

DIGITAL EDITION

DEVON HISTORY NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY

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www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk

Contacts

President

Mark Brayshay
mbrayshay@plymouth.ac.uk

Chairman

Andrew Jones 01769 579604
acjtherectory@btinternet.com

Vice Chair / Programme Secretary

Paul Auchterlonie 01392 426052
j.p.c.auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk

Secretary

Viv Styles 01626 830193
secretary@devonhistorysociety.org.uk

Treasurer

Jan Jones 01769 579604
treasurer@devonhistorysociety.org.uk

Membership and Bookings Secretary

Judy Moss 01647 433492
membership@devonhistorysociety.org.uk

Journal Editor

Mike Sampson 01884 243859
mjs@blundells.org

Newsletter Editor

Chris Wakefield 01404 815262
dhsnewsed@gmail.com

Affiliated Societies

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

Publicity

Ann Bond 01626 890736
bond499@btinternet.com

Council Members

Brian Carpenter, Henry French, Todd Gray,
Jan Wood, Abigail Gray.

Webmaster

Martin Smith 01395 442333
martin.a.smith.t21@btinternet.com

Other contacts:

Review Editor

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

Cover: Nina Coates (second from left) and the Smart Set, a singing and dancing troupe from Exeter. Taken from Nina Coates' scrapbook held at Devon Heritage Centre, a valuable resource for Devon Remembers's research into wartime entertainment.

EDITORIAL

It is important for members to recall the worthy provenance of the DHS as a means to extend interest and involvement in history, especially local history, to those people whose schooling is behind them, but whose appetite for historical enquiry has returned or grown afresh. We have always had close links with Devon's educational institutions, especially the Universities, and the list of past presidents bears eloquent testimony to the esteem in which the work of the Society is held in Academe. While we can never provide an adequate substitute for the much-lamented extra mural functions of universities, we are interested and willing to respond to members' suggestions for seminars and workshops, and we would work with other appropriate agencies such as the South West Heritage Trust to deliver them. Members can always feel confident that the DHS's door is open to appropriate contributions at many levels of historical endeavour. Pass this newsletter to anyone you think may be interested in the history of their area. Encourage them to join.

In conclusion, a further reminder about the changes to the News. The paper editions will cease with edition 24 (August 2019). The original end date was with this edition, but an admin error on my part added a couple of extra paper editions. I doubt I shall be punished severely for that, given members enduring preference for paper based reading material, but don't forget that the change-over is approaching.

Chris Wakefield

CHAIRMAN'S WORD



Many DHS members will (by now) have come across Paul Roberts, whether in person or from reading his book, *History Maker*. This is the story of Paul's great-great-grandfather, John

Roberts, a Witheridge man; and the story of his thirty Devonian grandsons fighting in WW1.

I mention this for three reasons. First, earlier this year, Paul spoke at a meeting arranged jointly by DHS and by the Devon Family History Society. As far as we are aware, this is the first time that the two societies have co-operated like this – and those of us involved agreed that we ought to be far more together. I hope we shall.

Secondly, Paul has a very interesting story to tell about his family. If you have yet to hear him speak about his distant relatives and their involvement in the War (seven of the grandsons died), you might like to consider inviting him to your local history group. You can contact him via me.

Thirdly, in the course of his research, Paul has uncovered scores and scores of cousins (usually fourth-cousins, I guess) living (and often farming) in the large tract of Devon bounded by Crediton to the south and Exmoor to the north. I can imagine that the history of this present-day family is, in its way, every bit as interesting as the story of John Roberts and his grand-children: the Roberts and their

descendants (they will forgive me) are ordinary, hidden Devonians, the very stuff of parish history.

I hope Paul may be moved to write a second volume, about the discovery of his extended family. It will make a good story.

Andrew Jones

Devon Field and Minor-names Project

– this is still very much on the cards but the deafening silence has to do with applying for a grant from the HLF, which has to wait upon our annual account being audited which has to do with our accountant not being ready just yet – but eventually we hope the pig will jump over the stile. The grant will fund a web-site capable of handling a great mass of place-name data. I hope we shall get the go-ahead eventually. **AJ**

New face on Council

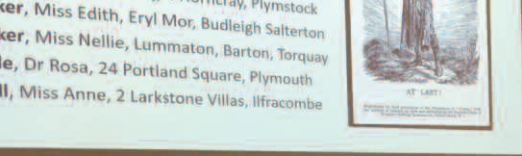
Abi Gray was welcomed to Council as a new co-optee at its last meeting on 24th Feb this year. Abi is Resident Archaeologist & Curator at the Devon Rural Archive at Shilstone, and a freelance archaeologist and speaker.



She is also a trustee and member of the management committee at Kingsbridge Cookworthy Museum, and belongs to Devon Archaeological Society, Plymouth Archaeological Society and the Devon Gardens Trust

Abi therefore brings a welcome new perspectives to our historical endeavours and opens up new possibilities for our future work.

CW



How the Vote Was Won

How the Vote was Won, Devon, and the Representation of the People Act 1918

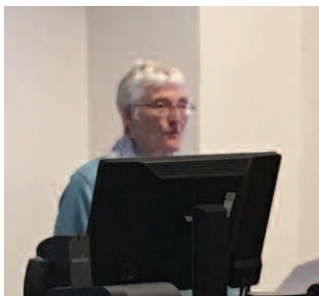
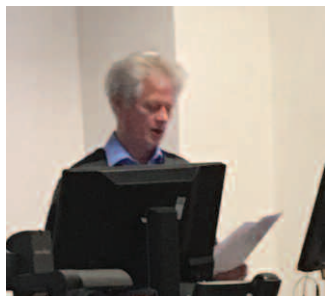
Delegates were treated to a very diverse programme at the Devon History Society Conference held on 21st April at the University of Plymouth. The conference was held in conjunction with the University of Plymouth to celebrate the centenary of the passing into law of the Representation of the People Act 1918.

Coffee was enjoyed in an historic setting. The original banner of the Sidmouth Branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies was kindly brought by members of the Sidmouth Museum and hung from the ceiling. Posters relating to the campaign for Women's Suffrage were also on view, produced by DHS members

Clockwise from above: The Killerton Songfishers; Delegates enjoy the exhibition; the Sidmouth suffrage banner; Professor Angela K Smith; Professor June Hannam; Paul Auchterlonie (DHS).

who have been researching the topic. The posters represented those militant, non-militant, party political, professional and church based women activists located throughout the County and each poster told their story.

