DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 34

Autumn 2016

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Illustrations

Front cover: Demolition of the two upper storeys of the front wall of the Royal Clarence Hotel, Cathedral Yard, Exeter, on 2 November 2016 © *Todd Gray.*

Secretary's Report 2014-15

Last year's AGM was held at the Baptist Church Hall in Bideford on 18 October 2014. About 50 members and five guests attended. Jo Cox chaired the meeting which followed the usual format, starting with my own report and followed by the Treasurer's report by Lizzie Induni; finances were healthy with over £8000 available but the cost of printing the Newsletter and the Register had yet to be met. In order to keep future costs down she advocated that notices should now be sent by email to those members who were happy with this. Thanks to Alison Bunning's efforts we have done this in the current year and despite some initial glitches I hope that everyone was notified of our two meetings. Four members of the committee were re-elected: Alison Bunning, Peter Dare, Stewart Brown and Stuart Blaylock. The resignation of Peter Marlow was announced with much regret. He was thanked sincerely for his huge efforts in recent years and presented with tokens of appreciation. There were short reports on the cobbles project and the Plymouth Churches project. The meeting finished with the usual discussion on future locations and themes for conferences.

Following the business we had two talks. The first was given by Peter Christie, a distinguished local historian and local councillor. He gave an excellent history of the town's development from its medieval origins to the present day. Bideford was not only a major crossing-point of the River Torridge with an early bridge but became an important port exporting its pottery to the North American colonies, Ireland and Wales, as well as importing tobacco. It still exports local clay and has some fishing boats. Ship-building was also a significant industry. Bideford flourished in the 19th century both as a market town and with the growth of tourism in the county. Extensive new housing development is now proposed. Peter was followed by John Thorp who told us about the houses of Bridgeland Street, a new development on reclaimed ground by the river carried out by the Bridge Trust from the 1690s. Many of the original houses survive today with double-depth or L-shaped plans, experimental for their time. He compared them with houses of the same period in Topsham or in Magdalene Road in Exeter. Some retain their fine staircases and other original fittings such as panelling. Their survival as a group is remarkable.

After lunch we toured the town starting at the Royal Hotel across the river, then crossing the Long Bridge to see the parish church of St Mary. We then went to the Market Square and the Market, before visiting Lavington Chapel and afterwards to the Freemasons Hall in Bridgeland Street. The latter was originally built

Right and far right. Staircase in the Royal Hotel, Bideford. Below. The Long Bridge at Bideford.




Bridgeland Street. Clockwise from top left. Freemasons' Hall, part of the Great House, external and internal. 28 Bridgeland Street built for Joseph Hooper. 28 Bridgeland Street hopper dated 1692.

as one of the houses described by John in his talk and we concluded the enjoyable day by looking at the exteriors of other houses in the street.

The Summer Conference 2015 was held on 20 June at Ashburton in the parish church hall. It was on the theme of thatch and was attended by 55. We had three presentations, the first by Jo Cox on the history of thatching in Devon. She pointed out that it was a remarkably complex subject considering what a basic material thatch is. England has the most extensive tradition of thatch in Europe and Devon has the most thatch of any English county despite its unsuitably damp climate. Combed wheat reed was the traditional regional technique. Devon has about 200 known examples of smoke-blackened thatch of medieval date, thanks to the local practice of not completely stripping roofs but leaving the lower layers intact. Thatch in Devon is almost entirely rural as its use in towns, once common, has long ceased because of the terrible fires that resulted. Combed wheat reed requires the thatch to be carefully prepared; this was done by hand until the invention of the mechanical reed comber in the late 19th century; this could be attached to a threshing machine. Growing and preparing thatch is now a specialized process. The tradition is under threat from the introduction of water reed imported from abroad, which is easier to obtain and to use and can be laid so that its closely resembles combed wheat reed. There has been much debate about its introduction and thatchers would prefer to be able to decide what they think is appropriate rather than letting conservation officers dictate this to them. This conflict of views resulted in English Heritage researching the whole subject in the 1990s and commissioning three books on it. Devon County Council also commissioned a book on the local tradition which Jo co-authored with John Thorp; DCC also issued a leaflet, a copy of which formed part of the conference programme. Jo was followed by Alan Prince, formerly chair of the Devon and Cornwall Master Thatchers who told us about the practical problems involved in thatching. He described how you might deal with a roof with decayed timbers and then how thatch was laid from the eaves upwards through

various courses. Ridges were formed by bending wheat reed over and only lasted about ten years. Chimneys should be repointed to avoid risk of fire even though thatch is hard to ignite; however once lit it is hard to extinguish. He described the various tools used, including the now illegal but very practical biddle which gives you a working platform hooked into the roof. His son-in-law had found a hedge trimmer much more effective than the traditional shearing hook for trimming thatch. He considered thatching not a particularly skillful craft but it did require a great deal of practice to ensure a properly functioning and lasting roof. Finally George Wakley gave us an account of growing wheat for thatching which he does in Somerset and Dorset. In the past there was plenty of long wheat for thatching but shortages began to occur in the 1970s which in part caused the introduction of water reed as a substitute. Modern varieties of wheat are all too short-stemmed to use for thatching so old varieties have had to be grown and only one of these is now commercially available. Triticale, a wheat-rye cross, is an alternative although this is now being bred shorter. When he started growing in 1979 the tradition of growing for combed wheat reed was already largely lost and he had to start from scratch. He described how to stook wheat and how to then make it into stacks on staddles, although traditional stacks have now given way to indoor storage. Machinery is also changing; it is possible to use a baler after combing so as to avoid stooking. Machinery now enables some growers to cultivate big acreages but there is lots of bad growing especially if the soil is too fertile. He concluded that in view of all the difficulties involved, it was best to be pragmatic when it comes to decision-making on thatching conservation issues.

In the afternoon we drove to Higher Uppacott, the Dartmoor longhouse owned by the National Park. Alan Prince discussed its thatching with us, John Thorp its archaeology. Its thatch was in a poor state which enabled Alan to point out various problems and to suggest remedies. Higher Uppacott dates from the early 14th century, although the smoke-blackened thatch over the domestic upper section is late medieval.

2014 Summer Conference on thatch. Higher Uppacott, Dartmoor. Left, George Wakley, Alan Prince and Peter Child.

We were kindly allowed access to the whole of the main house by the National Park for which we are most grateful. It proved a very suitable house to put the morning's talks into a real context.

The 2015 AGM will be covered in my next report. It was held in Cullompton for the second time in the Group's history, following the previous year's precedent of revisiting a place rather than trying always to find a new one. Sadly we were frustrated a second time in our ambition to visit the church. It was under major repair and shut to visitors.

The committee has met as usual six times in the last year as well as holding an additional meeting to consider the future of the DBG. A significant proportion of the time has been taken up in discussion about the two annual meetings (the summer conference and the AGM), which take a surprising amount of time and thought to organize. We resolved after discussion with the Cornish Buildings Group not to take up the CBA's offer to make us their local correspondent on listed building applications as on balance it seemed too difficult to organize. Given that doing this would have accorded with one of the Group's original objectives, we made this decision with regret; no doubt it could be revisited in the future. As regards case work, we have made representations on two cases this year. The first was on a proposed solar array near to Holcombe Court which would have impacted on its setting. The application was refused but a further one has now been submitted. The second was a strong objection to the proposed demolition of the church of the Immaculate Conception in Barnstaple. The group objected to an earlier proposal for its demolition as long ago as 1986 when it was refused on appeal. Since then the church has stood derelict, as the Roman Catholic authorities no longer have any use for this significant historic 19th century building which is important in the townscape of Barnstaple. No decision has been made yet on the application. We also supported the listing of the *Western Morning News* building in Plymouth when its demolition was suggested. This spectacular structure with a ship-like character was designed by Nicholas Grimshaw in 1993. We are pleased that it has been accepted for listing at grade 2* and has found a new sympathetic owner. We commented on Historic England's draft Advice Note Number 2 on 'Change to historic assets', one of a suite of new documents from Historic England which attempt to fill the gap in Government advice following the revocation by this administration of the previous invaluable statutory advice. We have been approached by the Devon History Society about the possibility of holding a joint meeting with them. We thought that this might be good idea for a future event but that it would probably not be viable in the immediate future. Since the DHS has a busy year coming up they concurred with this decision.

Anyone who was at last year's meeting may remember that I said that this would be my last year as Secretary. I am afraid that I have to disappoint them as we have been unable to find a successor so I have offered to stay on in this post albeit hopefully with reduced responsibilities. I would like to encourage all members to contact the committee about any matter relating to Devon's buildings which is of interest or concern to you. We can make representations on planning or listed building proposals which appear unsuitable and we can post items of news on the website. Just send me an email or give me a call.

Peter Child

Devon Buildings Group AGM: Treasurer's Report, Cullompton 2015

Devon Buildings group is very good value for money and still costs individual members £15 per year. We have 165 members, numbers remaining static, which brought in an income of £2,175. The costs for website, register, newsletter and insurance and the events have not changed significantly over the last year.

The accounts show a loss of £789.44. This is because we produced two Newsletters this year. You might remember that last year we made a profit of £1440.39, so these two years balance each other out.

We have £7,378.66 available to us in the bank at the end of September 2015.

This year, I will be retiring from the role of Treasurer in order to become the group's Newsletter editor. This means we need a new Treasurer. Unfortunately, because of a last minute change of date for the AGM, I am not able to be here in person to reassure the membership that the role of treasurer is no longer the onerous task that it was. Most members have been persuaded to pay by direct debit, so collecting membership money is relatively easy. The remainder of the post just covers paying the odd cheque for events and liaising with the accountant at the end of the year. Please do not feel shy about coming forward to offer your services as the new Treasurer.
I would like to finish by thanking Tony Elston the accountant, for checking the books.

Lizzie Induni

Exeter Fire

Early on the morning of Friday 28th October 2016, a fire broke out in the Castle Fine Art Gallery at 18 Cathedral Yard, Exeter. This developed into a major disaster extending over several days, the local fire service calling for help from Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire. The progress of the fire is not fully-understood but it spread to the Well House, the pub adjacent to the art gallery. Burning debris fell on to the roof of the Royal Clarence Hotel (occupying what were two separate historic buildings) to the east and this caught fire, too. Sterling work by firefighters from all over the south west prevented its spread across St Martin's Lane, at the east end of the block, although burning debris fell on Mol's Coffee House and the gardens of houses at the north end of Cathedral Close – the block of buildings at right angles. The fire caused mayhem in Exeter. The old High Street was closed, as was the cathedral. Several businesses were closed down for several days, some are not re-opened at the time of writing. Thankfully there were no lives lost and no injuries.

Cathedral Green has been the heart of Exeter for nearly two millennia. On the edge of the Roman military fortress that was the origin of the City, it was also the centre of the later Roman civilian settlement. Exeter was re-organised under the Anglo-Saxon reign of King Alfred in the late 9th century. It seems that it was then that building plots were established south from the High Street to the present frontage of Cathedral Yard on the north side of what is now Cathedral Close. Documents from the high medieval period – that is to say, from c.1100-1450 – show a significant and very interesting arrangement whereby the tenements on the north side of Cathedral Close indicate alternate ownership of what were the late Saxon tenements between the Vicars Choral and the Dean and Chapter.

The block of buildings that stand (or stood, since the fire) on these ancient plots between Cathedral Green and the High Street have seen multiple phases of redevelopment over the centuries. On the Cathedral Green side, they present (with some dull exceptions) distinctive elevations of mixed dates and styles, making up a worthy setting for the north side of the cathedral. Given the blitz damage to the City, they include the amazing survival of a number of historic merchants' houses including a run of nine houses along the High Street which are of serious national importance as they illustrate the development of urban housing from the late medieval period into the early modern. They include one medieval hall-house which was originally heated by an open hearth fire, and a number of later houses, sometimes built in pairs, illustrating the development of floored

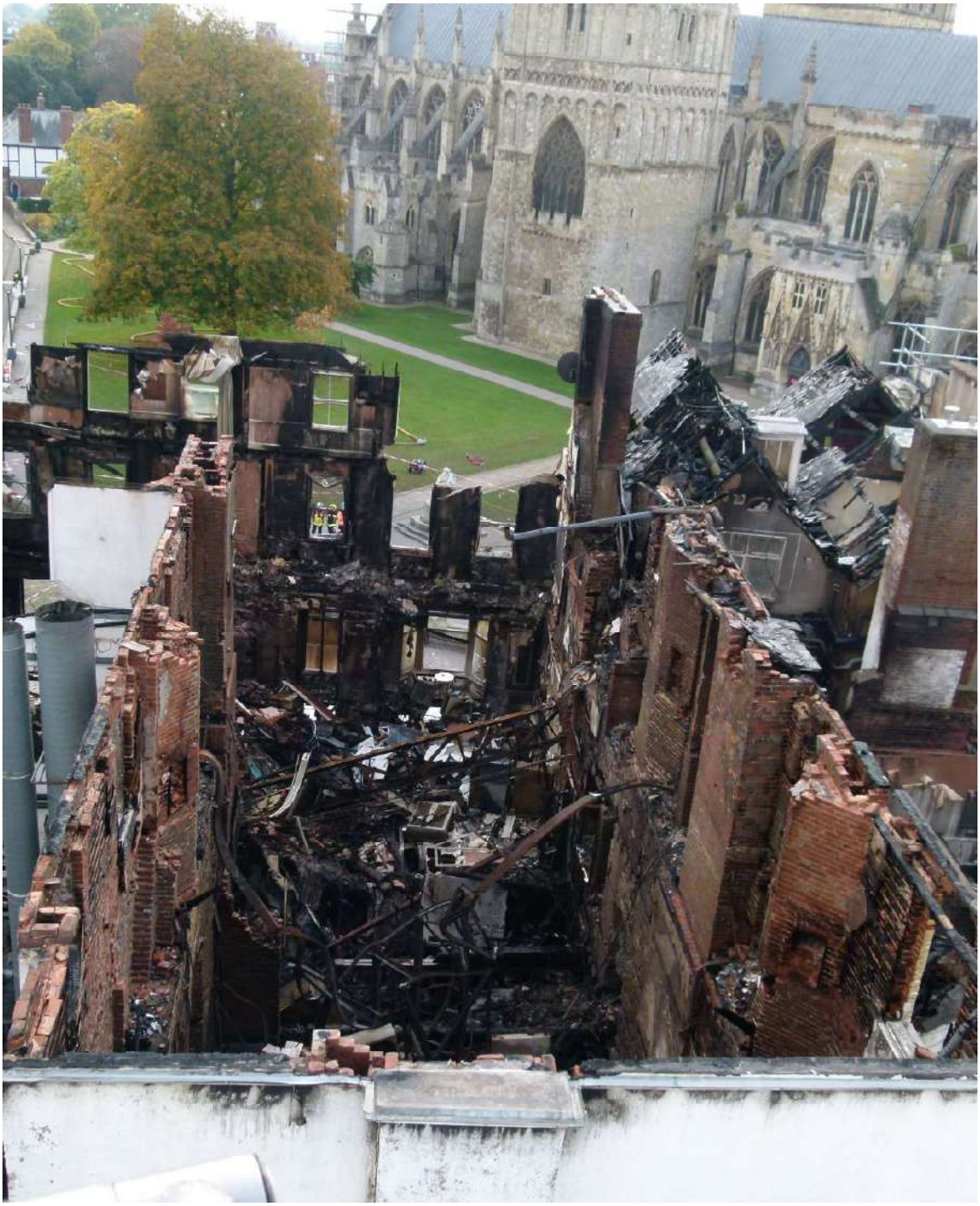
Cathedral Close looking north east © John Thorp.

merchants' houses from the early 16th to the early 18th century. Thanks to the presence of Todd Gray on site during the fire and the responsiveness of the fire service to information from him and John Allan about the importance of adjacent buildings, the losses have been less dreadful than they might have been. One example only of what has survived are the rooms spectacularly decorated with probably 17th century paintings on the upper floor of the 16th century Laura Ashley building.

What we know to have been lost is the interior of 18 Cathedral Yard (Castle Fine Art Gallery). This was an architecturally eccentric 1870s building facing on to Cathedral Green, known to a few as having a fabulous first floor mirrored room and suite of spectacular flights of stairs. The building was scaffolded and in the course of upper floor conversion to flats. This building appears to have been entirely destroyed inside the shell. Next door to east is/was the Well House pub in a 17th century timber-framed merchant's house or pair of merchants' houses with a rendered front, the west block preserving original ribbon glazing to its bay windows. The east end block of the Well House had a flying freehold with the Clarence Hotel next door to east with hotel bedrooms at first floor level. The damage to the Well House is unclear at present, the roofs are badly burnt but we do not know how far down the fire penetrated. The Clarence Hotel (Roman archaeology has previously been identified in an excavation of its kitchen) probably had a phase as a large clergy house. Its rebuilding in brick as a hotel in the 1760s incorporated 2 storeys of earlier, probably medieval Heavitree stone walling in the front facade. Thanks to the advice of Historic England, this walling has been retained, but the front above has been demolished (see front cover) and the interior is burnt out. The adjacent Exeter bank building, also 18th century in origin, also appears to be burnt out. A collection of 27 important continental painted glass panels, often known as 'Flemish roundels', leaded into its ground floor windows, and likely to have been supplied to the hotel by the Drake family of cathedral glaziers and glass experts, have been damaged and some appear to have been destroyed.

The first floor mirrored room of 18 Cathedral Yard (Castle Fine Art Gallery) has been completely lost © Dr Stuart Blaylock.

Public meetings, prompted by Todd Gray and supported by the City Council, to explain the historic value of what has been lost and what has survived were held on 5th and 7th November in the Barnfield Theatre and were over-subscribed. Excellent papers were given by Todd, John Thorp, Richard Parker and John Allan. City Councillor Rachel Sutton, Andrew Pye, Principal Project Manager (Heritage) and representatives from the fire service and police were present to answer questions. The talk can be viewed on You Tube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvpsnMjq-Xo&feature=youtu.be. Many people in Exeter, or who know the City, have described the fire as a personal bereavement. Perhaps the only Good Thing to come out of it is a reminder that familiar buildings are collectively highly valued as part of our sense of place: not just by those keen enough to be DBG members, but by a much larger and wider public who were in evidence at the public



The burnt out remains of the Royal Clarence Hotel. The two gables of the Well House can be seen middle right © Todd Gray.

meetings. Many are aware of how much Exeter lost in the Blitz in 1942 and understand that the buildings round the cathedral are therefore an especially precious survival in addition to the antiquity of the site and the importance of the individual buildings.

The public meetings had the character of a funeral where you discover just how interesting the deceased was and wish you had known sooner, as well as an occasion to find out more about some of the living. Most of what is known about the buildings, lost and surviving, derives from the work accumulated over decades of the Exeter Archaeological Field Unit and its successor organization, Exeter Archaeology. This knowledge has been supplemented by research and investigation carried out by building enthusiasts, e.g. Darren Marsh's work on the documentary history of the Royal Clarence Hotel and David Cook's publication on the collection of stained glass. This has been a painfully sharp reminder of how important publications are and how precious the archives of Exeter Archaeology are, not only for information that could and should guide further archaeological work, but also what can and must be saved during restoration and, in the case of the Clarence Hotel, standing as a record of a largely lost historic building. It is difficult not to think that the closure in 2011 of Exeter Archaeology, supported by ECC from 1971 and a pioneer in applying archaeological methods to the recording of standing buildings, was a case of ECC counting costs but omitting to consider real value.

To date there is no information about how the fire began (there is a police investigation), how much more demolition might be unavoidable, how the Clarence might be rebuilt, what can be retrieved of the Well House and exactly how much damage there has been to adjacent buildings. There is obviously an archaeological opportunity to develop the records that have already been made of some of the buildings and better understand 'St Martin's Island', as the block of historic buildings on these ancient plots has been dubbed since the fire. It is also profoundly hoped by the DBG that this catastrophe will prompt the completion of work to fully-record the important High Street buildings (some of which are not known in detail). It would be some consolation if the fire prompted the funding for accessible-to-all publications about the buildings around the cathedral.

Todd Gray is to be heartily thanked for his energetic presence on site during the fire, for dealing with the press and for responding to the widely-shared sense of loss in organising the public meetings.

Jo Cox and John Thorp

Devon Churchyards

This article is an attempt to set down and develop some of the ideas about Devon churchyards that were generated by the Devon churchyard cobbled paths project. I aired most of the themes in this paper at the November 2015 cobbles conference and at the DBG 31st annual conference in July 2016, so apologies to those for whom the material will be familiar.

