

DEVON HISTORY NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY

**Edwardian Town
Planning**

**The Curse of
Devonport**

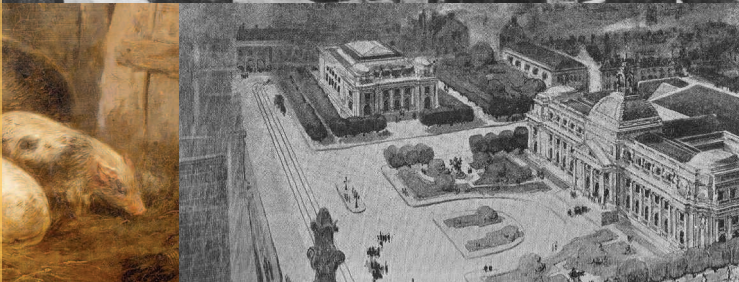
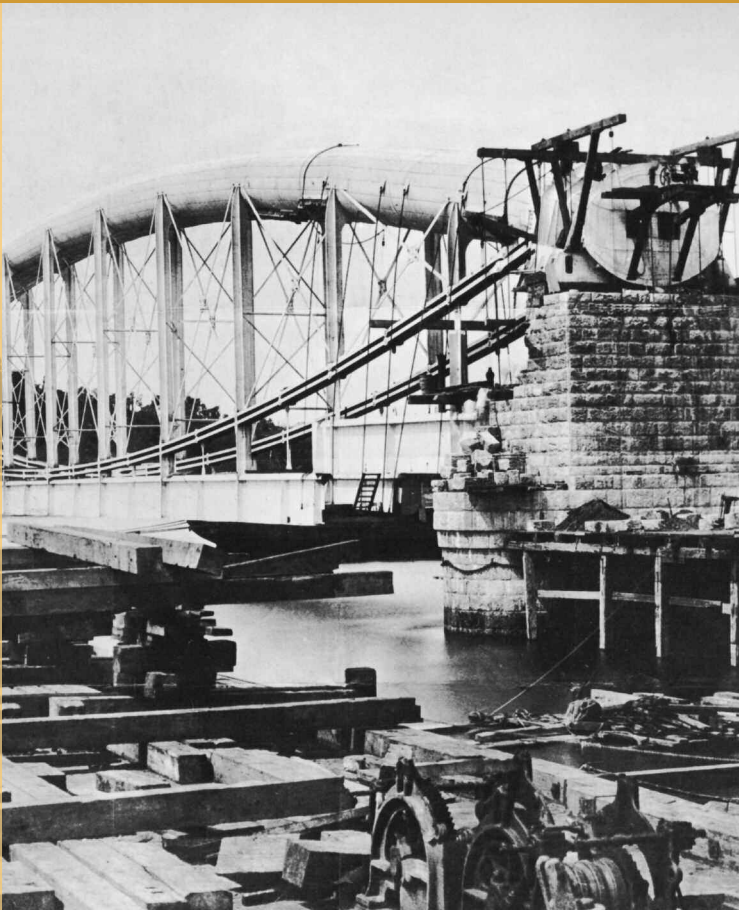
**Canon Girdlestone
and Sampford
Peverell**

**Caring for the
Sick and
Wounded in the
First World War**

**City, Town &
Country: 2015
AGM & Conference**

**W.G.Hoskins
prizes**

**Devon Domesday
curiosities**



Contacts

President:

Bruce Coleman 01392 254142
bruce.i.coleman@exeter.ac.uk

Chairman:

Andrew Jones 01769 579604
acjtherectory@btinternet.com

Secretary:

Viv Styles 07716 224079
secretary@devonhistorysociety.org.uk

Treasurer:

Ann Bond 01626 890736
treasurer@devonhistorysociety.org.uk

Membership Secretary:

Judy Moss 01647 433492
membership@devonhistorysociety.org.uk

Programme Secretary:

Paul Auchterlonie 075032 11649
j.p.c.auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk

Journal Editor (The Devon Historian)

Jane Bliss 01271 870723
jhbhistory@hotmail.co.uk

Newsletter Editor:

Chris Wakefield 01404 815262
dhsnewsed@gmail.com

Affiliated Societies:

Julia Neville 01392 461157
j.f.neville@btinternet.com

Council Members:

James Daybell, Henry French, Todd Gray,
Jan Wood, Claire Donovan

OTHER CONTACTS

Review Editor:

Mitzi Auchterlonie 01392 426052
41 Broadway, Exeter, EX2 9LU
M.M.Auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk

Webmaster

Martin Smith martin.a.smith.t21@btinternet.com

EDITORIAL

This edition of the News welcomes our new Chairman Andrew Jones, and bids farewell to our departing chairman Phil Panel.

Phil took the chair in 2013 and has steered the Society towards the digital age and heightened the drive for increased membership and a generally higher public profile. He and the late Chris Jago put together a development plan for us and it is this work which has propelled the Society forward to its current solidity. Phil's catholic interests and willingness to get stuck in with everything he could to push forward the recording and presentation of Devon's history (and archaeology), meant that he was much in demand. We shall miss his easy manner and pragmatic problem-solving approach, and wish him well as he moves away into yet more new territory, personal and historical.