In his welcoming speech, our President Mark Brayshay thanked the organisers of the Conference, Julia Neville and Ann Bond together with their colleagues and the University of Plymouth. He also thanked Martin Smith for his part in the production of a map to be found on the Society's website showing the location of the suffrage activists in Devon between



1866 and 1918 together with a list of these activists and their biographies where available.

The first lecture was by Paul Auchterlonie, on 'Franchise reform 1832-1918 and its effect in Devon'. Paul gave us an overview of the Reform Acts and the significance of each Act which gradually changed the way the elections were fought. He highlighted those issues which were peculiar to Devon. Finally the 1918 Act created universal male and limited female suffrage and laid down the basis for the electoral system we have today.

A very different aspect of women's suffrage was presented by Professor June Hannam on 'Re-thinking popular narratives of suffrage; a view from the regions'. She suggested the less dramatic reporting today compared with 1918 and 1968 is due to the fact that there is no longer the same kind of feminist confrontation, and equality is more acceptable today. Professor Hannam emphasised the need to keep the history alive and suggested ways of achieving it.

Professor Angela K. Smith then explored the complex relationship between World War I and the suffrage movement. Despite the mixed opinions of how to respond, the movement was a well organised network countrywide and this enabled women to support the war effort by establishing, for instance, the Women's Service Bureau and the Women's Hospital Corps. Society's attitude to women thus changed and patriotism had played its part in helping the women to get the vote.

After lunch the Killerton 'Songfishers' entertained us with two of the songs which were sung on the suffrage pilgrimage in



1913. The afternoon continued with presentations by research group members featuring both suffragettes and suffragists across the County by Pamela Vass (Kathleen Marie du Sautoy Newby & Anne Ball) Michael Corry (Frances Latimer & Alison Garland) Julia Neville (Jessie Montgomery, Adelaide Baly and Mary Willcocks) Marilyn Smee (Elsie Howey) Penny Bayer (The Women of the Frood Family) Ann Bond (Dr Mabel Ramsay) and Viv Styles (Olive Wharry).

Helen Turnbull

DHS Summer Meeting hosted by Way of the Wharves

We were delighted to host DHS at The Royal Hotel, East the Water for the summer meeting on Saturday 2 June. The weather was fine, even very sunny and the programme focused around the history of the wharves at East the Water. This is a very concentrated area in the middle of a conservation area with 20 listed structures from buildings including the Royal Hotel to Victorian sewer vent pipes. The long

history is essentially industrial with shipbuilding and allied trades, clay and potteries, limekilns, mining (anthracite and Bideford Black pigment) railways, gravel extraction, timber merchants, trading and warehousing. The WOTW project is now in its second year and is exploring the history of this area and communicating to the local community and visitors with projects including: schools programme (weird wharves), events, guided walks, interpretation panel, website and self guided map and guide 'walk the wharves'.

The programme included presentations on the history of the Railways, Royal Hotel, progress with oral histories and a guided walk along the wharves lead by Bob Kirby. Feedback: "It is amazing just how much

Photos: The gable end advertisement for the once bustling Brunswick Wharf, Bideford.



cc-by-sa/2.0 -Brunswick Wharf, Bideford by Phillip Halling - geograph.org.uk/p/1357056

history there is in such a small area". There was also time for a very useful discussion on next steps and to eat the excellent lunch.

The wharves ceased activity as a commercial trading site about 1982 when Torridge District Council purchased the site. Immediately prior Brunswick Wharf had been used for importing and distributing coal. In 1999 the trading schooner Kathleen and May (built in Connah's Quay, North Wales 1900) was restored at Brunswick Wharf and then opened to the public as a tourist attraction until 2009 when she was moved to Liverpool. The railway arrived to the north of the site in 1855 (now re-developed as Ethylwynne Brown Close on which work started in 1980). The railway line was extended through to Torrington in 1872 when the new station above the Royal Hotel was constructed. The last freight train on this line ran in 1982 and then the line was converted to the cycle/walking Tarka Trail.

Since 2009 there have been a number of development proposals for the wharves site, which have not come to fruition. In 2016 Torridge District Council announced that an outline agreement for re-development had been signed with Red Earth Developments. This would be the largest development/re-development site on the Torridge Estuary which is the middle of the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the first of the "new style" of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the UK. Simon Friend from Red Earth outlined his vision for the site during the Living History session.

Mike Teare

Thanks to Mike and his colleagues

and the thought that had gone into their programme we had a fantastic time at the Way of the Wharves event, with so much rich history so ably presented by the guide and the speakers. We wish them well for the future of the project. We were told that we were being 'guinea pigs' on whom they could trial the guided walk they have developed, and Societies planning their future programme might like to consider a day out in Bideford under the tutelage of the Way of the Wharves volunteers.

I'm only sorry the event was attended by so few members from DHS. Travel and transport were probably the major problem, and it did make me wonder if there might be some scope for a more structured approach to car-sharing than exists at present. What do you think?

Julia Neville - DHS

**SUBSCRIPTIONS WERE DUE 1ST
MAY**

HAVE YOU PAID?

You may have done so automatically by Standing Order, but if you don't have one in place, please pay the appropriate amount

Individual Members rate is £15.
Household membership is £22.50
Young Member rate is £5

by either sending a cheque made out to The Devon History Society to:

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

or pay by bank transfer to

**NatWest Bank
Account Number 23046031
Sort Code 56-00-49**

***with your surname and initial as payee
reference***

Any queries, email membership@devonhistorysociety.org.uk



2018 DHS Conference:

Devon's Cottage Hospitals Before the NHS

Devon History Society's Annual Conference, held in the year when the NHS is celebrating its 70th anniversary, looks back to the bedrock of the NHS in Devon – its 'cottage' hospitals.

Our keynote speaker is Professor Helen Tucker who is the current President of the Community Hospitals Association and engaged in raising the profile of modern community hospitals. But she has also always been interested in their origins and their past history which she has researched. She will be setting the scene for a discussion of Devon's

hospitals with an account of the national origins of the movement and, as she says, some 'fascinating tales'.

Devon had twenty-four cottage hospitals when the NHS 'nationalised' them all in 1948. This was more than in the whole of East Anglia, for example, and provided one of the highest rates nationally. Their origins show the breadth and depth of local philanthropy: they were founded by local individuals or by groups of local citizens and maintained by continuous efforts of fund-raising. A quartet of local speakers will present material about the hospitals in Ottery St Mary, Bovey Tracey,



Photos (Previous page): Exmouth, courtesy of Exmouth Hospital League of Friends. (Above): the Cottage Hospital Moretonhampstead. (Below): Ashburton and District Hospital.

