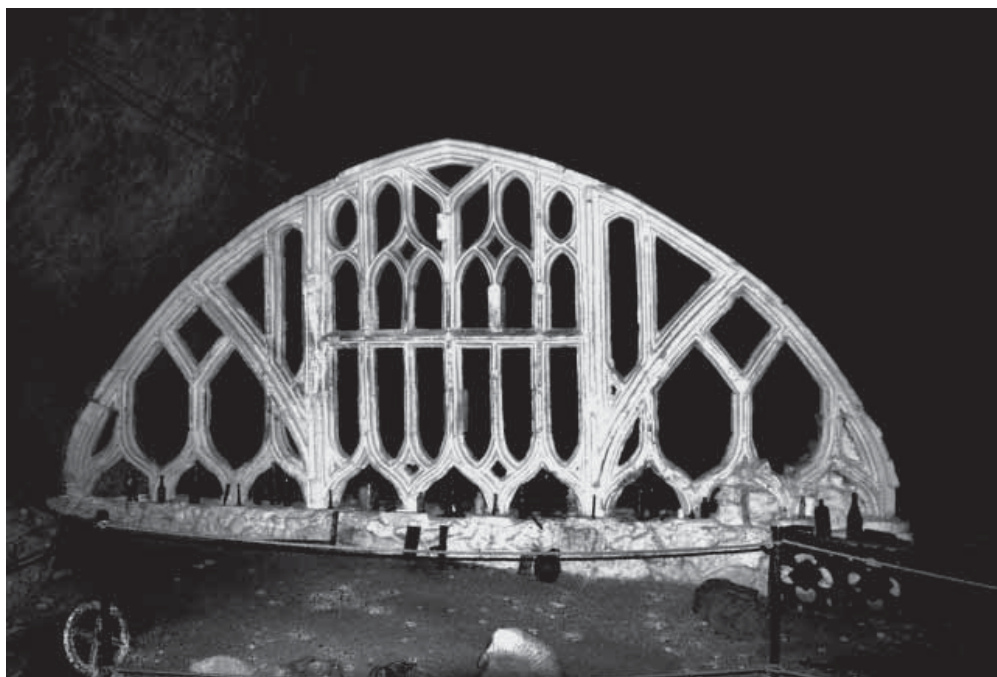


# **DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP**

**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 27**



**Autumn 2009**



# DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

## NEWSLETTER NUMBER 27, AUTUMN 2009

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Front cover: 15<sup>th</sup> century Beer stone window from St Andrew's Church, Colyton, rebuilt in Beer quarry: © *Barry Honeysett*  
Secretary's Report: © *Ann Adams, Dr Stuart Blaylock, Barry Honeysett*  
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Bradfield Manor: © *English Heritage/NMR*

Dartmouth AGM

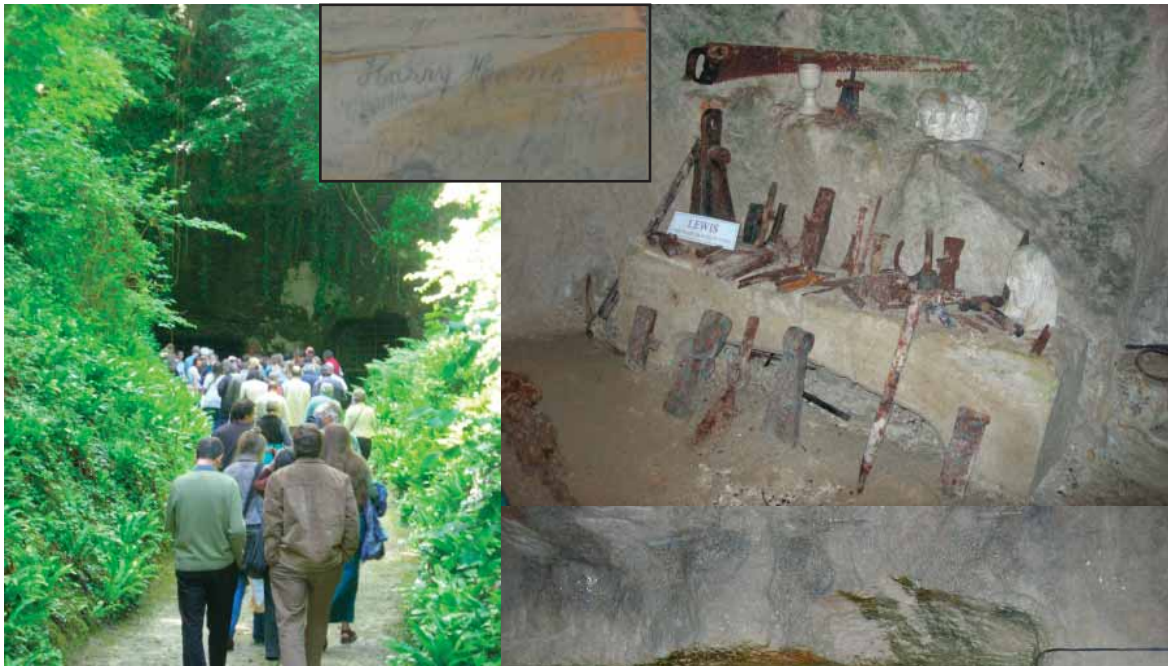


Clockwise from top left: two images of interior decorative plasterwork from the Mansion House; 5 Higher Street; rare 15th century painted stone pulpit, Church of St Saviour; members enjoying tea at 10, The Butterwalk; details from 10, The Butterwalk; detail from the Tree of Jesse plaster ceiling, 12 The Butterwalk

## Secretary's Report 2008-2009

We started the year with the AGM held in The Guildhall, Dartmouth on 25<sup>th</sup> October. Stuart Blaylock, Oliver Bosence, Stewart Brown, Richard Parker and myself were all re-elected to the committee after serving three years. Peter Marlow who had previously been co-opted onto the committee was elected as a full committee member. Following the formal meeting, John Thorp and Robert Waterhouse gave us two excellent talks on the town and its buildings. John related the development of the town in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which took place largely on reclaimed land. He described the houses which were then constructed, especially those in the Butterwalk with their fine interiors with decorative plaster ceilings and overmantels. He put the biblical subject matter of these into its contemporary context and described the evolution of the decorative subject matter. Robert followed, describing the earlier development of the town whose area was included in three manors, and which was based on progressive reclamation from the estuary over the centuries. A dam for the pond serving a tidal mill connected the two main areas of development and today's Boat Float is a last surviving remnant of this. The whole history of Dartmouth is one of successive clawing-back of land from the estuary. After lunch we went to see some of the really interesting buildings constructed on the land so gained. We were very grateful to be able to visit DBG member Brian Head's early 18<sup>th</sup> century Mansion House with its very fine interior, in particular its classically themed first floor saloon. From an earlier period, but equally impressive, was the Tree of Jesse plaster ceiling in 12, The Butterwalk to which we were given access by the Museum, whose own building was also of great interest. Finally, John and Robert conducted us on a short guided tour around the buildings of the town. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfactory day and particular thanks must go to John and Robert.