The plus in this situation is that, along with recruiting a new Secretary, Webmaster, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, Phil has made sure he leaves the Society in fine fettle by finding us a new chairman. Andrew Jones will introduce himself in this edition, but it is already clear from his presentation at the 2015 AGM that we are blessed with a singularly capable new chairman.

Finally it is clear, even to me (not on Facebook, a Twitter virgin, and not much good with mobile phones) that social media is an area in which the DHS must get more fully engaged. This will impact on our publicity and the way our output is managed and made available. The digital version of the News for example, will soon offer some advantages over the hard copy version, and eventually we shall have to work out which way is the best to produce your Newsletter.

Chris Wakefield

Cover: Brunel's Albert Bridge over the Tamar, under construction in Plymouth in 1859. Photo: wikimedia commons

CHAIRMAN'S WORD



I am the new chairman of the Society. Jan (my wife) and I live in South Molton where we retired in 2014. For 15 years, I was Church of England parish priest of Bishops Nympton, Mariansleigh, Rose Ash, Knowstone, East Anstey, West Anstey, and Molland (many readers will have visited Molland with its classic early Georgian interior).

Before ordination (in 1980), I worked as an archivist for Derbyshire County Council where the county archivist was Joan Sinar. Older members will remember her as Devon's county archivist in the 1950s. My post-graduate interests lay in medieval history, particularly the history of the countryside. I did a lot of work on land tenure, land

measurement, and harvest customs. When we moved to Devon, I became interested in the history of north Devon in the nineteenth century. This has now broadened into two particular projects. One is the history of the diocese in the first half of the nineteenth century; and the second, a data-base of Devon and Cornwall clergy, 1800-1851.

Enough of that. As a schoolboy, I fell in love with local history. I grew up in Leicester where I heard W G Hoskins give his inaugural lecture as Hatton professor. Leaping from those distant years to now, what are my principal concerns for the Society? I am very aware as a newcomer to the Council, I have much to learn, but three or four things are taking shape. First, and over-arching, there is the good name and good-standing of the Society. Secondly, I am anxious that the Council remains harmonious and that individual members and officers feel they have an environment in which they can flourish. Thirdly, I hope that we can strengthen the links between the Society and are many affiliated societies so that there is a growing awareness of our interdependence. Fourthly, I sense that we need to work more closely with sister organisations in the county. (One such opportunity has arisen straightaway, with the Beaford Archive, now based in South Molton, approaching the Society for co-operation.) Linking all of these is the need for communication: plans are forming for a reshaping of our web-site to make it more 'user-friendly'.

As I feel my way into the chairman's role, I hope that local societies and individual members will feel they can contact me. I am keen to be 'seen', so do please invite me to attend a meeting. May we work happily together.

Andrew Jones

From the Membership Secretary

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE 1ST MAY

You are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1st May. Please diarise this if you pay by cheque. Reminders are not sent.

Individual members rate is £15.
Household membership is £22.50
Please make cheques to **Devon History Society...**

& send to
**Membership Secretary,
2, St Olaves, Murchington,
Chagford,
NEWTON ABBOT TQ13 8HJ**

Not yet a member of DHS?

If you are someone who stops to think about the **times** in which we live and the **places** and **people** around you every day, and then wonder what on earth it all **means... we don't have all the answers.**

But we do have some of them - (probably the most interesting ones). So stop wondering and start finding out. Visit our website,

<http://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk/>
and click 'Membership'.

Barnstaple oral history drop-in films

North Devon Moving Image CIC and Barnstaple Town Council have collaborated on a local oral history project to collect and record the memories of local people about life in their younger days. The organisers opened a drop-in centre for local people to come and share in a cup of coffee and a chat about the past. Interviews and conversations recorded on the day have now been compiled as a series of short films available in the town at St Anne's Arts Centre and online at www.northdevonmovingimage.org.uk

Ed



Peter Jewell, taking part in the drop-in history event in Barnstaple. He recalled his visits to the cinema and theatre in Barnstaple from the 1930s onwards. Picture courtesy NDMI

Devon Remembers Heritage Project

The Devon Remembers Heritage Project is now up and running at the Devon Heritage Centre with many opportunities for DHS members to get involved. The project aims to tell the distinctive story of Devon during the First World War, and will run until the end of 2018.

There is a team of two staff, Katherine Findlay and Dawn Roberts, based in Exeter but working with communities and organisations across the county. The project is run by the South West Heritage Trust and funded largely by the Heritage Lottery Fund with additional support from Devon County Council, Torbay Council and the University of Exeter.

At the heart of the project is the creation of the Devon Remembers Collection within the Devon Archives and Westcountry Studies Library. This will be a searchable collection of archive material and books related to the First World War in Devon that will be permanently available to researchers and the public. If you have been involved in a local First World War project, the team would be delighted to accept your research notes, published writing or original material that you may have gathered such as letters, diaries or photographs. You can make deposits on paper or as digital copies.

The Devon Remembers Heritage Project will also support around 30 'micro projects' around the county. These will be led by local volunteers who want to explore hidden chapters of our First World War story.

Together, the micro projects will paint a rich picture of life in Devon one hundred years ago. Micro projects already underway are looking at a huge range of topics from fishing and farming to literature, children's health and refugees. If you have an idea for a project, contact the team to find out about the flexible support on offer.

