenth century that more Devon screens began to be demolished.

The eighteenth century

Nationally, there is evidence that, in the eighteenth century, more roodscreens were being removed than constructed. For example, in Yorkshire between 1720 and 1737, 71 screens were pulled down.[17] This was also true of Devon, although on a much smaller scale. The faculty causes, requests from the parish to the bishop to undertake alterations within the church, indicate the disappearance of two screens in the eighteenth century, at South Molton (1758) and Sidmouth (1776), while at the beginning of the nineteenth century screens were removed at Kingsteignton (1801), Colebrooke (1805), Kingston (1807), Shebbear (1815) and Merton (1822). The survey of Devon by the Lysons brothers (1822) mentions five further screens (Coffinswell, Fremington, Langtree, North Lew, and Uplowman) as having disappeared.

Some of the screens removed may have been in a ruinous condition, as at

South Molton where it was claimed that 'the condition of the roodloft and several screens which enclosed the chancel and side aisles... were very much decayed, broke, defective, indecent and attached with great inconveniencies for people assembled there for divine worship and service'.[18] Even so, an antipathy to screens can also be detected. Incumbents and parishioners at Sidmouth and Kingston complained that this presence impeded sight and hearing. At Sidmouth 'it was agreed to take down the screen which divides the church and the chancel, as the same greatly obstructs the hearing of the parishioners who sit in the chancel',[19] while at Kingston the reason for removal was similar. 'The screen between the church and the chancel is a great impediment to the sight of the desk and pulpit'.[20]

Nevertheless, new screens did continue to be built towards the end of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, such as that at Cruwys Morchard in 1689, after the previous screen had been destroyed by fire.[21] The joiner's bill came to nearly £1400, which shows that the parishioners still felt that they wanted a screen, and that they were prepared to pay for it, indicating that the structure, for whatever reasons, was still thought desirable. (see Figure 3). This may also indicate the pull of tradition, perhaps more marked in rural areas, as opposed to the continental influences which distinguished Wren's new London churches. Another new screen was built at Crowcombe (Somerset) in 1729, and as late as 1820 one of stone was erected at Haccombe. (see Figure 4). On the other hand, when the church at Teigngrace was rebuilt in 1786 there was no screen; instead, the interior had an open cruciform plan, with arms of equal length.[22]

The 'Gothic revival' of the nineteenth century had its roots in the eighteenth century, exemplified by the later work of the architect, James Wyatt (1746–1813). Wyatt has been described as 'the first professional architect to take Gothic at all seriously as a useable style'.[23] However, his strategy in his cathedral restorations, especially at Lichfield and Salisbury, was to open up vistas within the building by, among other things, clearing away screens and later accretions, and, by so doing, achieve a sense of spaciousness.[24] These aims were not conducive to the retention of medieval screens and Wyatt removed even the thirteenth-century choir screen at Salisbury Cathedral.[25] However, he was not antipathetic towards screens as such, for he did insert a new one in its place as a base for the organ.[26] There was also, by the late eighteenth century, a growing interest in antiquarianism from some sections of the nobility and gentry. Both national and local societies for the study of antiquities were coming into existence in the early eighteenth century, pointing to the rise of such interests. Antiquarianism, being conservative in nature, tended to help the retention of existing screens. This was to influence

Figure 3. Cruwys Morchard. Roodscreen.

Figure 4. Haccombe. Roodscreen.

the Oxford Movement of the 1830s in which antiquarianism was reinforced by a revival of interest in medieval worship and theology.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries

The Oxford Movement stressed the traditional heritage of the Church of England and its links with the pre-Reformation Church. But by the 1840s, thanks to the publications and influence of both the Cambridge Camden Society and the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture with the support and encouragement of the important figure of A. W. N. Pugin (1815–52), the aims and principles of 'ecclesiology', that is, the study of church building and decoration, became the dominant force in transforming the liturgy and architecture of the Church of England.[27] The ecclesiologists believed that the perfect plan of a church was that commonly used in the fourteenth century, in which they saw the characteristic feature as a long chancel. For the ecclesiologists, every present-day church should have a distinct and spacious chancel, at least one third the length of the nave. The chancel should be separated from the nave by a chancel arch or a screen, preferably with a raised floor.[28] Unfortunately, although the ecclesiological ideals caught on to the extent that by the end of the nineteenth century there were only a handful of churches which remained unrestored, the effect on pre-Reformation roodscreens was disastrous. This was the century when more medieval screens disappeared than at any other time, in so far as records exist. The lack of any specific issue concerning internal church decoration which marked the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries vanished with the onset of ecclesiology and one consequence of this new, major issue was the disappearance of screens (as had happened during the upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). While Pugin himself favoured screens, the 'Gothic revival' of the ecclesiologists demanded that the interiors of churches reflected 'authenticity' (i.e. that of the fourteenth century) and architectural purity, and the many surviving Perpendicular screens were perceived to be non-authentic. In the restorations which took place all over the land, much early screenwork was removed. The decisions to do this were, more often than not, made by architects, not their clients.

The Victorians also inherited the Georgian liking for open churches. However, their aesthetic preferences were different from those of the eighteenth century. They wanted to emphasise the altar and move the choir from the west gallery into the chancel. There was a growing desire for theatricality and colour with the east windows prominent in this dramatic colouring. It was, of course, necessary that the congregation should see the activities in the

chancel, so chancels were raised up by three or so steps (uncommon in parish churches previously). Screens got in the way of the congregation's view of this enhanced chancel, and the raising of chancel floors made them even more redundant than they had been for the last three hundred years. Nevertheless, the ideas and work of the architect Sir G. G. Scott (1811–78), especially his cathedral restorations, indicate that the removal or retention of a screen could still cause controversy and that some people still regarded screens as important. Scott replaced non-medieval screens at Bath, Lichfield, Salisbury, and Worcester cathedrals.[29] At Exeter he retained the 1320s pulpitum, although not without some difficulty. Demands from the local architectural society (the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society) to move the pulpitum to the west end of the nave were repeated in an open letter to Scott, in which the writer, W. T. A. Radford suggested, among other things, that the pulpitum be replaced 'with a new rood loft, surmounted by a bold cross. I would therefore suggest a structure in stone, with arches as open as possible'.[30] Scott, in his amended report on Exeter Cathedral had written,

> It is not my mission to destroy the antiquities of the buildings committed to my charge – but lovingly to conserve them; and if the whole Diocese were to urge their removal, I must be content to reply, that, not only am I not the man to carry their sentence into execution, but that I am prepared to use every means at my command to protect the objects of the attack.[31]

In the end the pulpitum was retained, albeit altered by the removal of the stone panelling behind the two screen altars (which had been inserted in 1819 during a previous restoration under John Kendall), and getting rid of the two sets of stairs that led up behind the two altars to the organ loft. These staircases were replaced by a spiral staircase in the south choir aisle.[32] Although this was a compromise, Scott, on the whole, had his way. The factor of taste, which had, arguably, begun to affect change in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, was now being slowly eclipsed by antiquarian considerations. The retention of the Exeter pulpitum, with its relatively minor alterations, was perhaps the first victory of conservation, and certainly in line with Scott's perception of his mission to conserve antiquities, as noted above.

In Devon, in the period *c.*1800–84 at least 120 screens were removed. Because a large number of these (55) have no definite date of removal, it is difficult to assess the impact of the ecclesiologists upon the fortunes of the county's pre-Reformation roodscreens. However, the fact that 26 are known to have been removed after 1850 indicates that the impact of ecclesiology and restoration was fairly dramatic in Devon. By 1909 at least 13 Cornish screens

had vanished since the beginning of the nineteenth century, while 15 had been cut down to the transom rail and 23 had only fragments remaining.[33] In Somerset 28 screens are recorded as having totally vanished between 1828 and 1882 or existing only in fragmentary form.[34] It seems likely, then that the fortunes of Devon's pre-Reformation screens at this time were typical of the rest of the country and certainly typical of the West Country.

But not all restoration was so destructive. Indeed, a possible reaction to such an all-pervasive movement as ecclesiology may have been a major cause in, for example, the restoration of screens which took place in Devon, under the guidance of Harry Hems and Herbert Read from the late nineteenth century onwards. A restoration of the Bradninch screen by Bradley of Exeter occurred as early as 1853,[35] and that of pre-Reformation screens took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries at Ashton (1908) by Herbert Read, Bovey Tracey (1887–8), Buckerell (1892) by Harry Hems, Combeinteignhead (*c.*1905) by Harry Hems, Dunchideock (1893) by Herbert Read, Feniton (1877) by Harry Hems, Harberton (1870) (see Figure 5), Manaton (1893) by Sedding, Pinhoe (1879–80) by Harry Hems, and Rattery (1911) by the Misses Pinwell.[36] This is a process still in train today. Such was the growing reaction against the destruction of screens that this may explain why new lofts were built upon the existing screens at Kenton and Staverton (see Figure

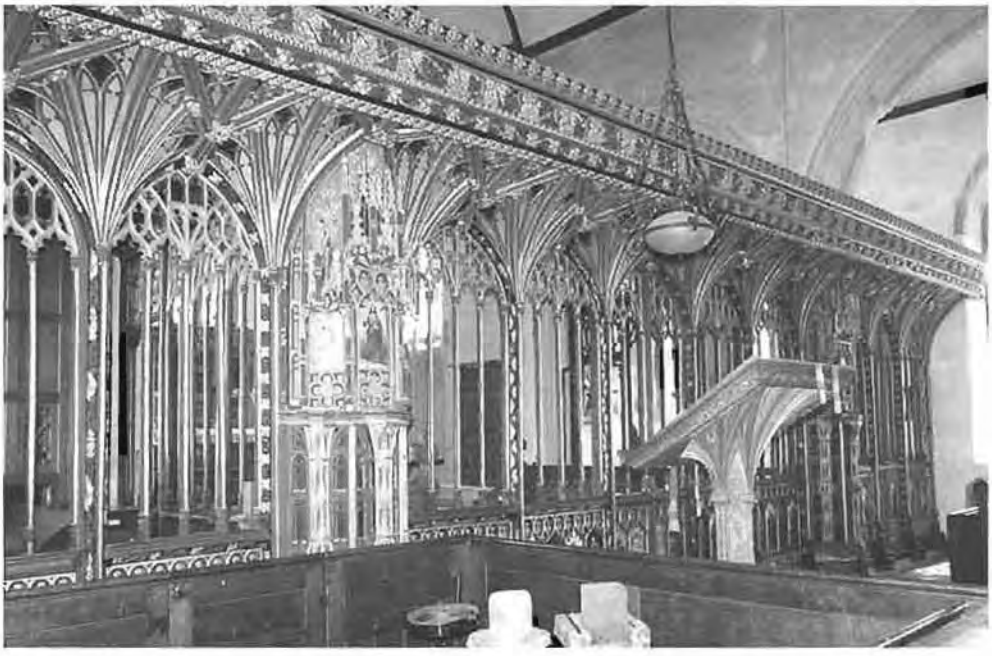

Figure 5. Harberton. Roodscreen.

Figure 6. Staverton. Roodloft.

6), and entirely new structures comprising screen and loft constructed at Lew Trenchard (1889–1915) by the Misses Pinwell and Littleham (near Bideford) (1891–2) by Temple Moore.[37] Indeed, chancel screens have been constructed in Devon in the twentieth century. At Northlew in 1922 a faculty was approved for the proposal to restore the ancient roodscreen (of which only the rotted wainscoting remained). The cost of this work, £1495, was to be found by parishioners and 'friends' (presumably those who lived outside the parish and were sympathetic towards the project).[38]

Allied with this reaction (or perhaps an integral part of it) was the growth of the principle of conservation. The faculty process (which is the ecclesiastical equivalent of planning permission) was, to say the least, weak in the nineteenth century. Parishes were permitted to carry out major alterations to (and in the case of screens, removal of) church furnishings without much investigation or acknowledgment of their value. However, the reaction to ecclesiological restoration, the growth of the conservation lobby, and a wider appreciation of the past eventually led to a considerable tightening

up of the faculty process and to increasingly strident demands that controls on the destruction or violent alteration of buildings worth preserving must be viable. Diocesan Advisory Committees (for the care of churches) and the Council for the Care of Churches (a central body which monitors the Diocesan Committees) now have responsibilities which include the existing pre-Reformation roodscreens. The Council was set up in November 1921 when representatives of the newly formed Diocesan Advisory Committees came together at Westminster Abbey. It met for the first time (under the name of the Central Committee for the Protection of English Churches and their Treasures) in December 1922, became a Council of the Board of the Church Assembly in 1927 and is now a permanent commission of the General Synod. The Council for the Care of Churches sees its task today as enabling parishes to release through careful stewardship the mission and worship potential of church buildings, their contents and churchyards. Their programme includes education, conservation and repair and, probably most importantly, financial support towards the care and conservation of church building and their contents. Importantly as far as pre-Reformation screens are concerned, they advise and assist the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England on all issues relating to the use, care, planning and design of church buildings. Thus, at present at least, the future of the remaining pre-Reformation roodscreens seems secure.

To sum up, it is possible to perceive the history of Devon screens from the period of the Reformation as falling into three periods: from *c.*1559 to *c.*1662, the next two hundred years to *c.*1880, and from *c.*1880 to the present. In the first period while lofts were, on the whole, eliminated, or at the very least 'transposed', screens were not and tended to remain, owing their survival in part to the rubrics of the 1559 Prayer Book as well as the requirements of the 1561 royal order, although there is evidence, certainly from churchwardens' accounts, for the removal of some entire structures. Screens continued to be built in the first half of the seventeenth century, though not in very great numbers. That the rubrics of the 1662 Prayer Book did not vary much from those of the 1559 version might have indicated that screens were safe, but this was not so. After about 1660, influences from the continent in favour of 'open' churches made themselves apparent in England and, although there is evidence for the occasional construction of a screen, the period *c.*1662–*c.*1880 was one of decline. They became increasingly redundant and, both Georgian taste and Victorian ecclesiology led to large-scale disappearances, particularly in the nineteenth century. In turn, the way screens were treated and appreciated changed again in the period *c.*1880 to the present day, due to the growth and influence of the ideas of conservation. Irrespective of how screens fit into

worship and aesthetics, they are now seen as being historically important and requiring to be conserved and restored.

NOTES

1. For a full transcription of the 1561 Royal Order, see Michael A. Williams, 'Medieval Devon Roodscreens from the Fourteenth Century to the Present Day', *TDH*, 83 (2014), 9.
2. Quoted by Aymer Vallance, *English Church Screens* (London: Batsford, 1936), 86.
3. Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, 2 vols. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), ii, 192.
4. *Ibid.*, 225.
5. George Edelen (ed.), *The Description of England by William Harrison* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), 35-6.
6. For the relevant maps showing Devon's extant screens and those which have disappeared, see Williams, 'Medieval Devon Roodscreens', 5, 11.
7. G. W. O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, (London: Faber and Faber), 37.
8. Francis Bond and Dom Bede Camm, *Roodscreens and Roodlofts*, 2 vols., (London: Sir Isaac Pitman, 1909), ii, 360.
9. Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 40.
10. *Journal of the House of Lords: Volume 6, 1643* (London, 1767–1830), 200-201; *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lords-jrnl/vol6 [accessed 7 September 2018].
11. *Journal of the House of Lords: Volume 6, 1643* (London, 1767–1830), 545-547; *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lords-jrnl/vol6/pp545-547 [accessed 7 September 2018].
12. Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 31
13. Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 148.
14. *Ibid.*, 45; Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 23.
15. Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 28.
16. Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 19, 52-3.
17. Vallance, *English Church Screens*, 91-2.
18. DHC, Faculty Cause – South Molton 1758.
19. DHC 1855A/PW/42.
20. DHC, Faculty Cause – Kingston 1807–1.
21. Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon*, 2nd edn. (London: Penguin, 1989), 302.
22. *Ibid.*, *Devon*, 793.
23. Reginald Turnor, *James Wyatt* (London: Art and Technics, 1950), 43-6.

24. John Martin Robinson, 'Wyatt, James (1746–1813)', *ODNB*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): online edn, May 2006 (http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/30105, accessed 5 May 2016).
25. Ralph B. Pugh (ed.), *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Wiltshire*, vol. 3, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 200.
26. David Cole, *The Work of Sir Gilbert Scott* (London: Architectural Press, 1980), 89; *ibid.*, Plate 75, showing Wyatt's screen at Salisbury Cathedral.
27. Alexandra Wedgwood, 'Pugin, Augustus Welby Northmore (1812–1852), *ODNB*, online edn., May 2005 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22869, accessed 8 May 2016).
28. Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 205.
29. Cole, *Sir Gilbert Scott*, 66, 89, 92, 99.
30. W. T. A. Radford, *Remarks on the Restoration of our Cathedral. A Letter to George Gilbert Scott, Esq. (Referring in particular to the Rood Screen)* (Exeter, n.d.), 31.
31. *Ibid.*, 20.
32. Vyvyan Hope and John Lloyd, *Exeter Cathedral. A Short History and Description* (Exeter: Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral, 1973), 39.
33. Bond and Camm, ii, 377-8.
34. Bond and Camm, i, 137.
35. Cherry and Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon*, 201.
36. *Ibid.*, 137, 191, 221, 283, 342, 441, 449, 469, 559, 699.
37. *Ibid.*, 534, 537.
38. DHC 2895A/PW/3.

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The Colyton Feoffees[1] and Twenty Men

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The Colyton Chamber of Feoffees was created in 1546 when some wealthy townspeople petitioned Henry VIII seeking to purchase back from the King a portion of the Manor of Colyton, seized in 1539 when he had his cousin Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter, executed for treason. The King agreed and granted the lands to a group of Feoffees 'to the use of them and their heirs, to fulfil and perform such intents and purposes by twenty men of the parish of Colyton, by the parishioners of Colyton then nominated, should be declared and devised'.[2] The Feoffees were also given the profits of the town's fairs and markets and a court of pie powder.

But what was the reason for originally creating two distinct groups of men to administer the Parish Lands charity? What was the nature of the relationship between the original Feoffees and the Twenty Men? What were their respective roles, was one group seen as superior to, or even employer of, the other, or did they literally co-operate? From what social strata did the two bodies come, and what was their status within the local community? Is there a direct link between the original Twenty Men whose names are ceremoniously lauded at each annual Feoffees' Banquet and the functionaries of the same name who came after them? Are they directly related? Are they related at all? And who and where are the Twenty Men today?

The co-existence of similar 'Feoffees and Twenty Men'-type bodies elsewhere was observed by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who noted the establishment of a group of Feoffees in Tetbury following the purchase of a Manor '... under carefully drawn Articles of Agreement ... legal ownership was vested in seven Feoffees, filling vacancies among themselves by co-

option, who were jointly Lord of the Manor, and as such held the Courts'.[3] The Webbs also made reference to a rather shadowy 'Thirteen':

> These [Feoffees] became, along with the Bailiff, the Executive of the Borough, acting in more or less consultation with the Thirteen who were, we are told, always 'the gravest, chiefest and discreetest townsmen' and who continued to audit the accounts, give a sort of confirmatory authority to the actions of the Feoffees and the Bailiff ... was usually the senior (of the) Thirteen who had not yet served that Office.

Confusingly, they also noted the existence of an even more shadowy group: 'the Four and Twenty' who seemed to

> have had no function beyond that of furnishing recruits to the Thirteen and we do not gather that it continued to meet otherwise than as the Jury which the Bailiff summoned to the Court of the Feoffees, with which it is believed to have become identical.

Yet the co-existence of two such groups does not seem always to have been an absolute requirement. In another example of sixteenth century feoffees, from Rotherham, no reference is made to 'Twenty Men'; rather two of the feoffees had to be appointed annually to serve as 'Common Greaves'.[4] Dudley, in his dissertation, also provides a pointer to the socio-political origins of the 'Twenty Men' model.[5]

An agreement was made between the Colyton Feoffees and the Twenty Men and the Bailiff on 25 March 1600, detailing the respective roles of the parties:

i) That the Charter of the purchase of the manor, and all other writings concerning the Parish Lands, should be kept under three locks and three keys, one to be in the custody of the Feoffees and the others of two of the Twenty Men,
ii) That a Bailiff should be yearly elected by the Feoffees and Twenty Men to view the Parish Lands and see when any waste should be committed, such Bailiff to have a yearly allowance,
iii) That the said Bailiff should give a bond and make up his accounts yearly,
iv) That no lease should be granted without a conference of the Feoffees and Twenty Men, of which notice should be given in the church,
vi) That the letting of the lands should be in an open place where strangers

might have access to make offers, and the other parishioners to see what is done,

vi) That no lease should be granted for lives or years, except at the public meeting above mentioned, and with the general consent of the Feoffees and Twenty Men, and that the Feoffees should execute such lease within 21 days of request, on pain of 5s. a week, to be paid to the Bailiff for the use of the poor by every Feoffee refusing,

vii) That any of the Feoffees or Twenty Men making a lease or grant contrary to the last article, should forfeit, to the Bailiff £5, and the value of the thing so leased or granted, for the use of the poor,

viii) That £5 a year should be paid out of the rents for the maintenance of a school in the town of Colyton for ever, and the residue of the rents to be expended in such godly and commendable purposes and deeds of charity as should seem meet and convenient to the Feoffees and Twenty Men,

ix) That any of the Feoffees or Twenty Men converting or bestowing any part of the rents, exceeding 3s. 4d. without the consent of the majority, should forfeit double the value of the money so bestowed,

x) That none of the said Feoffees should hold any lease either by himself, his wife or child, of any of the trust lands,

xi) That the Feoffees and Twenty Men should attend meetings under a penalty of 2s. 6d. except in case of sickness, or any other great cause,

xii) That any of the Twenty Men, dealing contrary to their trust, or being insufficient or obstinate or wilfully inclined to serve their own affections, might be dismissed by the majority of the Feoffees and Twenty Men, and others elected,

xiii) That if any of the Twenty Men should happen to be removed, and be no householder within the parish, he should no longer be one of the Twenty Men; and that when four of the said Twenty Men should be removed, or die, that then four other honest men of the said parish should be elected in their place by the rest of the Twenty Men and the Feoffees, and that within half a year after the death or removal of the said four, under a penalty of 5s. for each,

xiv) That when the Feoffees are reduced to three, then the survivors and the Twenty Men should within one month elect a competent number of new Feoffees, and the lands to be conveyed to them under a penalty of 20s. a week for every old Feoffee and 5s. a week for every Twenty Man that should neglect their duty in that behalf, to the use of the poor,

xv) That a Clerk of the Market should be appointed to execute that office, to hold a Court of Pie Powder, and to keep a book of the matters agreed upon by the Feoffees and Twenty Men at their meetings,

xvi) That the Feoffees should not release or be nonsuit in any action commenced by them, relating to the parish land, without the consent of the Feoffees and Twenty Men, under a penalty of £5 besides the damage incurred by the parishioners,

xvii) That any of the Feoffees or Twenty Men swearing or abusing any person by unseemly words at any meeting or conference about the Parish Lands, should forfeit 6d.,

xviii) That the Bailiff should have power to levy any of the above mentioned penalties by distress,

xix) That the articles should be openly read before the parishioners of Colyton at such times as the Feoffees and Twenty Men should think meet, and that if at any time they think it good new articles should be made, and the old abolished or reformed, as time and occasion should require, and as by the majority of the Feoffees and Twenty Men should be thought expedient, so that none of them be contrary to the laws of the land, or the common good of the parish of Colyton."

An interesting aspect of these articles is the light they throw on the concerns paramount in the medieval mind in respect of lands held in trust: the requirement for meetings where leases were to be held in public, penalties to be levied on the Feoffees and Twenty Men for non-attendance at meetings, unseemly behaviour and swearing, the requirement for the Bailiff to pay a bond – was this seen as an insurance policy against his profiteering from the role? It is of course also part of the wider debate on the significance of parish government and who was allowed to participate in taking decisions on behalf of the local community.[7]

These articles are also far-sighted in sensibly providing for the rules governing the membership of both the Feoffees and the Twenty Men to evolve presumably as a result of *ad hoc* situations and individual cases which arise over time. A minute from the Colyton Chamber of Feoffees dated 3 August 1852 records that two members of a family are not eligible to be in the trust at the same time either as Feoffees or Twenty Men.[8] Should one presume that this rule reflects an actual experience? Moreover, the minute also reaffirms that 'none but the actual possessors of Property in the Parish (are) to be considered eligible to be in the Feoffees.'