Observations by the DBG volunteers, who investigated almost every Anglican parish churchyard in the county, raised the questions of how and why the size, function and appearance of churchyards changed, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries. These changes were not, generally-speaking, undertaken as part of the church restorations that transformed most parish churches in Devon so comprehensively in the 19th century but had a major impact on the setting and character of church buildings. They established the churchyard as a place set apart from secular activities that were once commonly found there: agriculture, social gatherings and the playing of games.

Churchyard Size and Boundaries

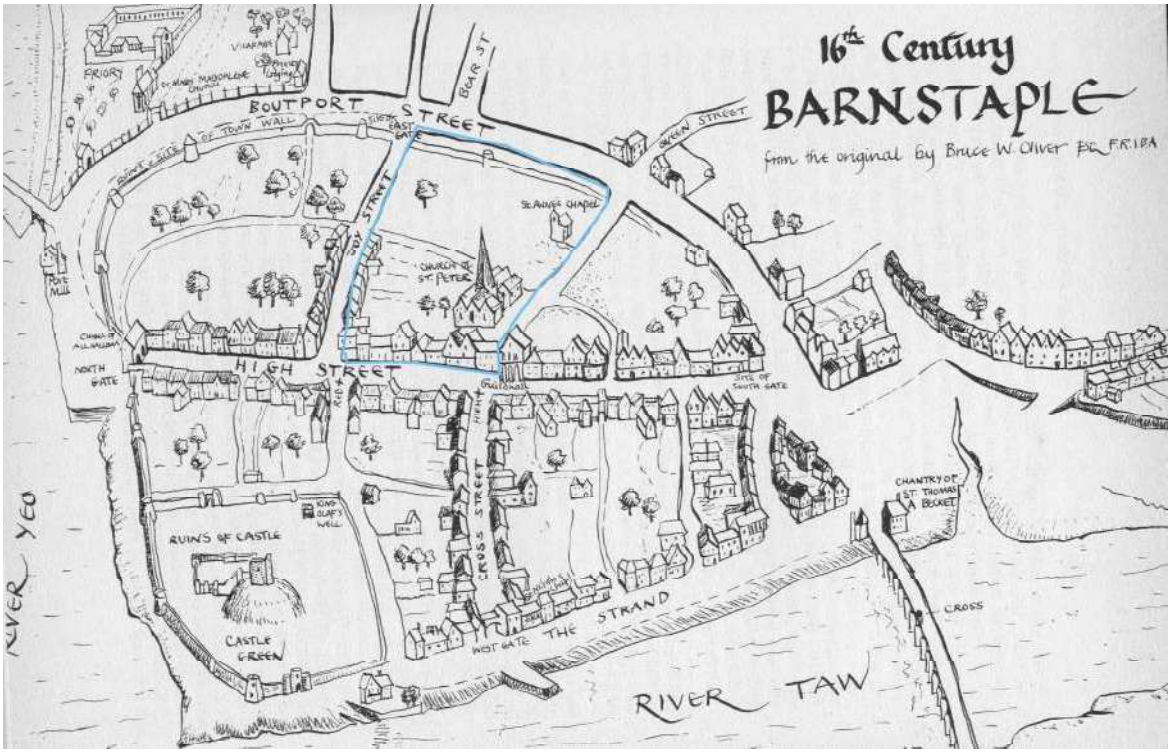
Fieldwork for the cobbles project immediately raised the problem of defining the 'churchyard' in some parishes. The materials of construction of most Devon churchyard boundaries (and some of the boundaries themselves) are no earlier than the 19th century. Portions of ground, steps and paths lying outside the current boundaries seemed once to have been part of the churchyard and some may still be in church ownership. The project had no brief or time to investigate this in depth but it is a reminder that what is now the churchyard may once have been a very different size and, in some places the question of who is responsible for the maintenance of steps and surfaces, may be uncertain or disputed [Fig. 1].

Fig. 1. Cobbled areas and steps outside the present churchyard boundaries at Rose Ash (left), West Worlington (top right) and Ilsington (bottom right) are probably church-owned.

Some churchyards shrank as villages and towns developed over what had been open land around a church [Fig. 2]. Many Devon church houses and domestic and commercial buildings were erected on land that had once been churchyard, reducing its size. Increasing population in the 19th and early 20th centuries meant more room was needed for burials [Fig. 3] and some churchyards were extended in this period although the provision of commercial cemeteries in the late 19th century began to relieve the pressure.

Agricultural Uses

Conflicts of interest in the use of churchyards are very ancient. Absence of boundaries and grazing by livestock, particularly by pigs (they snuffled up corpses) was an annoyance to



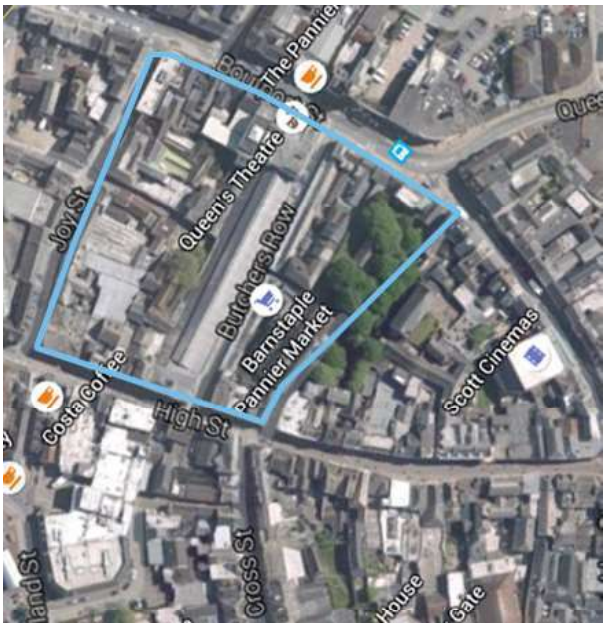
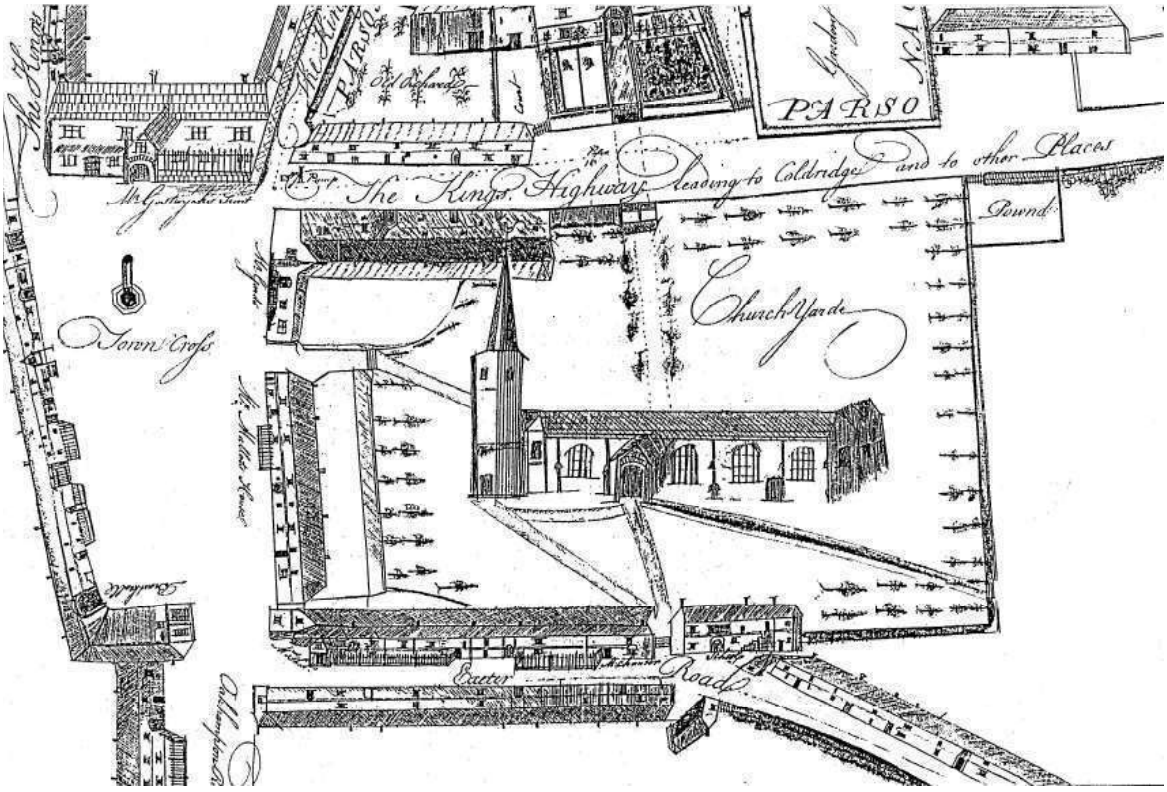


Fig. 2a, b (above and left). Part of the centre of Barnstaple built over the 16th century churchyard area as estimated by Oliver and published in Lois Lamplugh's *Barnstaple: Town on the Taw*, 983, Fig. 3; the same area shown in a modern satellite image.
2c (top right). North Tawton churchyard in the 1770s. This shows chunks taken out of the churchyard as gardens/courts to buildings on its perimeter. It also shows a carefully landscaped churchyard. It is likely that the parson, occupying the enormous parsonage at the top of the image, regarded the churchyard as an extension of his own garden. Ann Adams, original in a private archive.

the church authorities from at least the 13th century, illustrating the antiquity of the idea that a dignified place of Christian burial should be a place set apart. A statute of 1267 signed by Bishop Quinil of Exeter stated: 'All churches and cemeteries must be guarded from all defilement, both because they are holy (in themselves), and because they are made holy by the relics of the Saints'.[1] The gap between the aspirations of bishops and reality remained a wide one for more than 700 years in some places.

There are documentary references to livestock in Devon churchyards from the early 17th to the late 19th century. Some animals may have strayed into churchyards by accident or have been allowed to graze by custom. In 1611 the churchwarden at Tiverton St Peter was paid for keeping 'beestes' out of the churchyard, which seems not to have been fully-enclosed until the 19th century. Sometimes the use of churchyards for grazing was a case of the vicar or rector – the technical owners of the churchyard – exploiting land as part of the farmed glebe. As late as 1891 a newspaper correspondent complained that sheep and ponies grazed in part of Buckland Brewer churchyard, hay was ricked there and hens basked on the headstones.[2]



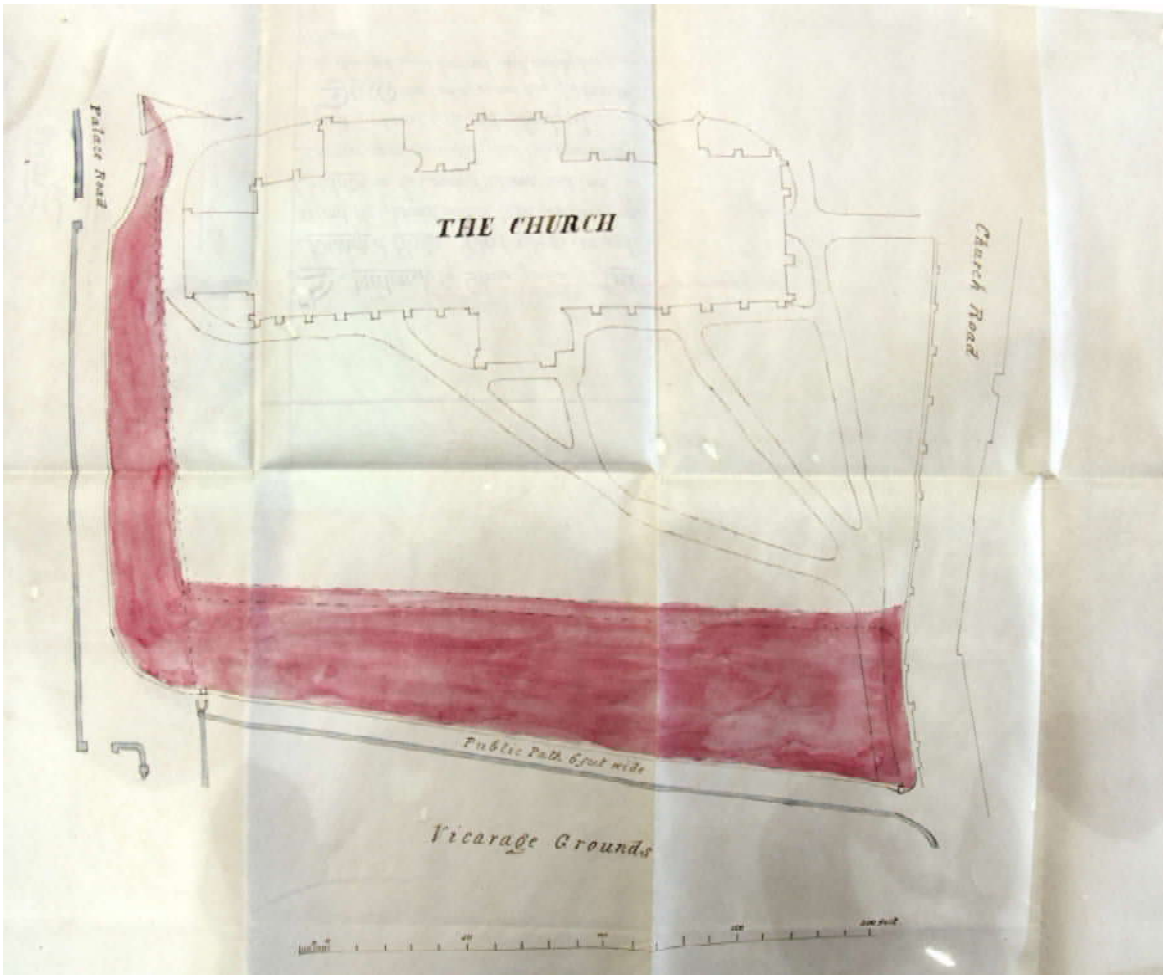


Fig. 3 (below). Crediton churchyard showing extensions of 1872 in red. Towards the end of the 19th century the number of burials in Crediton was sometimes as many as 100 a year. DALSS, 1660A/0/383. Reproduced with permission.

Fig. 4. A picturesque stile associated with a late 19th century churchyard boundary at the church of St George, Monkleigh.

The provision of stiles in 19th century churchyard boundaries [Fig. 4] in Devon is best interpreted as continued grazing use of churchyards long after most churchyards had been secured with complete boundaries and provided with gates that could be locked, a process that can be tracked in some late 18th and 19th century churchwardens' accounts and other documentation. This also seems to be the period when church porches were provided with lockable external doors or gates, indicating that both the church building and churchyard were perceived as exclusive territory and the church open only for services with churchwardens taking on the role of gatekeepers [Fig. 5]. DBG volunteers noted four stiles at St Nectan's, Hartland; two at Buckfastleigh and stiles at Ipplepen, Ashprington, South Tawton, Monkleigh and no doubt there are others.

It is possible that in the 19th century the stile was reckoned a picturesque element in a boundary, even when it ceased to fulfil its traditional function of access for people with containment for livestock, rather as 19th and 20th century lychgates were erected for picturesque (or memorial) reasons long after portions of the burial service ceased to be conducted under their shelter at the entrance to the churchyard. Sheep may have been grazed primarily to keep the churchyard grass short in a place where turf humps marking burials and, from the 18th century, headstones, made it laborious to cut grass with a scythe.

Social Gathering, Game-Playing and Larking About

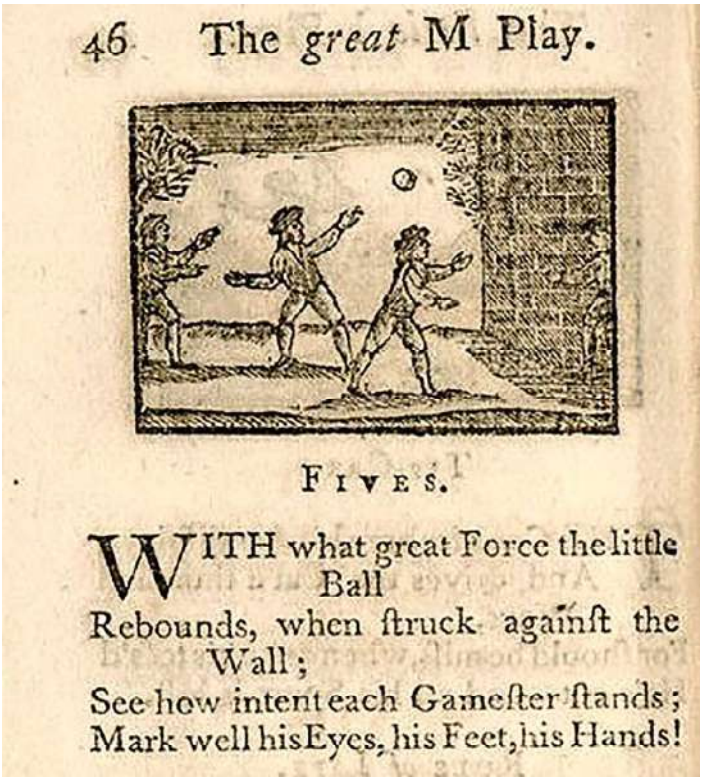
Festivities in churchyards associated with church houses were sanctioned or tolerated by the authorities, until the puritans put a stop to them. Unsanctioned games in churchyards are referred to in a poem of c.1450. 'Instructions to Parish Priests' written by Canon John Myre of Shropshire. Games listed that were not to be played in churchyards included competitive stone-throwing 'Castynge... of ston' and throwing a long pole or log 'Castynge of axtre'. A later note on the original manuscript of the poem, held by the Bodleian Library, requests that 'Danseyng, Cotteyng (playing quoits), bollyng, tenessyng, hand-ball, fott-ball' and all manner of other games should be

Fig. 5. A half-door to the outer doorway of the porch at the church of St Mary, Poltimore. This is an uncommon survival, probably late 18th or 19th century, although the outer doorways of porches often preserve evidence of fixings.

kept out of the churchyard. Playing cudgels and wrestling seems to have been local to the West Country.[3] Jerry Sampson's research has established that from the medieval period onwards the game of Fives [Fig. 6] was played in many churchyards, particularly in Wales and the West Country. This involved grown men hitting a ball against the church building.[4] Churchwardens responded with shutters and grilles placed over windows and these have left archaeological evidence that has survived very well in Somerset, in particular. After c.1750 the church authorities increased their efforts to exclude Fives-playing from churchyards.

As well as serving as a location for organised games and sports, churchyards were a common gathering place for unstructured larking about, fulfilling the function of today's bus shelter for young people. The churchwardens at Tiverton St Peter were paid for keeping 'boys', presumably misbehaving, out of the churchyard in 1647. As late as 1865 newspaper correspondence about the disgraceful state of North Tawton's churchyard prompted the following:

'It is a common thing in our villages for mothers to tell their children, "Go and play in the churchyard". The "louts" of the parish make it their lounging corner – the place for insults and coarse jests all throughout the Sunday, while their younger brothers swing on the gates, dance on the graves, and play at leap-frog over the tombstones. Parishioners say that it is no use planting flowers on the graves of their friends, for they will be stolen, and in short it is no use to try and do anything towards making the churchyard decent, for ignorant or mischievous persons will run riot all over it, and spoil everything.'[5]


46 The *great* M Play.

FIVES.

WITH what great Force the little Ball
Rebounds, when ſtruck againſt the Wall;
See how intent each Gameſter ſtands;
Mark well his Eyes, his Feet, his Hands!