Throughout the life of the project there will be a programme of exhibitions and events that will be open to the public. Contact Katherine on katherine.findlay@devon.gov.uk / 01392 381975 to join the mailing list or to discuss a project idea. To find out more about the Devon Remembers Heritage Project online, go to www.devonremembersheritage.org

Katie Findley



Dirty Tactics? Lever Bros see trench warfare as a chance to sell its soap. 1915. picture wikimedia commons

AGM and Conference 2015

The theme of the 2015 Conference and AGM (on the 10th October), held at the University of Exeter was 'City, Town and Country in Victorian and Edwardian Devon'. Members enjoyed a full day of lectures and browsing the stalls along the concourse outside the lecture hall.

Our President, Dr Bruce Coleman, was not long from a hip replacement operation and was present despite advice to the contrary, walking with the aid of crutches but standing firm to introduce the Chairman and to present the Society's awards.

The 2015 W G Hoskins Book of the Year award went to Mark Stoyle for his '*Water in the City*' a copiously illustrated story of Exeter's unique medieval water management system. There were two further awards in the 'highly commended' category: Nicholas Orme's '*The Churches of Medieval Exeter*' - a comprehensive examination of the city's religious establishments from the 11th century onwards and, and '*Heavenly Harmony*' - an account of the organ in Exeter Cathedral and the musicians who played it from 1284 onwards.

The AGM proceeded without notable drama - a new chairman was appointed, the accounts were approved, three Council members who were due to retire were re-elected and members moved as swiftly as they decently could to the awards and the conference agenda.

The conference agenda was packed tight with items of interest from all quarters of the County making the whole event well worth attending. For those who missed out, I have included summary articles from some of the speakers, but there was no substitute for attendance if you wanted the full story on these topics

Our new chairman gave his inaugural talk on the changes in the lives of clergymen in the early Victorian period - a result of reforms

introduced by the government between 1829 and 1840. The image and interests of the clergy post-1850 moved from concerns of social status and income, towards those of vocation and pastoral duty.

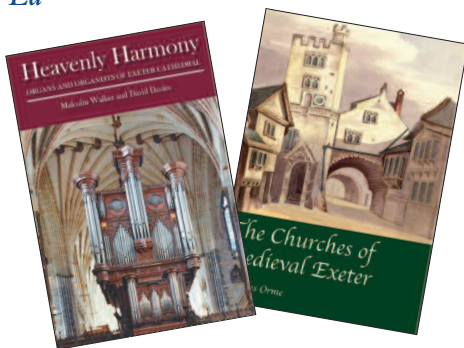
We also heard from Heather Culpin, with an extraordinary tale of emigration from Devon to the North of England in the Victorian period; and from Peter Mason and Graham Thompson on how painters strove to articulate their responses to Dartmoor's wild aspects and on social and demographic change on the eastern edge of Dartmoor.

Ann Bond explained why Devonport was cursed with poor housing, while Claire Maudling showed us an ambitious Edwardian plan for Exeter's city centre.

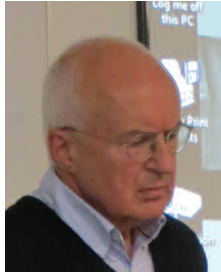
Julia Neville completed the day's talks with an account of the demise of country butchers in the face of competition from an industrialised Exeter based meat market.

At the close, there was a buzz of approval from members attending the event and the programme secretary and his assistants on Council are to be congratulated on another absorbing day of Devon history.

Ed



W G Hoskins 'highly commended' award winners *Heavenly Harmony* (Impress) and *The Churches of Medieval Exeter* (Impress).



Above: Chairmen past and present. Phil Planel (left) and Andrew Jones (right)



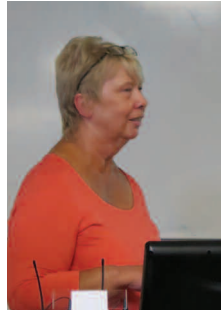
Above: Mark Stoyle (left) - winner of the W G Hoskins Book of the Year Award, with his father, to whom he paid tribute as mentor and supporter of his enthusiasm for history.



Claire Maudling spoke on early Town Planning - see p12.



Heather Culpin explored the trials of emigrant Devonians see p13



Ann Bond conjures up the Curse of Devonport see p15



Julia Neville tells us a meaty tale of Exeter markets.



Janet Tall, Head of Archives and Local Studies at SWHT presented the WGHoskins prize



Peter Mason on the Painters of Dartmoor



Graham Thompson, chair of Teign Valley History Group



Julie Willis (left) accepts the W G Hoskins 'Highly Commended' awards from Dr Bruce Coleman on behalf of Impress publishers.

Caring for the Sick and Wounded in Devon during the First World War

Reviewing recent exhibitions (such as that put on by the National Trust at Knightshayes, pictured) and publications about Devon's hospital services for sick and wounded soldiers and sailors in the First World War has brought home to me the scale of the operation in the county as a whole, and the range of places that were lent to provide such care. Hospitals sprang up all over Devon, and disappeared just as quickly after 1919.