An agreement of this time sets out a revised list of rules and requirements

for both Feoffees and Twenty Men – the wording of which shows some minor changes and clarifications presumably as the result of past experience.[9] Examples include:

> No lease shall be granted ... or for any period exceeding fourteen years
>
> No Feoffee or Twenty Man shall 'bestow or convert any part of the income to any purpose whatsoever without the consent of the majority of the Feoffees and Twenty Men',
>
> No Feoffee 'shall hold a lease under any circumstance but that he may rent as a yearly tenant provided he is the highest bidder. A Twenty Man may take a lease if the Feoffees and Twenty Men agree ... for a period not exceeding seven years',
>
> That ... 'when six of the Twenty Men from death or other cause be removed then six other men possessing Landed Property and residing in the Parish shall be elected in their stead chosen by the majority of the Feoffees and Twenty Men'.

A rather curious little amendment to the rules was made at a meeting on 21 October 1875, when it was resolved that the Bailiff should not vote in the Chamber.[10] Should we infer from this decision that this may have been accepted practice for some period previously?

Internal strains and divisions may be noted at a meeting on the 18 November 1892, when the Revd Mamerto Gueritz proposed a Special Meeting to fill up the Chamber to which Mr Kingdon proposed it should stay as it was – but got no support, and a further proposal to elect seven qualified men was agreed unanimously.[11] The Meeting, held a week later, elected seven Freeholders as an addition to the present number of Twenty Men.[12]

As the system of local government administration began to develop nationally in the second half of the nineteenth century, there appear to have been growing tensions between the Parish Council in Colyton and the Chamber over the running of the latter and the Parish Council's desire to obtain representation on the Chamber. This struggle was to continue for many years. The tension was evidenced at a meeting on 13 February 1895 when the Bailiff was instructed to write to the Parish Council saying that the 'Feoffees are not aware of any ground on which the Parish Council can claim possession of the Ridgway Allotment ground'.[13] A month later he was again instructed to write declaring that the Feoffees are 'not aware of any grounds on which the Parish Council can claim the information they seek',[14] namely

a list of the charities and trusts they administered. Relations descended into downright pettiness on 28 March 1895 when the Bailiff was instructed not to produce the Chamber's accounts to either the Parish Meeting or to the Parish Council.[15] Trouble rumbled on into July when the Bailiff was once again instructed to refer the Parish Council to his letter of 28 March. Rather curiously, given the strained relations between the two organisations, Albert Edwards, was acknowledged in a letter to the Charity Commissioners in October 1895 as being at the same time both Bailiff to the Chamber and Clerk to the Parish Council.[16] Furthermore, he is later listed as holding the additional office of Assistant Overseer.[17]

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Parish Council had clearly been flexing its muscles and seeking a greater say in the running of the Charity for a decade or more. In a report of a Parish Council meeting held on 13 May 1902 which discussed the Feoffees' charities and the 'non success' of the Council's efforts to date to obtain representation on the Feoffees, it was observed that one member had declared that 'to be elected on the Feoffees was to become a member of a kind of Freemasonry' and the report also stated that 'the Twenty Men were really administering the charity without interference from the Trustees'.[18]

As the dispute intensified, there was clearly a power struggle underway in Colyton between members of the Parish Council and the Chamber with elements of 'spin' being employed. A series of three articles appeared in the *Western Times* in September 1902 which sought to explain the background to the role of the charities overseen by the Feoffees and the Twenty Men and the discussion being conducted between the Parish Council and the Charity Commissioners.[19] By July 1903 the Parish Council had still received no response from the Commissioners. However, in December the Chamber responded to a letter dated 9 May from the Commissioners regarding the appointment of new members, noting that the Chamber consisted of 18 Members of which four were Feoffees and the remainder of the body named Twenty Men, and stating

> it has been the custom to appoint Freeholders on this body, six new Members were lately elected being Freeholders of whom three were and still are Members of the Parish Council ... the Chamber beg to point out that they have at their disposal a considerable sum of money to be expended in charitable purposes and venture to suggest that if persons elected by the popular vote be appointed there is a danger of misapplication of such charity.[20]

Finally, in May 1904, the Parish Council received a sealed order from the Charity Commissioners permitting them to appoint five additional members to the governing body.[21]

An interesting sidelight to all the political manoeuvrings emerged in August 1905 when a short debate in the Chamber on admitting the Press to meetings was carried by five votes.[22] A month later the *Western Times* reported that 'for the first time in living memory Press were allowed to attend a meeting of the Feoffees'.[23] Political wrangling in Colyton continued for a number of years and in 1908 Feoffee William Farmer was still complaining to the Press that the Parish Council, contrary to the Local Government Act, were being kept in the dark about the recipients of donations.[24]

A fascinating letter from the Bailiff to the Charity Commissioners invited them to give an opinion on a more modern scheme for organising the body, noting that 'according to the Original Rule of the Feoffees body it was the custom to elect 12 Trustees and Twenty Men.' He reported that nine Trustees having died, nine more had recently been elected with five of them being elected from the Twenty Men so that the current body would once again comprise 12 Trustees and 10 Twenty Men (and that five of the latter are elected triennially by the Parish Council) and asked if the Charity Commission felt this was a sufficient number to manage the Trust as some members considered that the original requirement for '12 Trustees and Twenty Men' resulted in too large a body to manage effectively?[25] It appears that the Trust was advised not to implement the recent new election of members but to await further advice from the Commissioners. However the latter were slow to respond and a polite reminder sent some twenty months later by the Bailiff indicated that the situation had become acute as another Feoffee had since died, meaning there were insufficient numbers, according to the rules, to enable them to grant leases etc.[26]

A letter from the Charity Commissioners dated 7 September 1909 noted that;

> the administration is shared by two bodies – the Feoffees and the Twenty Men – and it would appear that in strictness the duties of the former are confined to holding the estates of the Charity and dealing with them as the Twenty Men may direct. Nevertheless it has been necessary that the Feoffees, as holders of the legal estate should be maintained by a succession of deeds of appointment and conveyance of the trust estate, which have involved recurring expenses. The Commissioners would propose to obviate these costs in future by vesting the legal estate in the Charity property in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands, with the result that while the Feoffees would cease

> to exist, the administration of the Charity would be conducted in the future as in the past by the body of administrative trustees known as the Twenty Men ... As regards the Constitution of the Body of Twenty Men I am to point out that under the deeds of Foundation the Twenty Men were nominated by the Parishioners ... taking these considerations into account the Commissioners would suggest a Governing body consisting of Twenty Men of whom six should be representatives of the Parish Council, six of the Board of Guardians and eight should be co-opted as at present by the Twenty Men as a Body ... in the first instance all existing Feoffees and Twenty Men who desire to retain office and also the persons nominated for appointment in 1907 should be the first Twenty Men under the proposed Scheme.[27]

This would indicate that the Charity Commissioners at the time perceived the Twenty Men as 'directing' the Feoffees. It is not clear whether the obfuscation of their historic identities was the result of some deliberate or consequential blending of their roles and responsibilities over time or confusion amongst the Chamber members themselves, or errors and failures in reporting on the part of the local media or even by those who prepared the reports for the Charity Commission.

A headline in the *Western Times* of 15 September 1909 proclaimed 'Feoffees To Be Wiped Out',[28] while the *Western Morning News*, a week later, referred to the Charity Commissioners' report and recommendations and described the Twenty Men as 'the power behind the throne'.[29] However, it was agreed at a meeting of the Chamber on 28 September 1909 that the Commissioners' advice should be accepted and that, among other things, the administering Trustees 'should now be known as the Twenty Men'.[30] The new Scheme was agreed and sealed by the Chamber on the last day of January, 1911.[31]

If it had been hoped that this decision would bring an end to the rows between the Chamber and the Parish Council, it did not. In 1922 there was further argument at a Parish Council meeting over 'working men' being elected to the Chamber. One parishioner said 264 men were good enough for the war but it did not seem as if they were good enough to be elected on the Chamber while another said he considered there was a ban on working men being represented. Both suggestions were repudiated by the Chairman.[32] In April 1935 the issue of how to deal with members who had formerly been Guardians was referred to the Charity Commission,[33] and there was a further debate in the following year about amending guidance from the Commissioners to make clear that Trustees must reside or carry on work in the ancient parish of Colyton.[34] Continuing confusion over the duality of the

Feoffees and Twenty Men of Colyton was still evident in an article in the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* of 24 January 1947 which described the Parish Lands as having been 'vested for charitable and public purposes with the Feoffees or Twenty Men of Colyton since the time of Henry VIII'.[35] Clearly, the perception was that the two bodies were synonymous.

Feoffee Colin Pady provides a short contemporary explanation of the relationship between the Colyton Feoffees and the Twenty Men thus:

> In the minutes of a meeting in 1766 we have the record showing 14 Feoffees present with the names of Twenty Men listed in addition. It seems to me that the Feoffees were men of some influence and standing in the community (then, not all of them from the Parish of Colyton). But the Twenty Men were all Colyton parishioners and these were all traders, yeomen and skilled craftsmen – possibly hand-picked and appointed by the Feoffees to assist in their work and to carry out all the practical tasks necessary for maintaining their many scattered properties in Sidbury, Ottery St Mary and Honiton. I suggest that these were all practical men who may have been paid by the Feoffees for their work maintaining properties, collecting rent, and overseeing and supervising work such as the repair of bridges, maintenance of the leat, the town water tanks, water troughs, fountains, as well as the building and maintenance of the town underground drainage culverts. All work beyond the capabilities of most of the Feoffees. These Twenty Men were not themselves Trustees of the Charity but were vital for its successful operation.
>
> When, in 1918, the Feoffees sold most of their properties the requirement for this workforce disappeared. In addition, the maintenance of bridges, paths, support of the fire brigade, care of the school house etc., devolved onto other public bodies and there was no need for the services of the Twenty Men. It was at this point the Feoffees adopted the structure we see to-day – 16 members (all from the Colyton Parish) plus their Bailiff. The members of the Chamber being drawn from various trades and professions capable of dealing with the modern day work of the Feoffees.
>
> This is how I see the Feoffees conforming to the needs of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with no need for an army of skilled men (the Twenty Men) to assist them. Nevertheless, they were a vital part of the Colyton Chamber of Feoffees who could not have functioned without them over nearly 400 years of their existence'.[36]

The Charity Commissioners determined in 1909 that the Chamber should henceforth be known as the Twenty Men. Yet where are they today? Have the Parish Council nominees effectively replaced them in the Chamber of

Feoffees? Is Colin Pady right that the Twenty Men were simply no longer required because so many of the functions which they originally carried out were lost to other public bodies? It is ironic that the significance of the distinct responsibilities of the roles which the Feoffees and Twenty Men originally played appears to have been lost or confused over time, when it could be argued that the historic separation of the roles was a deliberate policy of checks and balances designed to reduce the risk of corruption or malfeasance?

NOTES

1. A trustee invested with a freehold estate to hold in possession for a purpose, typically a charitable one.
2. Best seen in *Report from Commissioners, Charities in England and Wales* (Cambridge: House of Commons, 1820), Vol. V, 45.
3. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act: the Manor and the Borough* (London, New York: Longmans Green 1908), i, 154.
4. M. H. Mackenzie, Mary Walton and the Feoffees of the Common Lands of Rotherham, *Records of the Feoffees of the Common Lands of Rotherham: Listed for the National Register of Archives* (Rotherham: Rotherham Public Library, 1973), document II/3.
5. B. C. Dudley, *The Constitution of This Realm, Political Decision-Making, Officeholding, and Religious Change in England's Parishes, 1559–1700* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, Department of History, 2013) 123-30.
6. *Report from Commissioners*, 1820, 45-46.
7. Dudley, *The Constitution of This Realm*, 40, 'householders alone were responsible enough to be trusted with the authority to make decisions that affected the parish community'.
8. DHC 1585F/17/7p. Minutes, 3 August 1852. The numbering of this, and subsequent documents in the collection is temporary while being listed.
9. DHC 1585F/17/7p. Memorandum of Agreement, August 1852.
10. DHC 1585F/17/8h. Minutes, 21 October 1875.
11. DHC 1585F/17/16d. Minutes, 18 November 1892.
12. DHC 1585F/17/16d. Minutes, 25 November 1892.
13. DHC 1585F/17/16f. Minutes, 13 February 1895.
14. DHC 1585F/17/16f. Minutes, 19 March 1895.
15. DHC 1585F/17/16f. Minutes, 28 March 1895, Note of Special Meeting.
16. DHC 1585F/17/16g. Minutes, 30 October 1895.
17. *Kelly's Directory of Devonshire (and Cornwall)* (Kelly's Directories, 1902) Part 1, 186.
18. *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 May 1902.

19. *WT*, 4 September 1902. (refers also to an article published the previous Saturday and another to come).
20. DHC 1585F/17/16o. Minutes, 2 December 1903, response to Charity Commissioners letter.
21. DHC 1585F/17/16o. Minutes, 10 May 1904, letter from Charity Commission was noted.
22. DHC 1585F/17/16q. Minutes, 8 August 1905.
23. *WT*, 14 September 1905.
24. *WT*, 11 November 1908, account of Chamber meeting and letter to the editor from Mr W Farmer, 18 November 1908.
25. DHC 1585F/17/16t. Minutes, 10 September 1907, meeting agreed the Bailiff should write to the Charity Commission asking whether they wished them to continue as before or give them a more up to date Scheme and copy letter from the Bailiff to the Charity Commissioners, 23 September 1907.
26. DHC 1585F/17/25b. Minutes, 8 June 1909.
27. DHC 1585F/17/25b. Minutes, 27 May 1909, copy of letter from the Bailiff to the Charity Commissioners.
28. *WT*, 15 September 1909.
29. *WMN*, 23 September 1909.
30. DHC 1585F/17/25b. Minutes, 28 September 1909.
31. DHC 1585/17/25d. Minute Book, 31 January 1911.
32. *WT*, 6 July 1922.
33. *EPG*, 12 April 1935.
34. *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 17 January 1936.
35. *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 24 January 1947.
36. Personal correspondence between the author and Colin Pady, one of the Feoffees.

Sarah Charman retired to Colyton in December 2011 after some 30 years public service – including five years as Press Secretary to both Margaret Thatcher and John Major. In January 2013 she had the honour of being appointed Bailiff to the Colyton Chamber of Feoffees – the first woman to hold the role since it was created in 1546. She is also a trustee of Colyton Parish History Society and a National Trust volunteer at Killerton.

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The Bidlakes of Bridestowe and the Young Pretender

ELLY BABBEDGE

Looking through the parchment pages of the Hittisleigh parish register nothing appears amiss: indeed Charles Fursdon transcribed the register in 1926 with no adverse comments.[1] He listed the marriage of Richard Bidlake to Joan Gay on 13 January 1687 and the baptisms of their children James in 1688, William 1690, Joan 1693, Ann 1695, Sara 1698 and Richard 1701. The burials of the two eldest Bidlake children were also recorded – William in April 1698 and James in May 1699. Even with the aid of an ultraviolet light there is nothing obviously wrong with the entries, although the entry for Richard's baptism does have the ghost of an ascender between the 'd' and 'l' of Bidlake. There is no roughness on the pages to indicate that letters have been erased and replaced, but the affidavits of several people submitted to a Court hearing in the 1750s point towards a forgery made to substantial

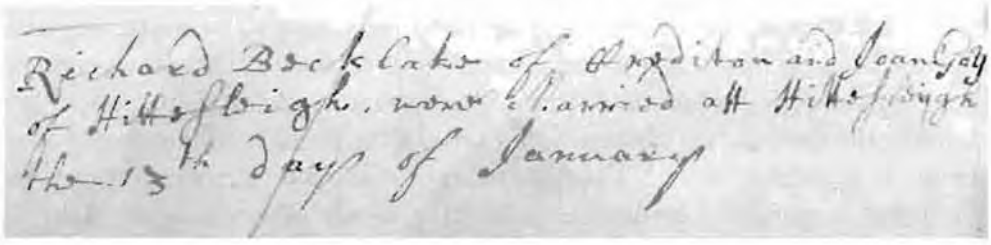

Figure 1. 'Richard Becklake of Crediton and Joan Gay of Hittesleigh were Married att Hittesleigh the 13th day of January' [1687]

(Reproduced by the kind permission of the Devon Heritage Centre).

claims on the estate of the Bidlake family by one 'insolvent debtor' calling himself Richard Bidlake.

The contemporaneous paper pages of the Hittisleigh Bishop's Transcripts,[2] however, hint at the truth of the matter.

Alerted to these discrepancies a return to the parish register uncovers an audacious deception. In the most revealing entry, the ghost of a letter 'e' can be seen beneath the 'i' of Bidlake, and there is an unnecessary gap between the 'd' and the 'l' where the letters 'cka' have been removed. Thus Beckalake became Bidlake.

Figure 2. 'Sara Daughter of Richard and Joan Bidlake of Drewsteing [sic] was baptised the 7th day of February' [1698/9]

(Reproduced by the kind permission of the Devon Heritage Centre).

When Richard Beckalake, the son of a weaver and footman to a local gentleman presented himself to the custodian of the Hittisleigh parish registers in 1734, he claimed that he had the authority to alter the spelling of his own name in the records. He carried with him an Order from the Lord Chancellor stating that he was the rightful male heir to the Bidlake estates and thus entitled to lands in Bridestowe and elsewhere. The parish clerk John Avery felt unable to give him access to the documents, but he was overruled by Samuel Coaker, the curate, who declared the Order to be authentic, and allowed Richard free access to the register.[3] The Order and the parish register were not the only forged documents that Richard worked on to support his claim to the fortune. He constructed a lineage for himself saying that he was the great grandson of one Thomas Bidlake of Bidlake Manor, Bridestowe. There was a genuine Thomas in the Bidlake family who was born in 1669, much later than the date cited by Richard in his documentation, and the genuine Thomas did not have a wife called Grace Harris, nor a son named Richard, a weaver in Crediton, and nor therefore, a grandson named Richard – the pretender.

The Thomas born in 1669 was the second son of William Bidlake of Bridestowe (who died in 1670) and his wife Elizabeth (née Furlong of Carkeel,

Cornwall). His elder brother, Henry Bidlake, was destined to inherit the Devon estates from his father, and his two marriages produced five daughters and one son. As the *younger* brother, Thomas Bidlake was apprenticed in his early teens to a family member who was a wine importer. In 1686 Anthony Furlong surrendered his yearly rental of £40 on a property in Carkeel, Cornwall called The Barton in order that 'Thomas brother of Henry Bidlake shall have sufficient maintenance out of the said annual or yearly rent of £40 during the residue of his apprenticeship'.[4] Thomas was in training from a very early age to become an importer, operating between Plymouth and the East Indies.

In March 1688 Anthony Furlong had cause to write to his grandson Henry with news of a shipping accident involving the nineteen year old Thomas Bidlake:

> This is now the third letter I have written since your brother's grand affliction which as I am informed not mortally wounded yet I have cause to doubt very much debilitated by the accident of the powder blowing up the ship while they were in harbour which happened about 3 of the clock in the afternoon when the master and his son and some part of the company were gone ashore. We have no account how the powder room took afire, only [h] men 3 killed and 3 wounded and the ship and goods sunk in sea. The merchants write the hurt men are well looked after and care taken for their transportation. The master and his son looked for whom when he comes we may have the certainty of your brother's condition.[5]

Not long after this event Thomas Bidlake died, leaving no children.

Henry Bidlake died in 1718, closely followed by his only son and heir, two year old William. He left behind five daughters, and it was this fact that Becklake seized upon as a young man. He started to target the family, forging settlements, title deeds and documentation to show that the Devon estates should not pass down the female line of the family, but instead pass to him as the supposed direct descendant of Thomas Bidlake.

Becklake worked as a servant to George Frensham and a Miss Fry from about 1725 to 1730 and then left to lodge near 'Bare Gate', Exeter, in the house of Philip Westron, a tailor, While there, he ran up a bill of £30 which he failed to pay. It was at this time that he started spreading the word that he was heir to an estate worth £300 a year called Bidlake. As early as June 1729 he was indicted for forging documents, although he was found not guilty on both counts he decided to strengthen his case by other means.[6] He filed a bill in Chancery claiming his right of title in 1733, but the family successfully

deflected his claim. Undeterred, in 1734 he presented himself to the family as 'cousin Dick' and somewhat naively expected that a personal overture would result in him being readily accepted as their heir apparent. Widow Anne was not taken in by his audacity and wrote telling him that she did not trust his claim to the title. Becklake wrote back to her as 'your humble servant, Richard Bidlake'.

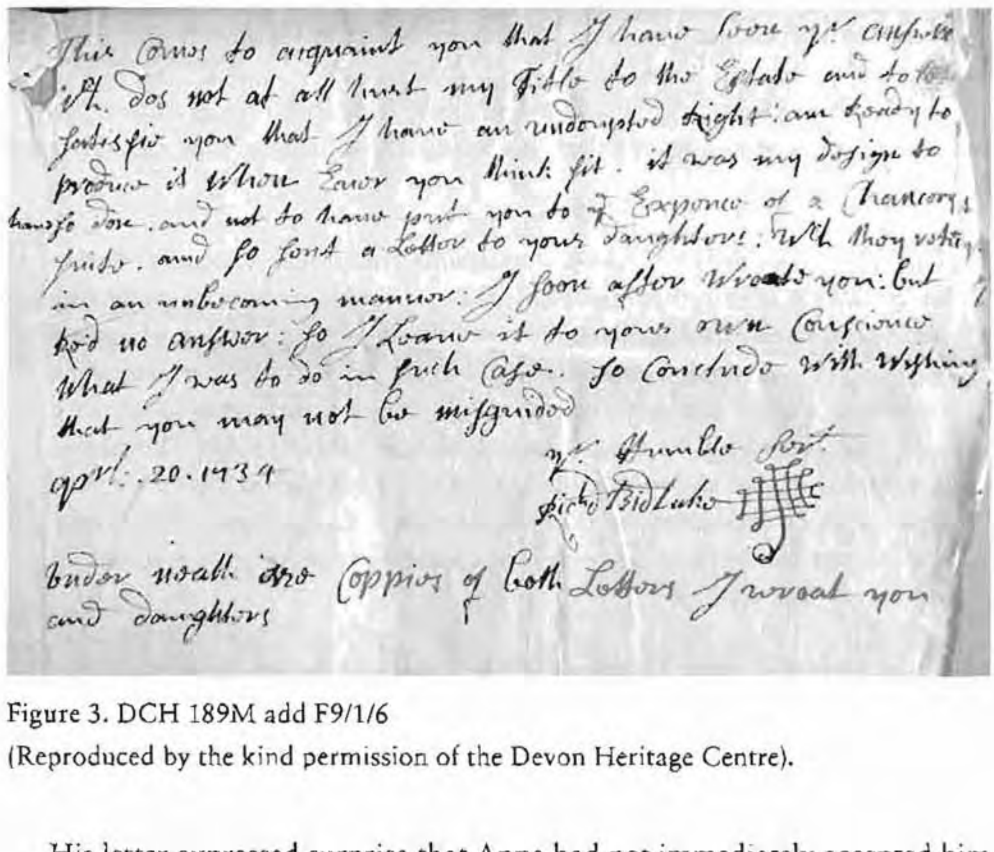
This Comes to acquaint you that I have seen yr. answer
wch. dos not at all trust my Title to the Estate and to
satisfie you that I have an undoubted Right: am Ready to
produce it when ever you think fit. it was my design to
have so done. and not to have put you to ye Expence of a Chancery
suite. and so sent a Letter to your daughters: wch they [illegible]
in an unbecoming manner: I soon after wrote you: but
Red no answer: so I leave it to your own Conscience
What I was to do in such Case. so Conclude with wishing
that you may not be misguided
yr. Humble Servt.
apl. 20. 1734
Richd Bidlake
Under neath are Coppies of both Letters I wrote you
and daughters

Figure 3. DCH 189M add F9/1/6
(Reproduced by the kind permission of the Devon Heritage Centre).

His letter expressed surprise that Anne had not immediately accepted him and he sought to assure her that he had 'an undoubted right' and was 'ready to produce it' whenever she should think fit. He obsequiously told her that he did not want to put her 'to the expense of a Chancery suit,' and left it to her own conscience as what to do to conclude the matter, 'wishing that you will not be misguided'. He signed with a flourish.[7]

The following year Richard's personal papers show that he was supplied with 'a fair copy of the Bidlake pedigree on vellum for £1 7s 0d' and in 1738 he was billed for a 'total of £6 0s 10d for a skin of vellum, searches, painting arms of the intermarriage and painting five crests'.[8] Now living in London as

Richard Bidlake esq., he was busy building himself a cast-iron ancestry and widening his circle of influential friends.