Fig. 6. The game of Fives illustrated in the 1741 *Pretty Little Pocket Book***.**

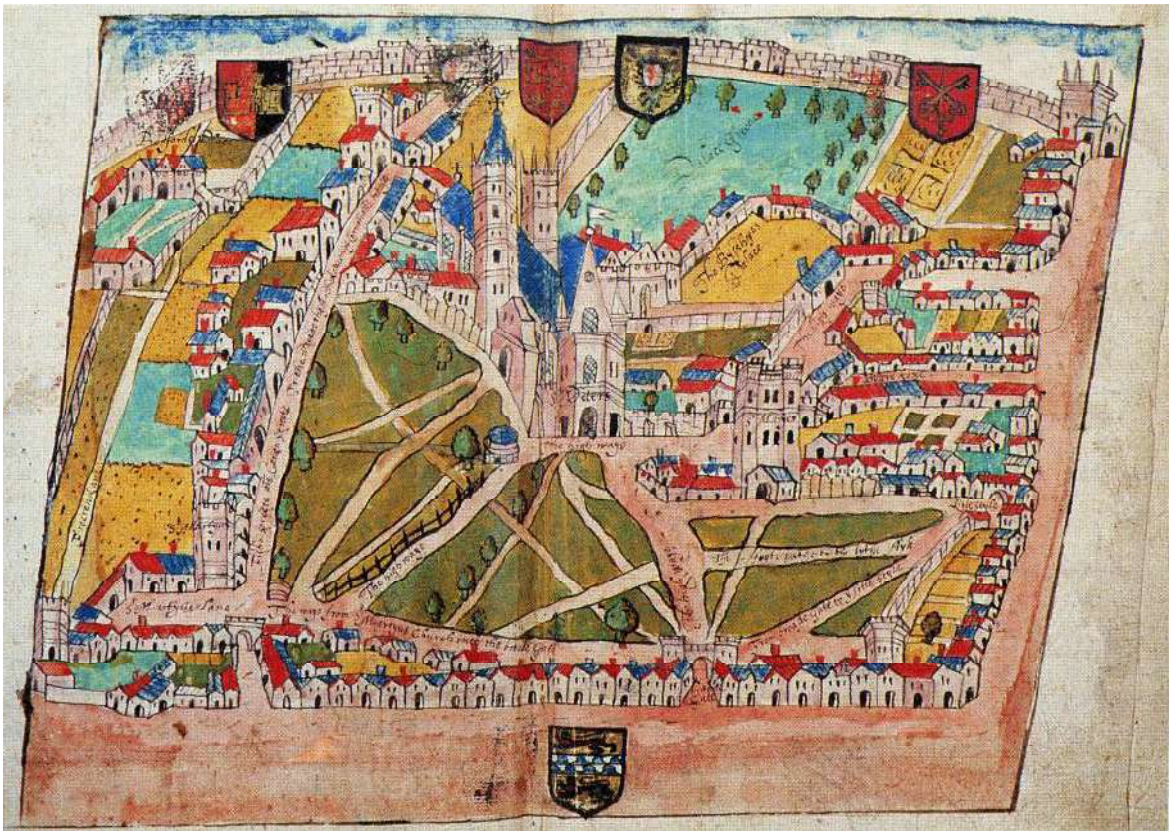


Fig. 7. Hooker's c.1600 image of Exeter cathedral and Cathedral Green, the City's burial ground. No monuments are shown. The pathways suggest that it was used as a place to promenade even before it was closed as a burial ground in 1637. D&C 3530 ff. 59/60. Reproduced with permission.

Burials

Before the early 17th century most churchyards were full of burials but devoid of permanent monuments.[6] In an image of c.1600 by John Hooker not a single monument is shown on Cathedral Green [Fig. 7], a burial ground that had served the city without interruption from the 5th century. Meanwhile the interiors of church buildings were full of burials. These were marked with floor slabs or, for the very wealthy, more elaborate monuments. There were zones of prestige for burial inside a church building. A location close to the high altar or great rood was superior to, say, the outer edges of the nave. Crowding became a problem inside the church. William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, d.1396, requested burial inside Exeter cathedral in his will. He had once been a prebend at the cathedral and his family, the Earls of Devon, had a chantry in the south aisle of the nave. Rather than the family chantry he chose a prime spot in the crossing in front of the great rood, but this was already occupied: 'where there now lie three deans in a row before the great cross'. The better location, in front of the high altar, was already home to past Exeter bishops, presumably immoveable even by an Archbishop, but the three deans could be made to give way. They were to be removed and interred 'at some other honourable place in the same church' at his expense.[7]

Churchyards also suffered from overcrowding. On Cathedral Green, where lesser Exonians were buried, any grave markers that existed (and it is not known if any did) were not permanent and, from time to time, as new burial plots were needed, bones were dug up and placed in a mortuary chapel on the Green, releasing space for the recent dead. Bone houses were also found in parish churchyards, urban and rural. The distinguished archaeologist Philip Rahtz estimated that a church site 1,000 years old in a community of only 200 would have acquired 6,000 burials by the late 20th century. At the church of St Thomas the Apostle in what is now the suburb of St Thomas in Exeter, a former bone house is mentioned in a consistory court case, attached to the west tower.

Fig. 8. The churchyard ground level at the church of St Peter, North Tawton, is raised high above a principal path to the church and its porch floor.

Fig. 9. The paths at the church of St Andrew, Ipplepen are more or less at the level of the churchyard turf. Does this mean the churchyard was levelled before the path was constructed?

By 1792 it was used as a building store and appears to have been roofless, sometimes being called the 'dead court'. In 1637 the Exeter burial ground on Cathedral Green was finally deemed to be full, and was closed for burials and levelled, an alternative burial ground having been established at Bartholomew's Yard. Cathedral Green gradually became a more genteel place of recreation and leisure, perhaps comparing with Exeter's unusually early 1612 public walk in Northernhay.

It is well-understood that the ground level of most old churchyards has risen with burials. It is more difficult to establish when or how often levelling occurred and how exactly it was executed. Some churchyard paths to the main church entrance are sunk well below the greensward with retaining walls on either side and presumably represent old routes to the church entrance which were probably once on a level with the churchyard [Fig. 8]. Other paths are almost flush with the churchyard turf – does this mean the paths are later and were built over burials? [Fig. 9].[8] Church porch and nave floor levels relative to churchyards can also be a conundrum. It is not unusual for the mouldings and stops of an apparently medieval porch to be consistent with the level of the churchyard path to the porch, but for there to be steps down into the porch or church. Levelling churchyards to provide additional space for burials must have been far more common than the scant documentary references indicate. The published churchwardens' accounts for the church of St Peter, Tiverton, include a 1646 reference to a considerable payment, £5 4s 10d for 'covering the churchyard'.[9] This was associated with labour and the cost of two wheelbarrows and must surely have been re-landscaping, even if this was only a dump of earth. This was the year after the town was affected both by a royalist skirmish, requiring the making of 205 graves at 4d each, and by a plague.

From the early 17th century overcrowding inside churches began to push high status burials out into the churchyard, which, like the church interior, also had a hierarchy of desirable zones.[10] High status burials were marked, usually with chest tombs, distinguishing them from lesser mortals whose graves were mostly unmarked turf humps at that date and later: 'Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap' as Gray's 1751 *Elegy* has it. The humps were the earth dug out to accommodate a corpse. Individual coffins were uncommon before the mid 17th century. A parish coffin was made available and re-used. Gray's *Elegy* makes sense in the context of a churchyard where there were some unmarked burials:

> Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
> If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise ...

but also some early rustic headstones, 'With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked'. Both sorts of burial are contrasted by the poet with the urns and busts of high status parishioners inside the church building.

Judging from what survives the practice of marking the burial sites of ordinary folk with headstones began in Devon the early 18th century and gained momentum in the last quarter of that century. As late as 1842, however, some country churchyards had very few headstones but many turf humps [Fig. 10]. The arrival of churchyard monuments in numbers in the 18th and 19th centuries is a very interesting phenomenon. It reflects profound changes in social and religious life with tentacles reaching into literature and art. Increasing literacy was, of course, crucial to the arrival of an inscribed headstone to a mariner, or a builder. Graveyard literature which, as Chris Brooks analyses in *Mortal Remains*, travelled through a thrilling and ghoulish early 18th century phase (no doubt the familiar sight of human bones in churchyards was relevant) to a Romantic focus on the churchyard as a place generating memories, imagination and reflections on mortality. This was coeval with the increasing importance in the 18th century of the sentimentally-

Fig. 10. Spreat's engraving of the old church at Honiton shows that a churchyard serving a town could still have far more unmarked than marked burials as late as 1842 when this image was published.

Fig. 11. Contrasting memorial inscriptions. In Bondleigh churchyard (left), a vault plaque of 1715 includes the threatening message 'Prepared Bee to Follow Mee'. In Great Torrington churchyard (right), the poem on the headstone of John D Davies who died only a year later illustrates the importance of the affectionate family in an anticipation of reunion in the after life: 'Farewell my dear and loving Wife/My Children and my Friends/I hope in Heaven to see you all/When all things have their ends'.

Fig. 12. Late 19th century engravings show flower-laying relatives visiting permanent memorials and early church crawlers reading a churchyard inscription.

Fig. 13. A beautifully inscribed early headstone in the churchyard of the church of St Mary, Pilton. The early slate headstones tend to be of very thin slate. Late 19th century headstones are usually much thicker having been cut by hand. The initials or full name of the engraver can sometimes be found at the bottom of the headstone.

attached family unit, rather different from the earlier family, where bonds were primarily economic. Monument inscriptions changed in the 18th century, with a greater emphasis on the idea of the loving family unit and expectations of reunion beyond the grave [Fig. 11]. Permanent monuments changed the character of churchyards, each monument becoming a personalised place associated with the departed in which a family had invested and which relatives could visit and strangers could learn from [Fig. 12].

From the early 18th century to the early 20th century local slate sources in Devon provided a rich, although highly localised, inheritance of beautifully-engraved headstones commemorating middle and working class people [Fig. 13], sometimes with texts or 'uncouth' rhymes that now have considerable vernacular appeal. The elaborate lettering of hand-set type on the title pages of 18th century books influenced the lettering and decoration of inscriptions [Fig. 14]. Decorative detail was drawn from the classical, not the Gothic vocabulary: cherubs' heads; hourglasses and sometimes inscribed pilasters.

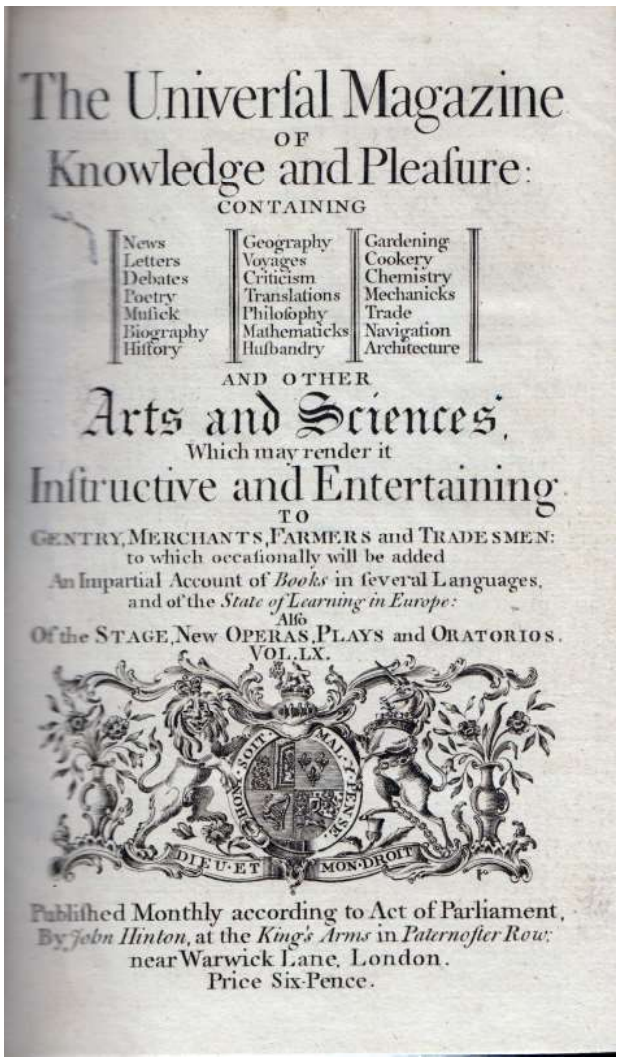
The 19th century concern that over-full churchyards (and interior burials) were a risk to public health is a huge topic with a substantial contemporary literature and difficult to summarise in a short article. The shocking condition of urban churchyards in the early 19th century, literally bursting with burials that could pollute drinking water sources prompted, where there was room, churchyard extensions and where there was none, the development of commercial cemeteries.

The Influence of the Cemetery Movement on Churchyards

The first commercial cemeteries on the outskirts of London, 'the Magnificent Seven' had all been established by 1850. By that date all aspects of cemetery design: drainage, hygiene and efficiency in the layout of graves, planting, walkways, boundaries, vistas and proper atmosphere, had been considered, published and exemplified and could be applied to churchyards.

In 1843 John Claudius Loudon, best known as a garden designer and botanist, published *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries and On the Improvement of Churchyards.* Loudon recommended converting rural churchyards into places that drew on cemetery design. His opening remarks in his section on 'country churchyards; their present state and means of improvement' may seem comically snobbish in the distinction he makes between the educated Victorian church crawler, the first in a long line of dedicated middle class visitors to churches,

Fig. 14. The title page of a 1777 miscellany is lavish with different typefaces. The miscellany assumed a literate readership that included farmers and tradesmen.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and local rural people, but shows just how seriously the Victorians took the moral and educational potential of a properly-arranged and managed churchyard:

'What traveller or tourist is there who does not make the churchyard of the village one of the first scenes which he visits; and does not receive from it his first impressions of the clergyman, the people and consequently the general character of the inhabitants? If such be the effect of a glance at the churchyard on the passing stranger, what must it be on those to whom its image is constantly present, and by whom it is associated with all that is reverential in feeling? To the local resident poor, uncultivated by reading, the churchyard is their book of history, their biography, their instructor in architecture and sculpture, their model of taste, and an important source of moral improvement. Much, therefore, must depend on the manner in which churchyards are laid out, and the state in which they are kept... there is not one countryman that does not understand the difference between slovenliness and neatness, between taste and no taste, when applied to walks, grass ground, and gardens. All of them therefore, may have their taste for neatness and order improved, or their habits of slovenliness confirmed, by the weekly impressions made on them while passing through the churchyard to the church and... by viewing the graves and monuments of their friends and relations neatly kept or utterly neglected, and reflecting that they also must soon take their place among them....The intellectual and moral influence which churchyards are calculated to have on the rural population will not, we think, be disputed.'

He commends the fashion for headstones: 'it is gratifying to observe, in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and of other large towns, that as they increase in number they are improving in taste'.

Loudon includes a 21-page illustrated analysis of all that was wrong with country churchyards and how to put it all to rights, plus another 21 pages of lists of trees and plants suitable for both churchyards and cemeteries. Material re-design of churchyards needed to proceed hand-in-hand with a sense of proper function and proper behaviour. There should be no disturbance of existing burials to make room for more. This was disrespectful and dangerous to health – gases from disturbed corpses were thought to carry disease. There should be no livestock (except sheep for grass-cutting) – or any other sort of agriculture – no dogs and no smoking.

Loudon's recommendations are illustrated, showing how an old churchyard, closed for burials, could be landscaped and extended, and a rather more unlikely 'ideal' new church and churchyard, where design would apply to church and churchyard conceived as one entity [Fig. 15].

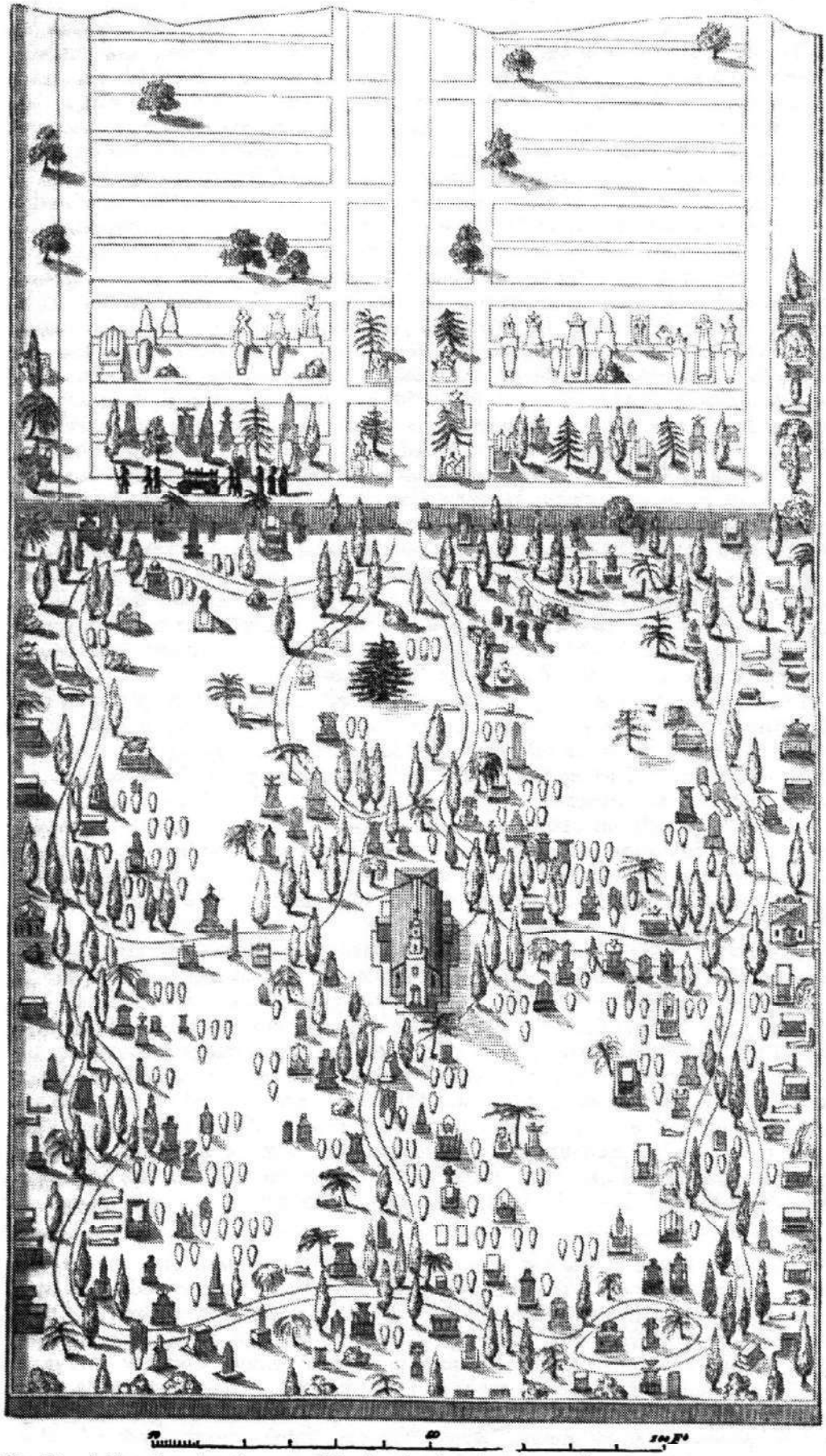

Fig. 50. *A Churchyard no longer used for burying in, planted as a Cemetery Garden, and a new Piece of Ground added and laid out.*

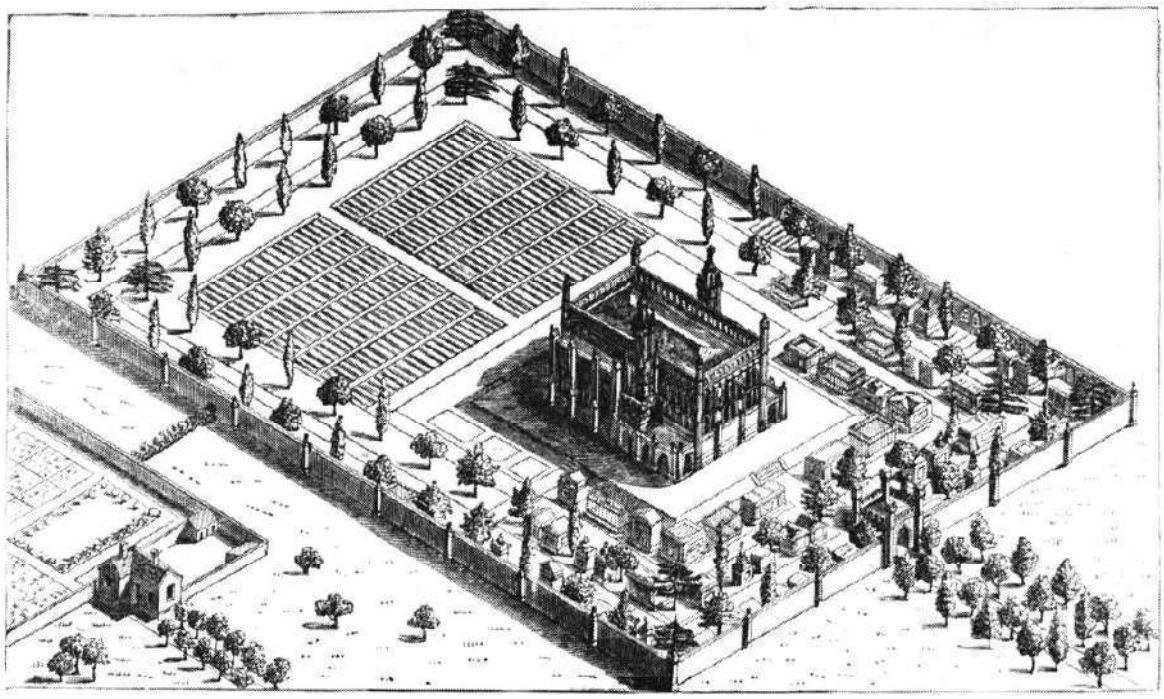

Fig. 15a (left). Loudon's recommendation for laying out a full country churchyard in cemetery fashion with winding paths and trees established without disturbing existing burials. A churchyard extension, shown at the top, is laid out as a grid design with the monuments in rows to maximise space.
Fig. 15b (above). Loudon's unlikely design for a new rural church with churchyard. The church is built on a platform to avoid drainage problems and does not face east, to avoid the problem of one side of the churchyard being shady. High status monuments are all placed round the ritual west end of the building with an area at the ritual east end laid out to maximise the numbers of burials.