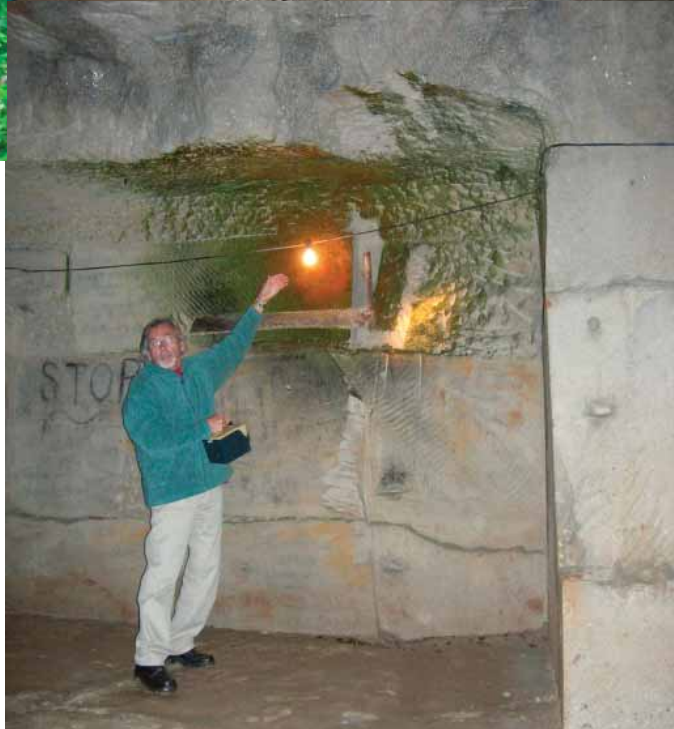
The Summer Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June was on the subject of Building Stone in Devon. It was organised by Peter Dare and Stuart Blaylock to whom our thanks should go for such a good day. No less than 65 members and 8 guests attended. The day started at Beer Quarry where Peter had started his career as an apprentice mason. We gambled and won on it not raining by having our warm-up cakes and coffee outside. We were then taken on a tour of the truly spectacular quarry caves by John Scott, where we were shown how Beer Stone was extracted and then dragged out to be used as a building stone both locally and sometimes much further afield from Roman times until 1920. Sadly the quarry no longer functions as a source of building stone. We were all amazed by the scale of the workings and the amount of human effort that their creation must have involved. We then drove to Colyton where we had a good lunch at the Gerrard Arms, after which we moved into the church hall where we were given three excellent talks by Peter Dare, Stuart Blaylock, and John Allan. Peter described the quarrying techniques, showing tools and transport methods used through the centuries as well as the recent history of the quarry, in particular its reopening along with Dunscombe Quarry at Salcombe Regis in the 1970s for the programme of repair work then being carried out at Exeter Cathedral. Stuart took us through the various most important sources of building stone in Devon based on his experience as a building archaeologist. These range from the cherts of east Devon through the slatestones and limestones of the South Hams, the breccias of the Exeter area to Hatherleigh sandstone, widely used north of Dartmoor. Although there are good sources of rubble stone in the county, better quality stone is always needed for fine work. This includes Beer Stone, Hurdwick Stone from Tavistock as well as some exotics such as Polyphant from Cornwall. Finally John gave us a masterly exposition of the use of Beer Stone and Salcombe Stone in Devon in the Middle Ages. Beer is first used in the Roman period but plays second fiddle to Salcombe until the later 13<sup>th</sup> century. Salcombe was used by the Norman builders of the cathedral and can be seen in the north tower, its quality declining as the tower goes up. John has observed its use in 85 churches in Devon. Its use declines with the distance it had to be transported; Plympton Priory is the farthest place he has found it. Beer was particularly attractive to the medieval mind because of its perfect whiteness. The increasing popularity of detailed carving from the later 13<sup>th</sup> century added to its popularity; the 14<sup>th</sup> century



Top left: the entrance to Beer Quarry.  
 Top middle: Harry Hems' signature.  
 Top right: tool collection.  
 Right: Peter Dare describing how blocks of stone were quarried.

sculptures of the Exeter Cathedral are all in Beer. The day finished with a visit to St Andrew's Church, Colyton which provides good examples of the various stones used in this area, including of course Beer and Salcombe Stones.

The Committee have met six times during the last year. The redevelopment of the website has been taken on by Peter Marlow and Caroline Garrett and this has



been the subject of much discussion. They will be giving a separate presentation at the AGM so I will not say any more on this subject now. Newsletter No 26 was produced under the editorship of Ann Adams. It contained three articles based upon the 2008 summer conference on the subject of bridges in Devon, two by Bill Harvey and one by Stewart Brown, as well as an update on the situation with Exeter's heritage of school buildings, a subject which has been of concern to the Group for some time. Sadly, since the newsletter was published, Ann Adams has been taken ill and is for the time being unable to carry on as editor. Peter Marlow has kindly agreed help out in her absence. We all wish Ann a speedy recovery. We now have liability insurance for the Group through the offices of the Council for British Archaeology to whom we are now affiliated. We have been relatively little involved in casework during the year but we are always interested to hear of cases that we might wish to comment upon. The case of the proposed covering-over of the cobbled path at Black Torrington Church has yet to be determined. Because of considerable objection, including our own, the Chancellor has returned the matter to the DAC for more information before he makes his decision. The committee are most concerned about the loss of cobbled church paths and hope to be able in the future to produce a publication on them, pointing out their importance and encouraging their retention and repair. We made representations to West Devon District Council following the sad fire which destroyed the George Inn at Hatherleigh, listed grade 2\*, at Christmas. We suggested

that the building should be rebuilt in replica using the original materials, cob and thatch. We also hoped that WDDC would revise its procedures in dealing with fires in listed buildings [the site was cleared with seemingly little care for what had survived] as Teignbridge DC had said they would following the 2007 Moretonhampstead fire. In contrast to Teignbridge, no reply was received from West Devon. We also objected to North Devon DC over a development in East Worlington which we felt would adversely affect this historic village. This application has yet to be determined.

We do not know if our comments made last year on the new Heritage Bill had any effect since this bill never came to Parliament, and it seems most unlikely that it ever will. However there is now a draft PPS 15 out for consultation which will, if adopted, supercede both PPG 15 [historic buildings] and PPG 16 [archaeology]. The former has long been a vital document in supporting conservation of buildings and areas and its proposed loss is to be regretted. The committee have considerable reservations about the new PPS which is a much less comprehensive document and will be making representations to the Government shortly.

*Peter Child*

## **Newsletter Editor's Report**

Owing to the entirely unexpected failure of my health, earlier this summer, I am, sadly unlikely to be able to make other than an advisory input to our future newsletters. However, we are all most fortunate in having Dawn Honeysett now well established in the production side. This is the third issue she has produced electronically – as apart from all those I created by the old-fashioned paste and scissors method, since I took over from Jim Cheshire, many years ago, after he departed for a new job in London, in the middle of an issue!

With the help which I have always had from fellow committee members, in rounding up suitable material, I know Dawn will continue to produce us quality newsletters. To help her, I ask all members to submit to her any articles of interest to us, long or short (and including mere snippets of news) for the committee's initial approval, and to get promised articles to her well within the given deadline, to make her task as easy as possible.

To maximise hard distribution and save postage, newsletters are always produced to coincide with either the June Conference or the October AGM so, whichever date it may be, do please help by getting the finished material in within a reasonably relaxed production schedule. As with the other committee members, who organise our events, Newsletter editors are volunteers and busy working people, and I know that you will agree that none should be required to burn the midnight oil in the service of their fellow members.

This issue seems to me to be living up to the DBG tradition of variety in its subjects and approach. Once again, we have examples of the importance of documentary evidence in evaluating standing structures. Without, for instance, estate and house inventories, churchwardens' accounts, the briefs and early photographs and engravings of architects' restorations, the Swindon aerial photographs and such as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century country house archive of Country Life, we should often be hard put to it to discover, looking at the fabric alone, what had been done.

*Ann Adams*

## Whimple Church: the value of documentary research to support understanding an 1845 restoration



Fig. 1. Whimple church from the south.



Whimple church in east Devon was restored by the local architect, John Hayward, in 1845 (Figs 1, 2). This is an unusually well-recorded campaign and Hayward's detailed specification (Devon RO 1418A add2/PW1) gives an insight into a comprehensive early Victorian restoration. It identifies the taking down and rebuilding of piers, the partial rebuilding of walls, the recycling of medieval windows in new walls and the repair and recycling of 16<sup>th</sup> century and later seating. The documentation is a reminder both just how 'Victorian' some of our 'medieval' churches are and how easy it is to go awry when analysing the development of a church entirely on the basis of observation and without the advantage of what documentation can reveal.

Fig. 2. Whimple church interior looking east.