Dartmouth and Sidmouth, and the programme will close with Caroline Stanford from the Landmark Trust. The Landmark Trust have recently taken over the former Winsford Cottage Hospital, an ‘architectural gem’, designed by Arts and Crafts architect C.F. Voysey, and Caroline will be presenting the work they have done to research the history of the origins of the hospital and its use. She will also talk about their plans for the future.



We would like to have pictures of as many as possible of the 24 cottage hospitals on display at the conference. I already have a small collection – thank you to those who supplied images – but would appreciate more suggestions about where to find them. Let me know!

Julia Neville

j.f.neville@btinternet.com



Devon History Society

AGM and Conference

**on Devon Cottage Hospitals
before the NHS**

Saturday, October 13th, University of
Exeter

**BOOK NOW through
Eventbrite: [click here](#)**



Putting Devon's Suffrage Activists on the Map (literally)

The DHS map and linked biographies of Suffrage Activists in Devon, featured in the last edition of DHS News, has continued to attract attention. ([click here.](#))

Historic England also have a project to commemorate the centenary of the granting of the vote in parliamentary elections in 1918 to (some) women. It's called HerStories, see <https://historicengland.org.uk/get-involved/help-write-history/herstories/>, and Devon History Society has been invited by Liz Clare, the Local Engagement Adviser, to contribute to this by creating entries on the National Heritage List for the activists who lived in or have connections with listed buildings. The entries will link back to the biographies on the DHS website. Members of the research group are now working on adding detail to the biographies and - a real challenge - preparing summary entries for the list in no more than 1000 characters. It's worth saying that, though we are doing this collectively as a DHS project, any individual

can add to information about a listed building through the Historic England 'Enriching the List' initiative.

But what about the many locations where activists lived, or protested, that aren't 'listed buildings'? We want to record them too and, by a fortunate coincidence, the South West Heritage Trust has just rolled out the Know Your Place digital mapping project to Devon, see <http://www.kypwest.org.uk/>. This allows individuals and groups to upload information from their researches to the 'community layer' of information to enrich the map of Devon. We plan to enter our suffrage activist findings there too and are working with Irene Andrews of Devon Heritage Centre to see how best we can do this.

We've still got a lot of work to do to get all our 120-plus biographies up to our 'gold standard' so, even if you haven't been involved before, if you think the research sounds interesting, do get in touch and offer your help.

Julia Neville, j.f.neville@btinternet.com

Improving our Presentations of the Past

A workshop exploring new and exciting methods of visual presentation of your researches will take place on October 29th at the Digital Humanities Laboratory, Exeter University

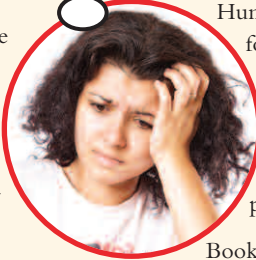
Is My Poster Good Enough? (or my Powerpoint or my Podcast ...?)

Most of us probably get involved in local history, because of our love of research. There's something of the Sherlock Holmes in us, the detective instinct, the thrill of the chase, the satisfaction of unravelling a mystery. Well, Sherlock Holmes didn't have to worry about how to publish his research. He had Dr Watson, the Strand Magazine and Sidney Paget the illustrator.

For the modern researcher living in a multi-media world the picture is more complex. The Devon Historian offers a route for formal peer-

reviewed publication of articles. But you or your research group may want to reach different audiences, to use a website, or put on an exhibition, or help tell the histories that are bound up with a particular historic building by a permanent installation.

DHS has arranged a workshop this autumn (free to DHS and affiliated societies members) designed to explore some modern methods of presenting research. We are grateful to Exeter University for hosting it at the new Digital



Humanities Lab; to Radio Devon for providing input about sound broadcasting; and to Freeline Graphics for offering to stretch our thinking about the visual representation of the past.

Book early as places are limited – for how to book see elsewhere in DHS News or find the Eventbrite booking form via the DHS website.



Exhibition at St Stephen's Exeter, 2017, courtesy of Freeline Graphics

DHS EVENTS

THE PROGRAMME FOR

2018

AUTUMN

PROGRAMME



*Maps and the Devon Landscape
Monday November 12th. Devon Heritage Centre*

Julia Neville gives more details elsewhere in the newsletter on the AGM and Conference on *Devon Cottage Hospitals before the NHS* (Saturday, October 13th, University of Exeter) – and on the workshop: *Improving our Presentations of the Past* (Monday, October 29, University of Exeter). The third event is a seminar and workshop on *Maps and the Devon Landscape* which will be held at the Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter on Monday, November 12th

We have put on the seminar on maps and landscape in response to the recent Survey of Members' Interests, which showed that the historical geography of Devon in all its various forms was among the most significant concerns of members. Speakers at the seminar will include County Archaeologist Bill Horner speaking on Historic Maps as a Resource for Landscape Archaeology, Honorary Exeter University Research Fellow Richard Sandover on Postulating a Domesday Landscape for Devon, John Torrance and Barbara Farquharson on The Branscombe Project: Mapping Local Landscape Histories, Chris Wakefield on Maps are the Bigger Picture: Ottery St Mary and Beyond and Devon Heritage Centre archivist Brian

Carpenter on From Estate Maps to Know Your Place: Maps and the Devon Heritage Centre. We hope that this wide-ranging programme will be of interest to many members throughout the county.

Paul Auchterlonie,
Programme Secretary

Book Reviews



There is one book remaining for review:

In the Footsteps of the Victorians: Aspects of change in the Wrey Valley and surrounding area 1837-1901 by members of the Lustleigh Society, 2018.

If anyone would like to offer themselves as a reviewer, please contact me on

M.M.Auchterlonie@exeter.ac.uk

The Living, the Dead and the Very Very Dead:

Ethics for Historians

Laura Sangha

Senior Lecturer, Exeter University

Students of history are no strangers to ethics. Indeed, universities have ethics committees and policies which cover instances where the conduct of research involves the interests and rights of others. For historians, this usually means that they must reflect on the possible repercussions of their research on the living – particularly those relatives, friends, descendants and other groups or communities otherwise connected to the subjects that the historian writes about. Indeed, many ethical statements produced by historians concentrate on the interests and rights of the living – for examples see the Royal Historical Society statement on ethics, or the American Historical Association 'Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct'.

But I don't work on the living.

I work on the dead. In fact, I work on the very very dead. People who died at least 300 years ago, and in some cases half a millennium ago. And since the dead don't have any human rights for a while I was rather dismissive of ethics policies. They were for modern colleagues working on the recent past.