A bill issued to him by John Langford, pewter supplier in November 1745 lists various pieces of crockery and an amount for 'engraving a coat of arms on them'.[9] It is not counter-signed to show that it was ever paid. A cluster of receipts for wages paid to his household servants, however, shows that he did keep the loyalty of those closest to him by settling his debts.

Richard Bidlake the pretender wrote his first will whilst still relatively young, most probably to add to his portfolio of 'genuine' documents that could be held up as proof of his rightful standing in society. The codicil, signed 20 December 1741, makes mention of debts recently accrued that were to be paid out of his estate, including one of £300 and upwards to a Captain John Butler of Islington and his now wife, Cornelia. The main part of his estate was to be halved between his two sisters and their heirs – 'my loving sister Joan Trend, wife of Richard' and 'my loving sister Ann Tucker, wife of Israel'. Revealing something of the life-style he was enjoying in London, he directed that the sisters first pay his debts to William Jones his milliner of New Bond Street and to John Dolan, peruke maker, late of Picadilly. On this document he boldly used the distinctive Bidlake family seal which he must have had made up for him.[10] There are fictitious rentals of Bidlake lands amongst Richard's papers with the names of tenants written in black ink and descriptions of the properties in brown ink. He had not, of course, received any money from these tenants, but such forged documents would have been ideal to show to potential financial backers in London.

He was careful not to put all his eggs in one basket though, and whilst creating documents to support his Bidlake claim he was also preparing another fake pedigree for himself. Sir Richard Combe of Hemel Hempstead and Gray's Inn had died a bachelor in 1692, appointing Mary Sprague, widow of Richard of Chipperfield gentleman, as his sole executrix. She administered his estates in Hertfordshire and Kent for some years but died in 1703. A tell-tale note in the margin of Combe's will reveals that Bidlake had successfully duped the Court into believing that he was the only surviving rightful heir and next of kin:

> On the twenty first day of February 1743/4 administration of goods chattels and credits of Richard Combe late of Hempstead in the county of Herts bachelor deced left unadstied by Mary Sprauge, widow and the sole executrices named in the said will now also deced was granted to Richard Bidlake esq. the administrator of the goods of Mary Gay wife of William Gay deced whilst living the aunt and only next of kin of him the said Richard

> Combe deced, for the said deced by his said will did not make any devise of his personal estate to any person whatsoever.[11]

In the ensuing years he had dealings with the Trustees of the Combe estate but releasing money from the properties was not as straightforward as he would have liked. He was, however, able to secure loans against the evidence of his entitlement. Just how he managed to persuade officials is a testament to his skill as a confidence trickster.

Audacious and daring in his behaviour, he was by now styling himself 'Sir' and 'Baronet' and misleading many men of good character in the City. Notes from colleagues amongst his papers reveal that he often missed planned appointments with them and was rarely to be found at home. Letters were delivered to him whilst he was doing business in the City or in the many coffee houses and inns he frequented. By 1748 letters were being addressed to him at 'the house of the 2 green lamps in Poland Street' where he lived for several years, and during the final years of his life he was receiving letters at 'Monmouth Buildings/Court, Hedge Lane, off Suffolk Street, Charing Cross'.[12] Bidlake the pretender was something of a dandy; dressing in the latest fashion – acquiring new ties, lengths of cloth, stockings, combs, wigs and buckles from various London suppliers, and from James Rothwell, 'a Manchester Parragon frock trimmed with silver, silver holes for the frock, silver buttons for the frock, a pair of black breeches and 2 wigs'.[13]

There were those in the City, however, who already doubted Bidlake's pedigree. He had failed to repay loans and defaulted on his promises, and they sought to inform others that he was a charlatan. But his unceasing belief in his right to claim the titles of others shone bright in everything that he said and did, and he made several bold declarations in public that he was the genuine article. In October 1746 he published a list of names collected from men he wined and dined, and stated:

> These gentlemen attest that I am not an imposter, but the person I represent, a gentleman descended from an ancient family in Devon and born to an estate of near £2,500 *p.a.*, £300 of which my father had in his possession at the time of my birth, £600 *p.a.* more out of a long lease now nearing expiry, and the rest in mortgaged lands for £10,000.[14]

Even his sisters Joan and Anne had initial doubts about what Richard was doing and he was not averse to playing them one off against the other with untruths and false promises. Anne Tucker, living in Crediton wrote to her brother in February 1747 having been advised by others,

> ... that you have taken the wrong way to have me sign away all without a farthing. Had you sent me some money that might have induced me to satisfy you. Your sister Joan is angry with me and says you have sent money to us both and I keep it all. But you well know I never see anything *from* you.[15]

In July of the following year he must have insisted again that she sign and return a document, for she replied to him,

> You charge me with misbehaviour in not signing and sending the Release which I could not, for you well know that my signing was as nothing without it was restated by the gentlemen which when I petitioned, they refused, saying that they had granted them your request already.[16]

Quite rightly these advisors had recommended that she wait until they could see some benefits coming in Anne's direction. By July 1748 his other sister Joan Trend had allowed herself to be convinced that she also was deserving of a fortune and appeared to be somewhat envious of her brother's rise in a letter she addressed to 'Richard Bidlake esq.',

> I most humbly beg pardon for my former omission. Had I your accomplishments I should no longer be the butt of ridicule or, had I in my younger days the £1000 with my other rights due from you to me, I might then appear with greater lust ... and not in this obscurity.[17]

It would seem that her husband Richard Trend had his eyes on the prize and in September 1748 he wrote to his brother-in-law with an outright accusation, 'you wrong me of what is mine'. Whilst a further letter from Joan in Plymouth, dated November 1748, shows that she was actively passing on intelligence to her brother: 'It makes me very uneasy in my mind ... I have made enquiry about the estate called Bedlake and the old gentleman and young lady desire that you would come down and take possession of it. Don't delay!'[18]

When Joan Beckerlake had married Richard Trend in Chagford in August 1725 there was no suggestion of the Bidlake name being used. Sister Anne however had married Israel Tucker in Crediton in 1729 under the name of Anne Bidlake – proof, if proof were needed, that the family had not bought into any duplicity until Richard started to construct the story of a false ancestry for them in his late twenties.

Richard's unscrupulous behaviour in London directly contributed to the bankruptcy of a broker named William Carmalt in 1742. Carmalt had loaned Bidlake a large amount of money by way of mortgage, but, being a bankrupt,

Carmalt could not call in the loan, and it would be unlikely that anything he said against Bidlake would be believed in the City. During the trial Bidlake added insult to injury by submitting a plea to officials that 'as you are acting against William Carmalt, a bankrupt, I thought it proper to acquaint you that he has endeavoured to defraud me of £2,900'. He admitted that he had taken out a mortgage of £900 in 1739 with the broker and had followed it up with a promissory note in 1740 but claimed that Carmalt had boasted at the time that he could 'discount the money' with the Countess of Winchelsea and with Mrs Lethelleare who were his friends. In consequence, Bidlake believed that he had been released from any obligation to the broker. His 'innocent' voice comes across clearly in the words – 'I had purchased an estate subject to a mortgage and having not the money at that time to pay the mortgage I asked Carmalt. I did not read the writing myself and the next I heard was Carmalt was a bankrupt'.[19]

By lucky chance Carmalt's servant Benjamin Fillis had recently been sent to Newgate Gaol, and sentenced to transportation for buying stolen silver spoons and other parcels of silver plate from a certain George Stackpole, who had already been transported for fourteen years for theft. Richard Bidlake stepped in and argued that justice had now been done, and pleaded on Fillis' behalf that he was only acting on the orders of his master, 'the bankrupt' William Carmalt in purchasing the silver.

By securing a release for the less than honest man, he gained a willing partner in crime who could swear to Richard's good character and honesty. Fillis even attested that he had witnessed Bidlake paying back a loan to his old master, William Carmalt. A list of valuable goods apparently left by Bidlake with Carmalt as surety for a loan may well have been forged by the pair in a bid to remove the items from the bankrupt's home.[20]

One wonders what drove Richard Becklake's ambition, for the reality was that he was the son of a relatively poor weaver from Crediton. He had served his apprenticeship with his father and become a serge maker, but then found employment as a footman and servant in several big houses in Devon. Perhaps observing the upper classes at close quarters gave him a taste for their life-style. No doubt he was a charmer, a good conversationalist and a very convincing liar, but he was not physically attractive, being only 'five feet tall, thin and with a dark, swarthy complexion'.[21] He must have made up for his diminutive stature with a larger-than-life charisma, for he managed to surround himself with the rich and gullible the whole of his adult life. There is no doubt that he believed the fantasies he had created for himself, and, later, when writing his will, he left his imaginary legacy to his sister Anne Tucker's sons and daughter: '... all my right and title in Bidlake House in Bridestowe,

the Berry estate in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, the Chart estate in Kent, an estate in the Isle of Ely, Cambridgeshire and a property in Paradise Row, in Chelsea'.[22]

Legal proceedings against him began in 1750 with a prosecution for defrauding Joseph Westron of St Clement Danes of 40 guineas taken in return for the promise of a Warrant place at Whitehall, and continued with a high profile case brought against him by the Bidlakes of Bridestowe. He went on the run and, after newspaper advertisements and a public hue and cry, he was finally apprehended and taken into custody on 20 July 1753. Further charges were brought against him later in 1753 and in 1755 for feloniously forging deeds to the Bidlake estate. In court, widow Anne Bidlake was ably assisted in defending the family title by her sons-in-law, John Herring and John Hierns. The latter was an attorney-at-law in Torrington who was Elizabeth Bidlake's husband, and it was their daughter Mary Hierns who was destined to inherit the Devon estate from her ancestors. The documentation from Richard the pretender was scrutinised and immediately called into question – the ink did not look quite right, the wording was not sufficiently ancient, and the paper did not seem to be quite weathered enough. One eagle-eyed official spotted that 'there is a riggle used for drawing the lines on the paper – lately introduced and never used in ancient deeds'.[23]

On 1 January 1755, as a prisoner for debt in the King's Bench Prison Richard advertised in three London newspapers that he intended taking the benefit of the Act of Parliament made by King George II for the relief of insolvent debtors. He stated that some evil-minded persons did by *habeus corpus* move him to His Majesty's Gaol at Newgate before the Sessions for Surrey after he had so advertised. He gave notice that he intended taking the benefit at the next Quarter Session. An editorial comment took his side saying, 'The barbarity with which this gentleman has been treated is inexpressible'.[24]

A Mr William Church realised that he had been taken for a fool in lending money to a man who had been found guilty of forgery and sent to prison, and he published a letter warning others not to trust Richard when he was released from prison. Bidlake retaliated ferociously in a statement issued 26 July 1757, seeking to retain the support of his closest friends:

> The fellow Church who wrote this letter I have greatly served and he is an ungrateful scoundrel and not a word of truth in all he has here in his letter said, he is now indebted to me and justice could take place and me not indebted to him when the balance is made.[25]

Aware that he had no further chance to borrow against the Bidlake estates he put all his efforts into releasing funds from the Combe legacy. The Trustees were wary of him and protected their assets, prompting Bidlake to threaten to sue them. A document dated 19 January 1761 makes a claim on behalf of him as 'Sir Richard Bidlake Combe of 32, Great Marylebone Street':

> The estates of the late Sir Richard Combe of Herrford were left to Trustees... the mortgages on the properties has long since been paid ... £35,000 is held by the Trustees ... and monies have not been paid to Sir Richard Bidlake Combe the sole surviving heir of Sir Richard Combe. They will be sued if the money is not paid.[26]

Although he never managed to obtain full entitlement to either the Bidlake or the Combe estate Richard the pretender continued living comfortably on borrowed money, rumoured to be close to £20,000 in total, well into his seventies. His critics remained active, and Richard was forced to protest his innocence. In March 1775 he wrote, 'I am determined to prosecute them as the law dictates and will insist their names and place of abode in the public papers'.[27]

Aged 75, Richard Becklake alias Bidlake alias Bidlake Combe fell ill and drew up his will dated 15 November 1775, and it was proved just two days later. John Herring wrote to his Bidlake family back in Devon in December 1775 telling them how '... the distemper rages here but few die of it ... three of my servants are ill with it ...' and adding the all-important news that 'Sir Richard is dead. He lived as he died, a villain'.[28]

Nothing tangible could have been inherited from the probate, but his nephew Henry Tucker took up the cause, obviously believing that he was also the rightful heir to a variety of estates.

Henry Tucker wrote his own will 14 April 1797 (probate granted 1812) and it makes for unusual reading. He dispensed with the conventional opening lines about the future of his soul and his relationship with God and launched straightaway into his claim, referring to himself as 'Henry Tucker of Ealing, gent.': 'I am the heir at law to Sir Richard Combe, late of Hemel Hempstead ...' and '... of his nephew Sir Richard Bidlake esq., deceased ...' He claimed their estates in the Counties of Buckinghamshire, Kent, Cambridge and Devon. He named his main beneficiary as his nephew the eponymously named Henry Tucker (born in Crediton 1786 to his brother Richard Tucker) and mentioned that his nephew was 'now or late of New York, North America'. The administration was granted not to Henry but to a Josiah Tucker, nephew 14 July 1812.[29]

A bundle of letters amongst the Bidlake (now Woollocombe) papers dated 1816-19 shows that the family was again called upon to fight their corner. Josiah Tucker had apparently approached the Heralds Office 'two years hence' and presented his 'dark deeds' outlining his claim of descent in May 1816, still believing that he was the rightful heir at law to the estate. A Special Warrant was issued 21 June 1814 directing Anne, Elizabeth Hierns and Mary Woollocombe to surrender the estates which Josiah Tucker claimed to be his right and inheritance.[30] Josiah died of consumption in Bermondsey in August 1820 and as all deeds were returned to the Woollocombe family by the Tucker family solicitor it would appear that no further claims were to be made.[31]

Bidlake the pretender had no children himself, but there were descendants from his sister Anne (Bidlake) Tucker. To this day, because the forged entries in the parish register were never restored, families tracing their lineage back through the centuries believe that they are Bidlakes rather than Beckalakes and know nothing of the extraordinary legacy left to them by Richard the pretender.

NOTES

1. DHC, Hitsleigh [*sic*] Parish Registers, transcription by C. A. T. Fursdon, 1926.
2. An Act of 1598 required church ministers to monthly make a copy of the parish register entries and to submit the copy to the bishop of the diocese.
3. DHC 189M add F9/29/30.
4. DHC 189M add F1/4d.
5. DHC 189M add F7/33-5.
6. DHC 189M add F9/43/20.
7. DHC 189M add F9/1/6.
8. DHC 189M add F1/4d.
9. TNA E192/7. Exchequer: Private papers and Exhibits, Supplementary. Papers of 'Sir' Richard Bidlake of Bidlake, Devon. This is a box containing about 400 documents, which have not been listed individually.
10. TNA E192/6. Exchequer: Private Papers and Exhibits, Supplementary. Papers of 'Sir' Richard Bidlake of Bidlake, Devon. As with TNA E192/7, this box also contains about 400 documents which have not been listed individually.
11. TNA PROB 11/412/117. The will of Richard Combe of Hemel Hempstead 1692.
12. TNA E192/7.
13. TNA E192/6.
14. TNA E192/7.
15. TNA E192/6.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*

18. TNA E192/6.
19. TNA E192/7.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Derby Mercury*, 20 July 1753, London News.
22. TNA PROB 11/1012/303. The will of Richard Bidlake esq. of Bridestowe, 1775.
23. DHC 189M add F9/43/20.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. TNA E192/7.
27. *Ibid.*
28. DHC 189M add F9/1-45. Woollocombe of Bridestowe, Fraud Case Documents.
29. TNA PROB 11/1535/206. The will of Henry Tucker of Ealing, 1812.
30. DHC 189M add E6/11.
31. DHC 189M add 9/30/14.

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Devon Dairying: A Look Back

HELEN HARRIS

Dairying has, for centuries, been a vital part of Devon farming, with its climate conducive to grass growing and thus well suited to pastural farming. It is, indeed, one of the very earliest of agricultural activities. From the use of milk produced by the livestock of prehistoric inhabitants techniques developed that led to the making of cheese and butter which were to become important constituents of modern nutrition. Records of the estates of Tavistock Abbey, for example, show that cheese and butter making were well developed from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, with details of quantities made, consumed, given away, and sold.[1] The making of cheese was also practised in Devon, but not to the extent as in Somerset, which has its own Cheddar variety.

It was probably due to an accidental discovery in very early times that, when milk was subjected to some form of agitation, particles of fat would be seen to separate out, and through the ages various methods evolved for converting the fat to butter. The work of preparing this food generally became a regular part of farmhouse work, for home use and for sale.

Methods of isolating the cream, containing the essential butterfat, from the skimmed, or separated milk have varied widely in different parts of the country. The fat globules are lighter than the other constituents, and so the cream will rise to the surface as the milk is left to stand. In much of Britain this method alone has been used for raising the cream, and then skimming it off. In Devon and Cornwall however it became customary to scald the cream by subjecting the pans in which it had risen to gentle heat, either above a low wood fire or in a water-jacketed vessel, but not allowing it to boil. After a while, by this method, a 'crust' begins to form and the pans are removed to

a cool place – preferably the cold slabs of a shaded dairy – to rest overnight, when the cream is carefully taken off. It was usual for some of the cream to be reserved for home use – either instead of butter on bread, or with fruit or puddings. The bulk could then be converted into butter. The separated milk might be used for other purposes in the home, or fed to livestock.

Mechanical means of separating became possible with the invention, towards the end of the nineteenth century, of the cream separator, relying on centrifugal force. Small models were developed, powered by hand or later by electricity, but it was some time before they came into general use on Devon farms. Where a separator became available the system developed of cream being floated into a shallow pan containing a small quantity of separated milk, and then scalding as before, but holding for a time at sub-boiling temperature to enable the greater depth of cream to 'set'. This became the practical solution for commercial purposes. (Devotees of the original naturally risen scalded cream might decry the modern 'separated' type).

The average fat content of cows' milk is around 3.5 per cent,[2] with variation according to such factors as breed, feed, and stage of lactation. The native South Devon breed produces milk with a fat percentage approaching 5 per cent, and with a good rich colour that is particularly suitable for cream or butter.

The next stage in butter making involves another process of separation, to bring the fat globules from semi-fluid form into solid aggregated masses, separate from the buttermilk. It is here that agitation comes into play. Over time this has been done by various methods – both primitive and more sophisticated. Methods may, or may not involve a churn. It is perfectly possible to obtain butter on a small scale without a churn, by whisking it in a bowl, or 'turning' the cream with a small paddle or with the hand, until it 'breaks' and the buttermilk is released leaving the developing butter. (In her young days, my mother made butter in this way in the dairy of the large farmhouse that was her home). Small churns became widely used however, as well as the larger barrel-like 'end-over-end' type. This was the kind in which butter making was taught in the universities and agricultural colleges in the 1940s when I was a dairy student.

The standard approved method which I learnt involved a very precise and quite complex process, and had to be carried out by students as a practical part of final exams. The whole process normally took about two hours. First the churn had to be scrubbed and scalded with boiling water, then rinsed with cold. We would each receive an allocation of liquid cream, which at that time was ripened by the addition of a small quantity of 'starter' – a benign pure culture of lactic acid organisms, grown in sterile milk, to produce

a suitable degree of acidity to aid churning and enhance flavour and keeping quality.

Important during the process was the regulation of temperature, the choice of which depended on prevailing conditions. The cream was suitably diluted with water before churning, and temperature regulated by either adding cold water or placing the cream in warm water to raise the degree. A formula was used for calculating the optimum temperature. Churning would then begin, at moderate speed, and eventually with a slight hesitation at each turn to ensure fall of the cream within. After about 20 minutes, with the cream thickened and beginning to break, water would be added to aid formation of the butter into suitably sized and shaped 'grains'. Ideally the size of wheat grains, at times they might be smaller or, occasionally, in an undesirable large lump. The addition of more water and further, faster churning was done to polish the grain and prevent rough edges which could hold water and reduce keeping quality. Salting of the butter would be done at this stage.

The butter would then be removed from the churn to the 'worker' for the application of a wooden ribbed roller to remove surplus water and consolidate the butter. It was then worked with butter pats – 'scotch hands' – into weighed blocks, and made up with suitably squared corners and edges. These blocks might be printed into a decorative pattern, using a smaller scotch hand with sharpened edge. Often, particularly in Devon, the butter might be flattened into a strip, and then attractively rolled.

This process would undoubtedly have contained the elements of the method taught in the Devon Dairy Schools, or 'Butter Schools' which were operated across the county at times from around 1900 until the Second World War. (See below).

Before large butter factories became general, most butter was produced on farms and in small dairies and sold locally. The butter made at my mother's home was wrapped and packed and taken by the farm horse and trap to shopkeepers in Buckfastleigh. (I remember with delight aged about five, being able once to accompany the trap driver, well wrapped up and sitting high in the passenger seat. And my husband's grandmother, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century used to get up very early and take the butter that she had made in her dairy at Northam by the same means to Bideford pannier market, where she had a stall for dairy and market produce).

The need for improvement

The need for improvement in the way milk was produced had become obvious. Up to the latter part of the nineteenth century little if anything had

been done to raise standards. Cows were kept in mainly unsuitable conditions, many were infected with tuberculosis or other diseases, and standards of hygiene were generally extremely low. The great agricultural advances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the field of crop and livestock husbandry had not extended far into the science of milk production, which just seemed to drift on in the old way. Most Devon farmhouses, however, had a cool dairy in the house, on the shaded side, with stone paving and shelves of slate slabs, and with windows fitted with metal gauze to exclude insects. With no refrigeration everything had to be done to keep the dairy cool and clean.

Various factors led to the improvement in dairy production nationwide around this time. Population growth and urban development were increasing, with needs for milk of good keeping quality and solid dairy products in the towns, transport to which had been facilitated by the recently developed railway system. Small dairies became established for local distribution, and larger ones for manufacturing. Torridge Vale Dairies at Torrington was an early one dating from 1883, followed soon in the county by others that would take farmers' milk and process it in bulk. Dairy education and scientific development took on a new importance. The British Dairy Farmers Association was founded in 1888 and offered certificated qualifications in butter and cheese making, and led to the establishment of dairy departments in agricultural colleges, and to its place as an academic subject at Reading and other universities.

Dairying had become subject to legislation with the passing of the Public Health Act and the Sale of Food and Drugs Act in 1875. Further Acts and Regulations followed at intervals in subsequent years.[3] Times were changing and greater awareness developing in the population about the quality and safety of food being consumed. In 1927 four grades of milk were created, defined as: Certified Grade A; Grade A (Tuberculin Tested); Grade A; and Pasteurised (heat treated). These required compliance with certain regulations but commanded a small premium.

In 1933 farmers were suffering from low prices for their milk, uncertainties prevailed and demand for milk exceeded supply. This prompted the establishment of the Milk Marketing Board by dairy farmers and controlled by law, to manage the sale of milk and to ensure a fair price for all producers. The Board in effect bought all the milk in the country and resold it for retail or manufacturing, and also carried out other functions. This placed the dairy industry on a more sound footing.

Dairy Schools

Out in the county efforts were being made to improve standards of production. It is believed that some classes in cream and butter making, and in dairy hygiene, took place before 1900, and in the early twentieth century such classes were formalised in numerous parishes, arranged by the Technical Education Committee of Devon County Council. Known as Dairy Schools, or 'Butter Schools' they were usually held in church or parish halls, were well attended by farmers' wives and daughters and proved very popular. The system was highly organised as much equipment had to be made available in the hall, as well as adequate supplies of hot water. Instruction was given by a qualified County Dairy Instructress, usually with an assistant, and someone to do the 'portering' and a course might extend over several days.

Among parishes where Dairy Schools are known to have been held are:- Manaton, Lustleigh, Moretonhampstead, Spreyton, Cheriton Bishop, Talaton, Merton,[4] and Whitchurch.[5] At the conclusion of the course certificates would be awarded and it was customary for a group photograph to be taken, showing the instructresses and class members in full dairy attire of white aprons and caps, and often including the vicar of the parish or a local farmer or personage. The classes proliferated up to the First World War, and again until the Second. Competitions for cream and butter at local agricultural shows provided an incentive for excellence, and in some cases led towards the establishment of Young Farmers' Clubs.