A couple of Devon churches illustrate both the substantial level of change in their churchyards in the 19th century and the influence of the cemeteries movement. Tiverton St Peter was massively restored in 1853-56 to the designs of a local architect, Edward Ashworth. The nave was given a new roof; the medieval arcades were taken down and rebuilt from the floor; an outer north aisle was added and the chancel rebuilt. Newspaper research reveals that the state of the churchyard was giving concern in c.1850 at the same time as anxiety was being expressed about the poor condition of the church. The churchyard project was not tackled until the late 1860s and must have been carried out over several years. As far as I can understand the two projects were quite separate and Ashworth had no hand in the churchyard work. Judging from initials in one of the cobbled churchyard paths, the re-design of the churchyard was the work of the churchwardens. This would have been sanctioned by the vestry.

In 1851 it was claimed in a newspaper report that the churchyard had no boundaries. It is not clear exactly what this meant: boundaries are shown on the 1842 tithe [Fig. 16] and a wooden fence is shown on the north boundary in an engraving published in the same year [Fig. 17]. It does seem to have meant that the townsfolk had free access to the churchyard, uninhibited by gates and locks. They enjoyed what must have been a spectacular walk along the steep ravine that leads down to the river Exe to west. Houses for the clerk and sexton survived in the churchyard on the east side until after the 1842 tithe map but were cleared away after 1850. In that year the vestry appointed a sub-committee to investigate the demolition of the two houses, look into the provision of built boundaries and to negotiate with Sir W P Carew of Tiverton Castle for an alternative right of way through the churchyard. The *Western Times* commentator was not happy with the idea of boundaries: '...to propose closing the churchyard, and preventing the inhabitants viewing the fine old fabric, or enjoying the magnificent views which its western walk affords, is too bad.' This

Fig. 16. The church of St Peter, Tiverton shown on the 1842 tithe map. Houses for church officials are shown built inside the churchyard on the east side.

would be the loss of a public right of way and the denial of access to the church fabric, except at certain times. Whatever may have been done by this committee is unknown but there were more grumbles about the state of the churchyard in 1852. A newspaper correspondent protested against a rookery in the big trees and begged for the trees to be pollarded or the nests removed: 'Then the walks leading to the sanctuary of the Holy One and the garments of the worshippers, will no longer with their filth be contaminated'. By 1857 Tiverton had acquired a town cemetery and the parish churchyard was officially closed for burials.[11]

Precisely as Loudon recommended, closure for burials was an opportunity to re-design a churchyard. Some work had been done by 1869, but human bones were still visible in that year in the 'chorl', the ravine down to the river. A photograph of 1871 shows the existing stone boundary wall on the south side complete and the yews ('fastigiate' (columnar) trees, as recommended by Loudon), if planted by that date, too small to be seen over it. The churchyard works must have extended over several years given the 1874 date in the cobbled path from the lychgate. This is shown in a photograph of 1890 not only with the existing timber gates, but a (now missing) wrought iron outer gate, suggesting a more proprietorial approach to the churchyard by the churchwardens, as had been feared in 1851. A comparison of Spreat's 1842 engraving with a photograph of the churchyard in 2015 from more or less the same angle strongly suggests that the existing paths are not late 19th century re-layings of paths in place in 1842 but paths on new routes [Fig. 17].

The south side of Tiverton churchyard in 2016 is a model of cemeterial design as recommended by Loudon: paths and (now veteran) trees provide picturesque vistas and glimpses of the church. While Loudon's advice on drainage – which included a continuous French drain around the church, bridged across for access to the porch – has not been carried out to the letter, there are attempts to drain the churchyard under at least one of the paths.

The 19th century history of the village churchyard of the church of Our Lady, Upton Pyne is unusually well-recorded in an 1890 publication by John Stafford Northcote. It illustrates just how

Fig. 17. Spreat's 1842 engraving of St Peter compared with a photograph taken in 2015 showing the same view, indicates that the churchyard has probably been levelled in between and the course of the path altered. The path is dated 1874 with the initials of the churchwardens of that year.

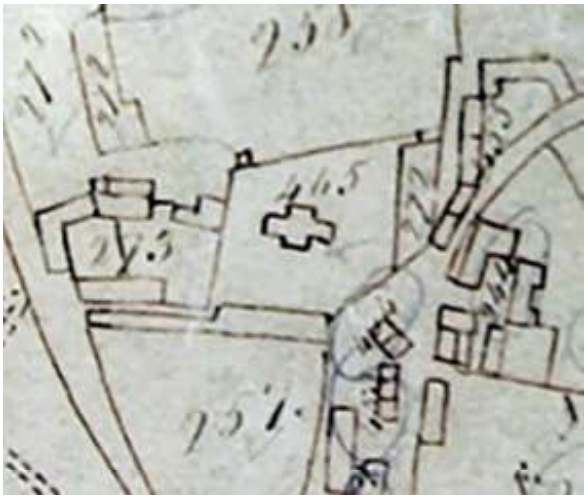

Fig. 18. The churchyard of the church of Our Lady, Upton Pyne on the 1842 tithe map, no 465 (left) and the church shown by Spreat in the same year before the many alterations to the graveyard in the late 19th century (below).

many amendments might be made to a small village churchyard in order to create a landscape that sat comfortably with the need for sufficient outside burial space; to make adjustments to a Victorian church restoration and to provide a sense of architectural dignity in the boundaries and lychgate entrance.

In the 18th century a vestry or perhaps priest's house was attached to the W tower – this had been removed before the 1842 tithe map, which appears to show the main entrance into the churchyard in the north east corner corner (it is now in the south east corner) [Fig. 18]. In 1861 a small piece of land at the east end 'where a path used to be' was taken into the graveyard with a wall carried round the east end. In 1873 a piece of ground on the west side was added for the Northcote family vaults. In earlier days the Northcotes were buried inside the church, but the nuisance – both the disruption to an interior and 19th century anxieties about disease emanating from the corpses in reopened family vaults – pushed new burials outside, however superior the family. The treatment of internal vaults by Victorian church restorers re-flooring medieval churches reflects the

contemporary concerns with public health, e.g. the vaults at Salisbury St Thomas were emptied by Gilbert Scott and back-filled with sand (*pers.comm*. Francis Kelly).

During the restoration of Upton Pyne in the 1870s by William White, the south porch was rebuilt and the (presumed) early 19th century cobbled surface adjacent must, at the very least, have been relaid to fit it. A lychgate was added during the restoration to provide a more dignified entrance to the churchyard from the south east. In 1887 a churchyard repair fund was established by Countess Iddesleigh, who transferred an investment of $1,000 held in the St Paul Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway Co. into a bond for keeping the churchyard and monuments in good order. Following this paths were cut from the Northcote vault in the churchyard and from the W door and round the west, north and east sides of the churchyard, repairing the old path near the south door and near the lychgtate at the same time. The path from the south porch to the lychgate is visible.

Shrubs were planted at the east end of the churchyard to hide the backs of the cottages and on the west end to hide the parsonage stableyard. The north and east sides of the churchyard 'being full of graves' with those near the church having been 'obliterated' (presumably marked only by humps in the ground), azaleas and rhododendrons were planted to the east, ornamental shrubs scattered about with cotoneasters and other shrubs planted 'by the wall against the causeway'. The 'causeway' survives in part as a cobbled area outside the lychgate. The old rough hedge along the north side of the churchyard was rooted up and light iron railings and beds of flowers planted there. The churchyard was extended on the south side, removing cypress trees and palings and replacing them with firs and other shrubs. A straight path through the churchyard was remade and a new wall built at the east end with a new gate and palings. A line of light iron railings with two gates was placed within the consecrated ground beside the thoroughfare. It is assumed here that all the late 19th century paths at Upton Pyne were cobbled, but this could only be proved by investigating under the churchyard grass, assuming that the paths were not lifted. Comparison of the tithe and 1889 OS maps shows changes to the churchyard boundaries and some of the disappeared paths referred to in John Stafford Northcote's publication, but not all [Fig. 19].

Upton Pyne was clearly a well-funded village churchyard in the late 19th century. The work done at the end of the 19th century probably represents more than could be afforded at most churches, and the results more shrubby and garden-like than most, but it is revealing in showing how, phase-by-phase, the churchyard was transformed into a 'garden' with subpaths, adjacent buildings screened off and substantial architectural boundaries provided. This was close to Loudon's recommendations, although he was keen that burial grounds were not too garden-like.

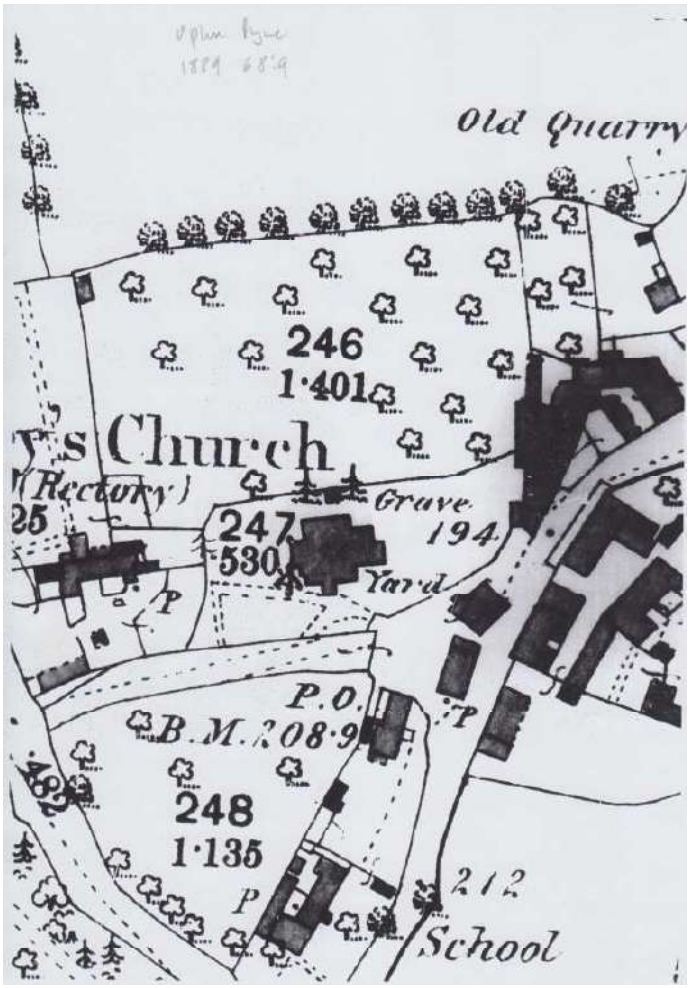

Fig. 19. An extract from the 1889 OS map shows the churchyard enlarged and its entrance changed.

Fig. 20 (left). Churchyard changes in the 19th century. Top. J M W Turner's 1816 water colour of Kirkby Lonsdale churchyard, Cumbria, shown here in a print, depicts small boys chucking stones at objects on a chest tomb and lounging about amongst leaning monuments. The shutter on the tower window might be for protection from the game of Fives though perhaps there is not enough room to west for this.
Below. In 1855 John Alexander Bowler (1824-1903) exhibited *The Doubt. "Can these Dry Bones Live?".* In the pre-Raphaelite manner, the painting shows a churchyard, thick with monuments, as a pious place weighty with symbolism, used for reflections on mortality and schooling in the Christian message of resurrection. The young woman leans on the headstone of 'John Faithful', d.1791 contemplating his skull on which a butterfly, symbol of the Resurrection, has landed. The word 'Resurgam' can be made out on the flat stone in the foreground. Cobble enthusiasts will note the cobbled churchyard path. © Tate, London, 2016. Reproduced with permission.

In conclusion, Devon's churchyards were elastic in size from the medieval period and although early churchyards might shrink, they tended to be expanded in the 18th and 19th centuries. Despite protests from the church authorities, use for agriculture and for organised and informal games and entertainment continued in some churchyards long after the arrival in numbers of permanent memorials. The 18th and 19th century saw the transformation of churchyards into the places 'set apart' with which we are familiar and which had been the goal of some of the church authorities from at least the 13th century. Progress was variable from place to place and mirrored aspects of societal change ranging from literacy to the 19th century cemetery movement. Two images rather nicely sum up the 19th century changes [Fig. 20].

Jo Cox

Endnotes

1 The wording of Quinil's statute that insisted that all cemeteries in his diocese should be securely enclosed and that no animal should be allowed to graze on the grass which grew there was repeated in other dioceses by other bishops.

2 *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 24.07.1891.

3 The poem and games are cited by William Andrews in his *Antiquities and Curiosities of the Church*, 1897, pp. 215-228.

4 *www.caroe.co.uk/fives_research.php.*

5 *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 13.10.1865.

6 The earliest reference to a 'permanent' churchyard monument encountered by Keystone is in Bristol in 1409. St James's fair was held partly in the churchyard of St James's Priory. Richard Gladwyn, a hosier, leased a site for a stall for the fair in the churchyard that included a 'tombstone'. A goldsmith, presumably needing more security than a hosier, rented a stall contrived inside the church in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary.

7 Dahmus, 1966, 266.

8 Evidence of a path built over a vault came to light at Tiverton St Peter when the path collapsed (*pers. comm.*) Stuart Blaylock.

9 Chalk, 1905, 135.

10 The south side of the church was more desirable than the north. The sense of the relative holiness of different parts of the churchyard was elaborate. The discovery of infant bones at the church of St Giles, Sidmouth, prompted Stewart Brown to contact Dr Julian Litten, an authority on English funeral practice and body disposal. Litten wrote 'It was tradition for unbaptised infants and stillbirths to be buried on the north side of the church, usually close to the church wall. The reason for the latter was so that rainwater from the church roof - which was considered "hallowed" as a result of its contact with part of a consecrated building – would drip down onto their little bodies and so impart a measure of sanctity on them'. The bones found by Brown may be late medieval: they certainly pre-date the restoration of St

Giles in the 1960s (*pers.comm.* Stewart Brown) referring to his report 'St Giles and St Nicholas Church, Sidmouth – Archaeological Evaluation, June 2004' pp 5-6.

[11] There are records of later burials in the churchyard, so evidently there were ways of getting round the official closure for those reluctant to be laid to rest in the town cemetery.

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Acknowledgements

Stewart Brown, Sandi Ellison, Ray Harrison, Francis Kelly, John Thorp

An Artist's Eye on Devon Buildings and Farm Equipment

Newsletter No 33 included an obituary of Brian Blakeway. Brian's son, Stephen is currently working through his father's archive and hopes to make the material publicly accessible. In the meantime, he has given us permission to reproduce a small sample of Brian's lovely drawings and paintings of Devon buildings and their fittings. We hope that more of Brian's work will appear in future Newsletters.

Brian's insatiable curiosity and eye for detail meant that he noticed, recorded, understood and explained in drawings parts of buildings and their accessories which others would overlook. His watercolours of whole buildings are of a different order and capture the spirit and reality of buildings in a way that archaeological elevations cannot.

Figs 1 & 2. Poultry-keeping on Devon farms has left relatively little surviving material evidence. There are a few impressive pigeon houses and pigeon holes are commonly found in farm buildings and sometimes in farm houses. It can be difficult to distinguish a purpose-built goose house from a dog kennel. An unusually elaborate example of an unmistakeable goose house at Beetor Farm, North Bovey, was recorded in 1990 by John Thorp of Keystone. It was built with a stone-lined tunnel that exited on the edge of the farm pond, impossible for a fox to cross. The tunnel expanded into a stone-lined goose house, largely covered with turf, which must have made it draught-proof. A stone slab on the top could be removed to pull out a goose when required. Identifiable hen-houses or hen-lofts are rare compared, say, with Kent, where it was possible in the 1980s, at any rate, to encounter the little ramps or ladders used by hens entering a loft over a stable or some other animal house. The agricultural improver, Marshall, was startled and disappointed to find hens unhoused and therefore scarcely managed at all on some Devon farms: 'Fowls roost in the cool open air; frequently in trees; *in a state of nature.* The Fowl, in its native woods, probably bred only once a year; and, of course, produced no eggs at any other season; and I think, we may fairly infer, that the nearer they are suffered to approach that state, the less fruitful they will prove (*Rural Economy of the West of England*, 1796, Vol.1. 273-74).

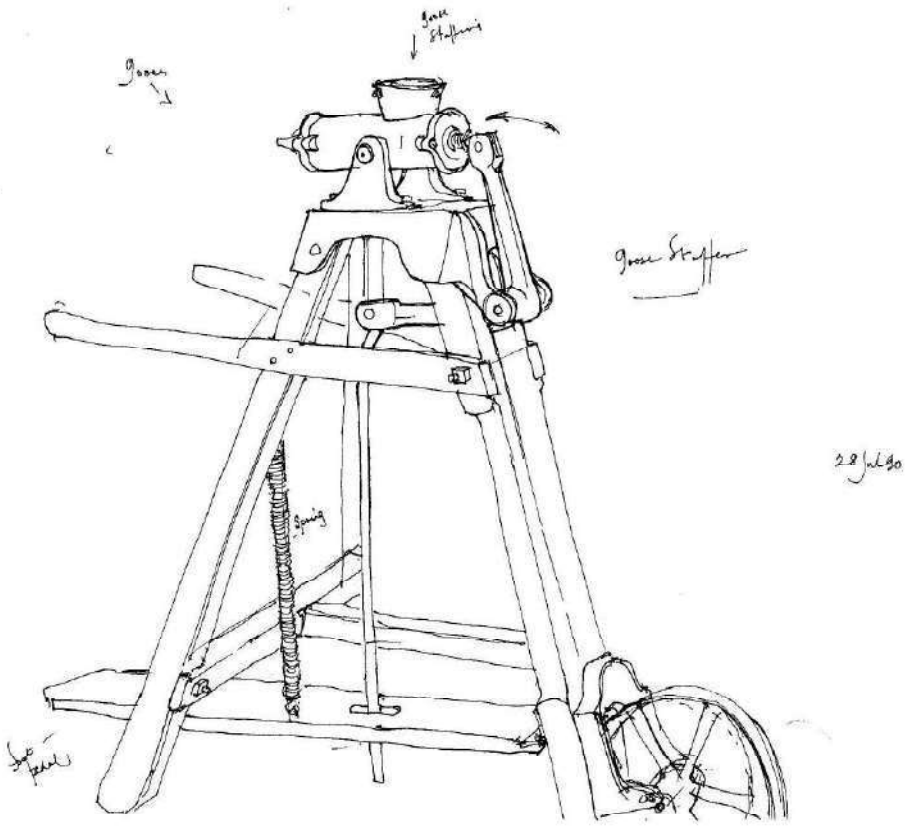


Fig. 1. Brian's drawings of farm machinery for sale at Markstone Farm, Lifton, 1990, included this device which he identified as a goose-stuffer, in the manner of French equipment designed to enlarge the liver for foie gras. Research by Peter Child with the help of Joan Grundy of the Historic Farm Buildings Group, establishes that this was in fact a chicken-crammer, to speed up fattening. This is a glimpse into what we would consider a rather dark corner of historic poultry-keeping, though probably no worse than aspects of modern

breeding and management. Crammers appear to have been introduced into Sussex the 1860s, including commercially available machines by Hearson and by Neve. Lewis Wright, in his *The New Book of Poultry*, 1902 stated that: ‘a skillful fatter can cram, by either of the machines named, 200 to 300 birds in an hour’ and ‘With ordinary care there is not the slightest cruelty involved’. The machine Brian recorded appears to be a vernacular version, dated unknown, of Hearson’s machine. Presumably Markstone Farm specialised in producing chickens for the table.