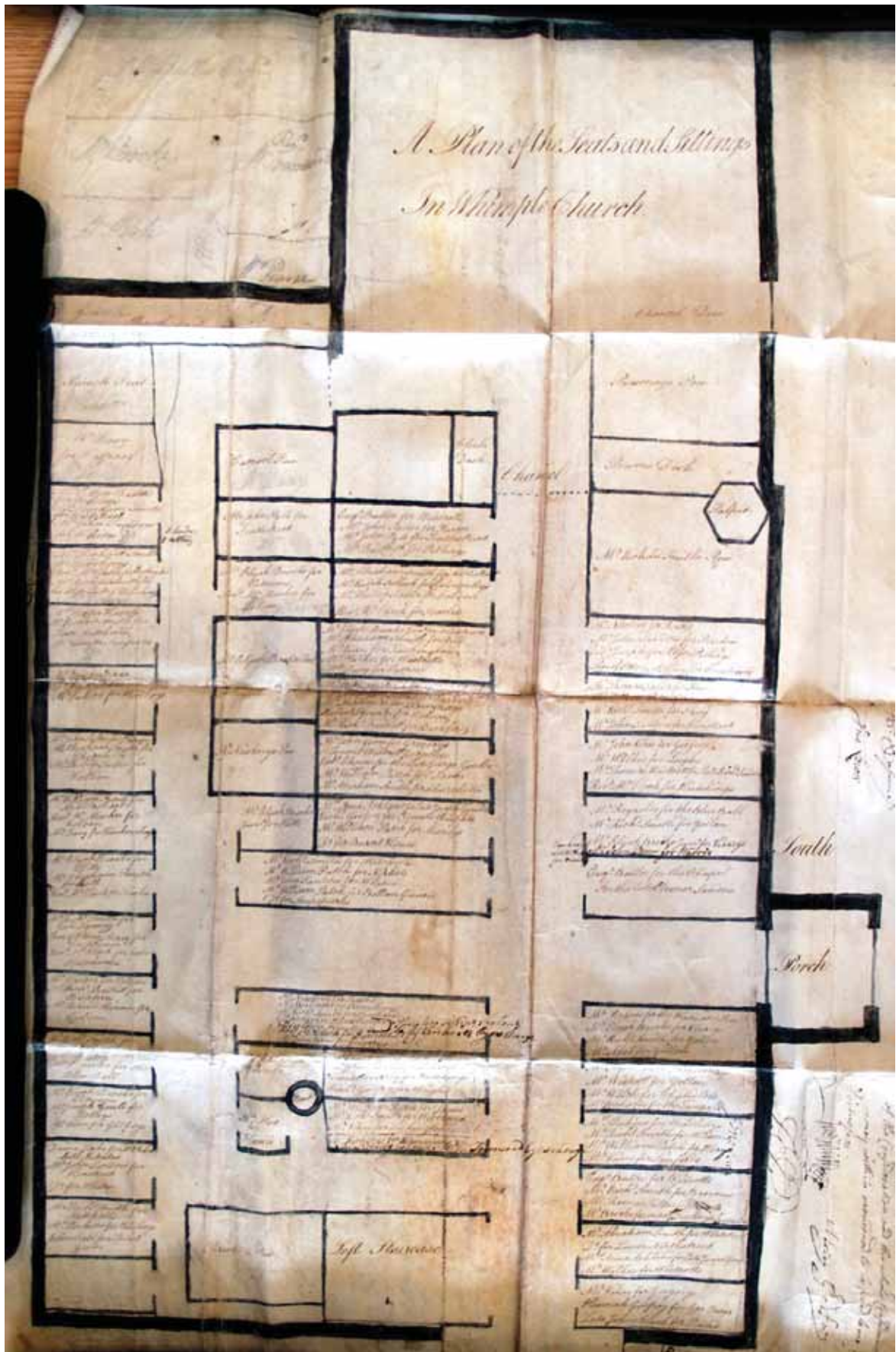


Fig. 3. Plan of the church in 1825 (not including the tower). Devon RO, 1418A add2/PW11. Reproduced with kind permission of the Exeter Diocesan Registrar.

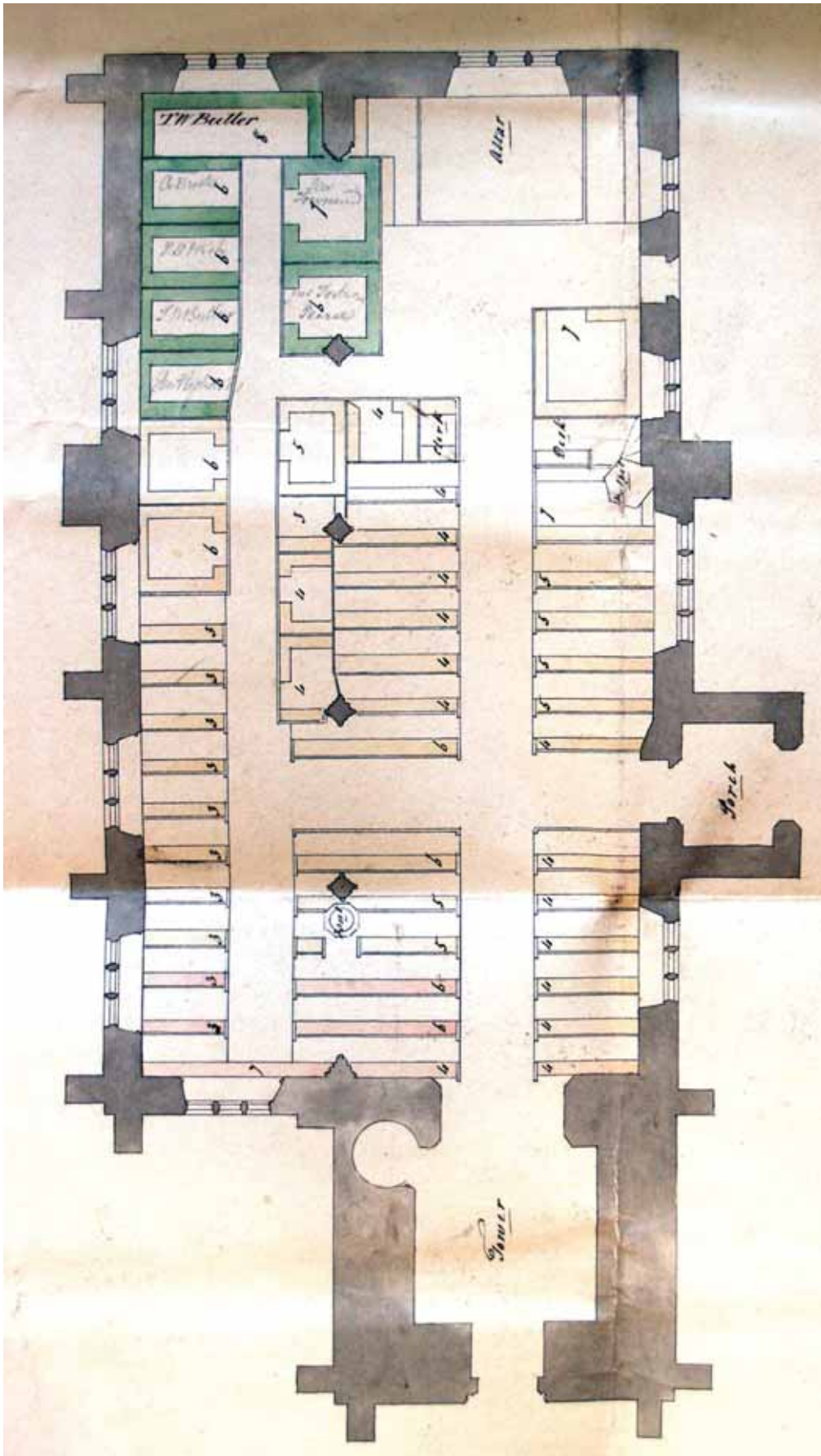


Fig. 4. Hayward's plan of the church in 1845, before restoration. This shows the extension to the east end of the north aisle. Devon RO, Whimble faculties. Reproduced with kind permission of the Exeter Diocesan Registrar.