The senior Dairy Instructress in those later years was Miss Evelyn Bray, and one of the assistants was Miss E. L. Coleman, (who, after the war became Devon's County Milk Production Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture's National Agricultural Advisory Service and my superior officer during my time as a Dairy Adviser in the county).

Times of Change

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 brought great changes. Food provision became an immediate priority, controlled by the Government. The rationing of food soon began, with butter, margarine, cheese, meat and other essentials soon coming under restriction. Milk followed later, with priority for mothers and babies, and extra cheese allowed for manual workers. The selling of cream was prohibited. People mainly accepted the situation, responding patriotically, well conscious of the risks being run by merchant seamen bringing in supplies in the face of enemy U-boat attacks in the surrounding seas. Home food production took on a new urgency.

Developments in dairying had been progressing in the pre-war years, and were to continue in this time of extra need. Many farmers had made improvements in their buildings and equipment. Milking machines, introduced some years before, had come into greater use, especially where warranted by larger herds. Bottles or cartons were now in regular use for retail milk sales. Greater attention was paid to nutrition - not only of the human population but also that of dairy cows and other livestock, and farming became subject to controls to ensure proper use of land and foodstuffs.

Devon by this time had numerous well developed dairy farms with herds of high breeding quality and efficient standards of hygiene. Before I went away to study agriculture and dairying I had to do a spell of practical work on a dairy farm, for which I was taken on as a pupil at the then Knightshayes Home Farm of Sir John Heathcoat Amory, which was quite near my home at Tiverton, from 1944–45. Here there was a fine herd of beautiful pedigree Guernseys, with a retail round selling TT (tuberculin tested) milk. I soon became familiar with all the work connected with the dairy – washing cows, milking by hand and machine, cleaning out and washing down the shippons (milking houses), washing the dairy equipment and sterilising in the steam chest, and filling the cartons for the retail round, also feeding calves and young stock. Occasionally, in the middle of the day in winter I was detailed to do something I really liked: taking the cob cart up the hill with fodder to fields where outlying young stock needed to be fed, and checking on them.

Another job that I was given between milking times was the grooming and training to walk on a halter of two young home-bred bulls that were aged about ten months, training them to walk around the farm yard and a little way beyond. This was in readiness for the forthcoming show and sale of pedigree Guernseys at Reading, to which I was told I might go. When the time came we all set off – the bailiff and herdsman travelling on the train, with the bulls and also two cows that were to be sold there. One of the land girls and I following the next morning, to stay in a bed and breakfast. On the day of the sale we had to milk the cows and groom the bulls and cows and get them ready. The cows sold, but the bulls didn't reach the reserve price, and so they were brought back to (the then) Tiverton railway station next morning. The herdsman and I had then to go and walk them the three miles back to the farm. We got a lift in to the station and then collected our charges, walking them up through the town and on the road beyond. I can't remember any strange looks from shoppers - seeing livestock walking by was not unusual in those days, with Tiverton having its weekly market and numbers of cattle and sheep often coming through. On the way to Knightshayes we had to pass

the end of the road where I lived, so I asked Bill if we could just walk the few yards along to my home as my mother would like to see the bulls. That was agreed, and along we went, but unfortunately my mother was out. The bulls, however, enjoyed a refreshing munch of the grass on the lawn.

The End of the War

The end of the war in 1945 did not bring the end of food regulations. Although the U-boat threat no longer existed, the war had been very costly and Britain was suffering from the effects on balance of payments deficits. Great economy was needed in maintaining food supplies and building for the future. Continuing advances in the science of agriculture and their application on farms were seen as highly important. In 1946 the Ministry of Agriculture set up the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS), to work in conjunction with local committees and staffed by professional advisers in General Agriculture, and in other branches including Milk Production, who were able to liaise with the research establishments and provide information and practical advice for farmers.

It was in 1947 that, after completing my studies at the then Studley Agricultural College in Warwickshire and having gained my National Diploma in Dairying at Reading, I applied to join the recently created service. I was accepted in 1948 and appointed as an Assistant Milk Production Officer to work in north Devon. Later, as I acquired more experience and seniority, I was moved to west Devon and covered a wider area.

During the war Devon had seen a vast increase in the number of milk-selling farms. The great need for increased production of liquid milk, and home-produced butter, cheese and dried milk created huge demands. Dairy factories sent their representatives out to farms to recruit further milk suppliers, with positive responses, even from very small farms which had not sold milk before. Also, the post-war years brought newcomers to the Devon scene. Many people were leaving the armed forces or being displaced from farming in other regions due to new developments, and were seeking a job and a livelihood. In parts of north and west Devon land was cheap, older farmers were retiring, and reasonably-priced farms becoming available. In many cases the land was indifferent, the house and farm buildings in bad repair, access from the country roads difficult, water was from a well and unreliable, drainage unsuitable, and there was no mains electricity. However, the prospect offered somewhere to live, and work, and if they could sell milk, an income. Therefore, being able to sell milk was vital for those in that situation. This all created new problems and needs, which were particularly

acute in certain areas where beef farms had been traditional, nevertheless, the country needed milk, factories were keen to collect supplies, and a monthly milk cheque provided for living expenses.

For dairy advisers there was plenty of work to be done, particularly with farmers having inadequate facilities. Milk was checked on arrival at the big dairies and if a churn was found to be sour it would be rejected and returned to the farmer with a red label. Milk was routinely tested in the laboratories for keeping quality, and farmers notified of failures. Rejections or bad results could cause panic for farmers, and the milk production officer - who worked from the NAAS district office - would be contacted urgently by the farmer, or by the authorities, to go and advise. General advice would be given in locating the source of the trouble, and on the cleaning and sterilising of equipment. Without electricity on many farms at that time means were limited, and much emphasis had to be placed on thorough scrubbing and the use of an approved chemical steriliser. In times of water shortage, before mains water supplies were extended, cooling of the milk was also problematical and the use of a surface cooler in which milk flowed over pipes carrying cold water was not possible. Sometimes churns could be allowed to stand in a stream if available, or in a water trough. Then, often the churns of milk would have to wait at the end of a long lane, in the sun, for a few hours before the arrival of the milk lorry; if no shade could be provided we often advised the use of wet sacks to cover the churns to keep them cool. Great care needed to be taken with milking machines which were increasing in general use, and which could easily become a source of contamination if not properly cleaned and sterilised.

In 1949 new Milk and Dairies Regulations were enacted requiring the improvement of premises and methods. While the need to provide help with methods and hygiene continued, this brought a whole new volume of duties in advising on works necessary to buildings, and we were all sent on a course to be told about the new standards and regulations, and a few new staff members were taken on. During the next few years our work consisted mainly of visiting all the dairy farms in our district, parish by parish, by appointment with the farmer, and classifying them A, B, C or D. (If they were not too far apart I generally aimed to do ten in a long day). This took several weeks throughout the county, after which we focused on the 'D' cases (the worst) and visited each farm in our district again to discuss matters with the farmer, who often also had his builder present. Following our advice and written list of works a period of time, usually six months, would be notified by the County Milk Committee for the improvements to be done, at the end of which we would revisit. If not all had been completed an extension of time could be

allowed, but eventually, if work was not done, more serious steps could be taken. When all the D cases had been dealt with the Cs were tackled, and so on. At the same time there was a great drive to further the Attested Herds Scheme to eliminate tuberculosis in cattle and to encourage the production of Tuberculin Tested milk which demanded certain standards, the premium from which could help finance the improvements to the buildings.

The Scene Today

Changes in recent years have been immense, driven by economics and membership of the European Community and enabled by rapid technical developments. Needs for the advisory services lessened and the NAAS was ended in 1971. The Milk Marketing Board was abolished in 1994 in favour of free markets. Herd sizes increased, with higher yielding cows, and the number of dairy farms decreasing drastically, from 10,000 in 1953 to just 824 in 2016.[6]

It is now a comparatively rare treat to see a fine herd of cows grazing in a field – many are housed most of the time and food taken to them. Technology is such that they can now virtually 'milk themselves', walking into the milking parlour to the computerised milking machines. Churns are no longer used – the milk is held in a refrigerated tank and transferred directly to the visiting tanker lorry, so does not have to stand in hot sun.

Most milk is sold to large dairies, for manufacturing or retailing. Formerly only the sale of whole milk was permitted, warranted 'with all its cream', the removal of cream being subject to prosecution. It is now possible to buy whole milk, semi-skimmed, and skimmed, all at the same price – the removed cream being sold separately at a higher price. A greater range of dairy products is now available, including yoghurt and new varieties of cheese, with many small manufacturers having developed their businesses in different parts of the county.

Acknowledgement

I gratefully acknowledge the information provided by Ann Cole about her late mother's memories of the Devon Dairy Schools.

NOTES

1. H. P. R. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1969), 138.
2. Average composition of a sample of cow's milk may contain approximately:

Water	87.45 per cent	Proteins – casein	3.0 per cent
Sugar (lactose)	4.7	Albumen	0.4
Fat	3.7	Ash (minerals)	0.75

   The minimum legal standard for whole milk is 3.5 per cent fat.
3. Peter Sainsbury (a former colleague in the county) gives extensive details of national regulations and requirements as they were introduced, and also an account of the establishment of commercial dairies in his *The Transition from Tradition to Technology: a History of the Dairy Industry in Devon*, (Tiverton: P.T. Sainsbury, 1991).
4. My thanks to Rachel Ponting, Devon Archives and Local Studies Service, Devon Heritage Centre, Exeter.
5. Information from Ann Cole.
6. Farming Statistics, DEFRA.

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The Church of England and the Great War: the Clergy in North Devon

ANDREW JONES

The Church of England did not have a good war. The conflict laid bare two uncomfortable truths. First, there was the gulf between priest and parishioner, more especially between the clergy and men. This gulf was compounded of class, of education, and of practice. The kind of Christianity on offer from the pulpit was, to many, unpalatable, unattractive. (There was little understanding of grace – either as a characteristic of God or as a virtue to be lived). The war revealed that the Christianity of the Church of England had barely penetrated the surface of society. Secondly, the war exposed the weakness of theology. Where was God in the slaughter? What was He 'doing'? How had it come about that two apparently Christian nations were at war with each other? To such questions, the church had few if any adequate answers or explanations. In the face of unprecedented warfare, the church was simply an irrelevance. And yet, in 1914, it looked so different. The Church of England was an integral part of the Establishment. Its bishops, public school and Oxbridge educated, were often connected to the landed gentry or the nobility. Its two Archbishops, Randall Davidson and Cosmo Gordon Lang, moved effortlessly amongst prime ministers and generals. Its clergy at all levels were usually Oxbridge men, secure in their rectories and vicarages.

This article, arising out of the *Devon Remembers* project,[1] examines the impact of the war on the clergy of the diocese of Exeter, more especially the clergy of north Devon. The role of the clergy (they were found in nearly every parish) cries out for study and yet has been curiously neglected.[2] At first blush, the source material is unpromising – there are few if any clerical

diaries or journals – but we can turn to the newspapers, to the church service registers, and to surviving deanery or parish magazines. From these, we can begin to explore the clerical mindset. We can see how the parish clergy reacted to the outbreak of the war and how they tried to cope with the long years of bloodshed. In particular, we can uncover something of their theological understanding – what they believed and how they communicated this to their people. We shall look at the initial reaction to the outbreak of the war; then the reaction to that as it became clear that the war would not 'be over by Christmas'; then the long years of attrition as the clergy, along with everyone else, adjusted to the stalemate on the western front; and finally, the end of hostilities.

There was a uniform, country-wide, response to the outbreak of the war: the clergy called their people to pray. At first, intercessions were held daily (as at Barnstaple St Peter) or mid-week, with a determination to maintain the pattern until the war ended. Few clergy managed to sustain such a resolve in the face of the war's long duration.[3] At Newport (Barnstaple), a 'Litany for War' was used on Sundays until the end of December 1914; at East and West Anstey, 'war services' were held weekly until December 1915, and then they disappear from the service register.[4]

Three other things absorbed the clergy in the first weeks – preaching, the fate of the Belgians, and recruitment. The martial metaphor was something of a godsend to the clergy. So, at Tawstock, where the Rector, Albany Wrey, and the curate, T. F. Daffen, were keen supporters of the military, there were sermons on 'War' (9 August, Psalm 92 – 'the righteous shall flourish ...'), 'The reality of war' (16 August, 1 Peter 4:7 – 'The end of all things is upon us so you must lead an ordered and sober life, given to prayer'), and 'Our refuge' (23 August, Psalm 46:1 – 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble'). And at Bratton Fleming, R. F. Cobbold preached on 'England's just cause' (23 August) and 'What we are fighting for' (30 August). Hymns provided another focus for patriotism. The Vicar of Newport wrote an 'intercession hymn' for the war (sung to 'Onward Christian soldiers'). At Chittlehamholt, worshippers were reminded to bring to church copies of a special war hymn, along with the national anthem. Both were sung 'on nearly every Sunday' in the evening, and the war hymn 'often at matins'.[5]

The clergy busied themselves with plans to offer accommodation to Belgian refugees. Local committees were set up to consider how to achieve this. Combe Martin found a house for eight; two cottages were made available at Filleigh; at Fremington and Bickington (Barnstaple), the committee agreed to find housing for families of the 'tradespeople class'. A former curate, Revd T. B. Williams, agreed to rent his 'spacious home' at half the market rent. At

Petrockstowe, the rector, Revd W. E. Crosse-Crosse promised 2s 6d a week towards the expense of housing two Belgian families.[6] But it was probably recruitment that (some) clergy embraced most eagerly as a patriotic duty. Sermon titles used at Petrockstowe in November 1914 included 'Enlistment', 'Training', and 'Fighting'. Earlier, in September, Albany Wrey of Tawstock spoke at a large recruiting drive in Barnstaple. Those responsible for recruitment recognised that clergy were well-placed to influence their flock. In January 1915, the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, Earl Fortescue, convened a conference of all ministers in the Tavistock and Plymouth areas to consider how best to increase recruitment. (Devon generally was removed from the main theatre of war and was seen as 'slow' to respond to the country's need.) If clergy were well-placed, they could also be crass. In December 1914, the Vicar of Knowstone, as Chairman of the Parish Council, was asked to furnish a list of men aged 19-37 fit for military service. He reported that there were no less than thirty-two men available 'who still remain idly at home while their country is in danger. Wake up Knowstone!' Farmers were understandably reluctant to lose their sons or workmen. In north Devon, it was the Vicar of Braunton, E. R. Gotto, who catches the eye. He enjoyed the busy-ness of it all – recruiting, and then listing all the Braunton men involved in the armed forces (with the intention of erecting a brass plaque in the church once the war had ended). To him, the war was the outcome of Germany's 'overweening pride and ambition ... our cause is righteous'.[7]

Many clergy wanted to 'do something'. This usually meant some kind of chaplaincy. Bishops very quickly moved to prevent men from simply abandoning their parishes: no parish was to be left unattended. And clergy, of course, were forbidden from becoming combatants. Just a few resigned to take up arms. In 1917, the Bishop of Exeter knew of four who had done so, including H. S. Allan, Chaplain at Killerton (the Acland's home). He had enlisted as a private, almost immediately, in August 1914, and was later killed. As the war progressed, so deanery committees emerged to decide which clergy might be spared for chaplaincy. In March 1917, it was reported that the names of virtually all the junior clergy in north Devon had been submitted to the Bishop for release from parochial duty. At Holsworthy, it was pointed out that if all such were accepted, there would be just six clergy for twenty parishes. Late in 1917, the Bishop of Exeter reported that one hundred and nineteen clergy were engaged in some kind of national service, whether at home, at the front, or in the navy.[8] This was perhaps a quarter of the diocesan work-force.

The clergy found themselves in a difficult position. They were sheltered from the full blast. They had to defend themselves against accusations (real or

imaginary) of unmanliness. There were calls from the clergy for the exemption on military service to be lifted, and a predictable response: those who stayed at home 'and did their duty could not be accused of a want of courage or manliness'. Manliness became a kind of clerical 'motif': in August 1915, T. F. Daffen, Chaplain to the Barnstaple Volunteer Training Corps and platoon commander, gave a 'thoughtful, manly address' on the first anniversary of the war: 'British men brought a gentlemanliness to the war, something that Germany lacked'.[9]

After the initial euphoria, there was an inevitable reaction. The churches quickly emptied. Attendance at weekly intercessions dropped away. There was no religious revival. The clergy cast around for reasons for this conundrum, as they did for reasons for the war. It was easy enough to blame Germany. What of Great Britain? In January 1915, Bishop Robertson of Exeter set the tone:

> while I do not think we can, with any sincerity, accept a direct share of the guilt of being responsible for bringing about this appalling war, there are, none the less, sins too prevalent among us for which we ought to ask the divine pardon ... drunkenness and self-indulgence of all kinds, impurity, worldly love of money and pleasure, and neglect of prayer and religious observance.

His suffragan followed suit: after a swipe at the 'profoundly anti-Christian teaching in German universities', he rounded on the modern culture 'with no sufficient strength ... to preserve from unbridled human passions ... the problem of immorality, the lapsing of our Christian youth into a distinct pagan life of fornication'.[10] In other words, the war was some kind of God-given 'wake-up call' to the British people. (National disasters had long been interpreted thus.) If not quite a divine visitation, it seemed clear that the war conveyed some kind of 'spiritual' message to the people. The problem lay in deciding what message, and how to articulate it.

We can pick out three strands. First, there were the national sins to be recognised and repented, especially intemperance, impurity, and covetousness. Writing in January 1915, the Vicar of Chittlehamholt believed 'we have been weighed in the scales and found wanting. This year, may it please God to find us, at its close, a holier, purer, better, more self-denying and God-loving people'.[11] Secondly, there was a need for discipline in church life. This was a theme developed by the new Bishop of Exeter, William Cecil, who was appointed in December 1916. He believed that the men who eventually returned from the trenches would be conditioned by discipline, and would

respond to it. (It seems not to have occurred to him that the men might be pleased to escape discipline.) The bishop was echoing a theme common amongst the clergy, which was the laxity of the laity in their 'Christian' living. There was a good deal of hand-wringing, to which we shall return when considering the National Mission, 1916–17. Thirdly, the more perceptive amongst the clergy were prepared to accept their share of responsibility for the weakness of church life. People did not see anything attractive or Christ-like in the lives of the clergy or the church-goer; 'if the clergy had the beauty of holiness... they would be able to help [their parishioners]'. The church was out of touch with the people. Its bishops needed to come into the parishes (as distinct from their ceremonial role at confirmation, etc.).[12]

As the war stretched into its second year, so we can detect a third phase in church life – a retrenchment, a search for some normality. This is well caught by Herbert Wilson Milner, the Rector of Belstone and also captain of Okehampton Golf Club. At first, no one liked to play. It seemed frivolous, almost offensive, to do so while men were dying. But, eventually, the Club resumed as an antidote to the stress of the time.[13] Many church service registers reveal a pattern of worship (and a mindset) apparently untouched by the war. It is surprising how many make no mention of the war after its outbreak. At Bishops Nympton, Littleham, Langtree, Lynton (Barbrook Chapel), Merton, Petersmarland, and Westleigh, one would scarcely know there was anything untoward. At Petersmarland, the Vicar, R. Wyn Honey, did not even record a thanksgiving at the War's conclusion, and yet he made weekly entries of the weather in the register.[14] In the country churches, the big event of the year remained the harvest. Harvest collections customarily went to the North Devon Infirmary in Barnstaple or the Bideford Hospital rather than to one of the many war charities or appeals.

At Swimbridge, in August 1916, C. A. Curgenven preached on 'spiritual patriotism', 'the need for national repentance', and 'militarism and Christianity'.[15] His sermon-titles are symptomatic of a change that two years of war, with its stalemate, had produced. Patriotism was a theme which the clergy latched onto. 'The truest patriot', claimed the Vicar of Witheridge, 'is he who rests with the fullest confidence in God'. When Sir Robert Newman addressed the annual meeting of the diocesan Church of England Men's Society, in July 1916, he stated provocatively that people confused patriotism with Christianity.[16] What then differentiated a Christian? It was this question which lay at the heart of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope, an initiative of the Church of England launched in 1916. And it was one to which the clergy had no clear answer, principally because they resorted to a series of negatives. In July 1916, the Vicar of Molland wrote:

> the great weakness of the church ... is the great body of men and women who have been made members of the church by baptism and confirmation [and who] refuse to obey her rules and regulations and ignore their obligations. It is thought possible [he continued with a superb absence of subtlety] that there are in Molland some who are not so fully informed on this subject as they might be. The great hope of the National Mission is to help members of the church recover the feeling of the obligations of membership.[17]

In other words, it was all the fault of the laity. With such an attitude, one widely shared, it is no wonder that the National Mission was a failure. The more perceptive clergy knew this from the outset. As early as May 1916, the Revd H. F. Nesbitt of Buckfastleigh felt 'a great shrinking' about the proposed Mission. As far as he could see, 'the war had left the nation untouched as regards the religious side of its life'.[18] In the autumn and winter of 1916-17, diocesan missioners visited the parishes. They tried to be imaginative. At Barnstaple St Peter, where there was an open-air service and procession, the missioner preached on 'Why does God not stop the war?' At Newport, in November, the missioner preached to men on 'Is God dead?' and to women on 'Women and Christ' – an indication of just how much the life of the church was dependent upon women. At North Molton, separate services were held for men (numerically 'a failure') and for women ('a great success'). At Mariansleigh, the Mission was judged 'a disappointment. It only shows the pitiable condition of those who consider themselves church people and yet are ignorant of their real state of mind in the sight of God'. Such heavy-handed moralising and point-scoring achieved nothing. The summit of clerical ambition was expressed by Cecil Curgenven, Vicar of Swimbridge, who wrote in his parish magazine after the National Mission: 'I want to have two organisations in the parish: a communicants' guild and a branch of S. P. G. (the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel)'.[19]

The National Mission had little if any impact upon the clerical mindset. At the diocesan conference in 1918, the Bishop of Exeter told his clergy that 'we *as a nation* (author's italics) are responsible for the empty church, the licentious life, the unChristian doctrines of hatred'. At the same conference, the Bishop spoke on a proposed relaxation in divorce law: 'those who broke the church's laws must be excluded from her worship'.[20] Sadly, legalism was easier to administer than grace, and forgiveness was never unconditional. It has taken the Church of England the best part of a century for such an attitude to be challenged and changed.