Yet eventually I came to think differently.

It dawned on me that while the dead don't have rights, in almost all human societies the living consider themselves to have universal duties towards the dead. The dead are to be treated with respect, to be honoured with ritual, and not to be spoken ill of. This is why the display of the remains of the very dead (for example as part of the Mary Rose exhibition) is controversial. If these duties to the dead are universal, then surely the passage of time doesn't diminish



*This article was first published in *Storying the Past* at <https://storyingthepast.wordpress.com/2018/05/22/the-living-the-dead-and-the-very-very-dead-ethics-for-historians-by-laura-sangha/>*

them? And if these duties apply to physical remains, then why shouldn't they apply to textual and visual remains too?

My conclusion was that a scholar working on the very very dead should be just as reflective about treating their subjects with respect and dignity, and only 'invading their privacy' for legitimate reasons, when there is proper justification.

One of the things that fed into my awareness of these ethical questions was joining Twitter and being suddenly plunged into an environment where brief, pithy tweets about the dead, often accompanied by a picture, were meat and drink for the platform. In many cases there were no issues about the privacy of dignity of the subjects being 'shared' around ('#otd in 1666 Samuel Pepys buried his cheese to protect it from the Great Fire of London!'), but in other cases the ethical issues were painfully evident.

To give an example, I was particularly uncomfortable to see pictures that were taken from early medical files. What would a person in one of pictures have felt had they known that in the future an image of their body was to be viewed, seen, and (virtually) passed around by hundreds, perhaps thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of people? If they thought that the audience would be doctors and that this indignity would improve the lot of others, it's plausible they would have felt proud. But what if they knew that this indignity was to be visited upon them just for the sake of curiosity? Perhaps even for entertainment? For the purposes of being 'social'? This is of course an issue that many Twitter users have raised in the past.

Whilst some invasions of privacy seem obviously unjustified, the question remains – what is a clear justification?

At what point does our interest in the dead become a lack of respect, and a denial of dignity? I think many historians would feel comfortable that their own research and publications treat their subjects with the respect and honour that they deserve. Laying bare lives of the past is justified through a sense that interest in these subjects are part of a bigger project of learning, a laudable and legitimate exploration of the human condition across time.

But what about historical fiction?

Does the same justification apply there? I have often found that people are much more ready to sniff at historical fiction authors, particularly those who are felt to take liberties with their subjects, or who are accused of ghoulishly dwelling on personal tragedy. These authors are presumably perceived to be in some way failing in their duties to the dead. What is the real problem here though? When I hear historical fiction writers talk about what they 'owe' to their subjects, and about 'writing morally', it is evident that many of them also feel this duty to the dead. They too work within a bigger project of learning, as part of an artistic culture with bigger aims and aspirations.

I sometimes feel that a comparison with very very dead seventeenth-century puritans might be a useful one. These puritans were very concerned about the mixing of the sacred and the profane. They insisted that popular drama was not to be mixed with a sacred message, and the holy

words of scripture were not be set to popular tunes. It was inappropriate for popular festivities and customs to take place in church yards. Books were to be instructive and didactic, not entertaining yarns where the serious moral message was smuggled into the epilogue. In short, the sober subject of religion was not in any way compatible with leisure, entertainment, humour, or fun.

When people object to historical fiction on the grounds that it makes 'entertainment' of the gruesome, mysterious, or dramatic episodes and people of the past, is their objection based on the same sort of impulse? That it is acceptable if done in seriousness, by solemn historians, with an eye firmly fixed on truth and higher things, but in other contexts it is profane and vulgar?

Yet, doesn't a historian also want their writing to bring pleasure? To be appreciated for what it is, as well as what it says? Aren't historians also in the business of entertaining?

And seeing this is a post full of questions I haven't answered, here is a final one for you. Is it a human right to be forgotten?

Below: Tolland Man: How should we treat him? picture Wikimedia Commons



Ethics and History - a response

Laura Sangha's piece on ethics raises some fascinating questions and is also perhaps, mildly discomfoting. How far is it safe to go in restricting what we say about events in the past, not because there is a lack of evidence to support what we say, but because by saying so we may step outside the moral norms within which we operate at the time of writing? It seems to me there is a part of our human constitution that will always want to examine and discuss the dead - their condition (as a totality) remains an existential mystery and as a species, we have been much exercised to confer meaning on the transition from one state to the other. I don't think I can answer many (or indeed any) of Laura's questions, but I thought the following offers an interesting perspective on the issue. Is what follows ethical history, or prurient sensationalism? Or a short history of prurience?

(The following is a paraphrased version of considerably longer Wikipedia article, where source references are included. If you want to read the longer version visit

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elmer_McCurdy

On 1st January 1880, Sadie McCurdy, a seventeen year old from Washington, Maine gave birth to an illegitimate son, who she called Elmer. The boy's father was not known but it has been suggested that her cousin Charles Smith may have been responsible, on the basis that Elmer in later life used the name as an alias. To cover the shame of Sadie's situation as an unmarried mother, Elmer was

adopted by her brother George and his wife Helen.

On discovering his true origins, Elmer developed an anti-social streak and began drinking heavily during his teenage years, initiating a pattern of alcoholism which blighted most of his adult life. Although he trained as a plumber and was engaged several times in that capacity, he began drifting to find work, many times having his employment terminated because of his alcoholism.

He joined the United States Army in 1907 and became a machine gun operator alongside training in the use of nitroglycerine for military demolition purposes. He left the army, honourable discharged, in 1910, but after an arrest and eventual discharge (with an army friend) for having the tools of burglary on him, he embarked on a career as a thief. His efforts in his new chosen profession led to a short series of inept and unprofitable burglaries and bank raids, many of them carried out with the use of ill-judged quantities of nitroglycerine, destroying both the safes containing cash along with the cash itself.

McCurdy's final robbery took place on October 4, 1911 near Okesa, Oklahoma. He and two accomplices planned a train robbery, expecting to steal \$400,000 in cash rumoured to be on board. Unfortunately they stopped the wrong train, and were only able to net \$46, two demijohns of whiskey, an automatic revolver, a coat and the train conductor's watch. The event was publicised by the press as "the smallest in the history of train robbery". Elmer consoled himself with the whisky, but had unknowingly become the object of a 'wanted' campaign with \$2000 bounty for his capture.