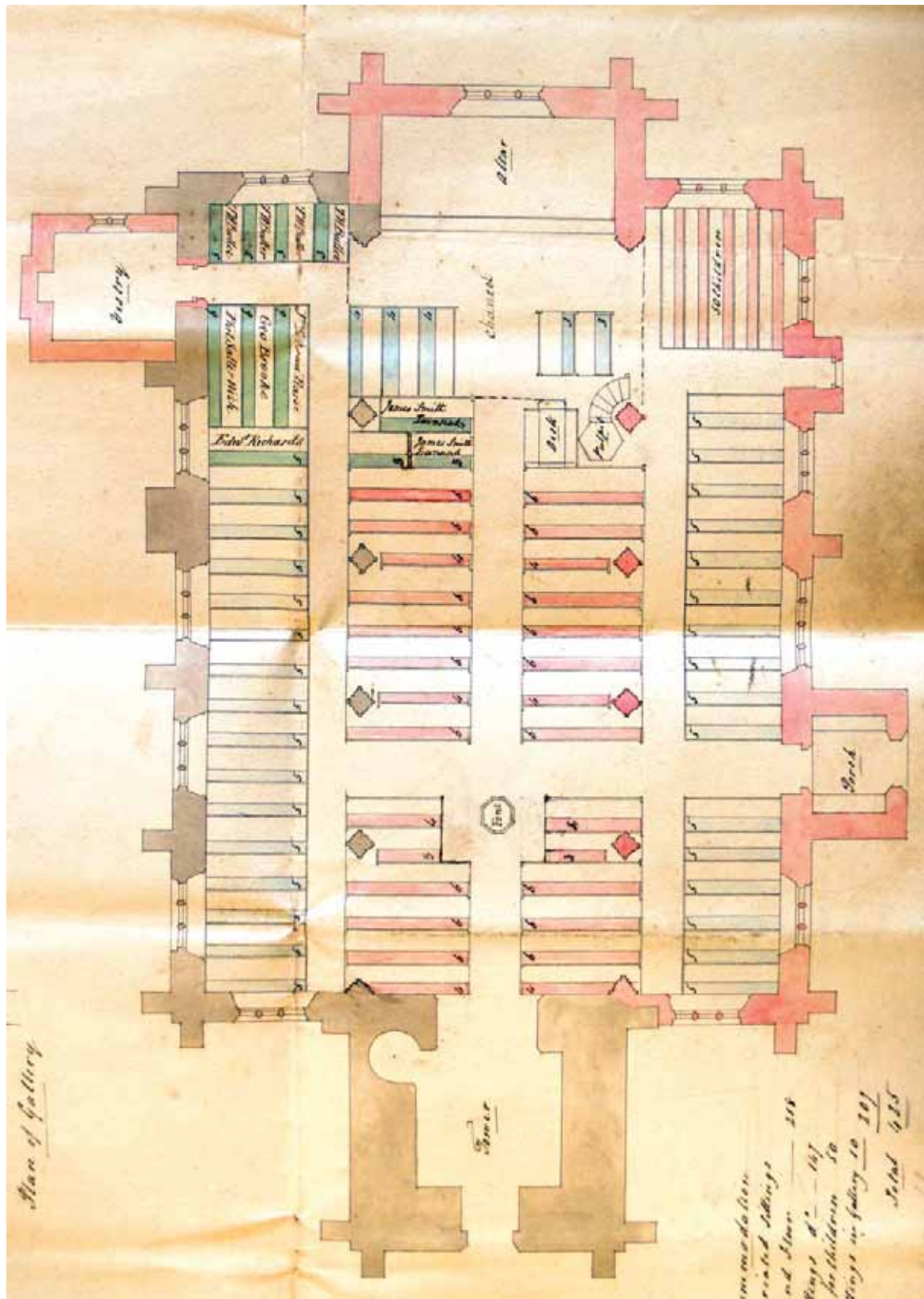


Fig. 5. Hayward's plan as proposed, showing the chancel extension, the addition of the south aisle and the new seating arrangement. Devon RO Whimble Faculties. Reproduced with kind permission of the Exeter Diocesan Registrar.

Three plans of the church illustrate something of the changes it underwent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figs 3, 4 and 5). After a modest extension at the east end of the north aisle in 1827, Hayward's work of 1845 completely transformed the building, extending the chancel, adding a south aisle and completely refurbishing the interior. Hayward's specification is for extensive rebuilding of the pre-existing structure:

‘Three of the Piers and Archways between nave and north aisle are to be taken down cleaned repaired and reset and the portions which have been cut away are to be properly restored’

and re-setting medieval windows:

‘the present East window of chancel and three in the South side of chancel are to be thoroughly repd, all defective portions being supplied with new, and refixed in the new walls.’

It is doubtful whether any educated observer of medieval church architecture would identify the fact that three of the north aisle piers have been taken down and rebuilt (Fig. 6). The medieval windows in new 1845 walls are also likely to confuse any buildings archaeologist dating walling on the basis of features, as we are all inclined to do.

Fig. 6. Two of the arches of the arcade. Both the piers were taken down and rebuilt in 1845.



The restoration both revealed and destroyed wall paintings. We can thank Hayward for enough interest in the medieval past to record the least damaged of the two wall paintings that were discovered. This was a St Christopher, sited, as was common, on the north wall of the church opposite the south doorway (Fig. 7). This location is generally considered to have been designed for passers-by to see the saint of travellers through the open door of the church.

The restoration rescued unusually refined painted panels, presumably from the former rood screen. By 1845 these had been reused as steps to the pulpit and are now re-sited in a tower screen (Fig. 8).



Fig. 7. Hayward's record of one of the wall paintings found, but not saved, during the restoration. This was published in the Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society, 1853, Vol. IV, Plate 2. The detail is fascinating showing the kneeling donors, a contemporary (16<sup>th</sup> century) fishing boat, showing the devices for pulling in nets and a mermaid with a mirror. What is the man who appears to be holding a golf club doing? Answers on a post card to Jo Cox please.



Fig. 8. Two of the painted panels rescued from use as pulpit steps in 1845. The cleaning test on the dog on the left hand figure has revealed just how refined and delicate these paintings are.



Fig. 9. One of the early bench ends (probably 16th-century) showing a large-scale free design, loosely based on Gothic architectural features, but perhaps also influenced by textiles.



Fig. 10. One of the early bench ends which incorporates a grotesque face on its side.



Fig. 11. One of the early bench ends, the frame carefully repaired, presumably in 1845.



Fig. 12. A detail showing asymmetrical pattern elements on in one of the early bench ends.



Fig. 13. The carver of the early bench ends shows off his skill with an undercut detail in one of the spandrels.



Fig. 14. One of the carpenters' marks on the inner face of an early bench end.

The 1845 work also gave a new lease of life to a memorably bold set of early bench ends, which were repaired and re-cycled as the ends to new Victorian open benches. The original date of these bench ends is open for discussion, with dates offered by various different specialists ranging from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, an embarrassing admission of how much we still have to learn about dating church woodwork. Whatever their date, and whether just pre-Reformation (which seems most likely) or later, they are a very distinctive series by a single carver who showed great energy and invention in patterned design and a pleasingly cavalier attitude to precise geometry (Figs 9-13).

The recycling of these carved ends in 1845 also saved a wealth of information, including carpenters' marks (Fig. 14), the scars of former flap or sliding seats (Fig. 15), and small holes to take candle sconces (Fig. 16). The holes for sconces are also found in 19<sup>th</sup> century seats in the church,



Fig. 15. The scarring on this bench end shows that it once had a flap or sliding seat attached, projecting into one of the aisles when in use.



Fig. 16. A hole to carry a candle sconce.

so presumably represent the lighting system in or after 1845. This is a nice reminder of how different the architecture of the church interior must have looked at evening services by candlelight and raises the question of how candles or tapers were fixed before 1845.

The early bench ends were extended in 1845 by a new set of benches, their carved ends inspired by their predecessors (Figs 17-18). Hayward's specification to the joiners for the new 1845 bench ends is interesting (my italics).

'The whole of the seats tinted red as well as those in the Chancel tinted blue are to be open and are to have 3 ½ deal carved standards *similar to the present ones in the Church varied in Patten* framed & pinned into the oak sill before described...'



Figs 17 and 18. Two of the carved ends to the 1845 benches, their design loosely-based on the earlier designs, and probably created, not by John Hayward, but by the joiners working for the contractor of the project, Charles Force.



It seems from this that he did not design the new carved ends himself, but left that up to the joiners, who would have had the old benches in their workshop to use as models. How much of the design of fittings in a restored 19<sup>th</sup> century church can automatically be attributed to the supervising architect? There are well-documented examples and drawings of 19<sup>th</sup> century fittings designed by architects, who sometimes contributed a single item, e.g. a font, to a church. However, in a large-scale restoration, in the 1840s at any rate, it is interesting to know from the Whimble specification that design was sometimes left up to the craftsman. We do not know who the joiners at Whimble were. The contractor was Charles Force of Exeter, who may have had in-house joiners, or might have sub-contracted the work. The out-sourcing of the design of the carved ends at Whimble is not necessarily typical across the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or even for all of Hayward's work. His role in design may have been different at different churches, depending on available budgets and the nature of the client. As the status of architects changed and developed and as the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement inspired through-design, architects may have become more responsible for every element of a church interior. It would be good to have some Devon examples of benches with carved ends we know to have been architect-designed, and to know whether some of the major woodwork firms of the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century – Herbert Read, for example – designed carved ends in-house or depended on drawings supplied by the architect.

This article is based on a 2009 report by Keystone on the church fittings, funded by Whimble Parochial Church Council. Jo Cox is very grateful to the Reverend Rob Wilkinson for access and interest, to Dr Anita Travers for documentary research and to Hugh Harrison, Richard Parker, Jerry Sampson and John Thorp for discussion. Thanks also to the Devon RO and the Diocese of Exeter for permission to reproduce plans. Any errors are those of the author.

*Jo Cox*

*July 2009*

## Parkham Wood House, Brixham



Parkham Wood House, Brixham. Photograph by Mervyn Seal.

English Heritage in March this year at the request of the Twentieth Century Society, listed [at grade 2] Parkham Wood House built in 1960 to the design of the Devon architect Mervyn Seal. The principal reasons for listing it were given as follows:

- \* It is of particular interest in being the first of four houses by Mervyn Seal built in 1960-3 where he successfully used the butterfly roof and which subsequently inspired him to develop this design concept further.
- \* It is a very interesting example of English modern domestic architecture that faithfully follows particular aspects of international 1930s architectural idiom and theory as expressed by Frank Lloyd Wright and in particular that of Le Corbusier.
- \* The way in which the overall design has incorporated its dramatic cliff setting (a challenging site to built on), and its spectacular views of Brixham, is impressive and unusual.
- \* Its plan flows very well, with inter-related spaces offering interesting internal vistas emphasised by the use of different materials, light, colour and changing levels.
- \* It contains many original bespoke features that are of a very high quality both in terms of design and use of materials.

As can be seen from the photograph it occupies a spectacular position cantilevered out from a steep cliffside in Brixham. Its east front is almost wholly glazed, taking advantage of the view over the harbour and the sea, and its three bedrooms occupy the higher section of the building under the asymmetrical 'butterfly roof', one of Mervyn Seal's hallmarks. This roof is clad in 'panels of compressed straw covered and sealed in cardboard' while those parts of the east front which are not glazed are faced in coloured 'vitroslab'. Internally it is well preserved with another of Mervyn Seal's hall marks, an open stair supported by a central spine, still surviving albeit now given additional

hand rails. The house and its origins are very well described in detail on the Twentieth Century Society’s website by Jon Wright. It is very rare for post-War houses to be listed and it is an accolade to its design that English Heritage consider Parkham House worthy of protection in this way. The only other example of a listed post-War house in Devon is thought to be Rigg Side at Goodleigh near Barnstaple 1970-1 by Peter Aldington and John Craig.