We seldom have an opportunity to see the good that most clergy undoubtedly did. At Northam, however, we have an insight into the task

which the Vicar, G. Payne Cooke undertook: to keep in touch with the Northam men on active service. He organised food parcels. At Christmas 1917, these included tinned salmon, jam, sweets, meat paste, and lemonade. Towards the end of the war he sent another parcel, this one containing a shilling postal-order, a pipe and a magazine. In return, the Northam soldiers wrote to thank him and his parishioners: 'and also very please to here my wife and children attends the parish church ... all of us from Northam have heard of the many different ways in which you have brightened things up for our people at home'. Many other clergy undertook the task of sending food and other parcels to their men: at Christmas 1917, Littleham sent twenty-seven parcels, Buckland Brewer thirty-three. Thank-you notes were printed in the deanery magazine.[21]

Clergy shared in the intense anti-German feeling that the war nurtured. In February 1918, when the Rector of Parkham preached on Revelation 13:6 ('the Beast'), he noted in his service register, '[Is the] beast Kaiser?' Once it became clear that victory was in sight, clergy and churchmen became more outspoken. In September 1918, the Vicar of Torre, J. T. Jacob, himself a chaplain, stated: 'merciless in victory, the Germans are cowards in defeat and, like all bullies, can only be brought to book by the same methods they abuse to intimidate the rest of the world'. A day later, Lord Coleridge addressed the church institute of Ottery St Mary on Britain's war aims: in essence – no peace without victory. 'No death-bed repentance could wash the German hands of the stains for all times. There must be both punishment and reparation'. (A year earlier, the Bishop of Exeter called for those responsible for the war to be punished – forgiveness did not mean an absence of punishment.) In December 1918, Ivon Gregory, Vicar of Hartland, wrote in his deanery magazine:

> Those who provoked the world war are contemptible bullies who, in the days when they confidently expected victory, cared nothing for humanity ... as soon as their defeat was assured, they began to whine. For Germany and her dupes we can have no respect.[22]

The end of the war was marked by universal thanksgiving, and once again the churches were packed – on the evening of the armistice and on the Sunday following. At Barnstaple on Tuesday 12th, a great ecumenical service was held in St Peter's, with thousands being turned away. At Torrington, the parish church and the Free Churches held separate services.[23] A few clergy tried to look ahead. At Barnstaple St Peter, four sermons were preached on 'Britain's responsibility', 'the hope for the future', 'the warning of Germany', and 'the League of Nations'.[24] In the same town, the Vicar of St Mary Magdalen,

R. J. E. Boggis had worked tirelessly during the war to bring together the various churches of the town. In October 1918, he had convened a meeting to consider the re-union of the churches. This was held in the Congregational church. Its Pastor, W. J. Lewis, and Boggis had hoped to exchange pulpits but the Bishop's permission for this was withheld. A month later, right at the end of the war, Boggis left St Mary's with warm thanks for his generous heart in bringing together the denominations. Sadly, in terms of ecumenism, he was far ahead of his time. The end of the war signalled the end of such co-operation.[25]

Most clergy (and their congregations) were relieved to return to something approaching normality. The clergy busied themselves and their parishioners over suitable memorials. As early as 1917, the Vicar of Bratton Fleming drew up a list of 'our boys'. The problem was – whom did you include or omit? Obviously, combatants, but he then noted six other categories: men who joined up but were invalided out; those who offered but were turned down; people who were only temporarily resident in the parish; those involved with the Red Cross; munitions workers; and those involved in other war work.[26] The Bishop refused permission for tablets in churches with the names of combatants, a prohibition which was circumvented in various ways. Communities bickered over suitable memorials to the dead – 'there have been very few parishes where the suggestion of any kind of war memorial has failed to cause trouble of some kind'.[27]

The war revealed quite starkly the gulf between the clergy and the great mass of people. This was less obvious in an area such as north Devon, sheltered as it was from the full rigour of the war's impact.[28] Church life quickly picked up its pre-war rhythms, especially in the countryside. In the long run, the main impact of the war on the church was theological: it simply forced the beginnings of a major shift in an understanding and ordering of Christianity. In particular, the doctrine of God (or, rather, the Trinity) and of the Cross (the 'sacrifice' of Christ) became and remain major theological preoccupations. English scholarship lagged behind the Continent, where the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, reshaped theological enquiry.

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It was in the face of the carnage that the clergy found themselves impotent. Christian theology appeared to have nothing to say of any comfort, or of any insight into the human condition. The one thing seized on was sacrifice – the shedding of blood in what was universally seen as a righteous cause. Surely, this was Christian, an imitation of Christ's sacrifice of himself on the cross? It did not seem to matter that of the hundreds and thousands of men who died,

few were committed believers. Somehow, in the mystery of the thing, all were responding to God's call. (The culmination of such a theological justification was Sir John Arkwright's hymn, 'O valiant hearts', still sung enthusiastically today at services of remembrance.) Here is the Vicar of Chittlehamholt, Raymond Allanson, in January 1915:

> Our soldiers ... are realising day by day that this Christ-child is going to be their saviour from all this suffering, misery and death. They are fighting because they know that He who at this time came into the world for us, who won the greatest victory against the most powerful foe on earth, will bring to them the same result in his own good time ...[29]

This kind of self-delusion was common amongst the clergy. It reflects (of course) the fact that the vast majority of clergy had no experience of warfare, and no means of grasping the horror of the trenches. The mindset of the clergy was Victorian. It was shaped by a belief that God had ordered society in a particular way, in which the class structure was immutable. Society was 'Christian' because society and church were one. To be 'Christian' was to attend church and to defer to one's betters. The clergy were uncomfortable with grace, with reconciliation, with forgiveness. They were more comfortable with an understanding of God who was demanding, unbending, and vengeful. The doctrine of substitutionary atonement, in which Christ died, on behalf of sinners to placate a wrathful God, was proclaimed unthinkingly and led to a perverted understanding of God and of Christ. Any idea that forgiveness (without reparation) might be an essential Christian doctrine was quite foreign and helps explain why the church was in effect complicit in the demands made on Germany once the war was over.[30]

NOTES

1. *Devon Remembers* was a multi-disciplinary project (2014–18) to investigate the impact of WWI on the county and the county's response. Participants were invited to research/explore some twenty to thirty topics. I volunteered to examine the Church of England (the churches did not feature in the original listing of topics). I am very grateful to the project's director, Katie Findlay, for her friendship and encouragement.
2. It is interesting in this regard to note that David Parker, *The People of Devon in the First World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2013), makes no reference to the Church of England or other churches or to Christianity in his introductory chapter.

3. Daily intercessions were maintained throughout the war, at Belstone (Memorandum-book of Revd Herbert Wilson Milner, Rector of Belstone, CD-rom supplied by Devon Heritage Centre, otherwise uncatalogued).
4. NDRO 1721-1/PR 13. Newport service register; NDRO B445/8 East & West Anstey service register.
5. NDRO 2288A/PR 18. Tawstock service register; NDRO 1506A-PR/3/1. Bratton Fleming service register; *NDJ* 24 Sept 1914. Intercession hymn; South Molton Ruri-Decanal Magazine (NDRO 1629/8/4-5, hereafter SMRM) October 1914, Chittlehamholt; NDRO 1721A/PZ/ 9. The war-hymn was reproduced in the Newport parish magazine.
6. *NDJ* 17 December 1914. Combe Martin; SMRM, December 1914. Filleigh; *NDJ* 29 October 1914. Fremington; *NDJ* 19 November 1914. Petrockstowe.
7. NDRO 2387/PR/2/1. Petrockstowe service register; *NDJ* 17 September 1914. Wrey; *EPG* 27 January 1915. Fortescue; SMRM December 1914. Knowstone; *NDJ* 13 August, 1 October 1914. Gotto; there are further examples of clerical crassness in Parker, *The People of Devon*, 69.
8. *EPG* 24 August 1914. Allan; *EPG* 8 November 1917. The Bishop's report to the Diocesan Conference; *EPG* 10 March, 16 March 1917.
9. *EPG* 17 March 1915; *NDJ* 12 Aug 1915. Daffen; Christian piety was usually cast as 'feminine' (C. G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800–2000*, 2nd ed, (London: Routledge, 2009), 104-05.
10. SMRM January 1915; *NDJ* 15 April 1915.
11. SMRM January 1915. Chittlehamholt.
12. *EPG* 8 January 1917; *EPG* 9 May 1916. Totnes Ruridecanal Conference.
13. Memorandum-book of Revd Herbert Wilson Milner (see note 3); at Parkham, in early 1918, there was a canvas of the parish to decide if dancing might be resumed (NDRO 1892/PR/2/1. Service register).
14. NDRO 2390A/PR2/1. Service register.
15. NDRO 1621A/PR/2/2. Service register.
16. *EPG* 14 July 1916.
17. SMRM July 1916.
18. *EPG* 9 May 1916.
19. NDRO 3054A/PR/2/4. Barnstaple St Peter service register; NDRO 1721-1/ PR 13. Newport service register; SMRM November 1916. North Molton; SMRM December 1916. Mariansleigh; NDRO 1621A/PY/12. Swimbridge parish magazine, February 1917.
20. *EPG* 6 March 1918.
21. NDRO 1843A/PM 1-2. Two files of letters to the Vicar of Northam from men of the parish on active service. The first food-parcel had to find its way (via the Western Front) to Mesopotamia; other details are taken from the Hartland Deanery Magazine (NDRO 1201A/PY/1/9); at Brixham, in the south of the county, Furzeham School distributed food-parcels to the many Brixham men who enlisted, as revealed in Samantha Little ed., *Writing Home to Brixham:*

Lives Across a Century – Letters from Brixham Men and Women Serving in the Great War, 1914-1918, vol. 1 (Brixham: Brixham Heritage Museum, 2017), 81-90.

22. NDRO 1892A/PR/2/1. Parkham service register, 17 February 1918; Germany was widely seen as the anti-Christ (Parker, *The People of Devon*, 89); *WT* 19 September 1918. J. T. Jacob; *WT* 20 September 1918. Lord Coleridge; *EPG* 1 September 1917. Bishop's newsletter. The Bishop of Exeter and the Bishop of Crediton both lost two sons in the war; NDRO 1201A/PY/1/9. Hartland Deanery Magazine.
23. *WT* 14 November 1918; *NDJ* 14 November 1918.
24. NDRO 3054A/PR/2/4. Service register.
25. *EPG* 3 October 1918; *NDJ* 10 October 1918; *NDJ* 7 November 1918; author's note – my grandfather was a Congregational minister in Swanage, 1919-35, and my mother remembered him being ignored in the street by the rector.
26. NDRO 1506A – PR/3/1. A loose note in the service register.
27. Memorandum-book of Revd Herbert Wilson Milner. Lists of combatants were placed in village halls (as at Rose Ash) or in the school (as at Bishops Nympton, until removed to the church in the twenty-first century). Some churches had a moveable list (as at West Anstey).
28. Milner noted that villagers did not keep particularly to the rationing rules. One of the advantages of the countryside was access to farm produce.
29. SMRM January 1915.
30. The essential background is provided by Alan Wilkinson's seminal, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: S. P. C. K., 1978). Much more recent and of equal importance is Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

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Participation in the Female Community by Women of the Frood Family of Topsham: Gentility, Suffrage, WWI and Afterwards

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Mary Frood (1855–1931) of Topsham, Devon, and her daughters Mary Sophia (1880–1956), Joan (1881–1916), Hester (1882–1971) and Constance (1885–1955) provide a case study of women from a colonial professional middle-class family, whose lives were marked by participation in the female community through education and teaching, in female gentility,[1] activity in the suffrage movement, and responsible career positions in the military in both World Wars. This study places previous work on the suffrage role of Mrs Mary Frood by Mike Patrick, Elizabeth Crawford and Penny Bayer in a wider context.[2]

The Frood women lived at various properties in Topsham for over 65 years – from *c.*1891 to at least 1956. In 1891 the family home and Dr James Frood's (1852–1913) medical practice were at Broadway House;[3] when Mrs Frood and one of her daughters opened a school for gentlewomen, the family lived at Little Broadway House, where Dr Frood died.[4] Mrs Frood lived at 26 The Strand in 1914,[5] and in 1924 she was still able to re-assign the lease of Broadway house.[6] Mary Sophia and Hester lived at 26 The Strand for periods from the 1920s onwards,[7] whereas Constance gave her permanent address in 1917 as Rest Harrow,[8] and when Joan died in 1916 she was living at Highfield, all in Topsham.[9]

Dr and Mrs Frood were Victorians with an international colonial background: James was Scottish but trained in Ireland, Mary was Canadian, and the couple's early married life and the birth of their four daughters took place in New Zealand. Their son James Campbell (1887–1964) was born at sea *en route* from New Zealand to Scotland and lived some of his adult life in Argentina.[10] The family moved to Topsham in about 1891.

Dr Frood was a successful Victorian patriarch, medical officer and surgeon, a pillar of the Topsham community: on the Parish Council, a River Commissioner and president of various committees including the Athletics Society.[11] His wife described him as a Conservative, he chaired a Unionist meeting in 1910 in Topsham, and the Conservative Club was represented at his funeral.[12] Newspaper mentions of his wife prior to 1910 are conventionally middle-class, referring to her as a doctor's wife or Mrs Frood; in 1894 she helped decorate St Margaret's Church and in 1895 accompanied her husband to a benefit performance for the distressed poor of the town.[13] Dr Frood provided security for his wife and daughters by leaving his estate of £2,391 7s. 5d. in trust to pay an income to his wife for her lifetime, and then to his four daughters in equal shares.[14]

The Frood daughters were raised with notions of the gentlewoman whose interests included domesticity, art, music, needlework, languages and religion. Hester, Joan, and probably Mary Sophia, were educated at Exeter High School for Girls (now Maynard's), where Hester exhibited drawings and Joan learned piano.[15] Constance went to St Margaret's, Exeter, 'a high class boarding and day school for the daughters of Gentlemen'.[16] St Margaret's ambition was 'to develop all that is womanly and natural in a woman rather than a mere list of examination results'.[17] Constance practiced drill, recited French and German, exhibited needlework, won prizes for Honiton lace and art, and gained a commendation from the Royal Drawing Society for original illustration.[18]

By 1904 a Frood daughter, it is unclear which, set up a school for training gentlewomen in domestic education at Broadway House, under Mrs Frood's careful guardianship and guidance. The opening of the school was described in the local newspaper's woman's column as 'unquestionably, one of the greatest events in the annals of women's work in Devonshire of recent times', in which women were being trained to gently help men.[19] The school, the first in the West Country, was considered needed 'as many girls and women have not always the opportunity of being initiated into domestic work at home'. Like St Margaret's School, it believed it was 'fitting a woman to fill her sphere in a womanly way'. The opening was graced by a 'fashionable assembly of over 100 visitors' including the Honorary Secretary of the Liverpool School of Cookery and Technical College of Domestic Science. The school had a large

flower and vegetable garden, tennis, croquet, hockey grounds, dressmaking room, large kitchen and two leisure rooms, one for theatricals and dancing. Cooking (plain and high-class) was taught there, as well as dressmaking, laundry, housework and mending linen, and students shared in housework. Dr Frood, living close by, offered medical help if needed.

At the opening of the school, after tea was served at small tables in a colonnade decorated with flowering plants, Hester, recently returned from studying on the Continent, and already an exhibitor at the Royal Academy,[20] displayed some of her sketches and paintings, and was described as 'another gifted member of a talented family'.[21]

Mrs Frood thus created a business and a place for her daughters to thrive in community with other gentlewomen, and to prepare them for life running households or for careers in education.

From 1909 Mrs Frood emerges from the historical record as an activist, fighting for female suffrage. New Zealand, where her daughters had been born, was the first country to give all women the parliamentary vote in 1893, soon after the Froods had moved from there to Topsham. Mrs Frood campaigned energetically for suffrage in a range of ways: through public meetings, lively letters to local papers, active membership of suffrage organisations, and, more contentiously, direct action. How far she aligned herself with a political party is unclear. In 1910 she campaigned for the Unionist candidate Lionel Walrond,[22] who in 1913 became a Vice President of the Exeter branch of the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association (CUWFA).[23] One of many letters she wrote to the local newspaper asked why Conservative editors were against the Conciliation Bill – the first of three bills aimed at placating the suffragists by giving the right to vote to a limited number of women – when 'all fair-minded Conservative men are in favour'.[24] Although she wrote that her husband was a strong Conservative, she did not define herself as one, but as 'one of the unenfranchised middle-class who have paid income tax for years'.[25] In June 1910 she organised a meeting in support of the Conciliation Bill at the Museum, Broadway House, at which she presided, with the speakers being Mrs Montague of Crediton and Miss Elsie Howey of Clifton.[26] One month later, at an anti-suffrage meeting in Exeter, Mrs Frood was described as an 'interrogator'.[27]

In October 1910 Mrs Frood was amongst a small group of ladies and gentlemen who welcomed Emmeline Pankhurst to Exeter at a Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) reception at the Royal Clarence Hotel, where Mrs Pankhurst asked them to help the suffragettes in their struggle to better the conditions in which the vast majority of women struggled.[28] The WSPU was the main suffragette movement and by this time included

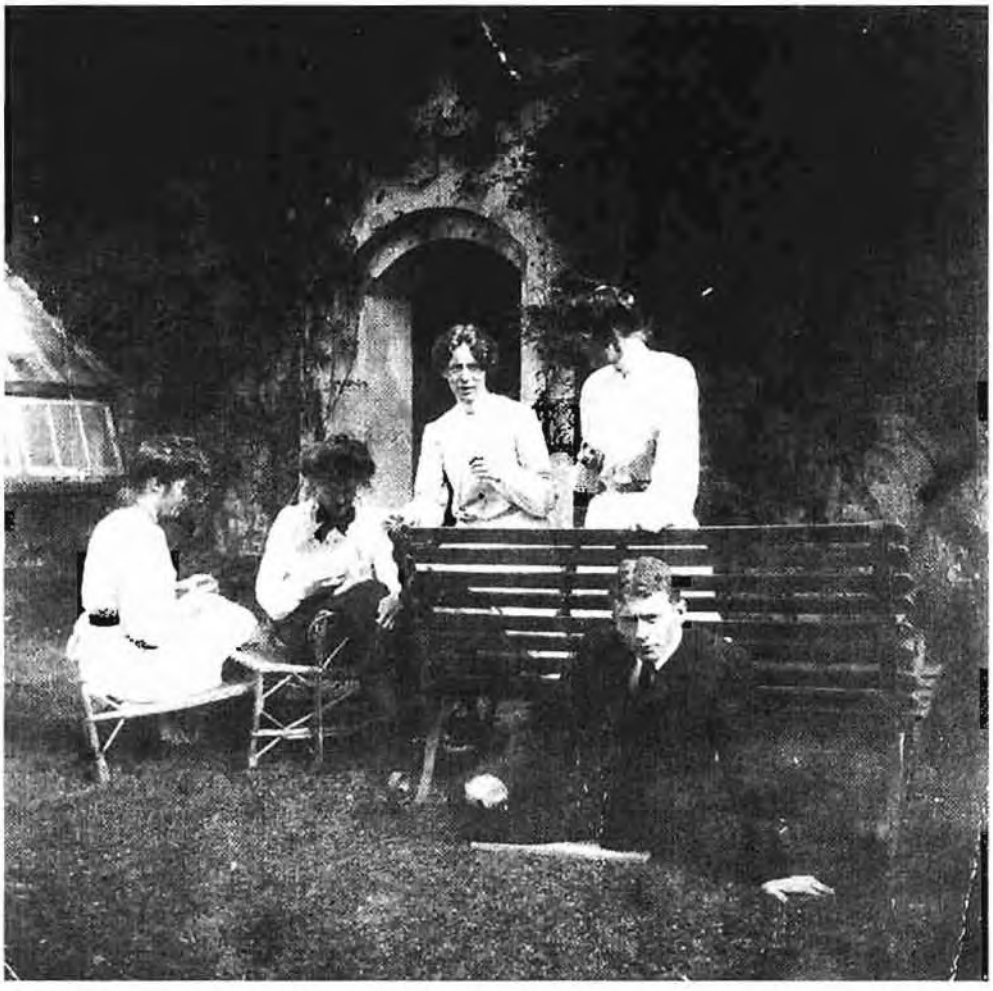

Figure 1. The four Frood sisters and brother James Campbell at Broadway House (Reproduced courtesy of Topsham Museum Society from Frood family album).

women of all political persuasions.[29] Worthies such as Lionel Walrond and Lady Acland, leaders of CUWFA and the Devon NUWSS (National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies) respectively, notably did not attend. Mrs Frood campaigned through several organisations and in November 1910, she was elected Honorary Secretary when a Topsham branch of the NUWSS was inaugurated by invitation of Mrs Holman of Sea View.[30]

Mrs Frood wrote in 1911 to the WSPU journal *Votes for Women* describing her non-violent direct actions in Topsham:

Dear Sir,

On the morning of polling day here last election I went out, before anyone was about, with a little pot of good white oil paint and a small brush, and painted on the inner edge of the pavement where all the voters would pass to and from the polling place, 'Taxation without representation is slavery, and Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.' I also painted it along the brick wall of my field, which they had to pass coming and going to and from the train. On this place when the daylight goes the station lights shine right upon the letters, so that night or day he who runs may read, till time and weather wear out the paint. On the large door of the field, near the same spot, I printed 'No vote, no taxes.' I find my field gate a useful place to stick cartoons and cuttings from Votes for Women, as everyone has to pass it going to and coming from the train.

Yours etc.

M. C. I. Frood, Topsham.[31]

Her letter displays her animated spirit and her intelligence in painting on the wall where the train lights shone, and willingness to overlook some property values to write graffiti on pavements. She signs with her own initials, not her husband's, although the letter to a women's readership begins traditionally with 'Dear Sir'.

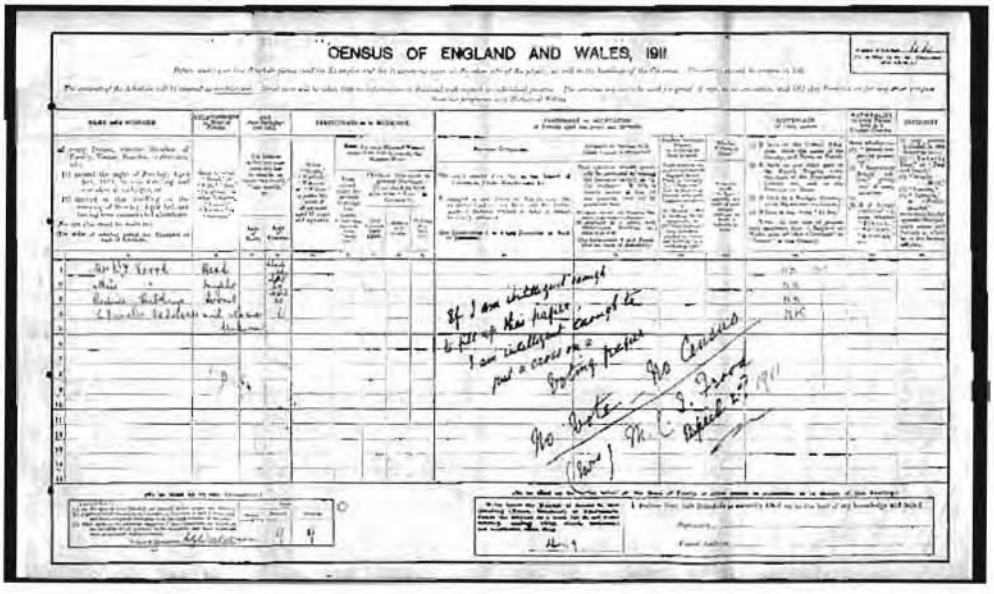
CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911

Figure 2. Mrs Frood's 1911 Census return (Reproduced courtesy of The National Archives, ref. Class RG14; Piece 12603; Schedule No 44).

Later in 1911 she also took part in the WSPU Census resistance scheme by which women refused to fill in the census form and instead wrote agreed reasons for refusal on the form. Perhaps conveniently for her campaign, Dr Frood appears to have been absent from the property and Mrs Frood wrote: 'If I am intelligent enough to fill up this paper, I am intelligent enough to put a cross on a voting paper. No vote – no census', and signed (Mrs) M. C. I. Frood, using her own initials, whilst still providing marital status.[32]

Figure 3. Group in Broadway House garden: the lady in black wearing badges is likely to be Mrs Frood in mourning after her husband's death in 1913
(Reproduced courtesy of Topsham Museum Society from Frood family album).

In 1913 she was still Secretary of the Topsham branch of the NUWSS, and in this role took part in the Suffrage Pilgrimage which passed from Exmouth to Exeter through Topsham on 5 July (only two weeks after her husband's death).[33] Daughters Hester and Constance carried the large Topsham banner in red, white and green.[34] In November she and one of her daughters attended a Christmas Tree fair at Barnfield Hall, Exeter, a fundraiser organised by the NUSWW.[35] Elizabeth Crawford suggests that Mrs Frood may have become dismayed by the WSPU's increasingly militant tactics. It was one thing to

paint slogans on pavements and walls, but another to break windows and commit arson.[36] In May 1914 Mrs Frood's 'untiring energy' was instrumental in setting up a non-political and non-sectarian Topsham Women's Club.[37]

The First World War brought new opportunities for women to serve King and Country which two of the Frood daughters enthusiastically embraced. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was formed in 1917, with Mary Sophia being an early recruit (no. 22), starting as Unit Administrator at the Advanced Mechanical Transport Depot in Abbeville, France and rising swiftly to Area Controller.[38] Initially, of the 204 staff she managed, seven were officers, the others printers, waitresses, clerks, orderlies, telephonists, laundresses, cooks, motor drivers, shorthand typists, ledger clerks, cleaners, housemaids and gardeners.