On October 7, 1911, a posse of three sheriffs tracked McCurdy to a local hayshed using bloodhounds. They surrounded the shed

before dawn and waited for daylight. In an interview featured in the October 8, 1911 edition of the Daily Examiner, Sheriff Bob Fenton recalled:

'It began just about 7 o'clock. We were standing around waiting for him to come out when the first shot was fired at me. It missed me and he then turned his attention to my brother, Stringer Fenton. He shot three times at Stringer and when my brother got under cover he turned his attention to Dick Wallace. He kept shooting at all of us for about an hour. We fired back every time we could. We do not know who killed him ... (on the trail) we found one of the jugs of whiskey which was taken from the train. It was about empty. He was pretty drunk when he rode up to the ranch last night'.

McCurdy was killed by a single gunshot wound to the chest which he sustained while lying down.

More interesting from the ethical point of view is what happened to Elmer next. He was taken to a funeral parlour in Pawhuska, Oklahoma where the undertaker, one Johnson, embalmed the body, and dressed it ready for collection, a process not uncommon when families often had to travel long distances to collect their deceased relatives. But because Elmer had no immediate family connections, the body was left unclaimed. Thus Johnson, anxious to cover his costs for work done, gave Elmer a rifle and propped him up as an exhibit in the funeral parlour, charging customers to examine 'The Bandit Who Wouldn't Give Up' at a nickel per view.

Business was brisk and Johnson received many offers to buy the cadaver, all of which he refused. He was eventually relieved of his exhibit by deception and it was next to be found exhibited in a traveling carnival, the 'Great Patterson Carnival Show'. In 1922 the Pattesons sold out to another carnival outfit and Elmer went on show again as in item in

the 'Museum of Crime'. In 1933, he was acquired for a time by film director Dwain Esper, who used him as a prop in various anti drugs campaign films (to illustrate the malignant effect of drugs). By this time the body had mummified and shrunk to the size of a child.

Placed in storage in 1949, Elmer continued to be passed around as a curio and prop for films. In 1968 he was sold to the owner of the Hollywood Wax Museum, and later to Ed Liersch, part owner of an amusement arcade in Long Beach, California. In 1976 Elmer was hanging in Lierch's 'Laff in the Dark' exhibit. In December that year, an arm broke off the cadaver which exposed the fact that it was in reality a mummified human corpse rather than a wax model as it had long been believed to be. After extensive police enquiries and pathologists investigations it was confirmed that this was indeed Elmer McCurdy's body, and his story ends on April 22, 1977, when he was buried in the Boot Hill section of the Summit View Cemetery in Guthrie, Oklahoma. To ensure that Elmer's body would not be stolen and re-used, two feet of concrete was poured over the casket.

The photo (right) has been around for decades and now graces the Wikipedia article where it must receive more attention in a week than it did in all the decades prior to its posting on the internet. I think the picture is telling, and adds to the impact that the history makes. You may think it an unnecessary inclusion – that the text version is sufficient.

If you wish to comment on either of the articles please email the editor at dhsnewsed@gmail.com

Chris Wakefield



Elmer McCurdy on display shortly after being killed by law enforcement officers (1911).

Prison History

Dear DHS,

My name is Rosalind Crone and I'm a lecturer in history at The Open University. I'm writing to you because I have recently been involved in developing a new internet resource which I believe will be of interest to the members of the Devon History Society.

Prison History <https://www.prisonhistory.org/> is a database which contains information on nearly 850 penal institutions which existed in 19th century England, including around 420 local prisons and 380 lock ups. For each institution, there is information about its operational dates, jurisdiction, location, population statistics, the primary and secondary sources which mention it, and a list of all the relevant and surviving archival documents which we have been able to find in repositories based in England. On accessing Prison History, users can either search for specific prisons or various types of prisons, or browse the lists of archival materials that we recovered.

One of the core aims of Prison History is to emphasise the importance of the local prison (and lock ups) in nineteenth-century society. It is an institution that has been largely neglected in the major studies of nineteenth-century imprisonment and I think it is time to redress the imbalance. To do that, I need help from local

historians. My hope is that Prison History will be a useful resource for local historians, and also that local historians will want to get involved with this project, to help make the database an even better tool for local history, and, through emphasising the importance of prisons within nineteenth-century communities, to demonstrate the importance of local history research.

We have just soft launched Prison History in advance of the formal launch date on 6 July. I would be very grateful if you could circulate details of the resource to your members. I have a promotional flyer which I could email to you for circulation, or I could send you some copies in the post. We have also put a survey for local historians on the website to collect feedback – thoughts about the design of the site, and opinions on how develop the resource in the near future – it would be wonderful if some of your members were keen to complete the survey. There is a 'submit feedback' button on the website, or the survey can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HR3CNLH>

With best wishes,

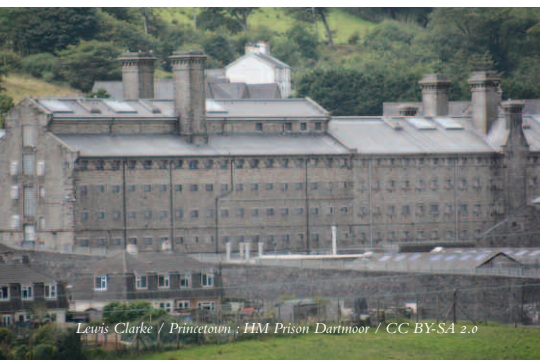
Rosalind Crone

Research request

2020 marks the Centenary of the formation of Calf Club No. 1 in Hemyock, Devon; the start of the Young Farmers movement in the UK.

Culm Valley Young Farmers and Hemyock Parish Council are combining to celebrate the event, including the presentation of research into the origins and early development of the Calf Club. We would be grateful for your help in sourcing information for Mid and East Devon between 1900 and 1930 including Calf Club records, milk production, milk recording, photos, diaries, farm accounts etc.

If you think you have anything which could contribute to the project please contact Penny Lawrence at hemyockcalfclub@gmail.com.



Lewis Clarke / Princetown ; HM Prison Dartmoor / CC BY-SA 2.0

Emmanuel Jeffery (1806 – 1874)

Dear DHS,

I am writing to enquire whether any of your readers can help with some research I am doing on the nineteenth century artist, Emmanuel Jeffery (1806 – 1874) who lived in Exeter, Lustleigh and Topsham. Jeffery was mainly a painter of watercolours some of which are in the collection of RAMM in Exeter, but he did also paint works in oils – one of which hangs in the Devon & Exeter Institution.