*Peter Child [with thanks to Jon Wright and Tony Garratt]*

## **Precursors of the military training simulator at Stonehouse Barracks**

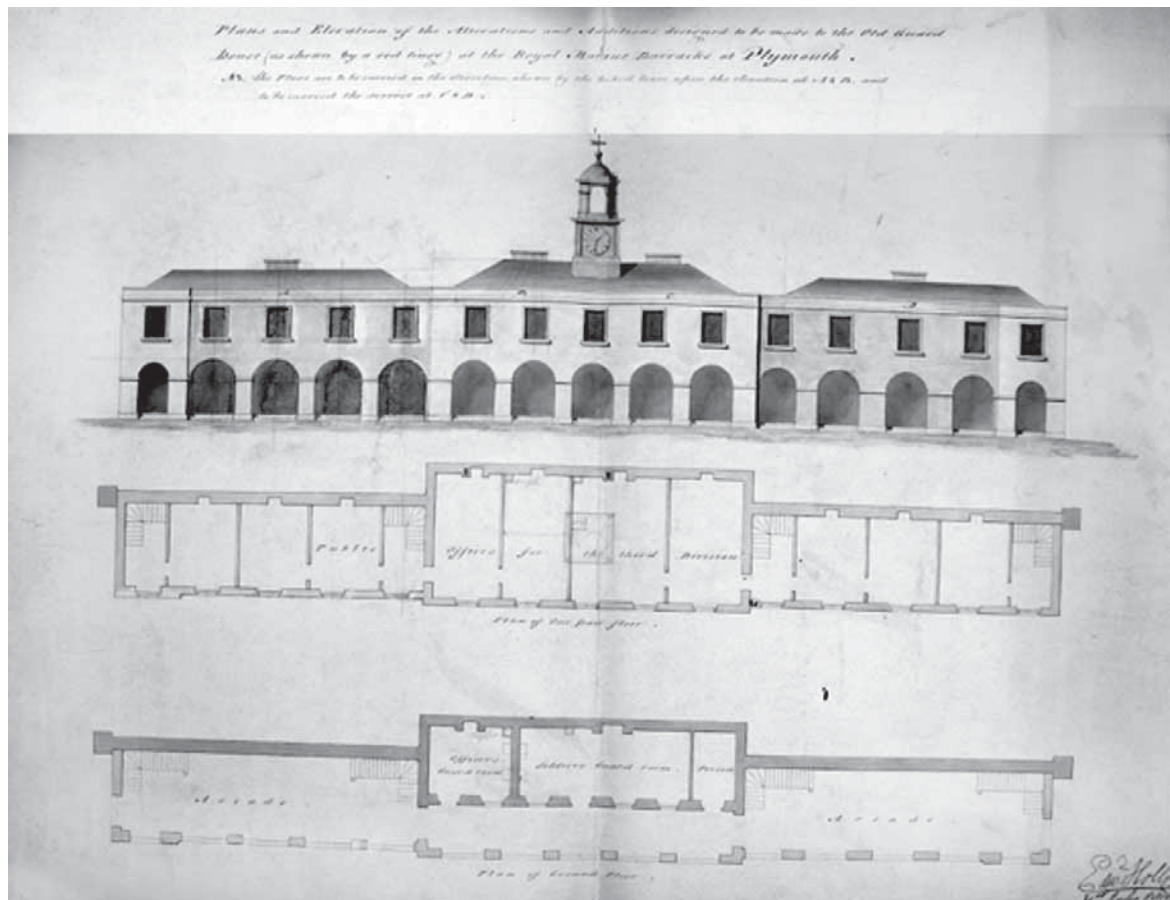


Figure 1. 1818 July ADM 140 308.

The use of the digital simulator for training purposes is now a commonplace in every walk of life. But these devices had material antecedents. So called ‘synthetic trainers’ were used by the RAF in WW2. These were fuselages of redundant airframes used to practice emergency exit techniques and other exercises requiring a realistic environment. But the origins of the specialised training structure go back much further than that. In 1818 the Architect to the Navy Board, Edward Holl, prepared plans for enlarging Stonehouse Barracks. This had been completed, as a barracks dedicated for use by the Royal Marines, in 1783, probably to the designs of the Commanding Royal Engineer at Plymouth, Colonel Matthew Dixon. Holl added the guard house and provided it with a cupola. (Figure 1) A plan of 1819 shows structures added (presumably by Holl) to the former garden ground at the north-west. This was now a Drill Ground with a Drill Shed and Battery. The Battery is partly overlaid by another (presumably proposed replacement) Drill Battery in the form of a prow of a ship. (Figure 2)

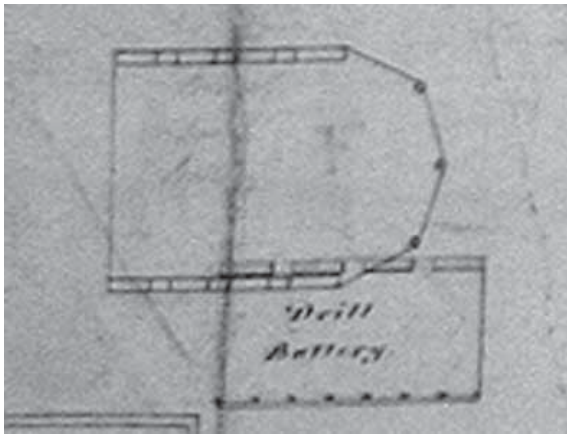


Figure 2. 1819 drill battery.

Embrasures are placed in the side for drill with broadside guns; carronades were presumably placed in the 'bow' portion. These guns were muzzle loaders (ML). No drawings are preserved for this building, but it may be safely assumed that the area containing the broadside guns was roofed, to simulate a gun deck on a ship of the line. A visit to HMS Victory today will show how cramped and ill-lit the working conditions were. There was no great art involved in aiming

and firing the guns; the difficulty was in manoeuvring these very heavy pieces of equipment and making sure that every member of the gun crew played a precisely determined role. This building survived until demolished in 1860.

That demolition was caused by the great enlargement of the Barracks which took place in the years following 1861. The Barracks was to be expanded to the west; this would involve the acquisition and demolition of the properties between Barrack Street and Durnford Street. (Figure 3) The training facilities, however, could not be lost, and needed to be reprovided before the works began. The Director of Naval Works, Colonel GT Greene (formerly of the East India Company's Engineers) therefore, as a preliminary move, in 1858 designed a new Battery on the same lines as the old one. This was relocated close to the Long Room, built around 1760 (Figure 4) and used originally for fashionable gatherings. All documentation concerning this building appears to have been lost in the



Figure 3. 1860.

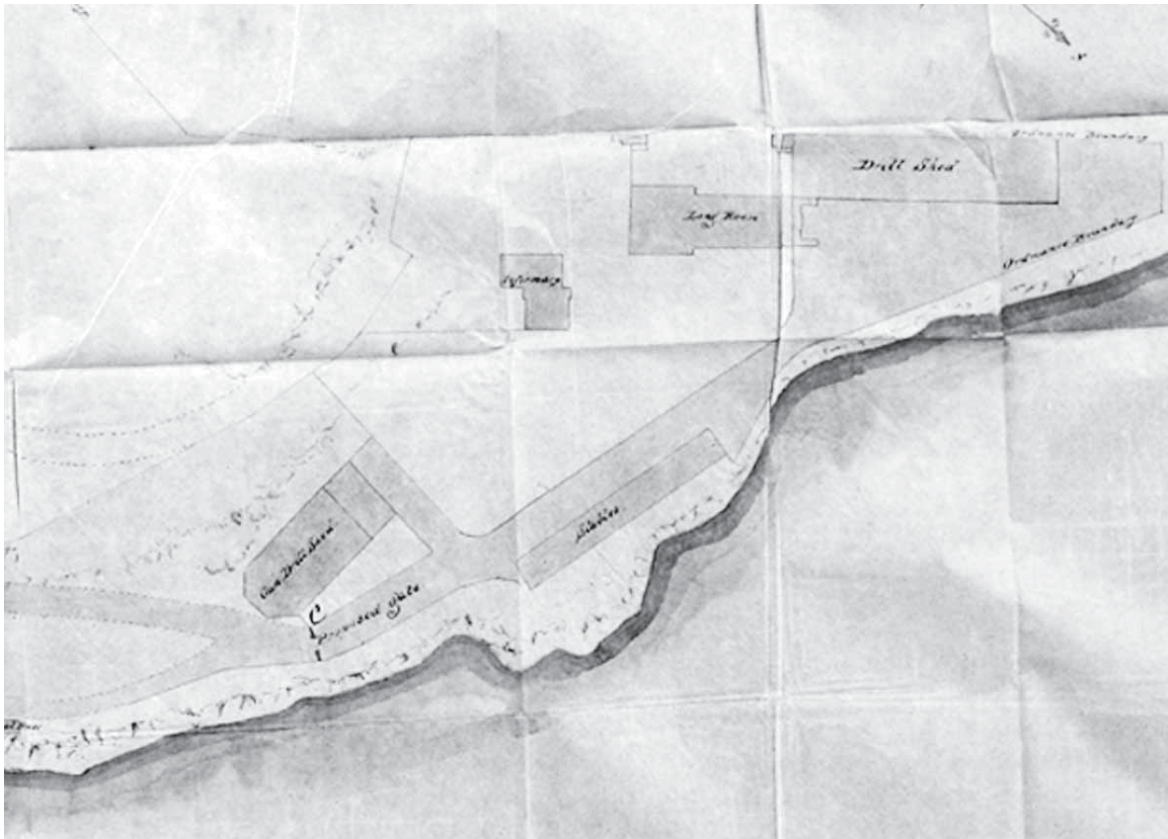


Figure 4. 1862 October ADM 1 5775.