Most of the hospitals – large and small – were run by the Red Cross. By 1918 they were managing over 4,000 beds. But a whole range of other agencies were involved as well. The regular army and navy had their own hospitals: the Royal Naval Hospital at Stonehouse, the Royal Military Hospital at Devonport, and small units at the barracks, in

Exeter, for example. When the war broke out the Territorial Forces swiftly established their own hospital, the 4th Southern General Hospital, initially in schools close to Plymouth's Friary Station, but from 1915 in the infirmary at Devonport Workhouse.

By mid August 1914 the Red Cross in Devon had received their orders to set up what were to become their front-line hospitals in Exeter, Torquay and Newton Abbot, soon to be followed by a whole range of small units, chiefly for convalescent soldiers, and many in private houses lent, and in some cases run by, private individuals, such as the Mildmay's of

Seale Hayne in South Devon was instrumental in treating first world war shell-shock victims.

photo: Derek Harper. courtesy wikimedia commons





Flete. There were also some independent initiatives, best known of which is probably the American Women's War Hospital in the Singer mansion at Oldway, Paignton.

As the war went on more and more buildings were taken over, schools, or places like the Honiton Constitutional Club. By 1917 the need for hospital provision was so great that the War Office paid for beds in voluntary hospitals like Axminster Cottage Hospital, or leased wards in infirmaries from Boards of Guardians like those in St Thomas, Exeter. Specialist units were also established. Devon is best known, perhaps, for the neurological hospital for 'shell-shock' victims at Seale-Hayne, but there were also specialists units for soldiers with VD and those like Grendon House in Exeter, set up for permanently paralysed soldiers. Many soldiers developed tuberculosis during their service, and the

Above: Knightshayes exhibition in the indoor tennis court. Photo National Trust

county's sanatoria at Hawkmoor and Didworthy took their share.

I'm working at the moment with a group on the history of Exeter's Temporary War Hospitals, eight hospitals set up initially by the Red Cross but effectively taken over by the War Office in 1916 as a military hospital. If you are involved in or know something of the history of a First World War hospital in your local area, or had relatives treated in Devon hospitals then, please get in touch. When Devon comes to remember the end of the First World War, we should make sure that the contribution of all those involved in hospital care is not forgotten.

Julia Neville

Towards One Thousand Years of Pottery from the Gardens of Bovey Tracey

Residents of Bovey Tracey have been digging their gardens with a new sense of purpose - to find out how much history is buried in them.

Our study of the archaeology and history of Bovey Tracey's historic borough is continuing. A weekly market was founded in 1219, and the borough and annual market date back to 1260. With the help of a community fund grant kindly provided through Devon County

Councillor George Gribble, we started a project to dig test-pits in local gardens in order to chart the use of pottery from different production centres over the ages. A 'Bring Your Garden Finds' event at our local library was popular with all ages, and residents of Bovey Tracey have responded with enthusiasm in letting us dig in their gardens. We have not found any prehistoric, Roman or Saxon pottery and our collection starts with three sherds of Upper Greensand-Derived ware which dates from the 13th to early 14th centuries. This thin, hand-made pottery came from the Blackdown Hills area and it is found elsewhere across south Devon – presumably these cooking pots were transported by pack horse across the Haldon Hills.

In the 13th century pottery production began in the Totnes area and this continued through

Below: Residents of Bovey Tracey examine their garden finds



to the 18th century. We find small amounts of this pottery across the town and it would appear that this was the predominant pottery used during the medieval period.

Foreign imports are also present albeit initially in very small numbers. One sherd each of 13/14th century Saintonge ware, 16th century Beauvais ware and 17/18th century Portuguese faience. 15/17th century German stonewares are more abundant with sherds from Raeren, Frechen and Westewald.

In the 17/18th centuries local pottery use was dominated by a wider range of wares from North Devon and South Somerset potteries and we find sherds from plates, bowls, chafing dishes, a baluster and a pancheon. As well as being glazed, some of the pottery has a coloured slip and a few sherds show sgraffitto decoration.

We are grateful to John Allan for helping us to identify this older pottery.

In the middle of the 18th century at least three potteries were established in Bovey Tracey producing stoneware, earthenware and experimental porcelain. By the beginning of the 19th century there was one pottery at Indio House and one at Heathfield which became known as 'Folly Pottery' (the House of Marbles site). Indio House pottery closed in the 1830s but the 'Folly Pottery' was revamped as the Bovey Tracey Pottery Company and later the Bovey Pottery Company Limited and this latter pottery remained in production until 1957. Not surprisingly we find pottery from all phases of this local pottery production and we are grateful to Brian Adams of the House of Marbles museum for his help in identifying these more recent finds.

Malcolm and Frances Billinge

Early Victorian Schools

Report from the Research Group

Since the publication of the last DHS News the group has met once, and another meeting is scheduled in February 2016.

At our last meeting we heard reports of research from around the county from Marwood in the north to Feniton in the south-east. We were also fortunate to be given a virtual 'guided tour' by Jan Wood of Devon Heritage Centre, covering sources we might have been aware of but not yet explored, plus many we had yet to find. We extended the scope of our research by agreeing not just to look at the schools within our particular communities but also at some particular themes those particular to Devon, such as our lace schools, and education and preparation for the navy, and also those we share with the rest of England, such as the move for industrial and reformatory schools. Even national movements sometimes have a local slant. The development of education for the middle classes, a movement for which Thomas Dyke Acland was a particular champion, took a special twist in Devon by the foundation of West Buckland School, originally the West Buckland Farm and County School. aimed particularly at the sons of farmers who might benefit from practical and intellectual education beyond the scope of the village school.