Related Fig. 2 (below). Hearson’s cramming machine with operator and chicken from Lewis Wright’s *The New Book of Poultry*, 1902, 104.

Fig. 64.—Hearson's Cramming Machine.

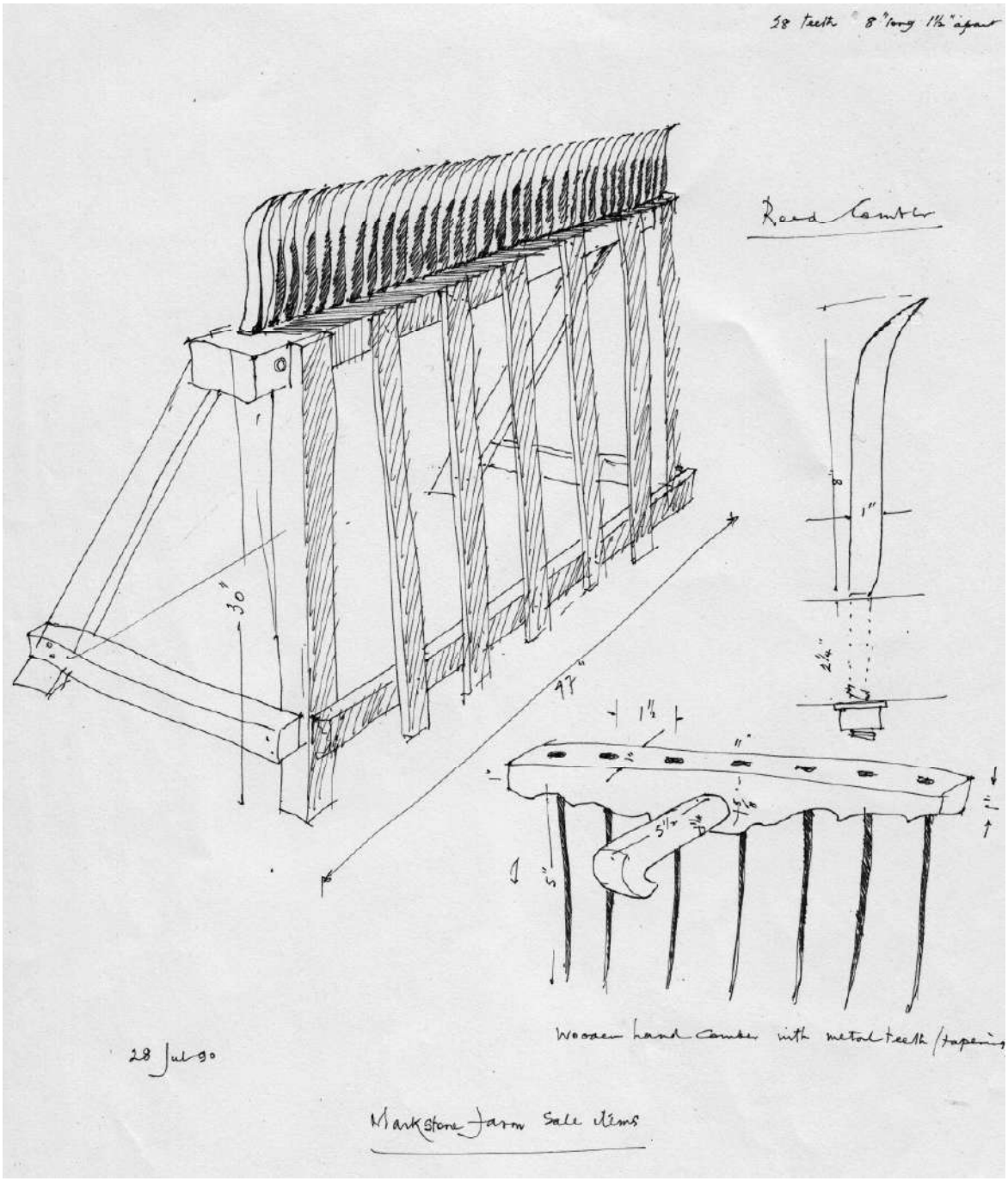


Fig. 3 (above). Hand reed combers from Markstone Farm, Lifton, 1990. DBG members who attended the thatching conference at Ashburton will remember that the straw used for combed reed thatch has to be very carefully processed from field to roof. It had to be kept with the ears and butts all lying in the same direction and cleaned of any weeds and leaf that would encourage rot in the straw and obstruct water-shedding. Before the invention of the reed comber attachment to the belt-driven threshing machine, a variety of hand-operated devices were used for the cleaning process. Brian has recorded, bottom right, a hand-comb. A bundle of straw would be hung up and this comb simply dragged through it. Another piece of equipment for hand-combing is shown on the left. Here the comb was static and the straw was pulled through teeth attached to a wooden trestle. More straw could be pulled through the teeth at one go, speeding up the process.

Fig.4. Shop at Germansweek, 1987. The exterior of a quintessential west Devon vernacular farmhouse, lovely in its unshowiness, is captured in these watercolours, along with one of the occupants receiving a shoulder massage.

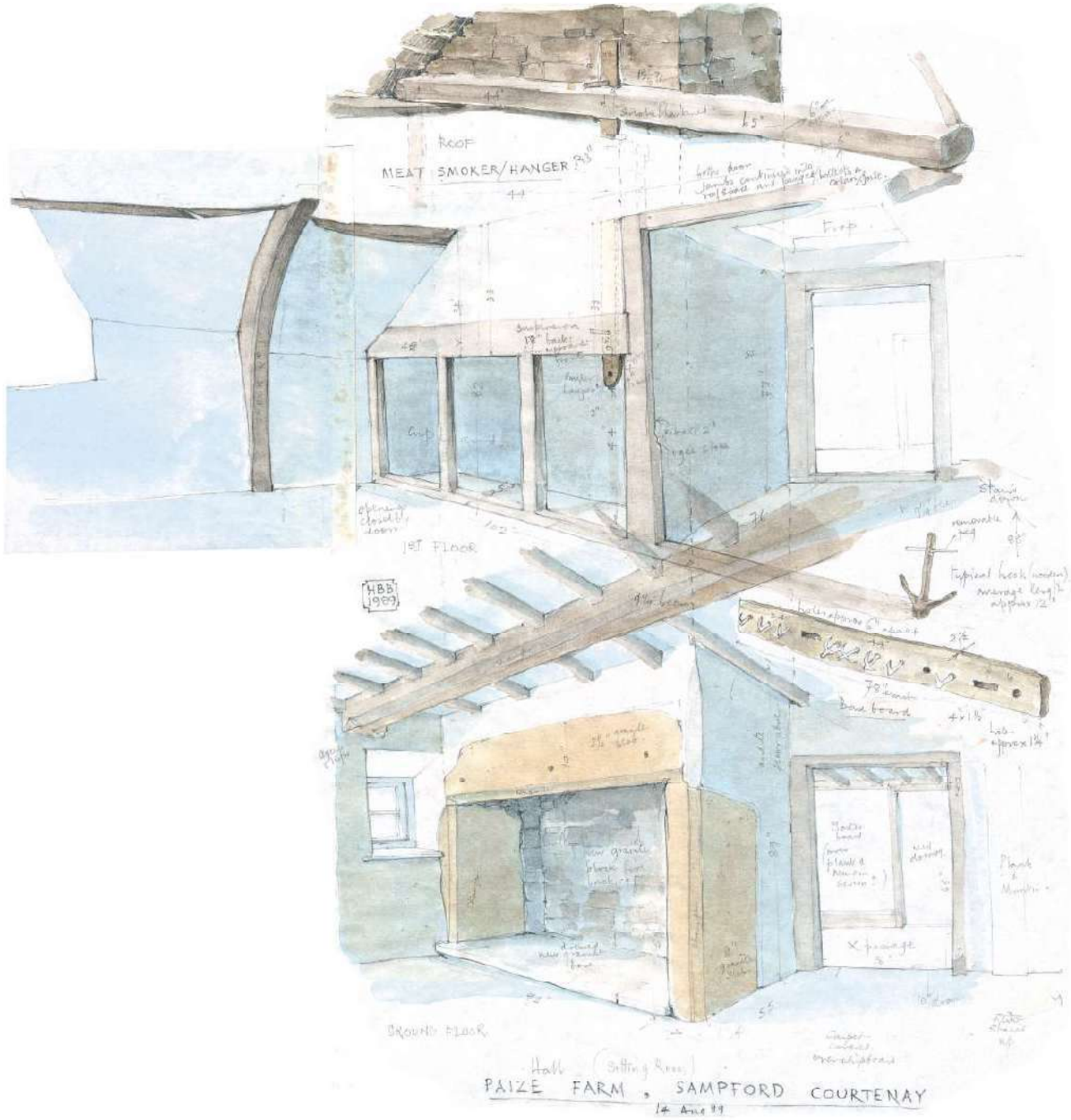


Fig. 5. A meat-smoker or meat-hanger at Paize Farm, Sampford Courtenay, 1999. The meat was hung off hooks in a horizontal board in the chimney at first floor level, in a framed triple opening into a floorless cupboard in the stack. The cupboard doors are not drawn. The board was suspended with pegs from two vertical planks (Brian was able to see one of these) secured with pegs to a crossbeam in the roofspace. Removable wooden hooks, made out of small hedgerow branches with thick twigs, average length 12", were secured with removable pegs at the back of the board. The board, and some of the pegs (carefully measured and drawn) survived but had been removed from the chimney. Brian shows the meat-smoker in context, in a hall stack backing on to a cross passage. He includes useful dating features, e.g. the stops on the hall cross beam. Judging from the details, the hall was floored in the 17th century and the meat-smoker probably built with the insertion of the hall floor.

Fig. 6 related to Fig. 5 above. A photograph by Brian of the board and surviving hooks.

Captions by Jo Cox.

Thanks to Peter Child, Joan Grundy and John Thorp.

Exeter and North Devon Monument Makers in the 17th and 18th Centuries

This paper aims to describe and evaluate the development of memorial sculpture in Devon during the 17th and 18th centuries. It will focus on workshops based in Exeter and Barnstaple and look at examples of their work. The paper will also draw attention to signed works as well as others that have been traditionally ascribed to an artist. Other monuments that can be attributed to known sculptors, based on new research, will also be discussed.

The great medieval sculpture gallery that is the west front of Exeter Cathedral is the largest of its kind in England after that of Wells Cathedral. It was started perhaps as early as 1330 but incomplete by the time of Bishop Grandisson's death in 1369. It has long attracted admiration for the range of sculpted figures as well as the beauty of their forms and is rightly considered as one of the greatest architectural features of medieval English Gothic art.[1] Given that the sculptors of the west front would have lived and worked on site, it is difficult to imagine that they would not have worked on other small projects as occasion warranted and the production of monuments would have been just such work. The vigorously posed cross-legged knight and his wife at Landkey [Fig. 1] is one possible example. Other 14th century monuments at Bere Ferrers [Fig. 2], and Haccombe may well have been produced by the Exeter carvers or were influenced by them. What we have therefore is very strong circumstantial evidence for an important school of carvers working in Exeter in the period up to the Black Death in the mid 14th century. They may have laid the foundations for further figure carving in the following century and while trends in monument production can be recognised, no workshop has thus far been positively identified.

It was not until the early 15th century that locally made monuments began to be identifiable again. The monument to Anthony Harvey, d.1564, in Exeter Cathedral is one of the first in the region to illustrate a broad understanding of the new Renaissance motifs that were becoming commonplace elsewhere in England. The format of the Harvey monument, that of a niche tomb, is clearly derived from the by then defunct Easter sepulchre type. By contrast the monument at Ermington to Christopher Chudleigh of 1570, like the Harvey piece also made of Beer limestone, is far more

Fig. 1. Member of the Beaupel family and wife, c.1300. Church of St Paul, Landkey.

Fig. 2. Sir William De Ferraris & Lady Matilda, c.1300. Church of St Andrew, Bere Ferrers.

restrained in the decorative elements and much less Renaissance in style. Both the Harvey and Chudleigh monuments are almost certainly the work of an Exeter-based workshop which, like its 14th century predecessor, could well have been associated with the cathedral mason's yard. A small group of monuments found in East Devon dating from the later 16th and early 17th centuries display similar architectural features and might well be the products of an Exeter workshop or, though less likely, one located nearer the Beer quarries.[2]

One important later 16th century monument that demands attention is that at Clovelly to Sir Robert Cary, died 1586. This large non-effigial monument displays a sound understanding of the classical orders of architecture and employs them in imaginative composition, previously unknown in the region. Again, the workshop is unknown but could very well be Exeter. The monument is noteworthy in that large panels occupy the space traditionally taken up by an effigy. These panels are decorated with strap work – a somewhat unusual feature in itself – but they are not an original design by the sculptor. They are in fact taken from the title page of *The bookes called Apocrypha*, part of *the Holy Bible according to the Ebrew and Greeke and conferred with the best translations in divers languages,* printed by Christopher Barker in London in 1583. There are three possibilities for its use on this monument. Sir Robert Cary might have designed the monument himself, his executors made a specific request to include an up to date image or that the sculptor was in possession of the design and used it as a means of introducing a more modern decorative element.[3] While we will never know how the design came to be used, it remains an important development in local i.e. Devon monument production.

One name that does exist as a monument maker and whose work can be identified as dating from the early 17th century is John Deymond, an Exeter carver. He is known to have been apprenticed to Richard Deymond, not a direct relative, who was one of the foremost ordinary masons (not a freemason) employed on the rebuilding of Exeter Guildhall in the early 1590s.[4] John Deymond is recorded in the Lists of Freemen in 1597 and it appears that he was dead by 1623.

The monument at Bovey Tracey to Nicholas Eveleigh, d.1618, has the interesting inscription

Fig. 3. Elizabeth Eriseys, d.1618 by John Deymond. Church of St Mary, Bickleigh.

‘1620 ID’ incised into a panel on the back wall of the monument, above the reclining effigy. This inscription confirms that John Deymond was the sculptor. This panel was very clearly intended to be the position of the main inscription and the date and initials were originally concealed beneath a thin panel of material that has subsequently become detached.

Other monuments, including that to Elizabeth Eriseys (d.1618) at Bickleigh [Fig. 3], Sir John Acland (d.1614) at Broadclyst, Sir John Jefferey (d.1611) at Whitchurch Canonicorum, Dorset and William Westover (d.1622) at Colyton can all be ascribed to Deymond with a high degree of certainty. According to the lists of Exeter Freemen, Deymond had two known apprentices, John Penney and Stephen Somers but nothing more is known of these people.[5]

Another known tomb maker from the 1630s is a man called Wellar, Christian name unknown. He has been identified as the maker of the Reynell monument of 1633 at Wolborough and references occur to him in the Reynell family accounts for 1633. The location of his workshop has not been ascertained, but it may well have been in Exeter.

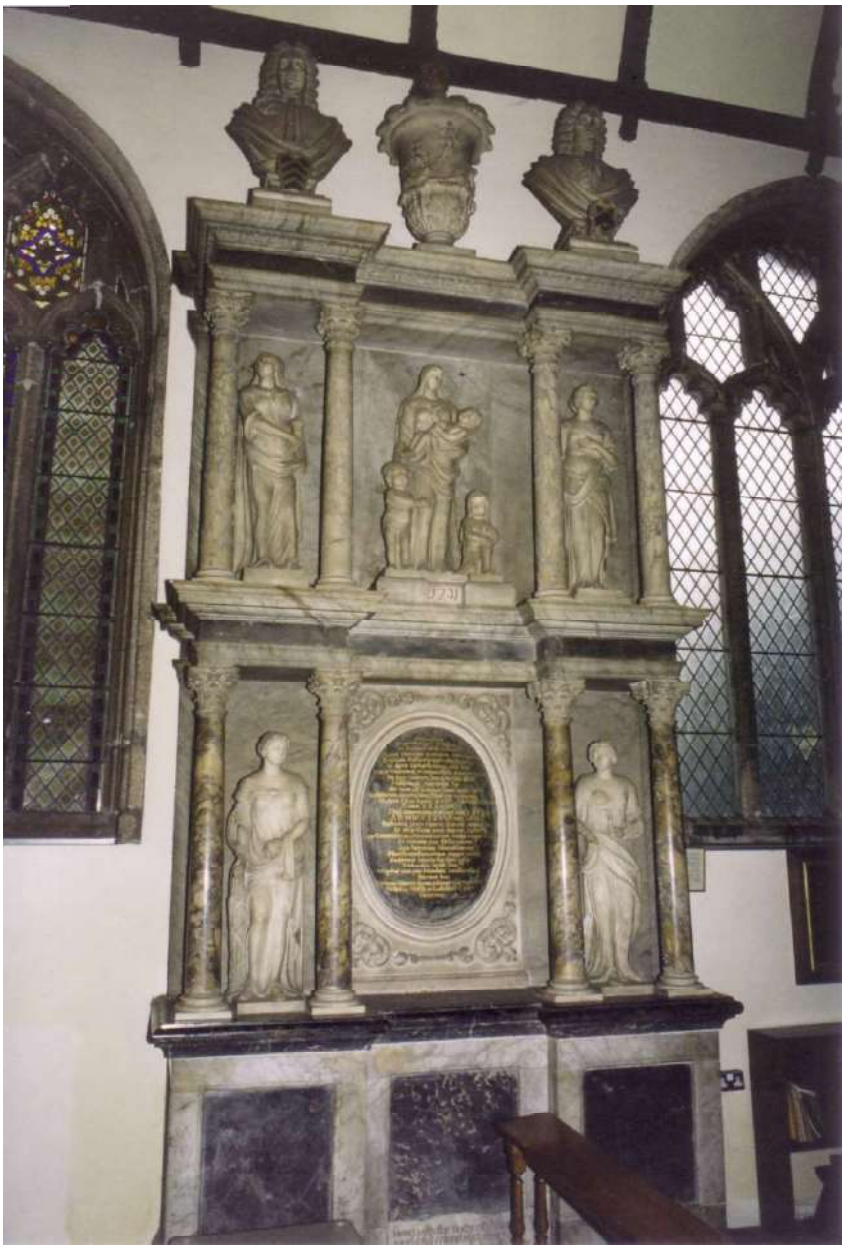
From the late Commonwealth period, a new style of mural monument is discernible in Devon. The format is simple with the inscription being the dominant feature set within an architectural frame. The earliest identified monument in this new style is that at Crediton commemorating Agnes Venner (d.1658). This monument is actually quite a sophisticated piece. The two panels that flank the inscription are decorated with foliage and hourglasses while above the cornice is a depressed open segmental pediment with an achievement of arms. What makes this monument particularly interesting is the apron beneath the main shelf. This is decorated in a strapwork style and with a prominent skull in the central roundel. This particular feature is the common denominator, seen on over 24 monuments in the region dating from c.1658 – c.1693. A study of the locations of these monuments shows a cluster in and around Exeter and it is therefore highly likely that the workshop that produced them was based in the city. Examples of the style can be found as far north as Clovelly and as far south as Kingsbridge and one example has been found in Cornwall at Lezant. By the late 1660s, the style had matured with a typical example being the monument to Robert Hall, 1667 in Exeter Cathedral. Here the inscription remains

Fig. 4. Monument to Francis Drewe, 1675. Church of St Andrew, Broadhembury.

the central feature of the composition, but the entablature is supported on columns with composite capitals and the segmental pediment with central achievement and two other shields of arms is very competently handled. The open segmental pediment was not the only type of canopy used by this workshop, as the sloping sides of triangular pediments were used upon which putti holding skulls and hourglasses could recline. Typical of this type of monument is that at Broadhembury to Francis Drewe (d.1675) [Fig. 4].[6]

The precise location of the workshop that produced these monuments has not been found and nor have any masons been fully identified with it. One name that occurs several times in the Exeter lists of freemen is that of Jonas Bampfield who is known to have employed apprentices and it is tantalising to think that he may have been responsible for some of the monuments associated with this workshop.

It appears that by the mid 1690s this workshop ceased to function or was taken over by others whose work remains unidentified. However, the most famous of the Exeter monument makers, John Weston, began producing commemorative sculpture in the second decade of the 18th century. Later in his career, he was appointed Clerk of the Works to Exeter Cathedral (at an annual salary of £10.00).