Plymouth blitz, but it bears a certain resemblance to Poole Guildhall (1761, no architect named by Pevsner).

Greene's drawings for the new Drill Battery have been preserved. (Figures 5 and 6) These show that that it bore a generic resemblance to Holl's building, and was mostly of wooden construction – not only was this cheap but it simulated the actual construction of the warship. That was soon to change. The advent of iron construction did not, however, at first alter the arrangement of the guns within the ship, though they were now on one deck rather than two or three. Figure 7 shows the similarity of the layout of the racers (metal strips on which the gun carriages traversed) to that of HMS Warrior, whose design was then being formulated. Greene would have been in regular contact with the Chief Constructor of the first ironclads, Isaac Watts, and the layout was probably arrived at in consultation between the two men. Water was laid on for the new battery in June 1859, by which time it must have been completed.

Further expansions are shown in a plan of 1881. This shows, sketched in, a further Drill Battery. (Figure 8) This was partly to house the new armaments, which had greatly changed since Warrior. The new Battery was first projected in December 1883, when the Deputy Adjutant General of the Corps wrote to the Admiralty 'I submit that a new Gun Drill battery...is urgently required...The present Battery is in a bad state of repair, port side, must be strengthened for the reception of a 9" gun & 6" BL [breech loader] on Vavasseur Carriage – this means nearly a new deck on port side, new side of battery and many new beams...The money spent on these alterations would go far towards building the new Battery – which would afford an extended new and ample opportunity of aiming at moving objects during instruction – The site is on War Department land, which doubtless would be readily granted...the old battery would be valuable as a classroom...The New battery to be single sided which would cause economy in construction and to have the 5 guns from Long Room Battery.'

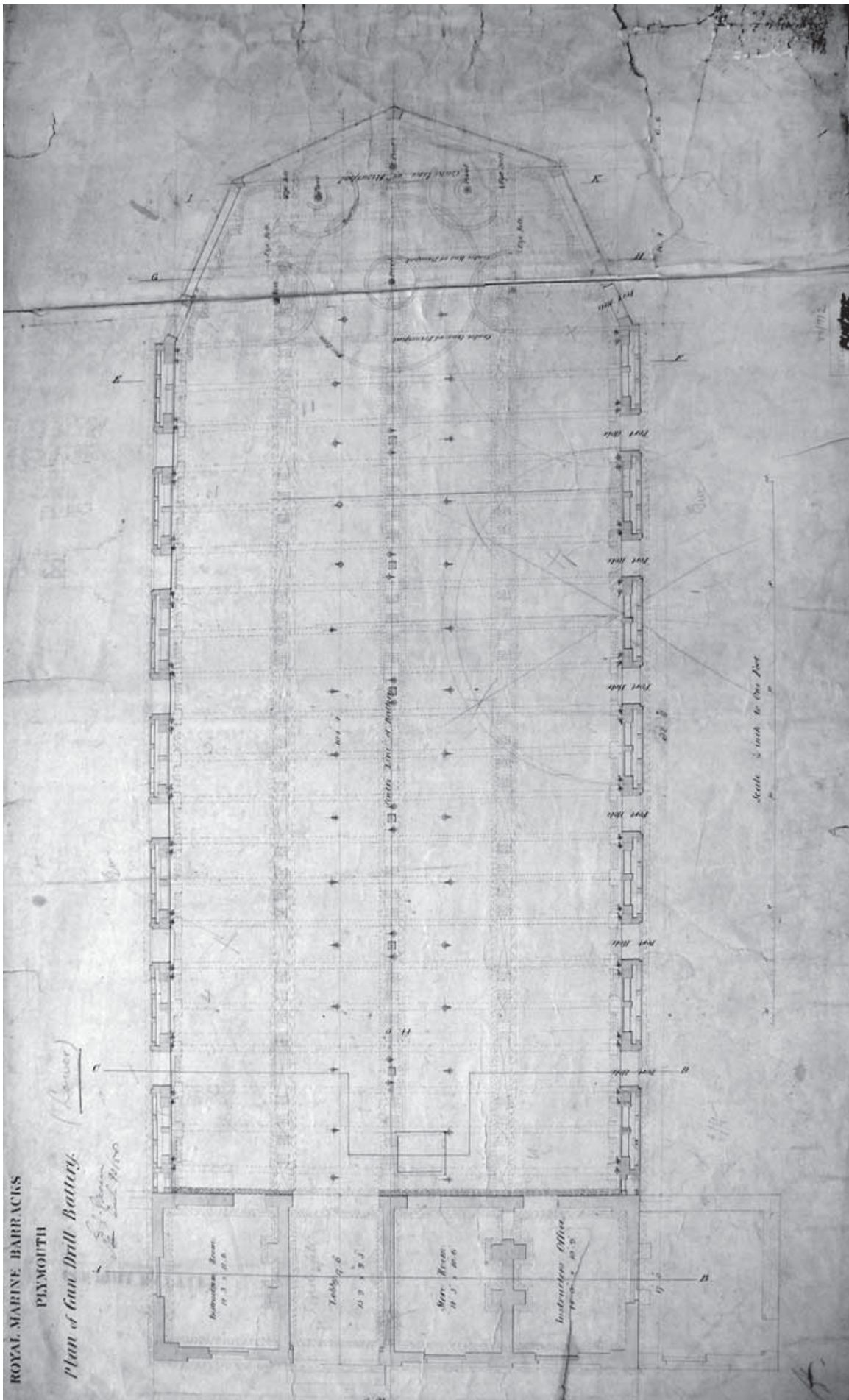


Figure 5. 1858 95 00912.