From 5 August 1917 when she became Area Controller, Abbeville, Mary Sophia kept a diary and intelligence report.[39] In these documents she detailed her duties, which included keeping track of the WAACs when moved between camps and places such as the British Officers Club, the Smoke Helmet Repair Depot and Infantry School of Instruction, or when they returned to the UK as unsuitable for service in France, or to be married. She recorded other movements too, noting for example that on 12 November Mrs Pratt-Barlow conducted a French journalist, Madame de Tizoc, to the Hotel Tête de Boeuf. She inspected offices and accommodation, sometimes accompanying the British Red Cross to the three camps where WAACs lived and worked. When the number of women arriving increased sharply, acceptable accommodation had to be provided. WAAC quarters at the 4th Army Infantry School at Flixecourt in September 1917 were satisfactory, as at the Men's Camp, Advanced Mechanical Transport Depot for WAAC cooks, and the 4th Army Musketry School. However, when she inspected the women's hostel at the 3rd Army Infantry School of Instruction it was unfinished, with a Nissan hut, bathhouse and washhouse still under construction. In December 1917 she had 644 staff. The diary relates to 1917, but includes a cyclostyled report *British Women's Work during the Great War 1914–1918* which describes proudly and patriotically how in every department of national life women came forward and did men's work in nursing, essential home services and the Navy, Army and Air Force, including the WAAC. Mary Sophia was awarded the MBE for her service in France in 1918 whilst still working there.[40] From July to October 1919 she held the rank of Deputy Assistant Commandant in the Royal Air Force.[41]

Through Mary Sophia's influence, her sister Constance also served in France, as Administrative Assistant (Physical Education) responsible for drill. Before the war she had studied at the Anstey College of Physical Education,

Birmingham, and taught physical education to boys and girls from infancy to age 20, as well as supervising other teachers.[42] Constance applied to be a WAAC Administrator or Controller on 14 December 1917 and was described as a 'Nice girl – suitable as A[dministrative] A[ssistant] in charge of drill'. However, she was told the service did not normally take anyone doing 'important Government work such as you appear to be doing'. She persevered but was unhappy to be posted to Handsworth College, Birmingham, as Assistant Administrator for Physical Training. Mary Sophia used her rank to raise this with the Chief Controller, asking if Constance could 'come out to us', writing: 'she is thrilled by the WAAC and has enjoyed her training so much and this has been a dreadful blow ... Do let her come if you can ... everything is so interesting here'. The Deputy Chief Controller, WAAC HQ, in April 1918 wrote a note that 'the Chief Controller is desirous of having Miss Frood's sister' whom she understood had already been posted.[43] In the following month Constance was transferred overseas and served in France at Rouen, Le Havre, and Le Tréport. In September 1919 she was at Camp 10, Rouen, when her service was extended to 1920. In January 1920 she was retrospectively promoted to Acting Deputy Administer and demobilised to Topsham railway station.

Mrs Frood and Hester remained in Topsham during the war. Mrs Frood served on a Food Committee of the St Thomas Rural Council from September 1917,[44] whilst Hester donated a framed etching to a Treasure Sale in aid of the Red Cross, and obtained a permit to sketch on Exmouth beach.[45]

In 1918 Mary Sophia and Constance were on active duty in France, aged 38 and 33. Hester was 36, their mother 62. *The Representation of the People Act 1918* conferred Parliamentary franchise on women at the age of 30 who satisfied an occupation qualification themselves or through their husband. Local Government franchise was conferred on women aged 21 on equal terms with men, or at age 30 for married women based on their husband's qualification. Mary Frood's name is on the list of the first women to get the vote for Parliamentary and Local Elections in 1918, alongside 37 other women living on the Strand, Topsham.[46] Mary Sophia appears on the London electoral registers from 1923 onwards, with the occupation qualification enabling her to vote in both Parliamentary and Local Elections,[47] and in some years she was also on the Topsham list, mainly at no. 26 but also at 25 (now Topsham Museum) and 49 The Strand, with only the Local Government franchise.[48] Constance was on the Glasgow electoral register from 1925 where she was entitled to vote at Parliamentary, Town Council, Parish Council and Education Authority elections.[49] Hester was on the Topsham register through her husband's occupation qualification, from 1927.[50]

After the War the three surviving Frood daughters pursued careers in education and art. Mary Sophia was house-mistress at Avery Hill Teacher Training College, Eltham, London, living in a hostel with other women.[51] Then, in 1928 (aged 48) she lived at the Helena Club, 81-83 Lancaster Gate, with Frances Erskine Holland and Marguerite Munday, all three of whom had the occupation qualification to vote.[52] In 1929 over 60 other women lived there temporarily.[53] It has not been established whether Frood, Holland and Mundy worked at the Club or were long term residents perhaps working elsewhere. The Club was 'for working girls and students who didn't have large financial resources', with catering by domestic science students.[54] The impression is of gentility on a shoestring. In the early 1930s Shirley Sinclair described how

> on one occasion during my stay there Queen Mary visited the Club and greeted us all ... The Club was two elegant terraced houses turned into one, with a large entrance hall and the Secretary's office in the reception area and a wide sweeping staircase rising from it ... The view from our second floor window was across the Bayswater Road and directly into Kensington Gardens.[55]

In the 1940s novelist Muriel Spark stayed at the Helena Club, then a respectable establishment to which parents could entrust their daughters, a safe and smart place for secretaries, models and civil servants, like a boarding school or women's services. It was a community of working women with an air of elegance, cheap and well-regulated with meals.[56]

In the Second World War, Mary Sophia was Company Commander in the Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS), reaching retirement age in November 1941 as Chief Commander.[57] She died in 1956 at 26 The Strand, Topsham, her effects worth a considerable £11,730 18s. 4d.[58]

Constance had a successful career teaching for Glasgow Corporation, eventually as Deputy Superintendent of Physical Education. She also served with the British Forces on the Rhine, was an ambulance driver in Civil Defence in the Second World War, later becoming President of the West of Scotland Gymnasts' Club (Women) and the Scottish League for Physical Education (Women), and was a founder member and Honorary Treasurer of the Glasgow Keep-Fit Movement, as well as helping the Glasgow Soroptomists Club in projects for disabled ex-servicemen.[59]

In her earlier career she lodged with a family,[60] but in the early 1930s, around the time she came into her Trust Fund, she and Esther M. Legge moved into 26 Alder Road, Glasgow, a home they shared for some 25 years

Figure 4. Probably John Gwynne Evans, Hester, and her sisters Maria Sophia and Constance in the garden, 26 The Strand, Topsham, after 1927
(Reproduced courtesy of Topsham Museum Society from Frood family album).

up to Constance's death. In 1949 another woman, Helen Findlay, also lived there.[61] When Constance died in 1955 the death was confirmed by her brother James Campbell Frood and Esther.[62]

Hester developed her art career, becoming a respected professional artist. Critics described her 'romantic composition' and 'delicacy of touch' at an exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1925.[63] In 1946 the *Illustrated London News* carried one of her watercolours, a view entitled *The Strand, Topsham, on the Exe*,[64] and that year she exhibited at a Devonshire Association exhibition.[65] She was enabled to do this through the use of 26 The Strand

where she had a studio, and helped by the Trust Fund from the 1930s, and by her marriage to the poet and former bookshop owner Frank Gwynne Evans (1872–1947) who lived with her at The Strand. Today her work can be viewed at such prestigious locations as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas.

Conclusions

From 1894, when Mrs Frood was 39 and her daughters between 9 and 14, the 'new woman' debate was current. The term came to refer to new ideas about the role and nature of women, as well as particular women who took up new activities, like cycling or archery, or entered new professions. The concept reflected a feeling that changes in behaviour, activity and the nature of women needed articulation, although there was no agreed picture of exactly what 'new woman' was comprised.[66] Frances Cobbe's autobiography, for example, published in 1896, contributed a positive view of womanhood, admiration for many individual women and enjoyment of a life which women could share based on woman's moral autonomy and a 'woman-centred' view of the world.[67] Like Constance Frood, Cobbe spent many years with a woman companion.[68] The debate provides context for the choices made by Mrs Frood and her daughters. They were middle-class women with some financial protection from a Trust Fund and property in Topsham. They had education, talent and drive, and established professions in areas open to women. Notions of female gentility – in the creation of the gentlewomen's school, in the Helena Club and Hester Frood's life as an artist – sat alongside modern ideas of the working, campaigning, and voting woman. They lived and worked in community with other women: Mrs Frood, Constance and Hester were politically active in the suffrage campaign; Mary Sophia's high rank in the women's services in both World Wars was rewarded with an MBE, she lived in a women's club in London, and had a management role in the women's Auxiliary Services in the Second World War; Constance taught drill to WAACs in France in the First World War, drove ambulances in the Second and became a leading teacher of women's physical education in Scotland, living with a long term woman companion.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Mike Patrick, Sheila Stephens, Catriona Batty (Archivist, Topsham Museum), Elizabeth Crawford, and Julia Neville.

NOTES

1. Probably the best definition of female gentility is 'attitudes associated with women from commercial, professional and gentry families from the sixteenth century onwards which increasingly emphasised domesticity', Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), 1.
2. Penny Bayer & Mike Patrick, *Topsham's Suffragists 1911–1913* (Topsham Museum Society, 2013); Mike Patrick, 'Topsham and the Great Suffragists' March of 1913', *Topsham Times*, 16 (2013), 35-38; Elizabeth Crawford, https://womanandhersphere.com/2013/07/04/suffrage-stories-mrs-frood-topshams-suffragetteist/, accessed 2017.
3. 1891 Census, Topsham, RG12/1679.
4. Ancestry.com, *National Probate Calendar, Index of Wills and Administrations, 1858–1966*, 1913, 238 (database on-line). After his retirement *c*.1910 he also gave his address as The Strand, *Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1910* (London: Kelly & Co.), 842.
5. *Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1919* (London: Kelly & Co.), 841.
6. DHC ZAJF/1/3. Lease assigned for 21 years to Reginald Worsley.
7. See notes 46 and 55.
8. TNA WO/398/81/23.
9. *National Probate Calendar*, 1916, 421.
10. *New Zealand Gazette*, 27 January 1876; 1891 Census, Topsham, RG12/1679.
11. *EPG*, 29 June 1899, 22 June 1890.
12. *Express and Echo*, 19 January 1910; *WT*, 25 June 1913.
13. *EPG*, 23 February 1895.
14. Downloaded from https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/Calendar#calendar.
15. *EPG*, 23 July 1898, and 26 July 1892.
16. *EPG*, 17 December 1898; 23 July 1898; 26 July 1892.
17. *EPG*, 16 March 1905, 23 July 1898, 17 December 1898.
18. *EPG*, 16 March 1905.
19. *EPG*, 20 January 1905.
20. *WT*, 17 May 1904.
21. *EPG*, 26 September 1905.
22. *EPG*, 15 January 1910.
23. *EPG*, 25 September 1913.
24. *EPG*, 18 June 1910.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *WT*, 21 June 1910.
27. *WT*, 28 July 1910.
28. *WT*, 29 October 1910.
29. Krista Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit: Paid Organisers of the WSPU 1904–18* (Manchester: University Press, 2007), 12-17.

30. *WT*, 25 November 1910.
31. *Votes for Women*, 3 March 1911, 11.
32. 1911 Census, RG14/12603/44, Little Broadway House, Topsham.
33. She is listed in *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who* (London: Stanley Paul, 1913), 84, and also in Elizabeth Crawford, *The Suffragette Movement: A Reference Guide 1866–1928* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 689.
34. *WT*, 8 July 1913.
35. *WT*, 29 November 1913.
36. https://womanandhersphere.com/2013/07/04/suffrage-stories-mrs-frood-topshams-suffragetteist/
37. *WT*, 8 May 1914.
38. TNA WO/398/81/23; *The London Gazette*, 14 September 1917, Supp. 30286, 9543.
39. TNA WO/95/84/7. Area Controller Abbeville Area, August 1917 to December 1917.
40. *The London Gazette*, 12 March 1918, Supp. 30576, 3289.
41. *The London Gazette*, 22 July 1919, Iss. 31467, 9259; 21 November 1919, Iss. 31651, 14046.
42. TNA WO/398/81/23.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *WT*, 22 September 1917.
45. Topsham Museum: Accession No 5911.3, Original permit No 170360, 30 July 1917; *WT*, 18 November 1915.
46. DHC Register of Electors, Tiverton Parliamentary Division (parish of Topsham), 1918.
47. Ancestry.com and London Metropolitan Archive: London Electoral register, Eltham ward, 1923, p.212; 1925, p.233; Westminster, Lancaster Gate 1928, p.86; 1929, p.65; 1931, p.67. For explanation of codes see http://www.electoralregisters.org.uk/codes.htm.
48. DHC Register of Electors, Tiverton Parliamentary Division (parish of Topsham), 1918, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1928.
49. Ancestry.com, and The Mitchell Library, Glasgow: The City and Royal Burgh of Glasgow: Register of Persons Qualified to Vote in Parliamentary and Local Government Elections, published 15 April 1925, print number 110, Cathcart Division, p.24.
50. DHC Register of Electors, Tiverton Parliamentary Division (parish of Topsham), 1927.
51. Her home address is given on the passenger list of the *Highland Pride*, sailing from Buenos Aires to London, arriving on 2 September 1924 – she boarded at Las Palmas (TNA BT26/770/101); Ancestry.com and London Metropolitan Archive: Electoral Register, London, Eltham Ward, 1923, p.212.
52. Ancestry.com and London Metropolitan Archive: Electoral register, London, Paddington, Lancaster Gate, 1928, p.86.

53. Ancestry.com and London Metropolitan Archives, Electoral register, London, Paddington, Lancaster Gate 1929, p.65.
54. http://www.barbaragoss.com/shirley/page36.html – the memoirs of Shirley Sinclair, a former resident of the Helena Club.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Martin Stannard, *Muriel Spark: The Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009), 66-7.
57. *The London Gazette*, 23 January 1942 Supp. 35433, 442.
58. *National Probate Calendar*, 1956, 421
59. *The Glasgow Herald*, 23 September 1955.
60. Ancestry.com and the Mitchell Library, Glasgow: Burgh of Glasgow Electoral Register, 1925, p.24.
61. Ancestry.com and the Mitchell Library, Glasgow: Burgh of Glasgow, Electoral Register, 1949, p. C3, no. 41, living at 26 Alder Road.
62. *National Probate Calendar*, 1955, 418.
63. *The Sphere*, 7 February 1925.
64. *Illustrated London News*, 9 February 1946.
65. WMN, 18 June 1946.
66. Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 241, 252-254.
67. *Ibid.*, 148.
68. *Ibid.*, 123-129.

Penny Bayer has worked in the environmental, arts and heritage sectors, and has a PhD in women's literature. She also takes a great interest in historical research and writing.

Book Reviews

Elly Babbedge ***The Bidlakes of Bridestowe*** (Exeter: Short Run Press, 2018) Softback. 110 pages. Numerous half-tone illustrations, one in colour. ISBN 9780993535710. £7.50

Great Bidlake Manor is situated in Bridestowe (apparently pronounced 'Briddis-tow'), a village on the north western edge of Dartmoor. A Grade II listed building, Great Bidlake was first listed in 1952 and is described by Historic England as a sixteenth century manor house with earlier origins, probably with some alterations in the seventeenth century and extensively restored with additions in the mid-nineteenth century. The site of Great Bidlake was acquired in 1268 by Ralph de Combe and after subsequent marriages, Bidlake became the family name. The listing records that a description of the house in the time of Thomas Bidlake (who died 1531) mentions that 'the great parlour with its large chimney place, the Entry and Porch, and a room or 2 beyond that, and those with chambers over them, were already built and fully furnished.' The importance of the connection between the house and the Bidlake family, is emphasised in both the introduction and epilogue by James Bidlake. The official launch of *The Bidlakes of Bridestowe* took place during the weekend of the 25th and 26th August as part of the celebration of 750 years since the family first settled at Great Bidlake. Bidlakes from across the globe were invited to join the celebration which also included tree-planting, hawking demonstrations, Morris dancing and a guest appearance by Dr Ian Mortimer.

There is evident pride in the house, the family and the armorial bearing, reproduced in colour, and in the family motto being '*Virtute non astutio*' (By excellence, not by cunning). It is therefore something of a surprise that the book opens with a tale of audacious cunning and deception. In 1734, Richard Beckalake, the son of a weaver, presented an Order from the Lord Chancellor giving him authority to change the spelling of his name in the parish register at Hittisleigh. The name Beckalake was carefully amended to read Bidlake and thus began an outrageous claim to the inheritance of the Bidlake estates.

Minute detective work has uncovered a fascinating story of forged documents, grand pretensions and ultimate ruin for the unscrupulous Richard Beckalake.

Elly Babbedge has compiled a comprehensive and engaging record of the Bidlake family history throughout their 750-year connection with Great Bidlake. Using family archives ('The Bidlakes were remarkably good at keeping documents' p.93) and documents lodged in the Devon Heritage Centre as well as a range of secondary sources she has pieced together a story of a family with ambition, but well-grounded by their attachment to land and family. Readers interested in the Civil War will enjoy the chapter on Henry Bidlake, who had strong Royalist sympathies. Other notable Bidlakes include clock-makers, a poet and a competitive cyclist. I was particularly interested to read of William Henry Bidlake, a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts movement and Professor of Architecture at the School of Art in my home town of Birmingham. I'm sure this book will appeal to anyone connected with Great Bidlake, but it will also be enjoyed as a fascinating story of one of the ancient families of Devon.

Knowing of Historic England's project to invite contributions of images, insights and secrets of England's special places (https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/), I feel sure that at least some of this information would be a valuable addition to Great Bidlake's listing.

Viv Styles

[*Editor's note:* Great Bidlake has an illustrated entry in Hugh Meller's book *The Country Houses of Devon*, Black Dog Press, 2015.]

Stephen Banfield, ***Music in the West Country: Social and Cultural History across an English Region*** (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018) 476 pages. Numerous illustrations, several music examples, graph, map and table. Hardback. ISBN 978-1-78327-273-0. £30.

This comprehensive study of the music culture of the West Country, a region defined by the author as having an eastern boundary from Bristol to Salisbury and all points west, takes the reader from the Middle Ages through to the present day. It has to be recognised that to get the full import of this book a fair degree of interest in the practice of music-making ('musicking') needs to be present in the reader and at certain points, albeit only part of a couple of chapters, an understanding of the harmonic structure of music and musical

form. If not to be read from cover to cover, the best way to enter into the musical soundscape is to use the extensive index.

In picking out the Devon towns and villages the book begins to open up, drawing the reader in, introducing the ordinary people of the region for whom anecdotes abound. Devon families notable because of their patronage, or involvement in instrument manufacturing or indeed with a fêted performer amongst their kin, have been realised and a vivid picture drawn by the author's erudite prose. Steeped in both the religious and secular music culture of the region, the reader is presented with details of the lives of the amateur and professional musician, of institutions which fostered music and where, as in cathedrals, it formed the life-blood of the institution. How did cathedrals maintain their prominence, were choralists paid, who was an itinerant musician, how did one village or town manage to pay more for a person's services than the neighbouring settlement? - all questions that the author by teasing out the details gleaned from an incredible amount of research, manages to posit an answer.

For someone interested in the development of the church organ, its manufacture, costs, parish status and local politics, Chapter two abounds with facts, figures and anecdotes. The purchase of a barrel organ in the mid-1800s for Brampford Speke church is a fine example of this, as are examples given from Paignton and Plymouth regarding the playing of the organ for secular entertainment. Chapter three details bands (military, brass and dance) and choirs (sacred, secular) through the centuries and aspects of Devon are well represented, peppered with documentary references. This chapter presents one of the musicological sections but the general reader can pass this by without loss of historical continuity.

The following chapter details the means whereby it was possible to make a living through music whether through patronage, church and/or noted families – important, as at certain periods of time, the wealth of Devon did not match other parts of the region. From a discussion of itinerant musicians and music apprenticeships prior to the inauguration of examinations, the author illustrates teaching in nineteenth century Devon with anecdotes from Crediton and Exeter, before moving on to trade and enterprise, shops and dealers - a piano dealership in Torquay at the turn of the twentieth century is a good example of a Devon music business. Chapter five details biographies of prominent music families and how their musical careers mapped out. Of special interest in Devon was the Davy family, in particular John Davy (1763–1824) who earned his living in a West End theatre from 1790. The biography of William Jackson, who corresponded with Davy when in London, gives an insight into the history of a musical family across three generations.

The chapter sub-titled 'Events and Inventions' opens with an analysis of a folksong. The author deconstructs the song analysing the different layers of meaning. Despite the academic turn of the subject matter, the general reader is urged to stick with it because the impetus is there to look in greater detail, as indeed does the author, at songs about Devon and how folk music was integral to the romanticising of the West Country as a distinct region. The chapter closes with a discussion of evaluating mass events and festivals within the region.

The final chapter focuses on the relevance of institutions throughout the centuries. The reader is taken from pre-Reformation sacred music, through the gradual structuring of a public education system and music, to 'Concert Life, Theatre Life, and Audiences'. The author cites Ashburton as an example of integration between an urban music environment and monastic establishment before a pathway is traced from Exeter Cathedral choristers to music education at Exeter University.

We have here a book overflowing with detailed analysis of the 'musicking' across the centuries, which by its nature invites the reader to undertake further research through a more localised channel. It is without doubt a stimulating and fascinating addition to the cultural historiography of the region, for it shows how Devon situates itself within the greater regional soundscape. 'Non-music' historians ought not to leave this book on the shelf for it contains absolute gems where individuals, families, towns, villages and institutions are concerned.

Susan Skinner

Roger Barrett, ***Salcombe: Schooner Port: A Maritime History of Salcombe & its Merchant Sailing Vessels in the Nineteenth Century*** (Salcombe Maritime Museum, 2018) 230 pages. 256 illustrations, 32 in colour, maps and charts. Paperback. ISBN9781527218512. £19.99.

This well-researched and well-written book is a welcome addition to our knowledge of nineteenth century sailing vessels and sheds light on the lesser known, and very specialised, fruit trade. Wooden vessels could be built on any flat piece of land on the coast and the West Country was noted for the volume of vessels that were built in the many tiny ports and havens around the coast. Salcombe today is a tourist destination, but in the nineteenth century it was a thriving hub of the shipping industry as Roger Barrett's book demonstrates. Little is left now in the town to show this once

all-consuming business in which almost every resident of Salcombe had an interest.

The book is divided into three main sections. Section one 'Fruit schooners, Fishboxes and Deep-sea Traders', looks at the trade for which the ships were built. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Salcombe was a small impoverished fishing village, with the inevitable smuggling connections. By the mid-nineteenth century it was transformed into a bustling and prosperous community as it focused on the niche business of the fruit trade, in particular, the fresh fruit trade across the Atlantic. The Azores were known for their oranges and, further afield, pineapples were brought in from the West Indies. The fresh fruit was brought back in small fast ships with a crew of between five and seven men. The vessels raced back to Liverpool, Bristol and London to bring in the fruit for the winter market. Small ships were ideal as their cargoes did not glut the market and cause depression in prices. They also brought dried fruit back from the Mediterranean. They continued to compete with steam as the small sailing ships could access the very small foreign ports in remote islands. Barrett shows the very significant specialisation of Salcombe in the fruit trade beginning in the 1820s, reaching a peak in 1860 and eventually dying off by the 1870s. Salcombe built its wealth around the fruit trade, but as that came to an end the community diversified into deep sea traders travelling further and carrying a wider range of cargoes from North America, South America and the Far East.

While other ports did have some ships in the fruit trade, Salcombe was by far and away the most specialised location. Barrett also looks at other trades such as the nut trade and the Newfoundland fish trade. He examines the owners, masters and the men. It may seem romantic and attractive viewed from the present, but the men involved worked long and exhausting hours of physical labour and danger at sea to bring back their perishable yet valuable cargoes.

Section two 'Shipbuilding and the Maritime Community' examines the town, the infrastructure and the community. Sailmakers, blockmakers, ropemakers and many other trades from victualling to basic labouring were all essential parts of the shipping industry. This section examines the growth of the town and its move into tourism by the 1890s as the sailing ships finally disappeared.

The final section is 'The Ships and the Builders'. While ships could be, and were, bought in from elsewhere, the vast majority of the ships were built in Salcombe itself. The main shipbuilding families were John Ball & Sons, the Evans family, Bonker, Vivian father and son, Henry Harnden, Dodbrooke, William Date & Sons. There was even a woman shipbuilder, Elizabeth Evans,

who presided over her yard from 1856 to 1876. While much of the book concentrates understandably on individual ships that were built there, it is worth remembering that what kept these businesses going financially was the very significant amount of maintenance and repair work that was required for wooden ships.