Weston only signed eight monuments, his earliest being that to Revd Newte of 1715 at the church of St Peter, Tiverton, but it is clear that he made others, some of which have been ascribed to him mainly on stylistic grounds. He was certainly working by 1713 as the monument to Thomas Northmore in St Thomas, Exeter has long been associated with him. Indeed, it was described by Polwhele as 'a large clumsy monument by Weston of Exeter'.[7] Polwhele is rather unkind about this monument as it is more sophisticated than he suggests, with the angels reclining on the canopy being quite well cut and the standing

Fig. 5. Granville Piper & Richard Wise erected 1731, by John Weston. Church of St Mary Magdalene, Launceston.

angels equally well made. Other monuments have been traditionally identified with Weston – the Hooper monument of 1715 at St Martin, Exeter as well as the Vavasour monument of 1727 at St Saviour, Dartmouth and two monuments to members of the Courtenay family at church of St Mary, Molland, dated 1727 and 1732.

The circumstances surrounding Weston's training are unknown and his name has not been found in any of the Mason's directories in London. However, he was a talented artist and he was clearly one of the best provincial sculptors working at that time. Recent research has identified several monuments that have previously been overlooked as being the work of Weston, foremost amongst them being the Piper and Wise monument at Launceston [Fig. 5], erected c.1731.[8] C S Gilbert, in his *Historical Survey of the County of Cornwall* published in 1817 thought highly of it describing it as 'a stately monument composed of rich marble and elegant sculpture.' Similarly, Polsue, in his *Parochial History of the County of Cornwall*, published between 1867-73, refers to it as an 'elegant and costly monument…the magnificent cenotaph reaches from the floor to the ceiling and is supported by colonnades of polished marble pillars'. More recently, Pevsner describes it as 'Sumptuous, uncommonly classical and uncommonly good. It should be possible to recognise its master.' The monument is arranged in three main tiers. The lowest tier, which acts as the base, has three black marble panels with grey marble surrounds; the central panel being set back from the other two. The middle tier has the inscription in the centre with two freestanding female figures representing Prudence and Fortitude at either side. Four columns support the third tier where two further freestanding female figures representing Faith and Hope stand either side of a female figure with attendant children, a personification of Charity. Given the overall style of the monument, including the busts and urn at the very top of the composition as well as the figure carving, an attribution to Weston is entirely valid.[9]

On four of Weston's monuments, dating from c.1712 – c.1729 he added an oval panel of the Last Judgement. This highly unusual feature has not been seen on any other monument of the period. Only three of the panels remain in situ, the other, formerly part of the Kelland monument of 1712 at the church of St David, Ashprington, is now in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter. A further Last Judgement panel is known to have existed on a monument in Plymouth but it was destroyed during World War 2.

Having considered Exeter as the main centre of monument production in Devon, it is necessary to think about the other area of monument production – Barnstaple. It is not known when monument production started in Barnstaple, but there was an identifiable school of carvers in the town certainly by the early 17th century. One of the reasons for the expansion of monument making in Barnstaple was the proximity of the port to the Somerset alabaster quarries and it is reasonable to suppose that a school of carvers was established to work in this particular material. The period between the 1620s and 1660s saw a large number of monuments made of Somerset alabaster. The church of St Peter and St Paul in Barnstaple contains a number of locally produced monuments, typical of which is that to Thomas Horwood 1658 [Fig. 6]. Here we see the half figure resting his head on his hand, the elbow resting on an hourglass and with the other hand resting on a skull. The references to death and time are often included within the wider melancholic pose, which is itself a feature often associated with this school of carvers. The monument surround, with its roundels and strapwork, are typical features of the Barnstaple school and similar examples can be found in other north Devon churches. It appears that the work of the Barnstaple monument makers was not confined just to the immediate area of north Devon. Two monuments in Exeter Cathedral, to Dr James Bidgood 1691 [Fig. 7] and James Raillard 1692 [Fig. 8] show features of the Barnstaple workshop, especially in the canopy work and cabochon stones on the Raillard monument.

No sculptors have been identified with the early 17th century Barnstaple school but by the 1690s, the work of Thomas Jewell, a local artist, can be recognised. There were two Thomas Jewells – father and son. Thomas the elder died in 1728 while his son died in 1758. The church of St Peter, Tawstock, has the best collection of monuments in Devon other than Exeter Cathedral and some

Fig. 6. Monument to Thomas Horwood, 1658. Church of St Peter and St Paul, Barnstaple.

Fig. 7. Dr James Bidgood, d.1691, a wealthy physician from Rockbeare, who owned Rockbeare Barton and also had a house in Cathedral Close. Exeter Cathedral. © John Thorp

Fig. 8. James Raillard d.1692, an Exeter merchant of Swiss origins who was granted English citizenship by Parliament. A ledger stone to Raillard, presumably marking his place of burial is set into the floor below his monument. It is Purbeck with indents for missing brass elements. Exeter Cathedral. © John Thorp.

Fig. 9. Sir Richard Northcote, 1732, by Thomas Jewell. Church of St Peter, Tawstock.

are the work of the Jewells. In the early years Thomas the Elder tended to specialise in cartouche-type mural monuments, often with curly edges while some others are clearly cut from square panels of white marble and placed lozenge-wise on the church wall. However, it is in their large-scale monuments that they excel and again there are style indicators to suggest that the Jewells were the makers.

The monument to Sir Henry Northcote (d.1732) at Tawstock is signed by Thomas Jewell and must therefore be Thomas Jewell the younger [Fig. 9]. This shows an oval inscription flanked by pilasters and with a moulded cornice upon which rests two putti reclining on baroque cartouches and an achievement of arms. The most interesting feature of the monument however is the cluster of skulls and bones at the bottom of the inscription, a feature repeated elsewhere and identified as a trademark of the Jewell workshop. This is characteristic of the enormous monument at the church of St Mary and St Benedict, Buckland Brewer, to John Davie who died in 1709 but whose monument appears to have been made somewhat later. It can therefore be considered appropriate that the Davie monument is a Jewell product, probably made by Thomas the Elder.

It has been shown that during the 17th and early 18th centuries there were important sculptors working in Devon and whose products have only just begun to be recognised. The pre-Civil War Barnstaple school produced a range of innovative monuments commemorating local worthies and while they may have kept a local clientele, they produced commemorative sculpture in quite large quantities. The Exeter school of the later 17th century also produced a sizable number of monuments, but the name of any artist firmly identified with this school remains elusive. It was not until the early 18th century with the work of John Weston and the Jewells that we have monuments

by named artists. Their work is testament to the desire of local elites to be commemorated by the products of local artisans and we rightly celebrate their achievements.

Dr Clive J Easter

Endnotes

1. For a fuller discussion of the art of Exeter Cathedral west front see Prior & Gardiner *An account of medieval figure sculpture in England* (CUP, 1912) pp350-353.
2. For a wider discussion of regional workshops in Devon in the 16th century see C Faunch, C*hurch monuments and commemoration in Devon c1530-c1640* (1998) unpublished PhD thesis, University of Exeter, chapter 3.
3. The Cary monuments at the church of All Saints, Clovelly are discussed in detail in Clive J Easter, 'The Cary family of Clovelly', *Church Monuments*, Journal of the Church Monuments Society (2011), 104-123.
4. Faunch, *op. cit.* p55.
5. For a fuller discussion of John Deymond and the arguments for his workshop being sited in Exeter see A Wells-Cole, 'An Oak Bed at Montacute; a Study in Mannerist Decoration', *Furniture History*, 1981.
6. For a fuller description of the Exeter workshop as discussed see Clive J Easter, *Church Monuments in Devon and Cornwall 1660-1730* (2006), unpublished PhD thesis, University of Plymouth.
7. R Polwhele, *A History of Devonshire:* 1793-1806, Vol.2 (1977) p102.
8. Granville Piper and Richard Wise are commemorated by a second mural monument in Bath Abbey. The sculptor is unknown and it may be London work.
9. See Clive J Easter, 'John Weston of Exeter: new attributions and the identification of some lost monuments', *Church Monuments*, journal of the Church Monuments Society (2008) 122-136 and at 131-132.

A Discussion of the Origins of the West Country Wagon Roof based on the recording of St Anne's Chapel, Barnstaple

In most regions of England in the medieval period there was a strong overlap between the carpentry traditions employed in churches and domestic buildings. Whilst some forms of assembly may be the exclusive preserve of either ecclesiastical or secular spheres, certain technologies are common to both. In the south west of England, extending into the southern marches and south Wales, however, the two are entirely different. Wagon or cradle roofs are found only in churches or chapels, never in vernacular domestic structures, which normally adopt a type or variant of cruck construction. Little systematic analysis has been done on these church roofs, mainly because they are so difficult to access. The chronological range of wagon roofs in the south west has normally been placed in the 15th or early 16th centuries. The firm dating of the roof at St Anne's Chapel has pushed the date back to the first half of the 14th century, and other examples in the region may be considerably earlier. This paper makes use of research undertaken for my article published in *Vernacular Architecture* on the wagon roofs of St James' Priory, Bristol, which included a stylistically similar wagon roof from the first half of the 14th century roof (Thorp 2013, *passim*). For those who do not have access to *Vernacular Architecture*, the discussion of the earliest roof phase of St James' is repeated here, although slightly adapted. It speculates on the origins of the west country wagon roof type and the reason why it remained an exclusively ecclesiastical form.

St Anne's Chapel is a rare survival of a detached chantry chapel, built in the first half of the 14th century [Fig. 1]. It is sited in the churchyard of the church of St Peter and St Mary Magdalen in the centre of Barnstaple. Documentation indicates that the crypt beneath was used as a charnel house, although it is not certain that the building was designed to have the dual purpose of a chantry chapel over a charnel house from the outset.[1] Nevertheless this would seem the most

Fig. 1. St Anne's Chapel from the south.

obvious intended function. Several medieval chapels are known from the borough of Barnstaple but now only St Anne's remains: it is the oldest building in the town.

At the mid 16th century suppression of the chantries the chapel was acquired by a couple of lawyers who quickly sold it to Barnstaple Corporation who found a new use for the building as a school, referred to as a High School or Grammar School. It continued as such until 1910. In 1928 the building became the Town Museum which survived to 1997. Thereafter its future was uncertain until 2011 when the Town Council determined to see the building reopened and reused as a major heritage attraction. A Heritage Lottery Fund bid was successful and included an archaeological watching brief and an English Heritage funded dendro-chronological analysis of the roof timbers. It is now an active community arts centre.

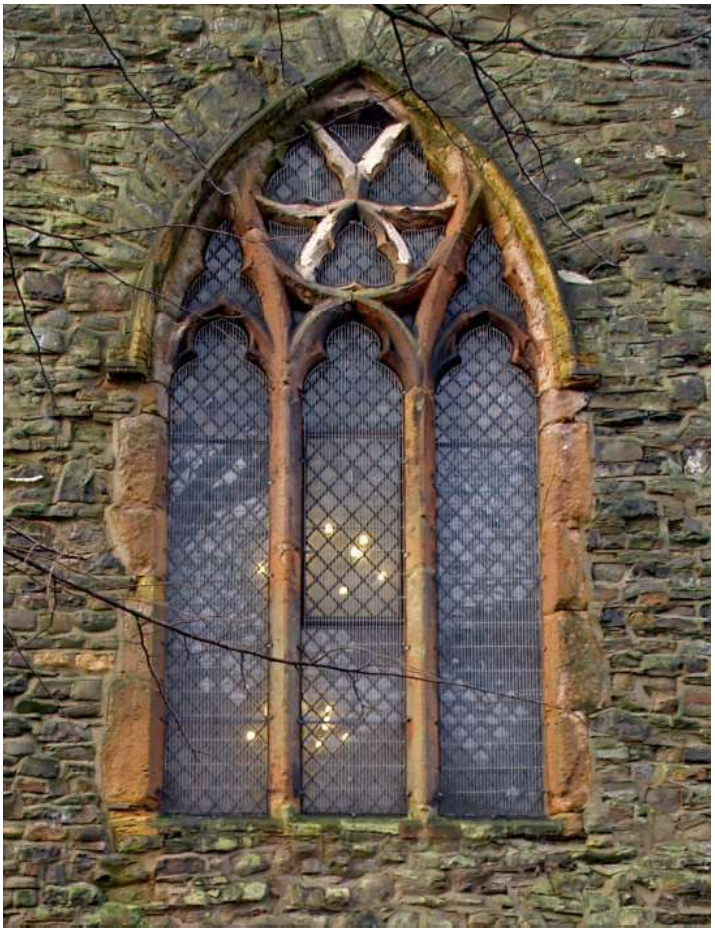


Fig. 2. The east window to the chapel.

The Chapel

The core of the early-mid 14th century chapel and half-basement crypt appears to survive remarkably intact. It is built of local slatestone quarried from the Pilton Beds using an unusual orange-coloured stone for original ashlar detail; it is a stone-type never noticed before by this writer and may be imported. Its use in the head of the crypt doorway in the middle of the west end wall and around the chapel doorway at the west end of the south wall indicates that these are the original doorways. Most of the crypt level windows are also original openings but now contain 19th century Beerstone window-frames. However the chapel preserves three interesting original windows; only the west end one is a replacement. The former chapel doorway is now contained within a 16th century porch tower.

The roof is the main subject of this report, but the contemporary axial timber arcade supporting the first floor level is also of considerable historic interest since the dendrochronological analysis proved it to be a primary feature. The scientific dating also provides a nice date-range by association for the three original arch-headed chapel windows which vary from plate tracery to full-blown early Decorated Gothic style at the east end [Fig. 2]. There is also a primary piscina in the south wall of the chapel in a niche with a cusped ogee-headed arch.

The Roof

In its original form – that is to say before the introduction of a crown purlin – the roof comprised a simple undecorated series of arch-braced common rafter trusses, 25 in all, producing a barrel vault [Figs 3, 5 & 6]. They apparently sat on separate wall and eaves plates. Since these were both replaced on both sides in the 19th century it was not possible to determine how the principals or arch braces engaged these lower plates.

Fig. 3. The chapel roof looking east.

Fig. 4. The crypt arcade looking northeast.

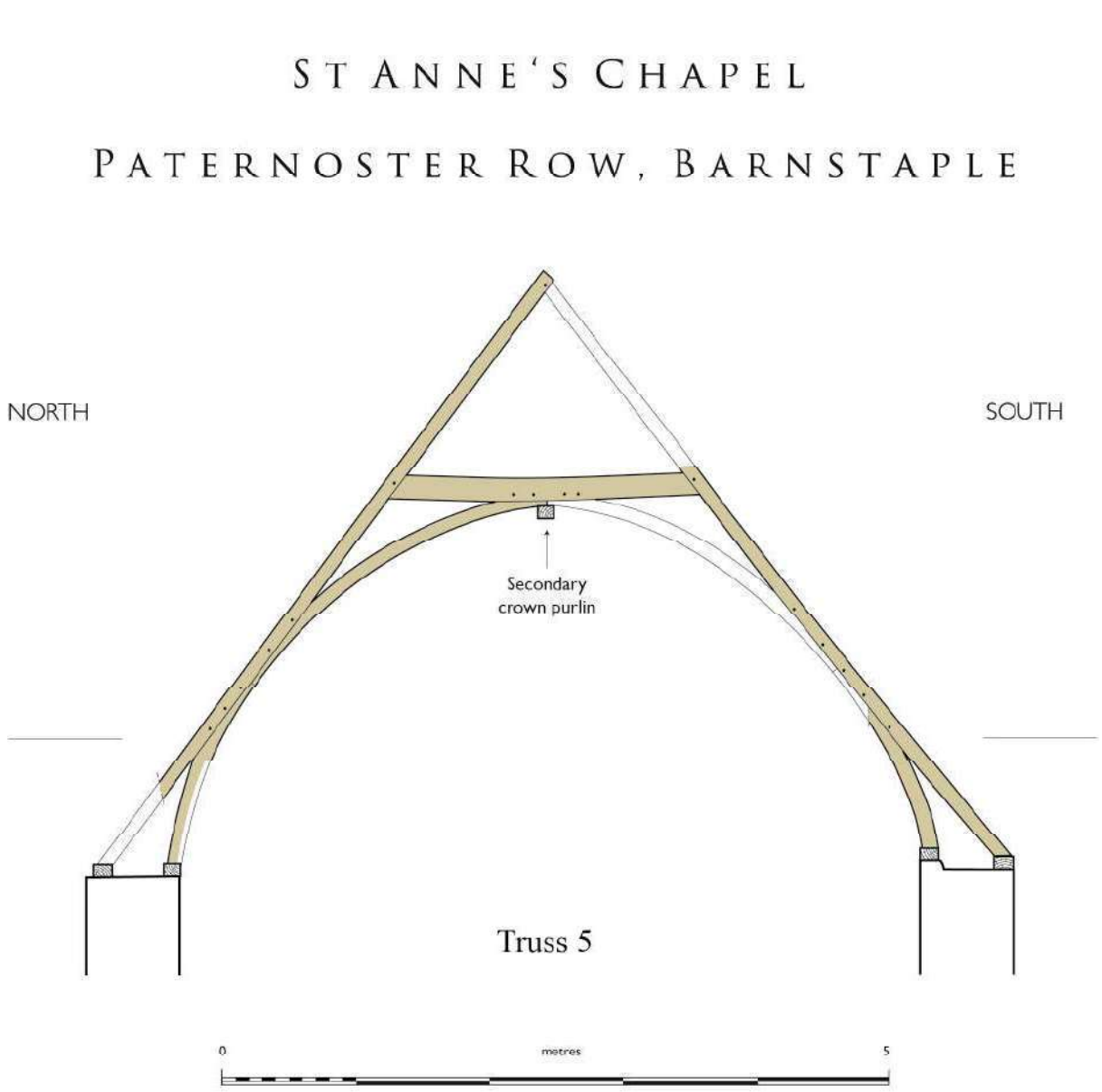


Fig. 5. The west face of Truss 5 with surviving medieval timbers coloured brown.

At the apex, the principals engage with a simple mortise and tenon joint held by a single peg. The flat collars are mortised into the principals and fixed by two pegs each side. Each truss has a set of four arch braces creating a continuous semi-circular intrados from wall to wall below the collar. Thus there are symmetrical upper and lower arch braces each side, all plainly finished with square corners. The arch braces are fitted into the soffits (or undersides) of the collar and principals by long mortise and tenon joints, each held by two pegs. The roof now has a longitudinal crown purlin which is secondary, probably a c.1869 addition.

The Chapel Floor Structure

The chapel floor is carried on a substantial plain axial (or spine) beam with squared corners. It is assumed that this was associated with cross joists but the crypt has a plastered ceiling and the chapel a boarded floor. Therefore, during the site survey it was not possible to examine the joists and establish their form or suggest a date.