The Research Group is still open to new members. We plan to commemorate the jubilee of Roger Sellman's Devon Village Schools in 2017 by presenting our researches, so there's still time to join and get involved. Contact Julia Neville, j.f.neville@btinternet.com if you are interested, or book a place via the bookings form enclosed with DHS News. *JN*

A Devon for the Future:

Town planning and urban change at the turn of the 20th Century

Town planning in Britain has its roots in the sanitation and public health legislation of the nineteenth century, which sought to ameliorate the urban conditions thought responsible for disease and overcrowding. The public health acts and housing acts passed between 1848 and 1890 provided a piecemeal framework for urban improvement, but were often difficult for local authorities to utilise. The comprehensive plan began to emerge at the turn of the century, starting with Ebenezer Howard's famous Garden City concept, first published in 1898. The concept of comprehensive planning quickly took hold and led to the passing of the 1909 Town and Country Planning Act. However, very few cities created comprehensive plans prior to the First World War; Exeter was one of the few.

The city was evidently keen to plan both housing and the wider city at the earliest possible date. Discussions around improvement and housing schemes are evident from the 1890s, but really gathered pace at the turn of the century. Exeter City Council commissioned a plan, called Exeter of the Future, in January 1913 and employed one of the few professional town planners of the era, Thomas Mawson, to create it.

The centrepiece of Exeter of the Future was a new civic centre on Queen Street. The Civic Centre would have included a town hall, council offices and a new public hall. A new city library, a remodelled Queen Street Station and Northernhay Gardens and an expanded educational district around the existing South West University College completed the plan. Mawson also recommended the remodelling of the High Street between Queen Street and Fore Street to improve access to the Cathedral and its environs.

What is interesting to the modern eye about the Exeter of the Future is just how much land would have been cleared to carry out the plan. The wholesale clearance and rebuilding of sites is an aspect of planning associated with post-Second World War reconstruction plans, but this plan demonstrates that this was not unique to that period. The Civic Centre would have been located where the Guildhall Shopping Centre now stands and required the clearing of the whole area, including St



Exeter - Queen Street as it might have been.

...continued next page

Canon Girdlestone and the history of John Webber

The Sampford Peverell Society was contacted last August by someone who was coming to Devon on a family holiday and wanted to find out more about two of his great-great-grandparents: Ann Trevelyan from Sampford Peverell, who married John Webber from Holcombe Rogus. They moved to Bolton in the 1870s, with their three young children, but their descendants didn't know why, how, or exactly when. We showed them around the village, and someone suggested the family may have moved because of Canon Edward Girdlestone, who was the vicar in Halberton, a neighbouring village, from 1862 to 1872. He campaigned vociferously to improve the lot of agricultural workers in Devon, whose living conditions were amongst the worst in the country, and he helped hundreds of families move to better paid jobs in the

Town Planning ...continued from last page

Pancras Church and the Higher Market. Of the Market, Mawson stated 'There is probably not a building in the whole city...which could be so easily spared'; a view which seems to have been echoed by the City Council. The plan also required extensive demolition along the High Street.

Exeter of the Future was stalled by the outbreak of war, but was never enacted owing to the extensive demolition required. It was briefly revived in 1937 but was superseded by the 1946 reconstruction plan, The Exeter Phoenix.

Clare Maudling

North, seeing to every detail of their journey for them. A book about him included a letter which Canon Girdlestone wrote to the Times in 1872. The letter concerned a court case in Cullompton in which a farmer from Holcombe Rogus was suing a worker for breach of contract. The worker was John Webber, our visitor's ancestor. (...a dramatic reading of this letter by Allan Weller was given as part of the presentation). During the court case the magistrate supported the farmer and verbally attacked Canon Girdlestone, to which the canon strongly objected. The magistrate appealed to the people in the courtroom, who loudly supported the canon. Accounts of the case are quite amusing! The magistrate found Webber guilty and fined him, but a kind gentleman in the courtroom paid the fine and the Webbers set off, by train, on 4th June 1872 to a new, better paid, job in Bolton. But that wasn't the end of the story. Girdlestone's letter to the Times was reprinted in newspapers up and down the country, and MP Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, raised a question in Parliament about the court case, naming John Webber, to which the Home Secretary, Henry Bruce, had to reply. The magistrate wrote his own pompous and long-winded letters defending himself, but the local papers clearly sided with Canon Girdlestone. Sadly John Webber died a few years after moving to Bolton and his children ended up working in a cotton factory, but his descendants now know more about him than they ever thought possible.

Heather Culpin

THE WATERFRONT RESEARCH GROUP

What has happened on Lympstone's waterfront over the centuries?

In earlier times, it is likely that the waterfront was to some extent separate from the village. In some places it is referred to as Lympstone Strand. The main village was located nearer to the church. On the seafront then there was a cluster of fishing cellars made of cob or wood or stone, where fishermen kept boats or sails. Fishing would have been an occupation alongside farming or other work. Some of the cellars were latterly made habitable and became the bases of some of the houses on the current waterfront.