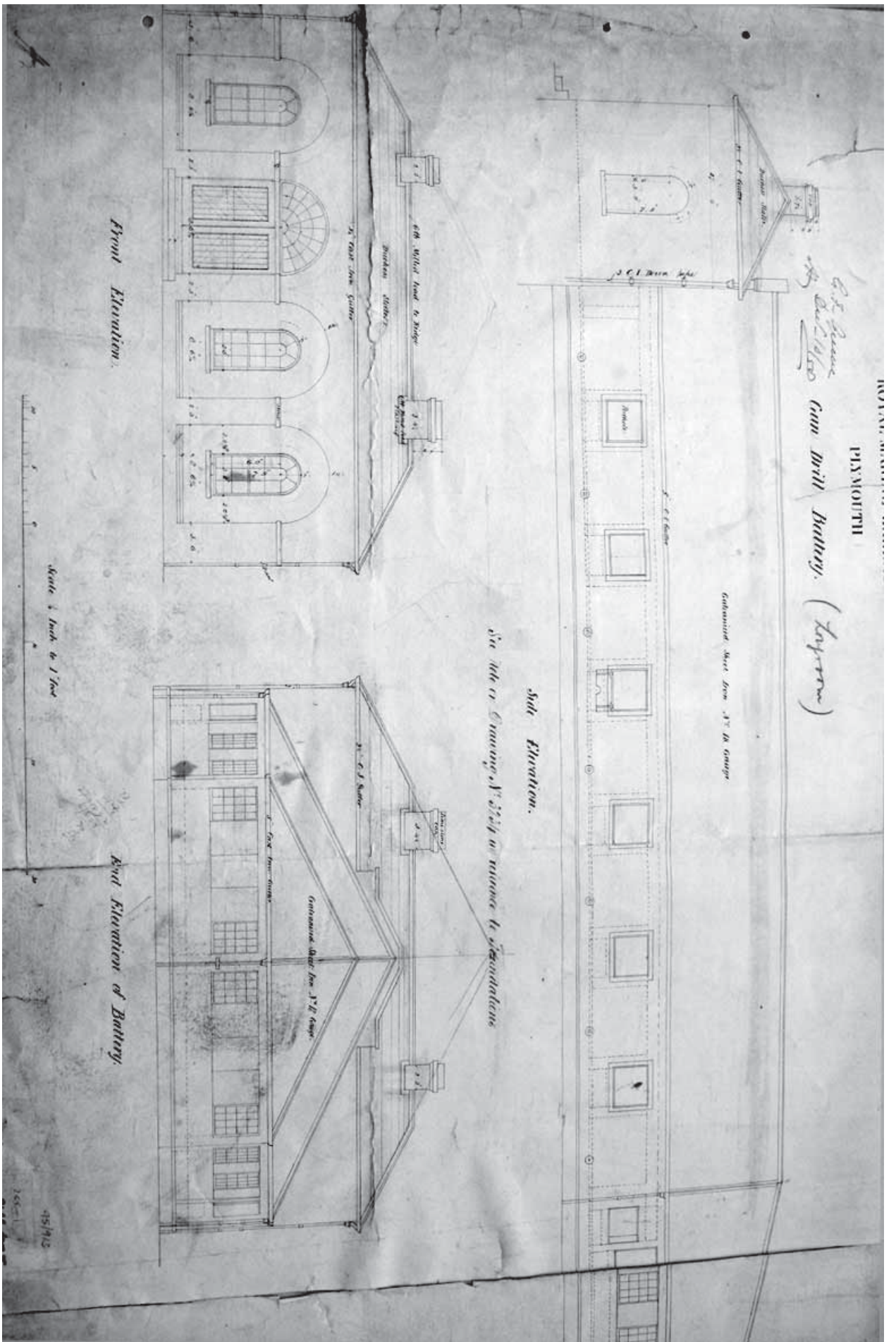


Figure 6. 1858 95 00913.

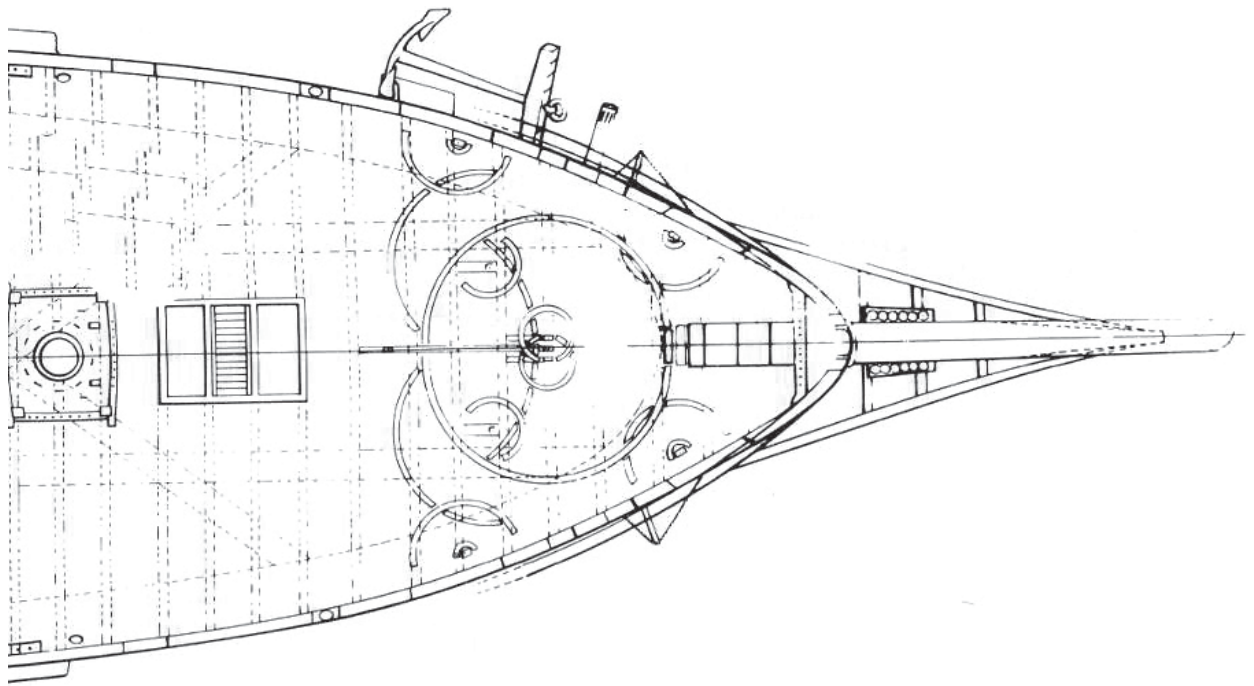


Figure 7 Warrior.

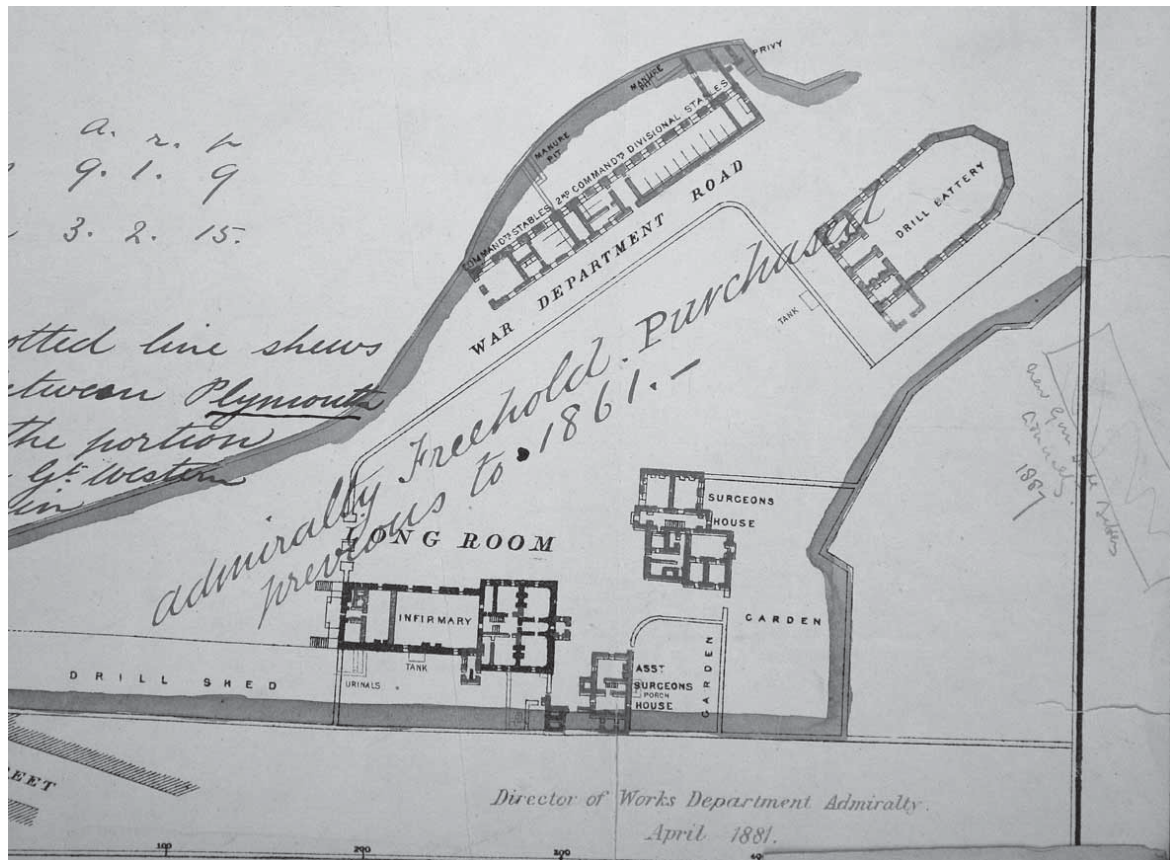


Figure 8. 1881 long room detail.