The main beam is considered to be a primary feature and it is supported on a three-bay arcade featuring octagonal oak posts set on stone pads [Figs 4 & 6]. Each post is tenoned and pegged into a hefty bolster which is supported each side by curving arch braces from the posts. The bolsters

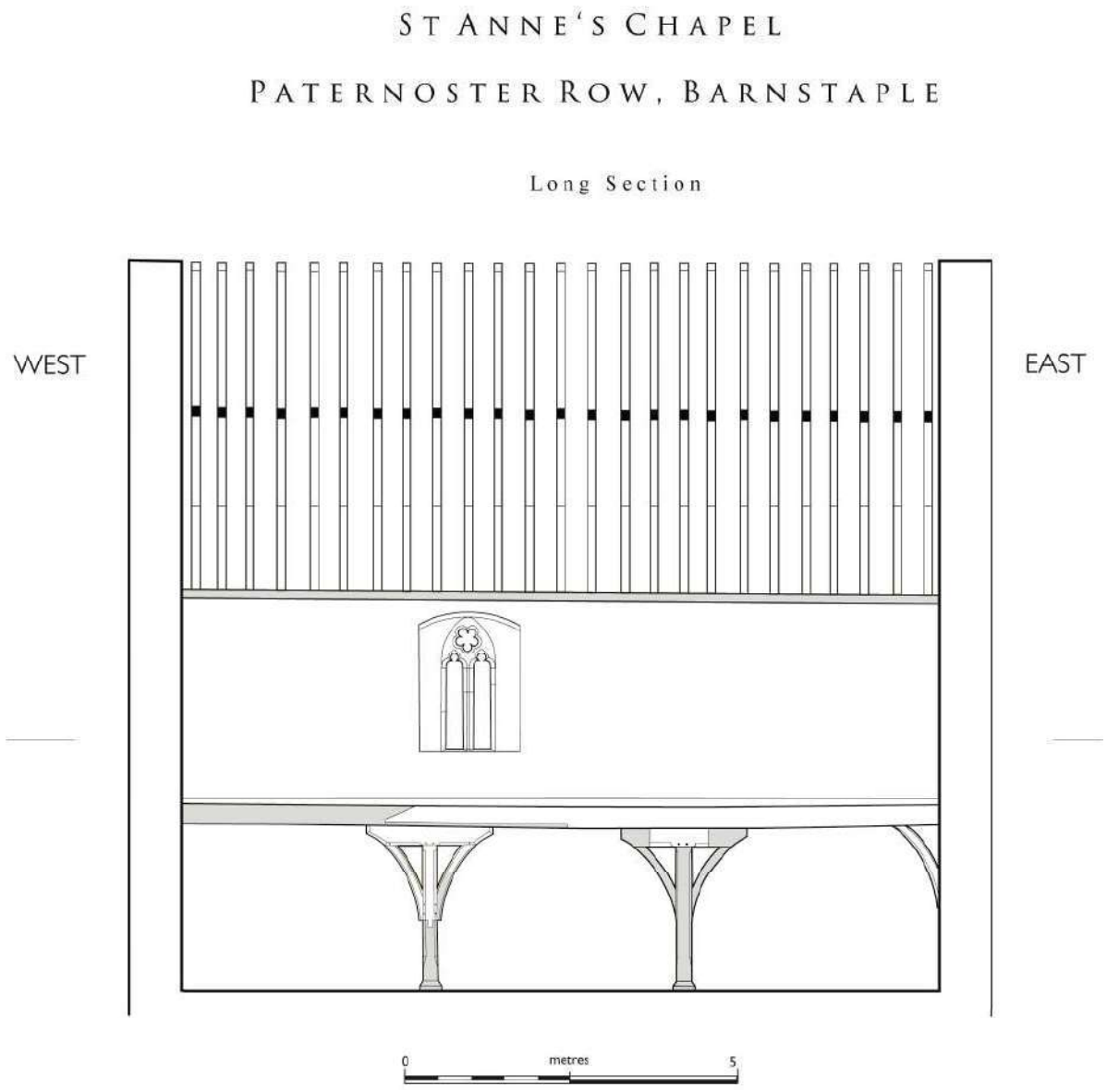


Fig. 6. The long section through the building with major replacement timbers (mostly 19th century) shaded in grey.

and arch braces are chamfered with roll stops. At the east end the spine beam is supported by another arch brace set into the end wall but at the west end it is tenoned into a double lintel over the doorway. Fortunately, the c.1869 repairs were conservative in philosophy so that whilst a great deal of timber was replaced at that time, sound primary woodwork was preserved.

In an English context this timber arcade is an unusual survival from the first half of the 14th century. The dendrochronological analysis has established that it was a primary feature along with the roof structure. When preparing the Conservation Management Plan for the building Keystone asked colleagues nationwide for parallels for this unusual construction. Stewart Brown suggested the chamber block of the Great Hall in Lustleigh, Devon. Other parallels ranged from London, York, Staffordshire, Gloucester, Chester and Newcastle upon Tyne (Keystone 2011, 14). Most of these examples were considered to be relatively early and their national spread makes it clear that such a structure was not a local vernacular trait. The roof is discussed below as part of a northern European mainstream, and it could well be that this floor structure might find more parallels across

the channel than elsewhere in England. Indeed, the recent 2016 Vernacular Architecture Group Summer Seminar in Maine (the Le Mans region of north west France) showed this technique as quite common in domestic gentry houses which are thought to date from the early 14th century. However those seen on the seminar have straight braces and any bolsters were secondary.

In conclusion St Anne's Chapel is a remarkably complete survival from the first half of the 14th century. However, it is the roof and its place in the development of a distinctively west country style of ecclesiastical roof carpentry which is the focus of this piece.

The origins and early development of the church wagon roof

The medieval carpentry of south west England (a region comprising the historic counties of Gloucestershire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall) is intriguing. Unlike most other parts of England, there are two quite distinct contemporary traditions for secular and domestic roofing. From the mid 13th century onwards, the south western domestic vernacular tradition developed a local variant of cruck or jointed cruck construction, although larger houses of the gentry tended to feature more urbane forms, commonly the arch-braced roof. Not a single 'domestic vernacular' medieval roof occurs in a church in the region, however modest its scale. Contemporary churches had their own form – virtually ubiquitous – commonly known as the wagon or cradle roof. With one arguable exception, no wagon roofs are found in medieval houses, except over private chapels as, for instance, at Bradley Manor, near Newton Abbot in Devon.

In the past few decades archaeological, academic and dendrochronological interest has concentrated on historic houses in the West Country, whilst medieval churches have been relatively overlooked. Part of the reason for this state of affairs is that church roofs are high and inaccessible, whereas medieval roofs in houses can usually be easily examined, recorded and sampled from low ladders into roof spaces. Consequently, few church wagon roofs have been archaeologically recorded and hardly any published. The dating of such roofs has usually been done by associating them with apparently contemporary fabric such as window tracery as, for instance, with the wagon roofs of Hatherleigh Church in Devon, a rare case where wagon roofs have been both recorded and published (Westcote 1992, *passim*). The establishment of a typology of the wagon roof, based on recorded examples backed up by documentary research and dendrochronological analysis, has slipped far behind equivalent research on secular buildings. This reappraisal of the origins and early development of the medieval wagon roof in the south west, using the two examples from here at St Anne's Chapel and St James' Priory in Bristol and the few other dated examples from the area, is therefore necessarily conjectural.

Writing of Devon, Bridget Cherry placed the church wagon roof firmly in the Perpendicular period **(**Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 46)**.** The same date range was also generally applied in the 1980s to domestic roofs, as is demonstrated in the list descriptions produced in that decade. The application of dendrochronology has confirmed the impression that the great majority of medieval vernacular roofs in the south west of England do indeed date from the 15th and 16th centuries, but it has also identified a substantial minority dating from the early 14th century and a couple from the 13th century. Targeted scientific analysis, accompanied by archaeological recording (Thorp 2011, *passim*), has made possible a serious and credible typological analysis of domestic roofs from c.1250 onwards.

In contrast, fewer than 20 medieval church roofs have been dated by dendrochronology throughout the six counties of the English south west region (VAG, 2009). Until very recently, all of these were sampled because the opportunity arose rather than as part of a systematic research programme. All but one of these church roofs date from the Perpendicular period, that is to say from the early 15th century through to the early 16th century. Whilst unsurprising, this picture almost certainly conceals a much longer time frame for wagon roofs.

The roof of St Anne's Chapel produced a date of 1317–43d (Bridge 2012, 6) from dendrochronological sampling. Interestingly this early date coincides with that of the earliest phase of the roof at St James' Priory in Bristol to 1327–52d (Arnold and Howard 2011, 2). The early date for the Bristol church encouraged English Heritage to fund the dendrochronological analysis of the similar Barnstaple roof. The date range of St James' Priory may possibly be refined from documentary evidence to shortly after 1346 (Jackson 2006, 10-11). This might make St Anne's the earliest wagon roof at this moment.

Although not the oldest church roofs from the region – that accolade attaches to the small Norman church of St Mary, Kempley in Gloucestershire, dated 1120–50d (VAG 2009, *VA*30 (1999), 99-100) – those from St Anne's Chapel and St James' Priory are the earliest scientifically dated wagon roofs from the south west. This evidence has established the existence of pre-Perpendicular wagon roofs in the region. Visual and stylistic evidence suggests that even earlier wagon roofs might well survive, a point to which I will return.

The earliest published example known to the author of anything that looks like a wagon roof in England is the Greyfriars Church in Lincoln, dating from c.1260 (Hewitt 1985, 28). Dendrochronology has identified other early examples in south Wales and the Marches. South Wales also shares the same pattern of cruck or arch-braced construction for domestic roofs and wagon roofs for the churches. Peter Smith's distribution maps of roofs in the Principality reveal a concentration of what he calls church 'barrel' roofs in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire that extends into Breconshire, a distribution of wagon roofs in Wales that is contiguous with those in south west England (Smith 1988, 677, map 56). As in the west country, most have purlins producing panelled vaults dating from the 15th and early 16th centuries. There are a couple of significant early roofs in the region that share north European characteristics such as St Nicholas in Grosmont, Monmouthshire, dated 1214–44d. This is basically a bayed tie beam truss roof with kingposts and no arch bracing. Another early English example, but close to the Welsh border, is also of interest. This is the little coved roof over the porch at St Mary the Virgin church, Cleobury Mortimer, in Shropshire, dated 1212–42d (Smith 1988, 677, map 56), but this is too small realistically to be counted as a wagon roof.

It is therefore instructive to examine the origins of the wagon form or its variants in northern Europe. Here this type of roof is normally associated with a (generally ecclesiastical) carpentry tradition from the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, and was in common usage throughout these centuries. Several writers concur that there are direct parallels and precedents for English common rafter roofs with those in northern Europe, particularly in northern France and Belgium (Smith 1970; Mercer 1975; Hewett 1980; Warren and Hallam 1990; Warren 1992). Warren and Hallam point out that there was obviously an exchange of craftsmen and ideas between England and Normandy, both subject to the same royal power, and there were also extensive connections between religious houses on both sides of the Channel, at least until the early 15th century (Warren and Hallam 1990, 101-2). Research in northern Europe, and particularly in northern and western France, has applied precisely those modern methods of research missing from south west England to its church roofs (Deneux 1927; Hoffsummer 2002; Épaud 2007; Hoffsummer 2011). The large numbers of surviving early French roofs allow a typological evolution to be established, which has occasional, but significant contemporary parallels in south west Britain. The implication is that a well-connected class of carpenters, that is to say those working at the level of the parish church or on other ecclesiastical buildings, were aware of innovations within a general north European mainstream. It is possible that some worked or were apprenticed on continental projects.

The majority of these early French roofs comprised single-framed, common-rafter trusses made up of straight timbers of uniform scantling above a tiebeam. In a process described by Chris Currie, a growing number of roofs dispensed with the tiebeam on all or (more commonly in France some) of the trusses in a regular sequence producing sole plates on the wall tops either side (Currie

2001). This opened up the heart of the roof to display. Interestingly, the Gloucestershire roof at St Mary's in Kempley, although not a wagon roof, is among the earliest known surviving roofs in northern Europe to dispense with tiebeams altogether. Even so, it is not clear if this early open roof set out consciously to reveal its upper and lower collar assembly to view as an aesthetic statement. Smarter roofs employed upright ashlar posts from the sole plates to the principals and diagonal soulaces, or scissor-braces from the principals to, or passing through, collars creating a canted heptagonal vault. One such roof survived over the domestic chapel at Fardel, Cornwood, in west Devon until its demolition in the 1960s, and is now known only from a small and grainy photograph in the West Country Studies Library (discussed and illustrated in Thorp 2011, 93). By substituting curving timbers for vertical ashlar pieces and diagonal soulaces, and extending them to meet each other, the arch-braced common rafter roof was created producing a barrel vault, and the wagon roof emerged.

There are numerous examples from northern France, often combined with bayed tiebeam trusses. Patrick Hoffsummer explains that such arch-braced roofs were very common in the whole area between the Loire and the Rhine by the mid 13th century, with the earliest example dating from 1198d (Hoffsummer 2002, 180-181). Hoffsummer's later assessment of the ancient roofs of western France from Brittany and Normandy to the Atlantic Pyrenees adds little more to the argument, showing most analogous examples north of the Loire but providing no earlier dates (Hoffsummer 2011, 85-177). Frédéric Épaud illustrates and discusses even earlier examples from Normandy including a couple from domestic town houses (Épaud 2007, 164, 273, 536). Such roofs continued to be built in France throughout, and even after, the medieval period, with the semicircular vault particularly common in the 13th and 14th centuries, whilst many of the later examples used a pointed arch profile (Hoffsummer 2002, 155-158). Thus the basic common rafter form of the chancel roof at St Anne's fits nicely into the north European mainstream, both in terms of appearance and date. These French examples date back to the 12th century, earlier than any in the British Isles, possibly reflecting the more developed trading infrastructure and attendant advanced architectural culture prevalent there. However, it may be that more early roofs survive awaiting discovery in England and south Wales in churches, concealed behind plaster barrel vaults.

Fig. 7. The roof of the crossing of the church of St Mary, Luppitt.

Fig. 8. The roof of the nave of the church of St John the Baptist in North Bovey has a secondary crown purlin to what might be an early roof.

In conclusion, the mid-14th century wagon roof over the chancel at St Anne's Chapel appears to have its origins in a common rafter roof tradition, originally designed in the 12th century, with curving arch braces to provide a barrel vault. Warren and Hallam state that such roofs emulated in oak the stone barrel vaults of the great French Romanesque churches (Warren and Hallam 1990, 103). It is interesting that a style so widespread in northern France should persist and evolve into the most common form of medieval church roof in the south western counties of England, but be supplanted by different types elsewhere in England. The barrel vault form of St Anne's, possibly intended for a plaster or boarded finish, might be considered as typical of the earliest form of church wagon roof in the West Country. It certainly provides an important dated example and opens up the possibility that similar roofs in the region may also date relatively early. For instance, the church of St Mary, Luppitt, in Devon, also has a collared common-rafter truss system with plain curving arch braces. With an impressively engineered transeptal crossing, the roofs of the nave and transepts sit very happily with the late 13th/early 14th century fabric of the church. It seems very likely that these are the original roofs and, if so, they are potentially among the earliest surviving church roofs in Devon [Fig. 7]. There is a similar wagon roof in the church of St Michael in Ilsington (Devon); another known from the church of St Michael in Honiton (Devon) was destroyed by fire in 1911. Others may survive above plastered barrel vaulted ceilings in church naves or chancels. Some possible candidates hide in full view, like the nave roof in North Bovey, if one considers the crown purlin as secondary [Fig. 8].

I would like the DBG website to have a Facebook page which could encourage DBG members to submit their own photos of similar roofs, enough so that we might be able to persuade Historic England to support further research into this interesting subject.

John Thorp

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Endnotes

[1] The historic background comes from a Conservation Management Plan produced by Keystone for Barnstaple Town Council in 2011.

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The Emergence of the Pinwill Sisters

Introduction

As the Pinwill sisters become increasingly known and better acknowledged for their woodcarving work in churches across Devon and Cornwall, it is timely to assess how it came about in 1890 that three young women took the audacious step of setting up their own company and succeeded in making their mark in what was essentially a male profession. This paper seeks to explore the factors that predisposed the Pinwill sisters to embark on this venture and enabled them to create a thriving company. Their family background was paramount, with a long tradition of wood working on their father's side and parents who inspired in them the confidence to learn, develop and perfect their skills. The early success of the business was due in no small part to the patronage of the architect Edmund H. Sedding, nephew of John Dando Sedding. Commissions from Edmund ensured a high standard of design and a good reputation was soon gained. Before long other architects recognised the talent of the Pinwill sisters, including Frederick Bligh Bond and George H. Fellowes Prynne.

Documents related to these early days are scant and largely comprise a short family memoir published in 1990 and a newspaper interview given by Violet Pinwill in 1934. These chronicle events mainly from the perspective of Violet, who managed the business single-handedly for nearly fifty years. Although her two older sisters, Mary and Ethel, left within the first two decades, their contribution was crucial in establishing the business in the early years. Through an array of other sources it is possible to piece together a more comprehensive narrative, to discover what influenced these young women, and to place the emergence of the Pinwill sisters in a wider context.

The Restoration of Ermington Church and the Development of the Company

Henry Bingham Mildmay of Barings Bank, having engaged Norman Shaw in 1878 to transform his wife's ancestral home at Flete, near Holbeton, into the 'huge, romantically craggy and castellated mansion'[1] we see today, turned his attention to the churches within his estate. All Saints at Holbeton and St Peter and St Paul at Ermington were in need of restoration and Mildmay decided upon the Arts and Crafts architect John Dando Sedding to carry out the work between 1885 and 1889. Of the two churches, it is evident that Mildmay very much favoured Holbeton and Sedding found himself with 'the opportunity... of showing what could be done with an old building when untrammelled by want of money',[2] which resulted in a lavish but tasteful restoration. Resources for the Ermington work, on the other hand, seem to have relied as much on the fund-raising activities of the incumbent Revd Pinwill and his family, organising bazaars and the like, as they did on Mildmay's generosity.[3] Given the attraction of the 'opportunity' at Holbeton, after producing modest plans for Ermington, John Dando handed over supervision of that restoration to his nephew Edmund H. Sedding.[4] It may have seemed for a while as if Ermington had drawn the short straw, but this turn of events led to a transformation in the lives of Edmund and the Pinwills.

The team of craftsmen that arrived in 1885 to carry out the restoration work at both Holbeton and Ermington were employees of Trask & Co. of Norton sub Hamdon, Somerset, a preferred contractor of J. D. Sedding.[5] The family maintains that, as work began at Ermington, it was Elizabeth's idea for the head woodcarver to teach her daughters in his spare time.[6] This may seem extraordinary to us today, but in the late 19th century the skill of woodcarving was seen as one of a range of 'accomplishments' that genteel young women may learn, usually for their own amusement. It was often taught in private classes[7] and also, for example, at Exeter High School for Girls.[8] The School of Art Woodcarving in South Kensington, London, was established in 1879 and over the next six years attracted more than 100 women to their classes.[9] From about 1895 its director was Miss Eleanor Rowe, who went on to write a classic book on *Practical Woodcarving* in 1907.[10]

Three of the seven daughters, Mary Rashleigh (born 1871), Annie Ethel (1872) and Violet Alice (1874), grasped this opportunity to learn the art of woodcarving. Their tutor was probably a man described as 'Giles the carver' on the reverse of two photographs [Figs 1a & b] of the Pinwill sisters with an example of their early work.[11] Most of the other daughters followed in their mother's footsteps and became talented musicians. Elizabeth's grandfather, Thomas Greatorex, was organist and master of choristers at Westminster Cathedral 1819-31 and Elizabeth herself was a fine musician.[12] It seems, however, that Mary, Ethel and Violet were also following family tradition in working with wood. Their grandfather, Revd William James Pinwill, was a keen amateur woodcarver,[13] but what was a mere pastime for him had been the livelihood of both his father, Andrew, and grandfather, William, who were shipbuilders at Sutton Pool, Plymouth.[14] The social transition from shipbuilders to clergy came when Andrew married an heiress worth nearly £30,000 in 1799, enabling the family to later retire to their native Salcombe.[15] Andrew became a country gentleman with considerable land holdings, acted as churchwarden of the daughter church in Salcombe and endowed the mother church at Malborough. He was also able to send his only son, William James, to Cambridge to study theology and become a cleric,[16] thus beginning a different chapter in the history of the Pinwills.

After serving in parishes all around the country, the arrival in Devon in 1880 was a homecoming for Revd Edmund Pinwill, who had been born in Holbeton in 1840, when his father was Vicar there.[17] And it was his father who bought the advowson of Ermington with Kingston from Mildmay, enabling his son to return to his native county. The girls must also have felt they were suddenly part of a larger Devon family and a growing understanding of part of their heritage conceivably inspired the three woodcarvers to embrace it wholeheartedly and make their way in the world, as their Pinwill forebears had done, with chisel in hand.