There would have been plenty to see and hear...

Quite large ships were built. Some would have taken up a lot of the beach area. There was much repairing of ships and boats.

There were small and larger boat fishing activities. The pilchard industry was important in the Exe for a while, and people would have been standing at look out points, searching for the shoals. As today, fish were sold on the seafront or transported from the waterfront.

Ships sailed in and beached with coal to fire the lime kilns. Firing up the lime kilns was smelly, noisy and hot (though you might get your bread baked).

At night smugglers brought in their hauls. Many villagers would have been involved in some smuggling.

Piracy was continuously a threat to any seaside villages or to those on the sea. There were notorious local pirates or the French...

In the 1500s onwards, in spring women said goodbye to husbands and sons who sailed

across the Atlantic (2000 miles) in iceberg season to fish for cod, and then came back in the autumn to spend the winter working on the land.

In Victorian times, city people discovered the seaside and learned to value tourism at the seaside. They came on the new trains and some would have stayed in Lympstone and walked the waterfront.

At different times, people washed in the sea, swam. There are the modern boating leisure activities.

People have painted and sketched at the waterfront, valuing its picturesque scenery.

There was trading – wool was particularly important as an export from Devon.

There was a whaling industry at Parsonage Stile.

There were floods, storms and fires at the seafront.

The railway was built – noise, dirt, navvies. Houses were demolished to make space for the railway and the station. This affected many lives, trades and activities and it changed the shape of our waterfront.

Others have looked at the effects of the railway being built, on the cod fishing connections with Newfoundland. The Digitisation Group is another valuable recent development within the Society, cataloguing our records – which are considerable and which do obviously contain much information on the waterfront.

For more information or to join the group contact:

LympstoneHistorySociety@hotmail.co.uk

Dr. Jenny Moon

**Lympstone History Society is
hosting the DHS's Spring meeting
on April 23rd.**

The Curse of Devonport

My paper to the Devon History Society AGM and Conference discussed the late 19th century conflicts in Devonport resulting from the leasehold system which still persisted. The manorial landlords of Stoke Damerel still owned most of the land within the parish. This was preventing expansion of the town, resulting in overcrowding and dilapidation. Constraints had been apparent from mid-century onwards, as more land was needed to build new housing to accommodate the expanding population. Many had been drawn to the well-paid employment available in the dockyards. When additional land wasn't made available overcrowding became so severe that the town was said to rank alongside Warsaw as the most insanitary in Europe. The lack of new land was, however, just one factor. Another factor was widely regarded as having a detrimental effect on the town's ability to adequately house its population. The manorial authorities had only permitted land to be leased of their three-life lease system without prospect of renewal. Principal leaseholders therefore built cheaply and failed to keep houses in good order. After the three-lives had expired the land and any buildings reverted to the ownership of the Manor.

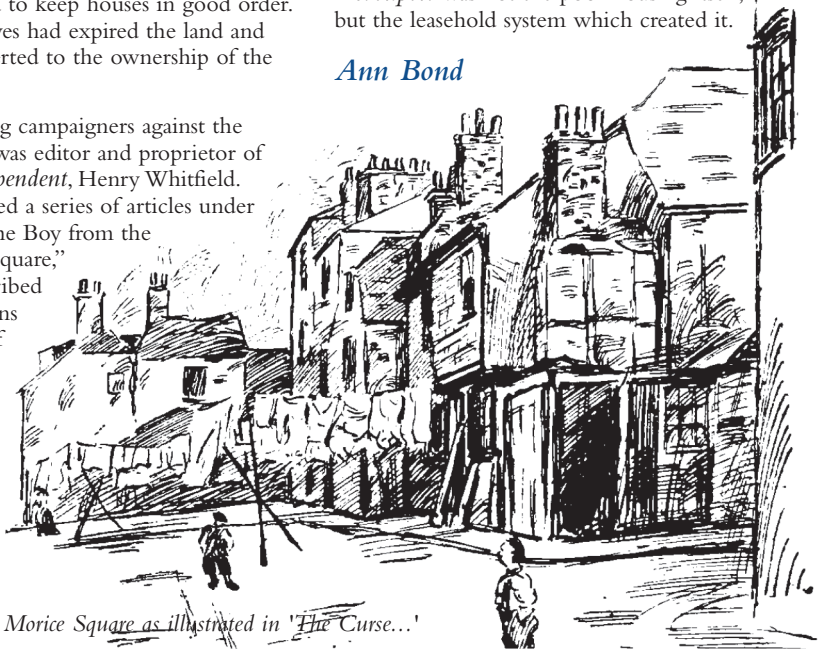
One of the leading campaigners against the leasehold system was editor and proprietor of the *Western Independent*, Henry Whitfield. Whitfield published a series of articles under the by-line of "The Boy from the Back of Morice Square," in which he described the slum conditions in which much of the working population were living.