This story of Salcombe mirrors the many small ports around England and Wales that came to prominence in the nineteenth century and whose communities expanded and became prosperous in this heyday of wooden shipbuilding. What makes Salcombe unusual is its specialisation in a lesser known trade. The general public is familiar with the short-lived tea races typified by the *Cutty Sark*, and which were hyped by the national press, but the fruit races lasted for a longer period. They had equally beautiful and specially designed fast ships, albeit on a much smaller scale.

The book is wonderfully illustrated with many photographs of Salcombe and the people associated with it. There are useful maps and several charts showing, for instance, the number of sailing vessels by type and tonnage and trade, although in some instances the source of the data is not clear. There are 32 colour plates of which 30 are beautiful pierhead paintings of Salcombe ships. It has a good index and useful source notes. Barrett has searched far for his sources using ship registers, census returns and a very extensive bibliography to pull together an impressive local history of one port in the nineteenth century. He and the museum are to be congratulated for bringing this important trade to the attention of a wider audience.

Helen Doe

Tony Brooks, *Kelly Mine and the 'Shiny Ore' Mines of the Wray Valley* (Published privately, 2016) xiv+189 pages. Line drawings, maps and halftones. A5 Softback. £12.99.

Shiny Ore, known to mineralogists as Micaceous Hematite, or Micaceous Iron Ore (MIO), is an unusual form of iron, which in Devon, was exploited from a small cluster of mines in the Hennock to Lustleigh area. Among these mines, the best known example is Kelly in the Wray Valley near Lustleigh. Over the past decade many of us have enjoyed visiting Kelly Mine on bi-annual open days, or other organised trips, to witness the amazing achievement of the Kelly Mine Preservation Society (KMPS), who have been restoring and researching this important asset since 1985. Remarkably, apart from a few printed articles, no substantial publication covering Kelly and the other Wray Valley

mines has been attempted until now. This welcome addition to the literature of West Country mining, by mining authority Tony Brooks, complements his earlier work on Devon's other significant MIO mine at Great Rock, *Devon's Last Metal Mine* (2004).

A variety of sources have been brought together to produce this very readable account, including documentation, maps and plans, contemporary photographs, underground surveys and oral testimony.

Following a somewhat brief first chapter on geology, the historical narrative for Kelly Mine, up until closure in the Second World War, is divided chronologically between the next five chapters. Wray and Pepperdon mines, worked only in the 20th century, are discussed in a separate chapter, as is a short renaissance for Kelly, when worked alongside Pepperdon from 1942 to 1952. Plumley and Shaptor Mines are the subject for a separate chapter, while Hawkmoor Mine is dealt with singly. A summary of the lesser mining remains in the valley and the work of the Kelly Mine Preservation Society are in chapters near the back of the volume, together with nine appendices, expanding the detail of some of the themes discussed. Helpful maps and diagrams, together with crisp half-tone photographs are used throughout the book, all reproduced to a good standard.

For the earlier period of Kelly's operations, information is somewhat sketchy up until 1890. Nevertheless, drawing on a range of mainly printed sources, including the all important *Mining Journal*, the author has provided an outline history for the origin and progress of the search for this mineral in the Wray Valley. Early writers it seems, were confused by the type of ore exploited here, often mistakenly describing it as tin or lead. In fact MIO was a specialized iron product, used to produce writing sand in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and later as a paint additive.

Although the narrative covering the operations and operators of these mines in the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries is of interest (covered in the first four chapters), for this reviewer, the book takes a far more insightful turn in chapter five, the period after 1926. From that time onward, oral testimony provided by those who worked in the mines, or remember them when working, is available, gleaned from interviews conducted by members of the KMPS. Paradoxically, written records for the mines, especially the smaller ones, are scarcer for the twentieth century so the oral record has proved vital. The author is mindful of the pitfalls of often conflicting, and sometimes incorrect accounts found within these memories, but by carefully checking and correlation with other sources, a body of intriguing information has been gathered. This includes not only the details of working methods used for mining and ore dressing, but small, non-technical insights,

such as the constraints caused by limitations of the water supply, or the small scale of the equipment at the mines, which were clearly working on a shoe-string scale, with a small number of hands. One demonstration of crucial information arising from such sources comes from several of the correspondents mentioning the existence of an ore dressing plant near Hyner Bridge. This site was not known to the modern researchers but an investigation based on these accounts led to the rediscovery of its overgrown remains.

At a more human level, there is Cliff Wills' account of his half-hour walk to turn on the water supply each morning, setting rabbit snares on the way up the hill, then collecting his quarry when returning in the evening to shut the water off. The experience of different miners, often very young, and the occasional ill-health of the older men together with the clearly arduous conditions within which they worked, is in contrast with their stoical attitudes and positive reflections on their time at these mines. All such memories prove the social value of this type of research, and interest in this book will certainly extend beyond those primarily concerned with mining history.

Other important elements of the book include the historical accounts and site descriptions of the smaller mines in the Wray Valley, including, Pepperdon, Hawkmoor and Shaptor. Although these sites have proved to possess scant documentary record, the author has compiled a respectable baseline account and alerted us to what remains in the landscape.

Apart from the well publicized mine remains at Kelly, the historical significance of the Wray Valley mines as a whole, and the extent of what survives, are not widely known. This well-researched, easy to read account will go a long way towards addressing that gap in knowledge, as well as providing a lasting record for the recollections of some of those involved.

Phil Newman

Martin Graebe, ***As I Walked Out: Sabine Baring-Gould and the Search for the Folk Songs of Devon and Cornwall*** (Oxford: Signal Books 2017) xxi + 420 pages. Softback. ISBN 978-1-909930-53-7. Illustrations. 5 appendices. £16.99.

Sabine Baring Gould (1834–1924), hereafter SBG, was a Victorian polymath; hymn writer, folk song collector, antiquarian, archaeologist, squire and parson ('squarson') of Lew Trenchard, and much more. Although he lived

well into the twentieth century, his upbringing, outlooks and best works were Victorian.

Martin Graebe, in a piece of self-deprecating humour, subtitles his introduction as 'Baring-Gould and Me (a Journey Towards Obsession)'. He side-stepped the true obsessive's pitfall of not publishing until a few more facts had been garnered, i.e. never publishing. He did not reach journey's end so his book presents a well-rounded account of one aspect of the life of a very complex character.

SBG was a pioneer in the world of folk song collection, not the first but the first to make such extensive enquiries. As he progressed he had to develop his own rules and procedures. Lacking the musical skills to note a tune straight from the lips of a singer he collaborated with the Rev Frederick William Bussell and the Rev Henry Fleetwood Sheppard, who also arranged his songs for publication. At other times he collaborated with other scholars and researchers, not always to their mutual satisfaction.

The constant theme throughout SBG's life was a shortage of funds to carry out the changes he had vowed to make at Lew Trenchard and to support his family of fifteen children, fourteen of whom survived into adulthood. At times to make ends meet he rented out Lew Trenchard Manor House and moved his family abroad, where it was cheaper to live. Another way he earned money was to write novels, in his opinion a necessary evil which took him away from his serious studies.

Throughout the book we meet SBG's family, friends, collaborators, rivals and the old singers. Most of the old singers were born before Victoria became Queen and the oldest predated the Battle of Waterloo. Life in Victorian Devon is difficult for us to imagine, but SBG filled every waking hour as only a Victorian could.

Noting a folk song involved initially making a value judgement about the merits of the tune and words, frequently the latter were earthier than Victorian mores would accept. SBG had a broad view but some texts were beyond the pale. Then came the laborious work of noting the tune and words, usually from an elderly person whose diction and grasp of a tune may not have been secure. Thereafter, every copy of a song entered into a personal manuscript or a loan book was done long-hand, which risked copyist's errors and casual 'improvements'. Songs for publication would often need softening, or re-writing, and setting to a piano score to make them marketable in the drawing rooms of England. Any song may appear in half a dozen different versions, which Martin Graebe has unravelled and put into order.

No book on folk songs would be complete without some examples, so

Appendix B contains a dozen songs with tunes while in Appendix A the noted musicologist Julia Bishop investigates the characteristics of the tunes that SGB found. The text is liberally laced with the texts of songs from the SBG collection.

When I reached the end of this book I had the satisfaction of feeling that I had just completed a book that will not be bettered in my lifetime. It is an excellent piece of scholarship. Undoubtedly more details will come to light, but nothing will change this story of a remarkable man.

Bob Patten

Denise Holton and Elizabeth J Hammett, *A-Z of Barnstaple: Places – People – History* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018) 96 pages. Illustrations. Softback. ISBN 9781445677750. £14.99.

Barnstaple is Devon's fourth largest urban settlement and has always sought to claim the title of capital of North Devon, no matter how much Bideford might have disputed the matter. This book, the latest in a series of A-Z books about British towns and the first to cover anywhere in Devon, sets out to illustrate, in text and pictures, the rich history of the town. It is also the third book about Barnstaple by these authors.

A great challenge to all A-Z books is to find suitable entries for every letter and this book just about manages to do this. The sub-title of places, people and history gives an accurate picture of the nature of the entries. The categories are not exclusive and much of the history of the town is told by way of particular places and people, and place related entries constitute about a half. Any selection like this must rest on a mixture of accumulated historical practice and purely personal opinion and my one slight quibble about the book lies in the matter of place, perhaps reflecting my disciplinary origins as a geographer. Appledore, Braunton and Instow (with Arlington as the home of the Chichester family) all get short entries but Bishops Tawton and Tawstock, into which the continuously built-up area of Barnstaple has extended for most of the twentieth century, do not. Tawstock Court is one of the major sights as one approaches Barnstaple by train and is surely also one of the architectural gems of North Devon. One might also argue a case for the inclusion, among the people, of Henry Williamson whose book, *Tarka the Otter*, has come almost to define North Devon and who wrote an attractive short story, *The Scandaroon*, about the River Yeo and the Derby area of the town. However, this is really nit-picking and, as the authors claim in their introduction, the

book covers all that one might have expected and also introduces people and places that are less well known.

Barnstaple has been a great place for re-inventing itself and effacing aspects of its history. In the nineteenth century most of the surviving medieval town was either demolished or disappeared behind suitably Victorian gothic shop fronts. By the late twentieth century, the town had lost most traces of its former manufacturing industry, such as furniture making, lace, pottery and woollens (although brewing, iron founding, tanning and leather working are omissions in the book) and also had turned its back on its rivers and forgotten about its long history of maritime trade. The entries in the book stand as correctives to such a selective and incomplete history of the town. I fear that the authors are too generous on the subject of the alleged charter of King Athelstan supposed to have been granted to the town in 930. Even as the Millenary was being celebrated in 1930, many historians doubted the authenticity of the charter, suspecting that it was a medieval forgery and it is now nearly fifty years since Susan Reynolds showed that five more medieval charters were almost certainly fourteenth century forgeries. Barnstaple, as successor to Pilton, could trace its history back to King Alfred's defensive boroughs in the ninth century and merited an entry in the Domesday Book as a borough, which the authors note.

The book is attractively presented with an excellent choice of photographs old and new. A minor typographic error in the contents list gives Holt Trinity Church (*sic*) but this is hardly a reason to be other than delighted with the book as a celebration of Barnstaple, its people and history.

John Bradbeer

Samantha Little, (ed.), ***Writing home to Brixham: lives across a century – letters from Brixham men and women serving in the Great War, 1914–1918,*** vol. 1. (Brixham: Brixham Heritage Museum, 2017). ISBN 9780995720800. £3.

Brixham contributed hugely to the war effort – about a quarter of its population enlisted. These letters home demonstrate over and again the affection in which the town was held by its service-men, and the town's pride in their achievement and sacrifice. Samantha Little (who has also written *Through Cloud and Sunshine: Brixham in the Great War*, Brixham Heritage Museum, 2008), deserves warm thanks for bringing together what must be an unusually rich correspondence. The letters are well-presented and well linked together.

Lots of questions arise, mainly because this is volume one. We are not told how many more volumes are to follow. We can only hope that the concluding volume will provide an editorial framework or context. For example, where do these letters survive? We must assume in the museum at Brixham, but we are not told. If not, what is their provenance? If in the museum, who first collected them, and how? Was an appeal made? Then, it would be helpful to know if the Brixham archive is matched by similar collections elsewhere – or is it an unusual survival? Do the Brixham letters fall into a pattern (I'm guessing they do) found across the country? Did some of the letters evade the censor? (and if so, how?). I realise all this sounds a little carping, but such a potentially important collection cries out for a solid introduction, setting the scene for the reader.

Andrew Jones

Lustleigh Society, ***In the Footsteps of the Victorians: Aspects of change in the Wrey Valley and surrounding area, 1837–1901*** (Lustleigh Society, 2018) 211 pages. Illustrations. Paperback. ISBN 9780995712218. £10 plus p. & p. from Emma Stockley at emma@moorthanmeetstheye.org

You have to congratulate the Lustleigh Society. Ten members have contributed eleven chapters to their professionally produced 211-page book about their area. It is truly commendable that a group of local historians could produce a collection of essays about various aspects of a circumscribed area. The theme is social history and reflects the title of the book, though it does stray out of the strict geographical Wrey Valley to include a chapter entitled 'Occupational survey of Chagford 1851–1901' by Judith Moss.

The book begins with an introductory chapter (anonymously written) setting the scene for the rest of the book, and this includes perhaps the only disappointing feature. A reproduction of an Ordnance Survey map sheet is so compressed and faintly printed that even with a magnifying glass details are impossible to read. Otherwise the chapter is a splendid introduction to the book.

One item particularly caught the eye of the present reviewer, who, as a boy of ten, was evacuated from his school to his soon-to-be invaded island home of Guernsey to the cotton mill town of Oldham. It was reported in the *Western Morning News* of 1889 that 84,000 pairs of clog soles cut from local alder trees were being sent to Manchester for 'Lancashire operatives'. He

clearly remembers the mill women clackety-clacking along the street as late as 1940.

The introduction is followed by chapter one, where Mike Lang's description of the coming of the railway mentions the fact that it was originally laid out to Brunel's broad gauge principles, and there is a photograph of one of the locomotives.

Chapter two, by Peter Mason, develops the railway theme, and describes Eastern Dartmoor as portrayed in the Victorian guidebooks and newspapers of the day. I found this chapter especially interesting, and the writer has researched his subject with considerable thoroughness, with numerous quotes from contemporary publications.

The subject of the book now becomes more social, and chapter three concerns population changes in the Wrey Valley, based largely on census analysis. Chapter four is about Chagford, the only section which strays from the Wrey Valley. This is illustrated with nine pie charts, and they are very revealing. For example, the statistics show that in 1851 Chagford had twenty-eight dressmakers and twenty-one boot and shoe makers!

Chapter five, by Chris Wilson and entitled 'The Victorian High Street', perhaps fits oddly in to this rural survey, and it tends to concentrate on Moretonhampstead and Chagford, and includes things like inquests, societies, customs and celebrities, and includes the development of the hospitality industry.

The next chapter, chapter six, grows seamlessly from the previous one, and deals with social life and leisure, with sport beginning to be addressed. It is a measure of the depth of research that this chapter has fifty-seven notes at the end.

The book now moves on to the specific occupations, and mining and quarrying in the Wrey Valley are well summarised. Mining, of course, has had several books written about it as the 'shiny ores' of the area have been well researched.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the arrival of the railway did not greatly lead to the expansion of granite quarrying, but it did lead to a change in the built environment of Lustleigh (chapter nine).

Chapters ten and eleven deal with the subject of education in Lustleigh and the development of the pottery industry in Victorian Bovey by the Divett family. This little-known aspect of the area has been very well researched, with a good number of notes at the end of the chapter.

The book's coverage of the Wrey Valley in time and activities is quite splendid, and one wishes that more parts of the county could be similarly

evaluated. There has clearly been an over-riding hand behind it, to draw everything together, for although it is the work of many contributors there is a quality of assembly which seems to make it the work of one author However, there is one minor omission, that of an index.

Brian Le Messurier

Peter F. Mason, *Dartmoor, a Wild and Wondrous Region: the Portrayal of Dartmoor in Art, 1750–1920* (Exeter: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, 2017) 47 pages. 21 plates. Softback. ISBN 9780956391025. £9.95.

Dartmoor, a Wild and Wondrous Region is the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter from December 2017 to April 2018; the exhibition encompassed oil paintings, watercolours, art postcards and early photographs and was 'the first major review of how Dartmoor has been portrayed in art, and the largest exhibition of its kind in a generation' (p. 9).

Before the eighteenth century, as Patricia Milton makes clear in her 2006 book *The Discovery of Dartmoor: a Wild and Wondrous Region* (Chichester: Phillimore), Dartmoor was considered an inhospitable and dreary place, but two factors combined to change this view. The first was the increased appreciation of landscape painting, influenced both by the scenery and art encountered by the Britons who went on the Grand Tour, and popularised by British artists such as Richard Wilson; the second was the rise of tourism within Britain (Peter Mason observes that the word tourist 'did not come into common usage until the 1780s' – p. 15), which was stimulated by William Gilpin's concept of the picturesque ('a scene that pleases the eye'), and embodied in Gilpin's travel guides highlighting the picturesque aspects of the River Wye (1782), of the Lake District (1786) and of the Highlands of Scotland (1789). When the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1789–1815) closed the Continent to British travellers and artists, they sought new areas to visit and paint within Britain, and, although Dartmoor was not top of the agenda, it did meet the criteria for those seeking the sublime and the picturesque. Indeed, looking at the catalogue, the picturesque is the dominant style of painting from the earliest artist mentioned in the catalogue, George Lambert (around 1700 to 1765), to the two Widgerys, father William (1826–1893) and son Frederick (1861–1942), whereas the different artistic perceptions created by Impressionism and Post-Impressionism are not apparent in paintings of Dartmoor till the early twentieth century.

Peter Mason, who curated the exhibition, and is a well-known local

historian and expert on Victorian travellers to Dartmoor, has gathered together a very interesting and representative collection of paintings for this exhibition, and has put them into their historical and artistic contexts in the catalogue. The catalogue opens with George Lambert's *Moorland Landscape with Rainstorm* which seems to have been based on the Plym Valley and is considered by Mason to be 'the first known work to capture something of the wildness of Dartmoor' (p. 13). Interestingly George Lambert is not mentioned in Brian Le Messurier's comprehensive *Dartmoor Artists* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2002), nor in the excellent analysis 'Dartmoor and its Artists', which forms the opening chapter of Jane Baker's *A Vision of Dartmoor: Paintings by F. J. Widgery, 1861–1942* (London: Gollancz, 1988).

After Lambert, Mason goes on to describe works by major artists such as J. M. W. Turner, Richard Wilson and Samuel Palmer, all of whom visited Devon at least once, and also the work of those with a closer connection to Devon, such as William Payne, whose painting of Brent Tor is described by Mason as 'almost the ultimate expression of the sublime' (p. 16), Francis Towne, John Gendall, Francis Stevens, William Spreat, William Traies, Frederick Richard Lee, and, of course, the aforementioned Widgerys. Mason also looks at the often-ignored work of artists like Edmond Morison Wimperis, Henry Wimbush, George Henry Jenkins (father and son) and Charles Brittan (also father and son), who produced paintings (known as "oilettes") for reproduction on postcards produced by the firm of Raphael Tuck, and which were bought in their thousands by tourists from 1903 onwards. Equally popular were views of Dartmoor locations produced commercially by photographers like Francis Bedford, William Merrifield and Francis Frith, and the author highlights a particularly curious photographic example of the 1860s, in which Bedford created a stereo-view of Lustleigh Cleave which mirrors in its arrangement the famous painting of the same view by Francis Stevens which has been described as the 'first large-scale painting of Dartmoor proper' (p. 26), and which now hangs in the Devon and Exeter Institution. The catalogue continues with the twentieth-century move away from the picturesque and into more modern painting styles as exemplified by the work of James Dickson Innes and John Baragwanath King, although the catalogue concludes with a 1911 drawing by Edwin Lutyens of Castle Drogo, which, with its now outmoded emphasis on the picturesque, provides a 'full stop to this story of how Dartmoor was portrayed in art in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' (p. 44).

This is an excellent catalogue of an exhibition which will live long in the memory.

Paul Auchterlonie

Joanna Mattingly (ed.), *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts, 1512–1578* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series, vol. 60, 2018). 322 pages. Softback. ISBN 9780901853608. £30.

Although this books deals with the Cornish parish of Stratton, in the far northeast of the Duchy, Stratton's position as 'the principal entrance into Cornwall from Devon' (p. 4) and its position bordering several parishes in West Devon means that historians of Devon can learn a considerable amount from these meticulously edited records. In the accounts, there are mentions (often multiple mentions) of places in Devon such as Plymouth, Ashburton, Exeter, Chagford, Cullompton, Honiton, Teignmouth, Totnes, Tavistock, Pilton, Plymtree and Morebath, as well as records relating to parishes or religious foundations close to the county border such as Hartland Abbey, Holsworthy, Pancrasweek, Bradworthy and Buckland Abbey.

The churchwardens' accounts themselves are significant 'because they are among eighteen (of some two hundred) surviving sets of pre-Reformation churchwardens' accounts, which cover the whole period 1535–70 when most Reformation change took place' (p. 1). In addition to the churchwardens' accounts, partial sets of general receivers' or stock wardens' accounts for Stratton survive from the same period, while the editor has made use of several other classes of documents (contracts, leases, tax lists, wills, etc.) to 'clarify obscure points' (p. 2)

The book consists of a detailed and scholarly introduction (which includes details of how Stratton was affected by Thomas Cranmer's visitation of 1534–35 and the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549), a meticulously transcribed and edited set of churchwardens' accounts 1512–1578, an edition and transcription of two general receivers' accounts book (Book One deals with 1531, and 1534–49; Book Two with 1557–81), appendices dealing with related matters such as the rood loft contract of 1531, the church house court case of 1583 and several church inventories, and concludes with very full supporting matter consisting of a glossary, extensive 'Notes on People', a bibliography and indexes of persons, places and subjects.

This is a valuable addition to Cornish history, and an interesting account of how a Cornish parish coped with the momentous events of the Reformation, with the bonus for the readers of *The Devon Historian* of considerable information on the many and varied contacts between Stratton and the people and parishes of Devon in the sixteenth century.

Paul Auchterlonie

Phil Newman (ed.), *The Tinworking Landscape of Dartmoor in a European Context* (Woolwell, Plymouth: Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group, 2017) 153 pp., c.135 figures, illustrations and maps, softback, A4 format. ISBN 978-0-9529442-4-9. £18.00.

In his book *The Early British Tin Industry* published in 2000, Sandy Gerrard concluded that the full complex picture of the industry was still waiting to be discovered, and looked forward to future revelations. Since then there has indeed been further research into the history of the tin industry, confined to Devon and Cornwall within Britain and yet of international importance, but mostly published as scattered nuggets in various journals. This new work therefore provides a very welcome update and synthesis, the product of an impressively international conference organised in Tavistock in 2016 to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group. The editor must be commended for having assembled the various papers from a number of experts and completed the volume for publication in little more than a year.

As far as Dartmoor itself is concerned, there is a short primer on the relevant geology from Richard Scrivener and Henrietta Quinnell which provides a useful summary of recent work on the industry from the Bronze Age to the early medieval period. Tom Greeves contributes two papers: a general overview of the industry from the twelfth century is nicely complemented by the introduction of a range of individual miners, smelters and managers, and there is a separate article on building remains that survive in great number on the moor. Phil Newman examines this and other landscape evidence of the industry's development and technology since the eighteenth century, and there is a very brief summary by Simon Hughes of the field archaeology preceding the recent reopening of the mine at Hemerdon near Plympton. Moving away from Dartmoor, Peter Herring's paper on tinworking in the Cornish landscape explains the field remains of sophisticated approaches to extracting tin from alluvial deposits as well as mining, and also brings out some of the wider economic and social implications of the industry since the medieval period.