For three years running Jeffery had works accepted for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. In 1840 he showed a work entitled “Woody Scene on the River Teign: Holy Street Mill, Chagford, Devonshire”; in 1841 he showed “Exeter from Exwick Hill, with Exmouth, Topsham and Powderham in the distance”; and in 1842 he showed “Widden Park on the Teign, near Drewsteignton, Devonshire, with Chagford and Dartmoor in the distance.” I would like to find information on these paintings, including their current location, and on any other works by Jeffery.

Peter F Mason peter@moormasons.plus.com

If you have a short article about how your group deals with the pleasures and/or pains of running a history or heritage society, please get in touch. The spread of good ideas is a vital part of DHS's job. Write to dhsnewsed@gmail.com, or contact the DHS liaison officer Julia Neville on j.f.neville@btinternet.com

Undergraduate Advanced Diploma in Local History (Online)

Having noted the interest among members in our recent survey for extra mural studies, this may be of interest.

The Advanced Diploma in Local History at Oxford is a one-year part-time course which aims to train students in key concepts and methods of historical studies. The course is at FHEQ Level 6, equivalent to study in the third year at a university in the UK.

The course is delivered entirely online so students have the advantage of working at home while having access to course material, to their tutor, and to fellow students. Oxford University's programme of online courses brings the quality of education and scholarship which the University represents to those living far from Oxford and those who cannot attend regular classes.

More detail at

<https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/undergraduate-advanced-diploma-in-local-history>





As the Devon Remembers Heritage Project (DRHP) enters its final months, it is time to reflect on what the project has achieved, how the culmination will be marked, and the legacy for future researchers.

DRHP set out to uncover and tell the story of Devon's unique experience of the First World War, with a focus firmly on the Home Front. Since 2015, the project's staff and volunteers have worked across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to find out what life was like for the men, women and children who lived in the county one hundred years ago, or found themselves here as a result of war. A wide-ranging programme of research, talks, events and exhibitions has given local people an opportunity to deepen their understanding of this extraordinary time.

The project is based at the Devon Heritage Centre and is managed by the South West Heritage Trust. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, the project received a grant of £267,400 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) with additional support from the

Above: Patients in the hospital farm at Seale-Hayne near Newton Abbot, colourised by graphic artist Joe Chisholm for DRHP's exhibition of medical photographs at the Royal Devon & Exeter and North Devon hospitals. With thanks to the Seale-Haynians Archive.

South West Heritage Trust, Devon County Council, Torbay Council and the University of Exeter.

DRHP has supported 30 volunteer-led 'micro projects' around Devon, each exploring a different aspect of life on the Home Front. Volunteers have done amazing work to uncover these stories and tell them to new audiences. Their research is permanently available at Devon Heritage Centre and has contributed to a book, *Devon During the First World War*, that is coming out shortly and will be available at Devon Heritage Centre.

There have also been four arts programmes that invited local people to respond creatively to the First World War in Devon. They have resulted in performances of new drama and music, a visual arts installation at Teignmouth Community

School and a book of creative writing and poetry that is available at all local libraries.

A major legacy of the project is the Devon Remembers archive collection which brings together a rich and easily searchable collection of First World War archive material at Devon Heritage Centre. It contains over 5000 documents and images. The catalogue can be searched at <http://devon-cat.swheritage.org.uk/exhibitions/devon-remembers>

Future research will also be helped by the creation of an indexed library of newspaper articles at Devon Heritage Centre. Copies of over 4000 articles relating to the First World War in Devon will soon be available in easily accessible folders organised by topic.

So far:

- Volunteers have given around 9000 hours of time to DRHP, more than twice the target for the project.
- Approximately 160,000 people have seen a DRHP exhibition or display
- Over 700 people have attended talks as part of our main programme or by micro projects
- 76 people have received heritage skills training as part of their volunteering
- 5400 documents have been catalogued as part of the Devon Remembers archive collection

The project will culminate in a major exhibition, Devon Voices: Home Front Stories 1914-1918, at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter which opens on 15th September and runs until the end of the year. There is also a special evening event at Exeter Cathedral on 8th November which will showcase our arts programmes and will commemorate Devon's



Fishing at Teignmouth, with thanks to Teign Heritage Centre. Farming, fishing and food has been an important theme in DRHP's research.

Home Front experience in advance of the anniversary of the Armistice.

For Devon History Society members there are also two special events to showcase the new research tools and display some gems from our First World War collections. They will be held at Devon Heritage Centre on 24th September and North Devon Record Office on 8th October. Book free tickets:

For Devon Heritage Centre go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/devon-remembers-at-devon-heritage-centre-tickets-45380348845>

For North Devon Record Office go to <https://devon-remembers-at-ndro.eventbrite.co.uk>





A Prussian Countess in East Devon –

The plot thickens...

Consequent on the piece in the last newsletter on Elizabeth Von Arnim, it emerged that Elizabeth did not simply bury herself in the Devon countryside and devote herself to her oeuvre. In one of those pleasant reminders that doing history is an active business, Julia Neville communicated that, in the course of her own research on a very different topic, she had also come across the Countess:

“I had just been browsing around in the hope of finding out what she was doing providing hospitality for the speakers to one of the first meetings of the Exeter National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies in February 1909. I now suspect the key may have been her temporary stay while house hunting in Southernhay West, where there were several pro-suffrage families”. Email from Julia 4 February 2018.

It was time for a closer reading of Von Arnim’s Princess Priscilla’s fortnight (1905), her only book

set in the West Country and subsequently both a play and a film. It is clearly much more than an essay on the effect of Devon junkets, cottages and cream on a German princess who decides to run away from a stuffy court, an oppressively large and brainless lady in waiting, and the prospect of an arranged marriage – though these elements are indeed all present in the novel. The book also clearly echoes the ‘running away’ of the author and also illustrates the complexity of literary creation and the influence on it of landscape and local distinctiveness.

Clearly, Von Arnim had to have a picture in her mind of the setting for her novel and although she says that Symford is on the edge of Exmoor, the difficulty of buying a cottage, because they are all the cottages are owned by the estate; the position of Shuttleworth Court and that of the church all point to Broadclyst, just over the hill from Blue Hayes where Von Arnim lived: The Symford churchyard, its church, and the pair of coveted cottages, are on a little eminence rising like an

island out of the valley. P.38. Sidbury is a less likely candidate.