In 1895, when Devonport Council was trying to make progress with a slum clearance scheme for the

James Street area, Whitfield published a pamphlet *The Curse of Devonport*. It was a powerful attack on the leasehold system which he had long regarded as 'an evil.' It was written as an imagined tour of the slums, with the author guiding the Lord of the Manor, Lord St Levan, through what was described as 'the Hades' of St Levan's wealth. Not only was Lord St Levan accused in this pamphlet as being the worst kind of absentee landlord, it also made allegations of bribery and corruption, referring to an event when the members of Devonport Corporation were taken to St Michael's Mount by special train where they were lavishly entertained. The pamphlet suggested that those who should have been working towards reform were consequently suffering from a paralysis of public honour. Whitfield described Devonport as a lease-bound, rack-rented community.

So, in Devonport, the chosen battleground for freedom from manorial control was over housing conditions and *The Curse of Devonport* was not the poor housing itself, but the leasehold system which created it.

Ann Bond



Morice Square as illustrated in 'The Curse...'

Domesday Oddities in Devon



The Domesday record's condensed information on the landscape of England a thousand years ago is the starting point for countless historical research projects. It is the absolute bedrock of local studies, offering insights into the astonishing variety of English life in the medieval period even as the commissioners attempted to regularise and standardise what confronted them (for the better functioning of the Norman tax system). Some of that variety has been retabulated over the years by historical geographers and in those reassessments, Devon shows up as a most unusual county (well I'm sure we would expect that anyway).

Two issues are immediately striking. One is the appearance of an unusually high number of pig farmers. No other county has so many. The westcountry as a whole is given to pastoral expertise, so we may not be much surprised at a wider westcountry interest in pork. But Devon alone is out in front by a country mile - 370 pigmen (porcarii) in all, compared to 87 in Wiltshire (a county with a substantial reputation for pork), 84 in Somerset, and only a handful elsewhere in

the rest of the country. Devon therefore accounts for 70% of all the pigmen in England. We were definitely big in pigs.

The fullest information comes from the Exon Domesday, but for reasons now lost to us, the Exchequer scribe missed out 25 instances of pigmen in making his copy for the government. The cause may have been a misreading of similar terms for swineherd, which he would have included, and for wild boar, which he wouldn't. Even given the omissions, Devon's listing at 345 pigmen was still easily at the top of the league.

Whilst we are clearly missing a major culinary marketing opportunity for the charms of the county, this is also a question that begs an answer - why on earth was Devon so addicted to pigs?

Bear in mind that Domesday was a mere 20 years into the Norman accession, and also that farming fashions are not likely to have undergone a radical rethink in that short space of time. So the pig thing is doubtless a tradition dating from deep within the Anglo Saxon period. Exactly how far back, like most

questions of Anglo Saxon origins, is difficult or impossible to say. My hunch is that we didn't pig out on them (sorry...) ourselves, but kept a fair few for hunting purposes.

Notwithstanding the difference between pigs and wild boars, maybe Devon was the place for hunting holidays in the medieval period, born out by the prevalence of our use of the field name 'park' with reckless abandon, whether it refers to a park or not. Any other suggestions more than welcome.

Another curiosity is our patchy commitment to the technology of the times. Milling by water power had been in existence in England since well before the Norman period and mills were recorded by the Domesday commissioners. - there are plenty of them all over England, but not in Devon and Cornwall. East Devon, considered alone, can match the density of mills we find in our eastern neighbouring counties, but go west of Exeter and the number drops off spectacularly. In Cornwall they had no mills at all.

How does this work? All of the southwestern counties, without distinction, were busy ploughing and harvesting corn, so how did the locals in Cornwall and West Devon make their flour for bread? Maybe they liked to use old tech hand querns - freshly ground flour may produce a very tasty loaf, but the work involved must surely be quite considerable.

Also the local landlords were missing a trick - mills were a nice little earner - Ottery St Mary had three of them which brought in thirty shillings annually - well worth the investment you would think.

Domesday records have been scoured endlessly in the past in the search for answers to all sorts of questions, and there is plenty of life in the old book yet. It's online too, so there's no excuse for not knowing your Domesday stats off by heart.

Chris Wakefield

Orchards in the Landscape

East Devon orchards and the wider world: Heritage, history, and biodiversity

East Devon AONB Heritage Conference

Saturday 16 April 2016

Norman Lockyer Observatory

Sidmouth - 10am - 16.45

£15 per person (non-returnable)

Booking Form and details available from

East Devon AONB

(phillipeplanel@gmail.com)

or phone 07983 279825 or website...

<http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/uploads/documents/events/flyer2.pdf>

Celebrating the Tinworking Landscape of Dartmoor in its European Context - Prehistory to 20th Century

Tavistock, Devon UK, 6-11 May 2016

This is the first international conference exploring the tinworking landscape of Dartmoor in a European context. It marks 25 years of the Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group, and 10 years of the UNESCO World Heritage designation of the Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape. Twelve lectures (including speakers from Czech Republic, France, Germany and Iberia, as well as Britain), four evening events and three full days of field trips, will make this a truly memorable and important occasion. Delegates will receive a Conference Booklet and a special medallion crafted in tin.

All bookings must be received by 30 April 2016. The full Conference Programme and details about booking are now available on the DTRG website:

www.dtrg.org.uk

Books for Review

The following books have been received for review in the 2016 edition of The Devon Historian, but they need to be allocated a reviewer. If anyone would like to offer to review one of them (it helps if you have some knowledge of the subject or related topics) please contact me by e-mail or post at the following address: 41, Broadway, Exeter, Devon, EX2 9LU.
My e-mail is m.m.auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk. Remember to give me your postal address. Here is the list:

•Heavenly Harmony: organs and organists of Exeter Cathedral,

by Malcolm Walker and David Davies, Impress.