During the restoration of Ermington church, while the three sisters were training under Giles, they set up a workshop in the harness room above the vicarage stables.[18] Edmund Sedding appears to

Fig. 1a. Five of the Pinwill sisters (L to R: Ruth, Ethel, Mary, Violet and Constance) in front of clay models for the completed reredos shown in Figure 1b, with (L to R) Smith the modeller, Flashman the joiner and Giles the carver. (Courtesy of PWDRO)

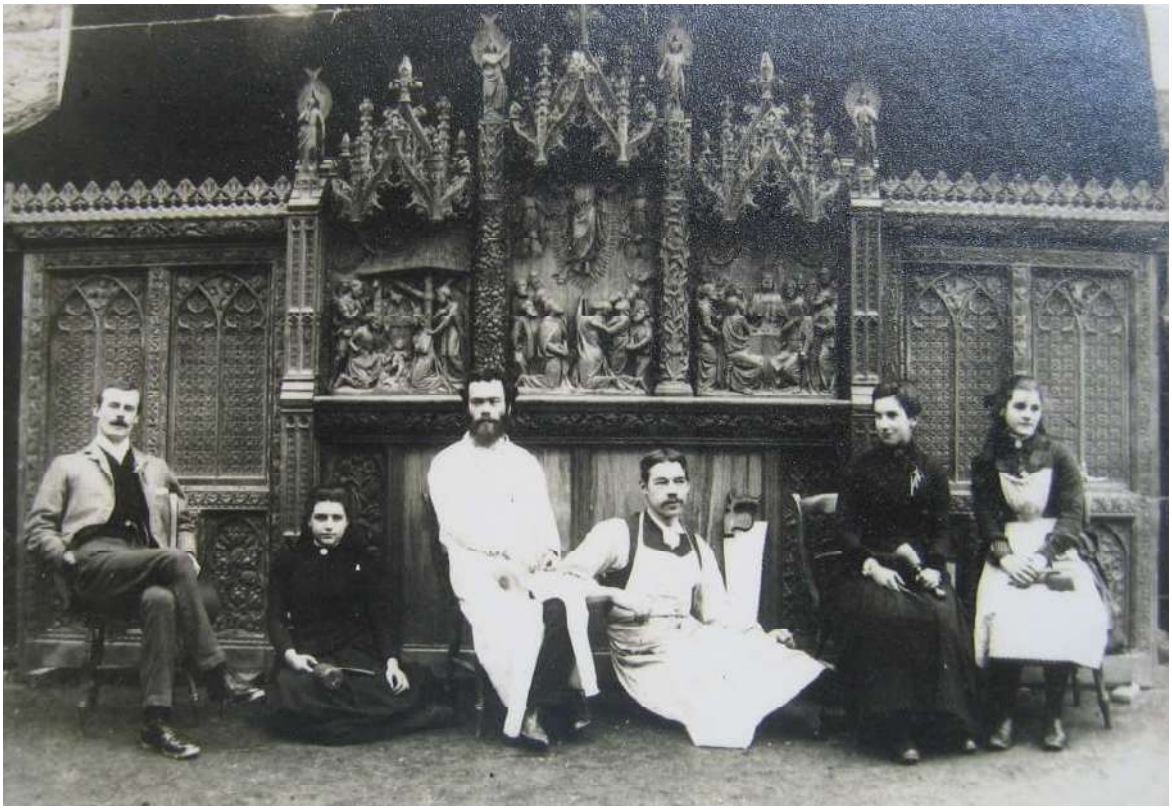

Fig. 1b. The three Pinwill carvers in mid 1889 (L to R Ethel, Mary and Violet) in front of the completed reredos, with (L to R) Edmund H. Sedding the designer, Giles the carver and Flashman the joiner. Note the tools in their hands. (Courtesy of Ermington Church)

have been a regular visitor to Ermington but there is frustratingly little documentary evidence of the interaction between him and the sisters or of how much influence he may have had on the development of their thinking. There is a suggestion that the training of the Pinwill sisters was some sort of 'experiment' by J. D. Sedding in pioneering 'parochial sculpture' in architecture.[19] There may have been encouraging noises from that direction, since their work conformed to his Ruskinian ideals, with their emphasis on the art of craft, but the Pinwill sisters were far more than adjuncts to a greater plan. Their work sits well with the ethos of the Arts and Crafts Movement in which women were well represented. Whether the sisters were directly influenced or saw themselves in that mould is not clear, but today there is every reason to place them alongside the likes of the silversmith Edith Dawson (1859–1941), the stained glass artist Mary Lowndes (1856–1929) and the many other under-recognised craftswomen of that era.

By 1889, when the restoration of Ermington church was complete, two substantial pieces of work had been completed by the sisters. One, an elaborate reredos designed by Edmund Sedding for Chilthorne Domer church in Somerset [Fig. 1a], was reported on after its dedication. It was described as 'one of the most magnificent specimens of woodcarving... to be found in the county' and 'a marvel of skilful work'.[20] The other piece was a pulpit for their father's church, which caused a sensation on a national level, when a photograph of it appeared in *The Queen* magazine (forerunner of *Harper's & Queen*), exciting such commentary as:

> *Lady wood carvers who have seen the pulpit recently placed in Ermington Church... will either be stimulated to fresh exertions, or, if they are of a less sanguine disposition, will be cast into the slough of despond at the hopelessness of ever attaining such perfection in the art.*[21]

Such accolades must have encouraged the sisters enormously, although at this point it seems that while they had decided upon the path of becoming professional woodcarvers and were described

Fig. 2. The restored 16th century screen at Manaton (1890), showing the gilded original carving and the ungilded Pinwill work.

as such in the newspapers, they had not yet named the company. Mary, being the oldest of the three, was seen as the leader, which may explain why the name decided upon was Rashleigh, Pinwill & Co. This was essentially Mary's name without the forename, with a comma inserted intentionally to give the impression that it was two men in business together.[22] Learning to carve and becoming recognised as skilled and artistic craftswomen was one thing; three women setting themselves up in business was a brave and extraordinary move that required caution, but also a belief that they could succeed commercially. The major source of such confidence was Edmund Sedding, who was by then obtaining commissions in his own right and in a position to become a patron of the newly-established company. All the early work of Rashleigh, Pinwill & Co. stems from his commissions, including the restoration in 1890 of the magnificent 16th century chancel screen at Manaton [Fig. 2]. For this project, sections of the original gilded running ornament across the cornice required replication to restore its full length, and the sisters, in copying this work, learned from the masters of old. The choice was made by Sedding, probably out of respect for the ancient work, to leave the new carving without gilding, ensuring that the original carving shone out.

Edmund was staying with the Pinwills in Ermington when he received news in April 1891 that his uncle had died.[23] He was the natural successor to the prestigious and lucrative Sedding business in London, but he eschewed that opportunity and instead set up a practice in Plymouth.[24] The reasons for such a decision are open to conjecture: a fondness for the Westcountry, particularly Cornwall, where he spent the very early part of his life, his love of ancient churches, and an increasing demand for his sensitive restorations. Added to this, he surely derived great pleasure in encouraging the flourishing of the Pinwill company and it was in his power to sustain it still further. When Rashleigh, Pinwill & Co. established offices and a workshop in Plymouth in about 1893, it was at the same address as Sedding's architectural practice and remained so for many years. Sedding's designs, carried out with skill and flair, brought the Pinwill sisters the recognition

Fig. 3. Crantock church, refurbished apart from the seating between 1899 and 1902, to designs by EH Sedding carved by the Pinwills. Note the traditional style of the screen, yet the decidedly Art Nouveaux poppy heads on the choir stalls beyond. (Courtesy of PWDRO)

they deserved. Perhaps the best and most complete example of the synthesis of Sedding design and Pinwill execution is to be found at Crantock [Fig. 3], where the entire interior was refurbished between 1899 and 1906.

The partnership of the three sisters was not to continue for long though. When Mary married in August 1900[25] she submitted to convention and left the business. Ethel and Violet continued, with workshops in both Ermington and Plymouth and with the company name slightly altered to R. Pinwill. An increasing number of commissions in Cornwall came through Sedding, including the central portion of a new rood screen at Stratton, the completion of the furnishings at Crantock, the restoration of a chancel screen at Madron and refurbishment of Lanteglos by Fowey. Other prominent architects began to engage the sisters, notably Frederick Bligh Bond for a new screen at Lydford and for the refurbishment of Lew Trenchard church [Fig. 4] and George H. Fellowes Prynne for the restoration of the early 16th century screen at Buckland-in-the-Moor [Fig. 5]. Documents related to the latter indicate that the sisters worked on pieces separately, with Ethel being credited and paid for the carving work at Buckland,[26] which is of a particularly high standard.

Ethel may have struggled somewhat with an arrangement in which her younger sister Violet was perhaps in a more powerful position, occupying a superior location in Plymouth for obtaining and directing work. There is no evidence of a rift between the two, but sometime around 1908 Ethel left Devon to set up as a woodcarver in Kingston on Thames, Surrey.[27] Why Surrey and whether she made a success of this venture is not known, but the loss of yet another sister left a void that

Fig. 4. Pillar casing with niches, part of the chancel screen at Lew Trenchard church, housing figures of St Petrock, St Peter and St Michael the Archangel, part of the refurbishment that began in 1899, carved by the Pinwills to designs by Frederick Bligh Bond.

Fig. 5. The restored screen at Buckland-in-the-Moor, designed by George H. Fellowes Prynne and carved by Ethel Pinwill, for which she was paid £424 15s.

Fig. 6. The painted and gilded panels in the reredos at St Gabriel's church, Peverell, Plymouth, carved in low relief by Violet Pinwill in 1946, based on a painting by Filippo Lippi from about 1450-3.

Violet had to fill. The sisters were employers from at least 1891,[28] when joiners were needed to prepare the wood and to install the finished pieces in the churches. With the increasing amount of work available and the loss of both her sisters, Violet also employed carvers. She ensured a high standard of apprentices by teaching woodcarving at Plymouth Technical College and employing the best of the tutees, such as Charles Gait.[29] She also brought in trained men, including Herbert Minchinton from London, who came with the skill of stone carving, increasing the range of work that could be carried out. At the height of the success of the business, in the years before the Great War, 29 men were employed by the company. Violet Pinwill, a women less than five feet tall, commanded great respect from her employees and ran the business successfully for nearly 50 years. During that time, the style of church furnishings changed considerably and she adapted accordingly. One of her crowning achievements, which she probably designed herself, is the low relief, carved and painted panels for the 1946 reredos at St Gabriel's church in Peverell, Plymouth [Fig. 6], which, though based on a medieval painting, manages to wear a mantle of modernity. By the time Violet died on 1st January 1957 Pinwill carvings in both wood and stone were to be found in over 180 churches across Devon and Cornwall and a further 18 in counties elsewhere.[30]

Conclusions

The Pinwill sisters did not emerge from a vacuum, nor were they moulded by the ideals of others. Their family background provided a milieu in which they were encouraged to develop their talents and to pursue their ambitions. A twist of fortune and a determined mother provided them with an expert teacher who had the patience to train three teenage girls to carve. Their friend and champion, Edmund H. Sedding, risked his own good name as an architect in order to gain theirs as woodcarvers. The business they established was an enormous success, ensuring them recognition as being among the best woodcarvers in the Westcountry and a place within the pantheon of women who found expression through the Arts and Crafts Movement. The legacy of the Pinwills is not only in the numerous examples of their work, but as an inspiration for both women and men.

Helen Wilson

Endnotes

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2 J. P. Cooper and H. Wilson, 'The Work of John D. Sedding' in A. Service, *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins* (The Architectural Press, Oxford, 1975) 267.

3 Elaine Chaytor, *Ermington Days* (Melinga, North Cheam, 1990).

4 For more information on the life and work of Edmund H. Sedding, see Helen Wilson, 'The Architect Edmund H. Sedding and his Devon Churches', *Rep. Trans. Devon. Ass. Advmt Sci*. 148 (2016) in press.

5 In a report in *The Royal Cornwall Gazette* (16 December 1887) of the reopening of Madron Church after restoration, it states that the work by Messrs Trask was of the same high quality as at Holbeton Church, where they were also working. It seems extremely likely that the same team of craftsmen worked at Holbeton and Ermington.

6 Chaytor, *Ermington Days*. *op. cit*.

7 For example in the *Devon & Exeter Gazette* (22 September 1892) Agatha Middleton advertised her wood carving and art work classes at The Studio, 37, Southernhay, Exeter.

8 In an advertisement for Exeter High School for Girls in *The Western Times* (19 April, 1898) woodcarving was among alternative classes available for girls not preparing for examinations.

9 *Bristol Mercury* (30 March 1885).

10 Reviewed by Harry Hems of Exeter in *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder* (12 April 1907) in which he notes that he generally did not consider women woodcarvers worthy of a second thought but that the only thing wrong with Miss Rowe was that she was not a man, 'for a very clever man she would make'.

11 Plymouth & West Devon Record Office 116/36 and Pinwill archive at Ermington Church.

12 Chaytor, *Ermington Days*. *op. cit*.

[13] *Western Weekly News* (22 September 1934). The only known example of the work of Revd William J. Pinwill is the fine pulpit at Salcombe Church.

[14] Plymouth & West Devon Record Office 117/10 & 3867.

[15] Plymouth & West Devon Record Office 117/14.

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[26] Balance sheet for restoration work at Buckland-in-the-Moor dated 1910; held by the church.

[27] The National Archives, census 1911 RG14 PN3498 RD40 SD2 ED1 SN119, accessed at www.thegenealogist.co.uk.

[28] The National Archives, census 1891 *op. cit.*

[29] Chaytor, *Ermington Days*. *op. cit*.

[30] Unpublished data compiled by the author from Pinwill photographs deposited at PWDRO and numerous other sources.

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Hugh Meller, previously the National Trust's curator of historic buildings in Devon, is a long-standing member of the DBG. These volumes are literally his magnum opus, 1200 pages long together and each far too heavy to read in bed! Hugh has devoted some 15 years to researching Devon's country houses, visiting all that he can, and the two volumes contain accounts of over 400 houses. Each entry describes the house's architectural and historical development, and sets out for whom it was built, its subsequent owners up to the date of the entry, and its architect or designer if known. Each entry finishes with a short description of any gardens. Hugh defines a country house as 'the principal residence at the centre of an estate usually of some architectural merit and antiquity. It may have been in the ownership of one family for several generations and was once the seat of power in the local community'. By no means all the houses in these volumes conform to this definition as Hugh has clearly been unable to resist houses of interest even when they fall well outside it: for instance both The Barn at Exmouth and Check House at Seaton are included although neither were more than grand houses and certainly not estate centres. The books are none the worse for this inconsistency; the additional unqualified houses are a bonus. Hugh has visited and photographed as many of the houses as he has been able to access; those where he failed (very few) are identified by a symbol and their description has come from other sources. He has also included significant houses which have been demolished in the last 100 years; these are also identified by another symbol. Each volume has an indexed distribution map of the houses inside its cover. The individual entries are preceded by a full introduction describing the development of the country house in Devon; this is followed by nine short sections on specific subjects: building materials, gatehouses, stables, chapels, gardens, kitchen gardens, conservatories, collections and recreations.

Each entry starts with a history of the house and its owners and is then followed by a description of both its exterior and its interior, concluding with a brief account of its gardens where these are significant. Each entry is accompanied by at least one black and white photograph mostly taken by Hugh himself but sometimes older images are used. Occasionally old drawings or prints are reproduced. There are almost no plans. Each entry has a good bibliography and each has a mini-map showing the location of the house within the county.

The coverage is comprehensive and it is easy to understand why it took Hugh 15 years to complete this work. This reviewer did not find any omissions and indeed many houses are described of which he not been previously aware. But what is really good about the volumes, over and beyond their comprehensive coverage, is the way in which entry offers a lucid narrative about each house. Sometimes it is difficult to follow the details of the architectural description without a plan but generally the text in conjunction with the photograph provides a clear picture of the character of each house and of the way in which this has been developed over time by its owners. It contrasts in

this respect with other sources for the history and architecture of houses in the county, in particular Cherry and Pevsner's *Devon* which, although a brilliant work, is of necessity always very succinct. The descriptions accompanying the listing are more detailed but often incomprehensible unless you are actually at the building. It is regrettable that the photos are all in black and white (we understand this was for cost reasons) as this does lend the volumes a somewhat archaic air as of an old issue of *Country Life* but this a minor criticism. Being able to turn to these volumes to find a succinct, academic and readable account of all the larger country houses in Devon will be a major boon to all those interested in Devon's historic architecture.

Peter Child

Devon Pubs. A Pictorial Retrospective

Andrew Swift and Kirsten Elliott
Akeman Press 2015. £15.00. Paperback. 372 pages

There can be little doubt that an interesting building together with real ale and food makes for a good venue and many Devon Buildings Group meetings take advantage of the county's hostelries, sometimes for the building itself, sometimes simply for refreshment. It is also noticeable that there are now fewer pubs than there were ten or perhaps even twenty years ago, so they are a diminishing resource. This nicely-produced book features over 450 of Devon's pubs, from Abbotsham to Yarcombe, using a remarkable collection of archive photographs, both exterior and interior, to illustrate them. Each illustration is accompanied by brief historical notes, anecdotes and, in many cases, an up-to-date appraisal of the present status of those pubs that remain in business, such as the Red Lion at Exbourne, which the authors describe as 'an archetypal, magnificently unspoilt and much cherished village pub.' The black and white photographs, many of which are from old postcards and show the building in the context of the village or street in which it is located, are generally well-reproduced and very evocative.

Interspersed with the photographs and notes on the individual pubs are small features, including several on cider and one on the notorious Devon white ale, including recipes for those with a strong stomach who might want to have a go at reviving it. There is a chapter on Devon's lost breweries, the last historic brewery (in Plymouth) having closed in 1984, but the chapter does open on an encouraging note: there are now about 30 breweries, all less than 32 years old, which produce a wide range of beers. The book concludes with a bibliography, a general index and an index of breweries, old and new.

While this is not a study of a particular building type, and it would have been interesting to know something of the designers of the purpose-built hostelries, such as the Globe at Chudleigh, the authors have put together much visual and some background information which provides a wide ranging general introduction to Devon pubs. For anyone interested in Devon buildings and in visiting country pubs, this is a book that could be kept in the car and used, rather than sitting on a bookshelf, although there is plenty of information contained within its descriptions and photographs for those who would rather sit with a good book and drink at home.

Martin Watts

The Toll-houses of North Devon and The Toll-houses of South Devon

By Tim Jenkinson and Patrick Taylor. Polystar Press at £8.95 each including p&p and available directly from Tim Jenkinson at 17 Monro Mead, Liverton, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 6UL (01626 824808).
ISBN 978 1 907154 03 4 and ISBN 978 1 9071540 0I 0.
122 pages each.

These two books follow the pioneering and rather less substantial 1984 *Devon Tollhouses* by John Kanefsky. The South Devon volume covers all the county west of Exeter south of and including Dartmoor; the North Devon volume all the county north of Dartmoor as well as the areas covered by today's East and Mid Devon Councils. They both contain descriptions and photographs or illustrations of all the known surviving and lost toll houses which once controlled traffic on the turnpike roads of the county. Turnpikes were the first stage of upgrading the medieval main road system into its modern form with turnpike trusts being formed from the mid-18th century to take over responsibility from the parishes for the maintenance and improvement of specific stretches of main roads. Prior to their construction, Devon roads were notoriously bad, practically precluding wheeled traffic in many areas. Trusts were formed under acts of parliament and were non-profit making. They were funded by the collection of tolls and the revenue thus collected was dedicated to the upkeep, repair and improvement of the roads within the trust's control. In the area covered by the South Devon volume there were 16 such trusts founded between 1753 and 1831. By the 1870s the trusts were being wound up and responsibility for roads moved to Highway Boards and in turn to County Councils.

The collection of tolls required the construction of gates or 'turnpikes' at strategic points along the roads – the roads take their popular name from these gates. They were manned day and night so in most cases (there are three examples of toll 'huts' – no more than sentry boxes) small houses were provided for the gatekeepers and their families and it is these which form the subject of these two books . The houses take a great variety of forms without much consistency even within the same trust. Most are two-storey and some are picturesque with Gothic-arched windows or slate-hung walls. These two books contain a gazetteer of all the known toll-houses in their areas with black and white photographs of all the surviving examples and drawings of lost ones where these are available. The gazetteers are preceded by short sections which cover the precursors, origins and demise of the trusts and there are further sections on the collection of tolls, the design and building materials used for the toll-houses and on the creation of the turnpike trusts in Devon. There is also a section which attempts to summarize the design of the toll-houses in each part of Devon. There are also two seemingly superfluous sections on Devon geology, one of which contains a wholly inaccurate description of the constituents of cob which in any event does not seem to have been used in the construction of any of the toll-houses.

The strength of these books is in their illustrated gazetteers from which one obtains a very clear impression of the character and form of these buildings albeit without any plans of their internal layouts. Unfortunately the gazetteer is not supported by a map although strangely (and where applicable since theses new books record a greater number of toll-houses) it uses the enumeration used by John Kanefsky in 1984 and shown on the map in his book. Thus it is not possible to see where a house is located except by somewhat laboriously looking up each map reference. This is a regrettable omission which should be rectified in any further edition. Although there is a map showing the location of the roads within each trust, this map is small and very sketchy and would benefit from improvement and enlargement. The introduction to John Kanefsky's book is also more informative in some respects than the introductory sections here and perhaps the two works should be seen as complementary.

Peter Child