Von Arnim, the runaway princess and her pretend uncle (in fact the avuncular and erudite palace librarian with whom she escape from the principality) are all influenced by the local landscape, weather and moods. The local characters are a good fit and can only be drawn from life, as may be the difficult relationship with Annalise, German maid to the princess, who did not feel at home in England. The background and characters are more than adequate to the task of providing a disquisition, not only on the role of women in rural society (the princess is obliged to box the ears of the too forward vicar's son) but, and in more detail, the Victorian view of charity. The princess hands out money to the poor, provides a huge tea party for the local children, on a Sunday, and vastly overpays 25 cooks (25 local women applied for the job so the princess takes one on each for a day in turn). The whole story becomes much more serious when an indigent old lady is murdered for the £5.00 the princess has given her, the children are sick because of the over rich food and a cook leaves the village with the £5.00 note from which she was supposed to return change from for her day of cooking. The Symford responses are various The vicar is worldly wise and non-judgemental, his wife is outraged and appalled that charity should ever be separated from moralising and Lady Shuttleworth realises that these three Germans in the village are not ordinary citizens.

However, the key theme remains the psychology of running away, running from and running into:

“Priscilla wanted to run away. This, I believe, is considered an awful thing to do even if you are only a housemaid or somebody's wife. If this were not considered awful ... there is, I suppose, not a woman who at some time or other have run ... a wife who runs is pursued by social ruin, it being taken for granted that she did not run alone. I know at least two wives who did run alone ... One of them, unable to bear this, asked her husband's pardon. She was a weak spirit, and now lives prostrate days, crushed beneath the unchanging horror of a husband's free forgiveness.

The other took a cottage and laughed at the world. Was she not happy at last, and happy in the right way? I go to see her sometimes, and we eat the cabbages she has grown herself”. P.8

The above is one of the rare occasions where the authorial voice is heard and we can visualise Von Arnim at Blue Hayes pausing and looking up from her pen at the Devon hills, thinking of the Prussian Count and estate she has run away from and the life of a novelist and emancipated woman she has run into.

Julia Neville, meanwhile, has been exploring Von Arnim's suffragist connections while living in Devon:

“So, the event at which Elizabeth v.A's name is mentioned was a reception in the Barnfield Hall that took place on 15 February 1909 and was attended by 150 people. It had been called as a preliminary to the formal meeting to inaugurate the Exeter branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, which was to be held later that month. It was reported in Western Times, 16 Feb 1909. The Countess was definitely there and the Devon and Exeter Gazette of the same day specifically mentions that the speakers were the guests of the 'Countess of Arnim'. The speakers were two women with whom, as far as my investigations go, she had no obvious connection – Lady Grove and Miss Eva Gore-Booth, both well known in the movement for women's suffrage. Perhaps she just kindly offered to some of her Exeter friends that she would put the speakers up? But why? – Jessie Montgomery, the organiser, lived in Baring Crescent and was not short of guest rooms. Could her path and theirs have crossed in London society? “ Email from Julia 24.03.2018

Perhaps the bow wave of the countess' passing through East Devon and Exeter caused other people and institutions to rock at their moorings sufficiently to leave a trace in the historical record.

Phil Planel

A tribute to Dr Jean Shields

North Tawton and the wider area are coming to terms with the death on Friday 4th May of Dr Jean Shields, after a 24-hour illness. She was 88. She was born at de Bathe Farm at North Tawton in 1930, and she spent much her life there, bringing up two sons who still live and work nearby.

Jean worked in the health service for over forty years, initially part-time in child health and family planning and later as a full-time Okehampton GP. In retirement, she continued to work part-time until she was 70, and was made a Serving Sister of the Order of St John in 1995 for her contribution to the Okehampton branch.

After her husband's early death in 1991 she threw herself into local history research, joining local history societies in Okehampton, Bow and Crediton and also volunteering at Okehampton and Crediton museums. She was North Tawton Parish Archivist and an

acknowledged expert on the history of North Tawton and its families, co-writing *The Book of North Tawton* (2002, reprinted 2011). These endeavours were recognised with a British Empire Medal in 2013. Not only a member of the Devon History Society, she was also a member of the Devonshire Association and their Industrial Archaeology subsection, the Devon Family History Society and the Friends of Devon's Archives (FODA) for whom she did a lot of research for their Oath Rolls project. Her areas of expertise (apart from all things North Tawton) were the Devon woollen industry and the history of medical and workhouse provision in Okehampton.

Judy Moss



EXMOUTH HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Golden Anniversary celebration

Saturday, 13th October 2018

at Glenorchy church and hall, Exeter Road,
Exmouth EX8 1PP

Programme

10.00 Arrival & registration (coffee/tea available from church coffee shop, cost 50p)

10.30 “A Victorian head gardener” – talk by **Dr. Francis Burroughes**: informative, entertaining and gently humorous.

11.30 Coffee/tea (included)

12.00 “Exmouth 50 years ago” – illustrated talk by **Ian Cann**, drawing on the lifetime collections of himself and Paul Radgick, both born and bred Exmothians.

1.00 Lunch – not included, but if you bring your own it may be eaten in the church hall, or there are many cafes and takeaways within a short walking distance. Tea and coffee (included) will be available in the hall.

2.00 “The first seaside resort in Devon, and what happened next” – illustrated talk

by **Mike Tracey**, former chairman of EH&AS.

3.00 Tea/coffee (included)

3.30 “Exmouth and its neighbours in the Middle Ages and the Tudor period” – illustrated talk by **John Allan**, doyen of Devon historians.

Throughout the day there will be an exhibition relating to Exmouth history in the church hall, including a number of works of art. There will also be an extensive sale of second-hand books to suit all tastes, with many historical delights, and we will be launching the first of a proposed series of occasional papers on Exmouth history, this one about local suffragettes, written by April Marjoram.

The cost of the day will be £12.00, to include coffee and tea, but NOT lunch. If you book before 13th August the cost will be £10. If you would like to attend please send a cheque (made payable to Exmouth Historical & Archaeological Society) together with your contact details and post them to: Mike Tracey, 16 Claredale Road, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 2EE.. Full details of the venue, parking etc. will be supplied with the acknowledgement of your payment.

For additional details please email Mike at mdclaredale@tiscali.co.uk

Mike Tracey



The Holdsworth Claret Award

The Devon & Cornwall Record Society has awarded the first bottle of the **Holdsworth Claret** to Professor Julia Crick of King's College London.

The prize is awarded in memory of Emeritus Professor Christopher Holdsworth, an eminent historian who was also a former chairman of the Society. The Devon & Cornwall Record Society was formed in 1904 and publishes scholarly editions of original records. The award is given to mark to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the understanding of manuscripts relating to Devon and Cornwall.