Napoleon's Grand British Holiday: The remarkable story of Bonaparte and his time on the South Devon coast.

by Mike Holgate, Halsgrove.

The Heritage Handbook: An A-Z Guide to the Archaeology and Landscape History of Northern Devon

by John Bradbeer and Terry Green, North Devon Archaeological Society.

The Shops of Lympstone

by Angela Coles and Harland Walshaw, Lympstone Historic Houses Group.

The Churches of Medieval Exeter

by Nicholas Orme, Impress.

England's Last Medieval Monastery: Syon Abbey 1415-2015,

by E.A. Jones, Gracewing.

Devon's Torre Abbey: Faith, Politics and Grand Designs,

by Michael Rhodes, The History Press.

Dr M. M. Auchterlonie, (Reviews Editor)

Internet resources for historians

Please email dhsnewsed@gmail.com with new finds including a note about the resource and a link. This column is open to any resource of interest to a broad range of history related disciplines, so if you find anything that helps in the wider local studies area, please let us know.

Space does not permit a long list in this edition of the News, but can I point you to the late Ray Girvan's considerable historical notes on the DHS website - something I regret I hadn't noticed before. I am therefore reminded to look under my own nose for items of local history interest, and I hope members are equally rewarded if they do the same thing. Didn't someone say 'All history is local history'? (If not, they should have).

To read Ray's notes, go to the DHS website and key in "Ray Girvan writes" - a link to them should be the top item in the search results box. Mostly East Devon - Topsham and Exeter, but covering a wide variety of very interesting topics. *Ed*

Devon History Society and the South West Heritage Trust presents

Becket's Murder the Devon Connection

Monday February 15th 2016, 1.30-4.30 - Devon Heritage Centre

In your pack of information about the DHS programme for the year you will find a separate booking form for a special event put on jointly by Devon History Society and the South West Heritage Trust.

We've organised this event to tie in with the exhibition of the Becket Casket from the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Trust have arranged for the loan of this amazing medieval reliquary to the Museum of Somerset during February and March and events are planned in both Devon and Cornwall to tie in with the exhibition and provide potential visitors with the context of the counties' Becket connections.

The murder of Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, as shown on the Becket Casket, is just one of the many images to survive of this earth-shattering event of 29 December 1170. Canonised as St Thomas Becket in 1173, the speed with which the fame of St Thomas spread throughout Europe can be traced through this iconography.

Dr Helen Birkett (University of Exeter) will speak on 'Murder in the Cathedral and the cult of St Thomas'. Dr Claire Donovan (Devon History Society & University of Exeter) will explore the iconography of St Thomas Becket and the legacy of his popularity through art, and a quartet of local historians will contribute the work they have done on the legacy of the murder in Devon – in worship, in land holdings and in legend.

**If you're interested, take urgent action
to book via Devon Heritage Centre
(not via DHS) as places are
limited and time is short!**



PROGRAMME FOR 2016

The first half of this year's programme begins with a half-day symposium on Thomas à Becket, the connections to Devon of some of his murderers, and the churches subsequently dedicated to him in the county. The symposium, which combines lectures with contributions by local history societies, will be held on **February 15th at the Devon Heritage Centre and is open and free to all (Booking via the Devon Heritage Centre).**

This is followed by the **third study day on Early Victorian Education in Devon** and then the **Spring Meeting, which is being held in Lypstone**, one of the most interesting villages on the Exe Estuary. **The Summer Meeting** will take place in the attractive market town of **Holsworthy**.

The programme continues with lectures by Hugh Meller on **"The Country Houses of Devon"** – members may well be familiar with his definitive two-volume work on the subject published in 2015, by Elly Babbedge who will talk about the research she has done on the **poor law records of Cheriton Fitzpaine** and place it in the wider national context, and by Scott Pettitt who has been working for the past year at the Devon Heritage Centre on the **Devon Manorial Documents Register Project**, and has uncovered a considerable amount of previously little known material.

An innovation is the chance to attend for free the talk on **"Early Photography and Plymouth"** which is part of the 2016 programme of lectures being organised by the **Historical Association, Plymouth Branch, at the University of Plymouth on May 3rd.**

The unusual request for members to take their copy of *The Devon Historian* for 2015 with them when booking this event, is so that the Peninsula Arts Box Office can issue the free ticket to genuine DHS members, given that the Historical Association issue membership cards and we do not. I hope our members do not mind this novel arrangement, but it seemed a good way to hold a shared event in Plymouth.

Paul Auchterlonie

Programme Secretary

Affiliated Societies

Welcome to three societies that have affiliated since the last DHS News. There are two local history groups: Cornwood and District Local History Group and Exeter Local History Society, returning after a couple of years' absence. The third society is the Devon Rural Archive, the subject of an article in the last DHS news, open for visits and research. More details about them can be found at <http://www.devonruralarchive.com/> *JN*

Just agreed...

Devon History Society will host the spring meeting of the British Association for Local History next year, 2017. The theme of the conference will be 'Who Governed Devon, and How?' and the date for your diaries is 29 April 2017.