This is useful enough as far as the Westcountry is concerned, but it is highly admirable that the conference raised its sights to an international level commensurate with the industry's wider significance. Your reviewer might not be the only reader to struggle with the science of isotopic fractionation, but the paper provided by a project team based in Germany seeking – ingeniously – to identify the different geographic fingerprints of tin deposits in prehistoric bronzes raises the intriguing possibility of truly long distance trade in tin over 4,000 years ago. It is even possible that bronze cast in Mesopotamia

incorporated tin from the Westcountry and Iberia as well as from the far nearer Afghanistan. Two of the other main tin producing regions of Europe are also represented here. Petr Rojik presents the results of his research in Bohemia combining fieldwork, LiDaR imagery, chemical analysis and documentary study to show remarkable similarities to Westcountry streamworks used to extract tin from alluvial deposits. Also from the Czech Republic, Michael Rund describes a sixteenth century tin mine recently reopened as a museum. The book concludes with a summary of several case studies of tin research at several locations in northwest Spain and Portugal from the Bronze Age onwards.

These various contributions remind us that the English southwest has been connected by sea to the wider world for millennia. The book sparks so many new questions. What explains, for example, the apparent surge in Dartmoor tin production from the fifteenth century? Did pewter, with its high tin content, appear widely on tables during this 'golden age of the labourer'? What of the fuel used in smelting? Both wood and pear charcoal are mentioned, and it would be instructive to learn more of the transition from the former to the latter. And where are the kilns in which the wood and pear were turned into charcoal, so notoriously brittle to transport over any distance? This attractively produced book whets the appetite for more.

Greg Finch

Pamela Vass, *Breaking the Mould: The Suffragette Story in North Devon* (Bideford: Boundstone Books, 2017) 256 pages. Illustrations. Paperback. ISBN 9780956870964. £10.99.

Vass begins *Breaking the Mould* with an imaginary description of the night in March 1912, when Adela Pankhurst arrived in Ilfracombe to speak in a debate on women's suffrage.

The imaginary description of actual events has become a popular method of bringing historical narratives to life (e.g., Anne Carwardine's, *Disgusted Ladies: The Women of Tunbridge Wells who fought for the right to vote*, Leicester: Matador, 2018).

Vass focusses her account of the events of that night on two North Devon suffragettes, both prominent members of the Ilfracombe branch of the militant WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union), Anne Ball and Marie du Sautoy Newby.

The author also includes in her narrative an event which obviously intrigued her. In August 1910 she mentions the arrival in Ilfracombe of a mysterious woman she calls Cerisa Palmer. (We find out more about this woman in chapter ten, p. 102).

Avoiding the necessity of having detailed information of when and where things happened in the main text of her book, Vass has a very helpful local timeline at the back which tells us that an Ilfracombe branch of the Women's Social and Political Union was set up in October 1910 at the home of Marie du Sautoy Newby, wife of a distinguished surgeon, Charles Newby. Mrs Newby became the treasurer of the group and Anne Ball, an independent business woman, the literary secretary.

The first event organised by the new branch was to be a visit by Lady Isabel Margesson, an active WSPU speaker, who would address the audience on the subject of women's suffrage at the Gaiety Hall, in Ilfracombe on November 12th. The event was such a success that many new members joined the group.

Vass goes on to describe two protests organised by the suffragettes in North Devon as a background in which to place her two protagonists.

In 1911 there was a census to be taken, and all over the country suffrage groups were organising women to boycott the census by staying away from home or defacing their census form. The Women's Freedom League announced that 'women do not count neither shall they be counted'.

In Ilfracombe Anne Ball organised census resistance by encouraging local women to spoil their returns, by writing on the form something like 'No Vote No Census'. She opened up her nursing home in Barnstaple so that anyone could go there to stay the night and avoid the census. Once again, Vass writes an imaginary description of the events at Anne Ball's house on census night. The mysterious Cerisa Palmer is assumed to have joined the Ilfracombe WSPU Group, because Vass imagines that when the time came for the group to go to sleep Cerisa Palmer turned towards the wall to claim her own private space. (chapter six, pp. 72-73). Palmer is not mentioned in the report of the census evasion in Barnstaple in the relevant article in *Votes for Women*, (7 April 1911), although there is no doubt that she was a member of WSPU (see *Votes for Women*, 29 September 1911).

The second national protest which the fledgling group joined in was the Tax Resistance Campaign, set up in October 1909 to organise the refusal of women to pay their taxes , the slogan of the group being 'No vote, no tax'. As usual, Anne Ball was the dominant figure in the protest. The *North Devon Journal* (no date given by Vass), reported that Anne Ball 'recently refused a demand for imperial taxes as a protest against the exclusion of women from the privilege of the vote.'(p. 76). The report goes on to state that goods were

seized from Ball's home to cover the amount owed, but when they were auctioned her friends purchased the items, which were then returned to her.

Another example of Vass speculating on events without offering any evidence is that she suggests that Anne Ball was influenced to carry out her protest by the arrival in the district of the Honourable Evelina Haverfield, a well-known suffragette, who, Vass claims, was 'the person who most likely encouraged Anne Ball' to join the campaign (p. 75).

Vass continues her description of the activities of the Ilfracombe and Barnstaple WSPU Group in chapter eight, headed 'Loud and Proud in London ...' In the spring of 1911, at a meeting in Anne Ball's house the charismatic suffragette Annie Kenney urged the group and their supporters to make the trip to London to participate in the great suffrage procession planned for June 17th. The group decided to join the procession and Anne Ball was tasked to make the arrangements. Vass provides the reader with a vivid description of the procession of 40,000 women taken from the testimony of a Miss Skrine in the *Bath Chronicle* (no reference given).

It is in chapter ten that the mysterious Cerisa Palmer re-enters the story, when the news came of her death from drowning off the Tunnels Beaches at Ilfracombe. The group did not know that Palmer's brother was the well-known Irish nationalist leader and politician Charles Parnell, who agitated for land reform and home rule in the 1880s. Her real name was Anna Parnell. In Ireland she had been an active member of the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association.

Vass makes the assumption that because in the account of the inquest in the *North Devon Journal* of 28 September 1911 it was reported by a witness that the 'deceased never spoke nor called out', that Anna Parnell may have committed suicide, claiming on page 106 that 'the papers reported it as a tragic accident. But some in Ilfracombe wondered if there was more to it ... witnesses reported that she was conscious, maybe intent on allowing events to take their course'. What the witness actually said was not that she was conscious but that 'breath was in the body', so there is a possibility that she was in fact unconscious. At the inquest the jury returned a verdict of accidental death with which the coroner agreed and no evidence was brought forward or even the suggestion made that Parnell took her own life.

In November 1911 Prime Minister Asquith announced that he intended to introduce a Manhood Suffrage Bill, which could be capable of amendment to include women. However, the WSPU knew that no private members' amendment would gain a majority, and they saw the exclusion of women from the bill as an outrage and vowed to continue with their militant campaign. The next plan, was to rally representatives from all the suffrage societies to

be part of a deputation to see Asquith at 10 Downing Street on November 17th 1911. Despite Asquith's reassurances WSPU remained determined to continue their activities with a deputation to the House of Commons and organised window smashing. Two hundred and twenty women and three men were arrested. Marie Newby went up to London to show solidarity with the other members of WSPU. In a semi-fictional account Marie joins the crowd of women in Parliament Square until she is 'set upon in the crush'. She is not arrested, but Vass records that some Devon WSPU members were arrested and imprisoned, including Olive Wharry from Holsworthy.

Her exploits in London must have given Marie Newby a taste for militant protest, because on March 4th 1912 she was back in London for a window-breaking protest. This time she was arrested and sentenced to two months imprisonment with hard labour in Holloway prison. She went on hunger strike but we don't know if she was force fed.

Meanwhile the Ilfracombe group continued with their meetings, debates, protests and political lobbying. The non-militant NUWSS was now busy campaigning and attracting members in North Devon too. The new WSPU organiser, Mary Phillips, encouraged the group to carry out more militant activities. One of their ambitious plans was to target Hollerday House, Lynton, home of the son of publisher George Newnes. On 3rd August 1913, the house was set on fire. The events of that night are described by Vass in a fictionalised account, which imagines the motivation behind the event. There were other similar outrages carried out in 1913 in North Devon – Lynton Town Hall was set on fire, and Bideford Bowling Pavilion was destroyed by fire.

Vass ends her book in 1918 when the vote is given to women over the age of thirty and meeting a property qualification.

Vass's methodology is to constantly link the most important events of the national women's suffrage campaign with the activities of the Ilfracombe women, and this works well in that it is a good way of learning about the campaign as it was manifested at a local level. It also places these extraordinary women in the historical record.

However, I do have some reservations about the textual presentation. The book is padded out with quite lengthy descriptions of national events, but the stories of Emily Wilding Davison and Constance Markievicz do not need to be re-told in a Devon local history since there is a time line of events at the back of the book which is sufficient to inform the reader about what was happening on the national scene.

The lack of an index and no detailed references to exactly where information was found (a list of sources is not enough) is annoying and

frustrating, but a common fault in local histories, and the fictionalised descriptions are inappropriate in a book which gives the impression of being an historical account of the suffragette campaign in North Devon.

M.M. Auchterlonie

Robert Waterhouse, *The Tavistock Canal: Its History and Archaeology* (Camborne: Trevithick Society, 2017) xi+ 536 pages. line drawings, maps, photographs. A4 hardback (£50), softback £30.

This book provides much more than one might assume from the limited wording of the title, for it brings together, in massive detail, an account not just of the Tavistock Canal, but also the many industries that relied on it, as well as their secondary transport infrastructure, such as tramways, inclines and the use of water power. Also included are the author's investigations at the main quay on the Tamar, served indirectly by the canal, at Morwellham, and if that's not enough, there is also a very full account of the numerous metal mines associated with the canal. The majority of what is presented is new original research, and although the author generously acknowledges his debt to earlier researchers of the Tamar Valley's industrial archaeology, the fact is his own work has knocked most previous offerings into a cocked hat by the scale of the research, the level of scholarship, and the extremely high quality and detail of the final publication.

The book is the product of many years research by the author, bringing together archive and historical research, archaeological survey, excavation and subterranean survey. The author also explains how this work and the themes contained therein, very much complement the work of his friend and colleague Rick Stewart, who was simultaneously working on his volume on *Devon Great Consols*, published in 2013 [reviewed in *The Devon Historian*, vol. 84, 2015].

Early chapters discuss the conception of the canal, the formation of the Canal Company and various people involved in financing, planning and building the Tavistock Canal. This includes John Taylor the famous mining entrepreneur and perhaps the most significant figure in the story; he surveyed the course of the canal and was its resident engineer during construction, but was also involved with management of several canal mines and, later, with overhauling Morwellham Quay.

The construction of the four and a half mile canal and its two-mile

branch to Mill Hill took 16 years, from 1803 to 1819. The author presents the progress of this intense period of activity as a well written narrative, though the level of the detail is formidable, with several pages devoted to each year of construction outlining the various problems encountered and their technical solutions. The ambitious tunnel on Morwell Down was clearly a time-consuming and costly part of the project, and problems with it included dealing with bad air, excessive backed-up water, and some very hard rock, all hampering progress. Keeping the whole project to within budget was also, predictably, something of a struggle. Following completion, the canal underwent many further developments and structural improvements during its 54 year operational life, which, together with a description of the practicalities of working the canal and its fascinating infrastructure, are considered in some depth.

The canal project was never viewed by its investors as solely the creation of a system of water conveyance, for its construction also offered a massive opportunity to exploit a number of metalliferous lodes, which lay beneath its course within the Duke of Bedford's lands. These mines, and others, acquired by the Canal Company or those associated with it during this episode, such as Taylor, and referred to as the 'Canal Mines', are covered at length. Each mine is provided with a brief history, and in some cases the author has undertaken fieldwork and survey, presented as illustrations and photographs. Water power and the diversion of water needed to turn the wheels, was essential to maintain these mines and to power other industries in the locality, and once again the author provides us with many detailed surveys of water-powered installations, accompanied by explanations, reconstruction drawings and photographs. Canalside industries, and others benefitting from the existence of the canal, including forges, lime kilns, tin smelters, and their various buildings and infrastructure are given a similar treatment.

Although some results of archaeological investigations carried out by the author are dispersed amongst the various themes described above, including the groundbreaking work at the canal mines, a separate chapter is given over to the archaeology of the canal itself, focussing on its landscape impact and remaining built assets. These include tunnel portals, bridges, cuttings, aqueducts and quayside buildings, all illustrated with maps, plans, section drawings and photographs.

Wharves and quays dispersed along the canal are discussed in a similar level of detail, including Morwellham, which, although geographically separate from the canal, was its main destination wharf. For sound reasons the author has refrained from a complete history of the quay, but having carried out a great deal of fieldwork and excavation at this site, he has been

able to present a very authoritative set of development plans for the period between 1787 to 1873, which is most relevant to the operation of the canal.

Meticulous attention has been devoted to plateways, tramways and railways used by the canal and its supporting industries. The information presented is almost entirely the result of archaeological work at several of the locations, revealing many in-situ remains and artefacts and giving the author the opportunity to present some interesting conclusions. One suspects that much of this intriguing information would be unknown to us if relying on historical accounts alone.

In a short review it is not possible to pay this book the full attention it deserves, but all in all, it is an impressive piece of work – well-researched, well-written and visually excellent. The themes are sensibly organised and the text is very readable and most of the illustrations are produced to a good standard. There is nothing of significance to criticise but one or two of the map drawings are a little over-detailed with text overlaying linework and the use of red text over colour and black and white photographs, has made some text difficult to read. Several drawings and photographs have slipped through at low resolution (including 12.21 and 12.22). This is beyond the author's control but should have been picked up at layout or proofing stage.

Sadly, a DVD containing appendices and much detailed additional information on many aspects of the research, referred to several times in the text, had to be withdrawn by the publishers after the book was printed due to a copyright issue. However, for the general reader, this will not affect appreciation of what is already a comprehensive piece of work.

Phil Newman

Anthony J. Wheaton, *A Lasting Impression: a History of Wheatons in Exeter* (Tedburn St Mary: AJW Publishing, 2017) 184 pages. Illustrated. Hardback. ISBN 9781527213272. £20.

On 1 June 2017 Wheatons Exeter Ltd finally closed its doors after more than two centuries of trading, during which it became the largest printers and publishers in Exeter and one of the city's largest employers. Anthony Wheaton joined the family firm in 1959 and worked with it until 1987, returning in 2011 for its final years. He is therefore well qualified to produce the history of this important publisher, especially as he has in his possession 'a suitcase of family archives and Wheaton company records including pictures, newspaper

cuttings, catalogues and memoirs'. It is this suitcase whose contents are spread out before us in this colourfully designed book, supplemented by contributions from former colleagues and retired and working employees.

A time-line winds its way through the main body of the text, charting the developments year by year. The earliest years are sketchy, perhaps reflecting the loss of many of the firm's archives in the blitz. Wheatons' origin can be traced to 'a Mr Penny' (actually James Penny) who began trading in Southgate Street, Exeter in about 1788, later taking his son James as partner. They moved to 185 Fore Street by 1823. William Gain took over the business from Penny and Son in about 1834 and William Wheaton acquired it from Caroline Gain in July 1835. These early details have escaped the author but he does provide useful information on William Wheaton, the founder of the firm. Details on the other members of the family who were linked with the firm are difficult to disentangle from the thread of the narrative which is unfortunate as until 1966, when it merged with Pergamon, it was essentially a family business.

With the Pergamon era the account becomes more detailed and complex when the media mogul, the controversial Robert Maxwell (1923–1991) bursts onto the stage. Wheatons survived the wheelings and dealings, mergers and restructurings, at times losing some functions to Pergamon's headquarters at Oxford, but also acquiring a vast amount of printing contracts on a wide range of subjects apart from the long-standing educational publications which had taken off in the 1920s and were international in distribution. Illustrations in the book hint at the many works Wheatons printed for Maxwell, from a biography of Leonid Brezhnev to *Information China*. They also printed a large range of scientific journals which were despatched world-wide from the production department in Exeter. From 1983 to 1985 Wheatons even printed the *Radio Times*. In the 1970s they produced ten million publications annually for almost 100 publishers and employed about 500 staff in Exeter.

In 1981 Maxwell acquired the British Printing and Communications Corporation and Wheatons group transferred from Pergamon to BPCC in 1986. Polestar Wheatons was set up following a buyout by Webinvest after the collapse of Maxwell's empire in 1998. Split into five divisions it survived until 2016 when Polestar went into administration, following which Wheatons Exeter Ltd, set up by a management buyout, kept the company alive for another twelve months.

Thematic sections interrupt the flow of the timeline. The first, somewhat unexpectedly, relates to motor cycles. The author's father [Alfred] John Wheaton set up the AJW Motor Company Ltd in Friernhay in 1926 and it successfully produced motor cycles until 1940. He later became chairman of the publishing company. Robert Maxwell has sections to himself: a

brief biography, an undated newspaper article from the *Express and Echo* no doubt unearthed from the suitcase, and 'Maxwell's way, negotiating with unions', which includes an extract from *The Way of the Sun* by Peter Greenhill, printed by Polestar Wheatons in 2010. There are sections towards the end of the book on union recognition, the production bonus scheme, educational publishing, changes in the book production market from the 1980s to 2017 and on Wheaton's Sports and Social Club. 'Printers pie', a lengthy concluding section on Wheaton's involvement in technical changes in the book production industry is in places highly technical but a good survey of the changes affecting the publishing industry with the arrival of the digital age. It covers safety at work, typesetting, letterpress printing, lithography, digital production and bookbinding.

These inserts and the variety of page layouts make it somewhat difficult to find one's way through the volume. Some tables, perhaps as appendices, would have helped: changes of name across the years, addresses where Wheatons were active with dates, a family tree with dates of individuals' activity in the firm. While footnotes may have been over the top, a fuller list of sources and references would have helped. Articles reprinted in the text are not mentioned in the list of sources, for example two from *Printing World* 1978 and *Litho Week* 1985. And there is no index – an unfortunate omission where so many individuals, firms, places and book or periodical titles are mentioned in the text.

Nevertheless the author must be congratulated in bringing this publication out so promptly, a fitting celebration of the achievements of one of the most important printing and publishing firms in the region. It is described as 'first edition' and there is certainly more to say about Wheatons, particularly its contribution to educational publishing – there are more than 1,000 titles listed in library catalogues by COPAC. Perhaps a second edition (or a volume two) is called for but, if so, not in an oblong format, please. It is to be hoped too that the suitcase of documents – and indeed any other surviving records of Wheatons – eventually find a good home. For example the only catalogue of the firm that has been traced in public collections is one for 1931 in the Westcountry Studies Library.

Ian Maxted

Martin Wyatt, *Quakers in Plymouth: A Friends Meeting in Context 1654 to the 1960s* (York: Quacks Books) viii + 112 pages. Softback. ISBN 9781904446927. £7.

Martin Wyatt's book is a narrative history of the Quaker presence in Plymouth, which for three hundred years constituted the largest Meeting of the Society of Friends in Devon and Cornwall, and has been instrumental in their longevity in the South West. The Quakers were one of the many competing Protestant sects to emerge during the English Revolution, and numerically the most important. During the spiritual and ecclesiastical turmoil of 1640s they were part of a growing number of Seekers who sought to advance what they believed to be the true principles of the Reformation. This study, which is divided into five chapters, provides valuable insights into the process by which the only radical religious sect to survive the Interregnum, succeeded in thriving well beyond it. Two subsidiary themes are identified in the introduction as 'the continual tendency of Plymouth Friends to fiddle about with buildings', and their subsequent involvement in education. The informal writing style is a characteristic of the work, and detracts somewhat from this valuable local case study. The author, who identifies himself as a Quaker, states that 'obvious' non-Quaker sources were consulted, although these are not discussed.

The book would benefit from further editing. The acknowledgements are unusually located between the introduction and the first chapter, and lengthy quotations are embedded in the text, rather than indented without quotation marks. Chapter three includes an outline of Quaker belief which would more usefully have been included in the introductory chapter. The suggestion that it might be argued that early Quakers had experiences rather than beliefs is debateable. They believed implicitly that the Day of the Lord was nigh, energetically disseminating a propheric and apocalyptic message based on a compelling interpretation of the Book of Revelation. Quaker missionaries urged people to join the Army of the Lamb and work towards establishing Christ's kingdom on earth. Indeed, early Quaker evangelising at home and abroad resulted in one of the most dynamic outbreaks of missionary enthusiasm in the history of the Christian church. Quaker faith is clearly experiential, but early Quakers believed profoundly that the inner light inherent in everyman was the ultimate source of religious truth. Priests and ritual were perceived as an unnecessary obstruction, and any member of a gathered group who felt moved by the spirit was free to witness. Many of the distinctive habits and customs of the early Quakers outlined in the book were not initially peculiar to Friends, although they were viewed as particularly

subversive. In their pacifism, publicly acknowledged in 1662, they were pioneers.

The rapid growth of the movement and its long-term survival was testament to the dynamism of the early founders, and in particular to the Leicestershire shoemaker George Fox. He visited Plymouth in 1655, the year after two prominent travelling Quaker ministers, had been received by many who were reported as 'waiting for the Lords appearance'. Significantly, it was two female itinerant ministers, rather than Fox, who were mentioned by Plymouth Quakers in accounts of their origins. Quaker recognition of the equality of all God's creatures allowed women to be actively engaged in growth of the early movement.

An interesting second chapter on 'Organisation and Persecution' charts the fate of Quakers following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, when the religious freedoms accorded to Trinitarian Protestants in the 1650s were demolished by the re-establishment of a compulsory state Church. The 1662 Act of Uniformity and other punitive legislative measures known as the Clarendon Code, meant that all alternative religious groups were persecuted for their refusal to conform. Plymouth Quakers, in common with Friends in other regions, suffered intense persecution and recurrent imprisonments. Martyrdom was an integral part of early Quaker identity, and the harsh travails of early Friends were assiduously recorded. By the time the Toleration Act of 1689 gave all Trinitarian Protestant dissenters the legal right to worship openly, Plymouth Quakers had already acquired the lease on two buildings in Bilbury Street. The site was to provide a home for Plymouth Friends for over two hundred years. As with all the groups that survived the Restoration, the Quakers began refashioning their history and identity in a gradual move from eschatology to apologetics. Quaker leaders established an organised system of regular meetings named after the frequency with which they met, a process which is explained in detail with close reference to Plymouth minute books. Of particular interest are the rules regarding marriage. Friends were required to seek permission to marry from the separate women's meeting. Those who 'married out' could be disowned.

During the eighteenth century the Quakers had 'settled down to become a solid, respectable sect', with a formal membership system. Strict discipline was applied. The fervour of the early Friends receded in favour of a Quietist phase, favouring a plain style of dress and silent worship. The Meeting for Sufferings evolved to become a central body dealing with national affairs. The Plymouth Meeting continued to engage with the wider Quaker community. From the late eighteenth century Quakers (and Plymouth Friends in particular) were influenced by the rise in evangelicalism, and their views became

more orthodox, a factor which increased interdenominational cooperation. The Meeting was run by 'men of business', a pattern which continued. They included many major names from the business community who were significant employers, including John Collier, William Cookworthy, William Bryant (of Bryant and May), and Edward James, all of whom are discussed in the book. The Plymouth Meeting reached a peak membership of 164 in 1923, declining in 1952 to 109.

Success in commerce and participation in philanthropic causes such as abolition of slavery, prison reform, and temperance, resulted in Quaker contributions disproportionate to their declining numbers. Plymouth Friends were 'assiduous' in responding to national campaigns. A useful introductory synopsis in chapter four outlines the social problems caused by the rapid expansion of Plymouth, a situation which led Friends to focus primarily on educational projects in the town. The Plymouth Public Free School is opened in 1809, followed by an adult school in 1861 with associated projects. In 1920 Swarthmore Hall adult education centre was opened on the site of the new meeting house at Mutley. Swarthmore later became the base for a successful allotment scheme for several hundred unemployed men, started by Friends in the 1930s, and was used as an important rest centre during the Second World War. In 1969 the nominal membership of the Plymouth Meeting had dropped to 96, with only 24 attenders and a consequential reduction in activity.

This book contains a wealth of detailed information based on a broad range of primary source material which is recorded in the endnotes, and a useful glossary is provided. The author has succeeded in his aim of recording the history of 'an ever changing people' which is 'neither restrictedly local, nor exclusively Quaker'.

Jane Bliss

The Devon Historian

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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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When the article has been accepted following peer review, it will be returned to the author with editorial suggestions. When the author has undertaken revisions the paper should be re-submitted for copy-editing. The paper will then be returned to the author for amendment, and final copy should be sent to the editor by a mutually agreed date. All articles will be sent to the author at proof stage. No changes to the text can be made at this point, other than the correction of typographical errors.

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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