Prof. Crick's project, *The Conqueror's Commissioners: Unlocking the Domesday Survey of South West England*, investigates the earliest surviving record of the Domesday survey, a manuscript which has belonged to Exeter Cathedral for more than six hundred years. *Exon Domesday*, as it is known, consists of more than 100 booklets of detailed administrative data relating to Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire providing unique information about the landscape, economy and governance of the South-West just after the Norman Conquest. The booklets were compiled in 1086 by a team of two dozen scribes and they provided data used in the compilation of the famous (Great) Domesday Book, now in the National Archives at Kew.

Dr Todd Gray MBE, chairman of the Society, said 'The society is delighted to award the

Holdsworth Claret to Professor Crick whose work has transformed our understanding of the West Country in the eleventh century. Her work and that of her team is one of the most significant pieces of original work which has been undertaken in our generation.'

Professor Julia Crick said 'I am delighted and honoured to accept this award on behalf of the project's two co-investigators, Professor Stephen Baxter (University of Oxford) and Professor Peter Stokes (École pratique des Hautes Études, formerly of King's College London), and of the whole team. This has been a multi-disciplinary project and we are indebted to our Project Partners, The Friends of Exeter Cathedral, to the Dean and Chapter and the team at the cathedral's Library and Archives, and to the Arts and Humanities Research Council who funded the project. When our website is released very shortly the text of *Exon Domesday* will be freely available to the general public to consult.'

For further details contact: Todd Gray
01392 272727



Professor Julia Crick.

Tree-planting

On 6th July 2018, Mid Devon District Council planted a tree in the People's Park Tiverton. Coinciding with National Democracy Week, the tree ceremony commemorates the suffrage movement in the **centenary year of the Representation of the People Act**. A number of the Council's elected women members took part in the tree planting, including ninety-one year old serving councillor Eileen Andrews. Viv Styles and Ann Bond attended on behalf of the Devon History Society. During several short speeches, the Society was thanked for providing biographical information about suffrage activists in mid-Devon, accessed via the online map www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk/research/suffrage-activists-in-devon-1866-1918/ Tributes

Below: DHS council members join councillors of Mid Devon District Council at the commemorative planting in Tiverton. Inset: Emmeline Pankhurst at a tree planting in Batheaston in 19012. (photo from BBC website http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/bristol/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_9224000/9224419.stm)

were paid to Mid Devon activists Olive Hepburn, Ada Jefford, Bertha Lake, Amy Montague and Zoe Montague and posies of flowers were laid in their memories.

Reference was also made to the arboretum created in Batheaston between 1909 and 1912 by the Blathwayt family at their home, Eagle House. More than 60 suffragettes came to stay with the family to recuperate from debilitating prison sentences and they were encouraged to plant trees on the estate. Most of the trees were felled in the 1960s to make way for a housing estate, so it was especially poignant to see the planting of the *Davidia involucrata* (the Handkerchief Tree) in memory of all who campaigned for the right to vote. Our thanks go to Sarah Lees and the Chairman of the Council, Peter Heal, for involving the Devon History Society in this special event.

Viv Styles



DHS Affiliates

Welcome to our most recent recruits, the Ivybridge Heritage and Archives Group and the Friends of Totnes Museum. We're delighted to be extending our coverage with new groups, both of whom got to know the Society through our spring conference in Plymouth. We also welcome back Lewdown Past who have rejoined us after a break. Farewell, sadly, to the Kingsbridge History Society which has been unable to recruit a new organiser and is now disbanding. We hope historians in the local area will find another focus for research and sharing local histories. JN



River Erme at Ivybridge (1834)



The Butenwalk Totnes.

Devon Remembers Heritage Project

Special events for researchers in Exeter and Barnstaple

Join us at Devon Heritage Centre or North Devon Record Office to see a display of significant documents and images from our extensive First World War collections and learn about the new tools and resources that have been developed by the Devon Remembers Heritage Project for you to use in your own First World War research. Talks at 2pm will be followed by complimentary refreshments and time to view the display. Tickets are free but must be booked in advance.

Devon Heritage Centre: Monday 24th
September, 2-4pm

Book at: <https://devon-remembers-at-dhc.eventbrite.co.uk>

North Devon Record Office: Monday 8th
October, 2-4pm

Book at: <https://devon-remembers-at-ndro.eventbrite.co.uk>

Or call 01392 888726



Lustleigh Heritage Weekend

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Lustleigh Society we are organizing a Heritage weekend. This event is supported by Moor than meets the eye. We hope that your members will want to join us at the events. This is the programme:



Friday 31st August, 7.30 p.m.
LUSTLEIGH ON FILM

An evening of films from the Archive featuring Lustleigh through the seasons, May Day, Beating the Bounds, special village occasions, village characters and some newly commissioned films.

Lustleigh Village Hall

Tickets: £5 In advance from Lustleigh Dairy or on the door

Licensed Bar



Sat. 1st September 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Sun. 2nd September 10.30am – 4.30pm
A CHANCE TO EXPLORE the HISTORY of LUSTLEIGH

Lustleigh Village Hall and around the village

This will be the largest exhibition of historic material about the village and parish of Lustleigh. It will include the 1837 Lustleigh Tithe Map, paintings of Lustleigh scenes, some

over 100 years old, historic photographs of farming, information on changes in the Wrey Valley during the Victorian era, indentures & other key documents and much more.

There will also be trails and guided walks around village, a quiz for children and a chance to record your memories of Lustleigh.

A new book about Lustleigh, *Lustleigh, A Dartmoor Village in Focus* will be launched at 2.30 pm on Saturday.



KELLY MINE will also be open on Sunday 10.30 am – 4.30pm

A shuttle service will run between Lustleigh Show Field and the centre of the village on Sunday

Parking will be available on both days on Lustleigh Cricket Field (weather permitting)

Further information:

<http://www.lustleigh-society.org.uk/>



Kelly Mine.

Photo © Martin Bodman (cc-by-sa/2.0)

DESERT ISLAND DOCUMENTS

A Celebration of the work in Devon of
Professor Mark Stoye



with discussion on such topics as

**CIVIL WAR IN DEVON
EXETER CITY WALLS
EXETER UNDERGROUND PASSAGES
PRAYER BOOK REBELLION
EXETER WITCHES**

in conversation with Dr Todd Gray

2pm Saturday, 27 October 2018
Exeter Guildhall

To book send (by 20 October) a cheque for £6 (£5 members) to DEVON & CORNWALL
RECORD SOCIETY to The Cottage in The Hayes, Cheriton Fitzpaine, EX17
4JG. Enclose SAE if receipt required (email preferred)

More details at todd@toddgray.co.uk