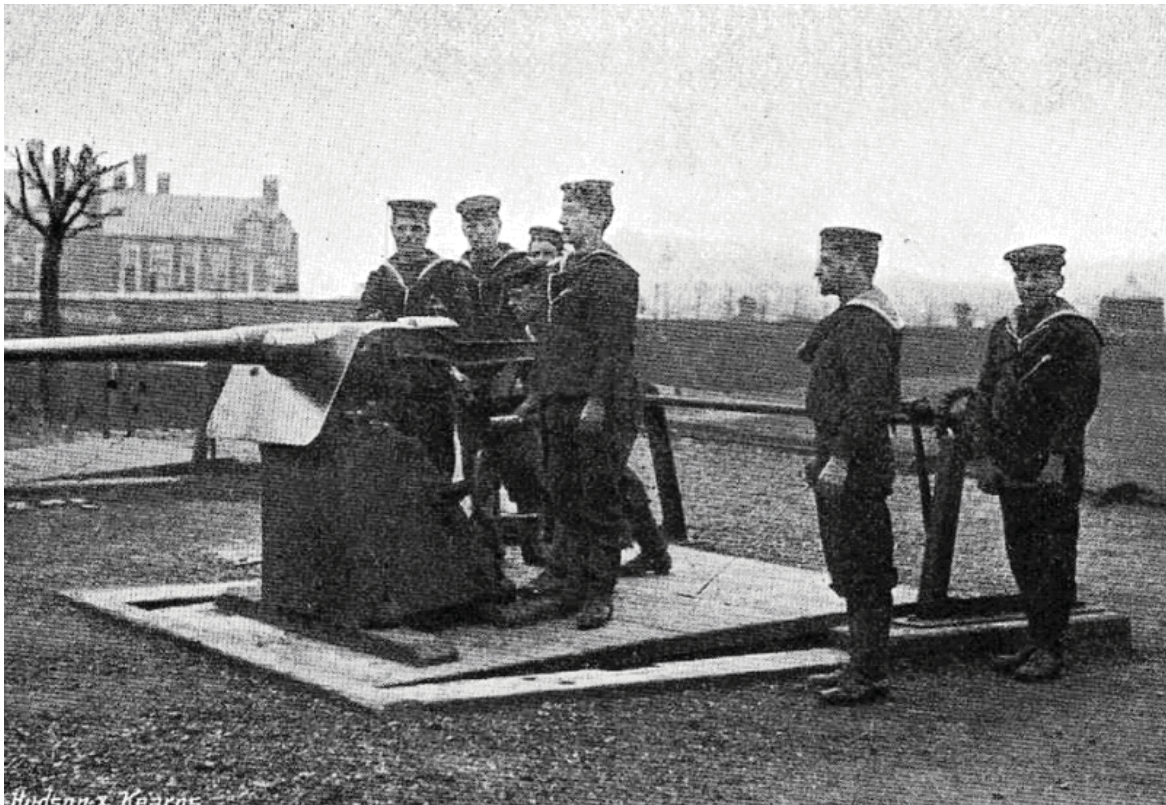


Figure 9. Rolling platform.

The growth of the buildings of the Great Western Docks had blocked the view from the Battery, which meant that practice in training the guns could not be carried out. A higher site was required. All plans are missing from the file dealing with the New Battery, but the correspondence makes it clear that the preferred site was within the earthworks forming the left flank of Eastern King Battery. The War Department refused this request, but allowed the use of land close to, but higher than, the existing Battery. Plans of the building were sent to the Director of Works on January 1 1887. The building was far better lit (by north lights) than the old Battery, as the increased complication of the mountings and instruments needed to be seen clearly for instructional purposes. Jonathan Marshall's tender of February 14 for £2,943 was accepted. This included the Battery, a Rolling Platform, latrines, a boundary wall and approach steps. In January 1890 estimates and plans for mounting 4" BL in the New Battery were approved. In 1891 a shed was erected over the Rolling Platform. On November 27 1893 a Gunnery inspection was carried out. General Quarters were carried out with ML and BL guns and a Nordenfelt on the Rolling Platform with Morris tubes. The old Battery was still in use; it was armed with an 8" 9 ton ML on the port broadside, a 7" 6½ ton ML in the bows, two 9" SB 100 pounders on the port broadside, one 6.3" 64 pounder ML on the starboard broadside, and one 4.75" 40 pounder RBL (rifled breech loader) on the starboard broadside.

The New Battery was not yet completely armed. It mounted one 4" 23 cwt BL Mk IIP on VCP mounting Mk 1, a 5" 38 cwt BL Mk IP on a VB mounting Mk II, a 6" 89 cwt BL Mk IIP on a VB mounting Mk II, a .45" 5 barrel Nordenfelt on a field carriage, a 1" 2 barrel Nordenfelt on a field carriage, a 3 pounder QF Hotchkiss on a recoil mounting, a 6 pounder QF Hotchkiss on a non-recoil mounting, a 3" 7 pounder boat's gun, and a 4.7" QF on a Mk IIG mounting. The Rolling platform mounted a 1" 4 barrelled Nordenfelt Mk III and a rifle rest for aiming instruction.

Some words of explication may be called for. The Rolling Platform simulated the movement of a ship at sea. Figure 9 shows one installed at Whale Island in 1896; that example is armed with a

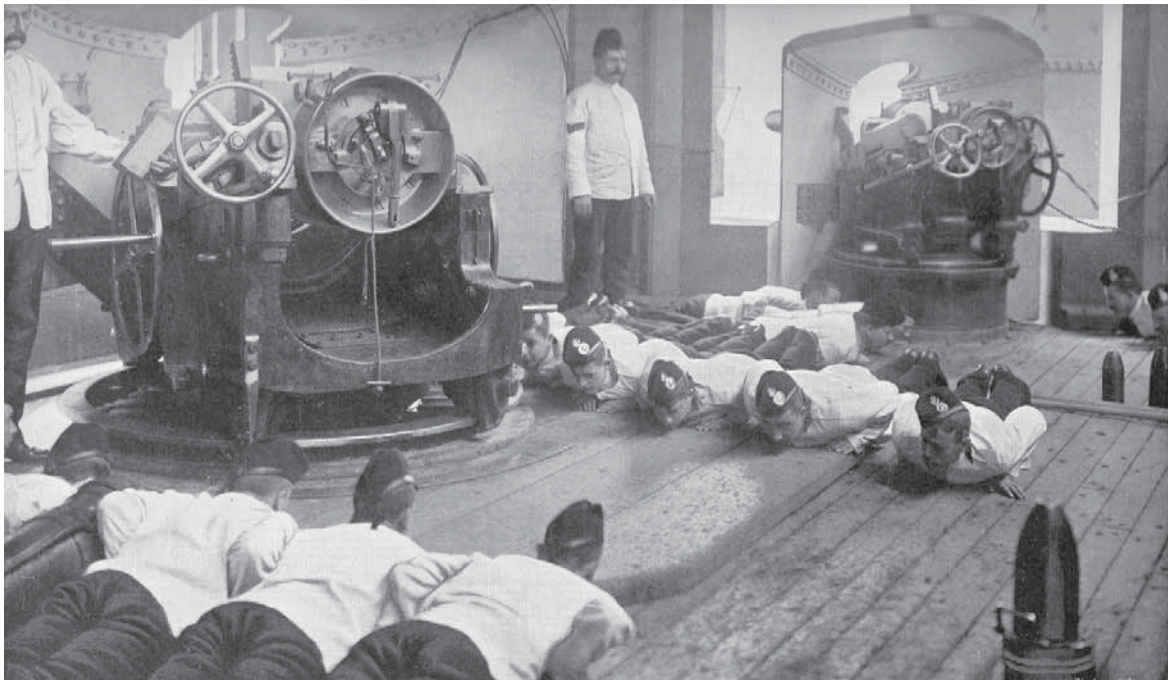


Figure 10. 1897 battery.

QF (quick-firer). The Nordenfelt was a multi-barrelled machine gun. The VB and VCP mountings are Vavasseur (Vavasseur was a designer at Armstrongs) broadside and central pivot mountings respectively. In 1897 the interior of the Battery was photographed (Figure 10) and this shows two VCP mountings. The men are lying down to simulate a ramming attack.

Around the same time a Morris Tube Gallery was built. On April 25 1881 Richard Morris patented small cartridges for use in rifles with reduced bore for drill or practice. Improvements were patented on April 26 and October 11 1883. On November 14 1883 the Tube, Aiming, Morris's, Martini-Henry Rifle, (Mark 1) – the crazy inversion was the Army's way of official description – was approved for issue, followed on February 5 1884 by the Tube, Aiming, Morris's, Accessories (Cleaning Brush, Cleaning Rod, False Foresight and Key). The tube had a calibre of .215 inches, and was smooth-bored for 16.5 inches from the breech end, and rifled for the rest of the length. A pattern cartridge for Royal Navy use had been sealed on August 11 1883. With the introduction of the magazine Lee-Metford rifle, a new pattern of Morris tube was introduced on December 29 1891. This was rifled throughout with eight grooves, which greatly improved the accuracy.

The device was used for practice at indoor ranges, where special targets simulated ranges from 100 to 800 yards. This use was common to both Services. But as has been stated Marine barracks trained men to use Naval weapons. Having been trained in the Morris Gallery to use the modified Service rifles, the men then went on to simulate practice on heavier weaponry. For this purpose a modified rifle, equipped with Morris Tube, was mounted co-axially on a piece of Naval ordnance. The Morris Tube Gallery, which still survives structurally unaltered, was built in 1886. (Figure 11) This shows Marines armed with Lee-Metford rifles.

The remainder of the story of these two Batteries is soon told. In September 1947 instruction at the batteries was discontinued, provoking the following doggerel in the Corps journal *Globe & Laurel* – 'The thunder gods have ceased their feast of imaginary slaughter/On Longroom Hill, overlooking Plymouth water.' The Gunnery School was dismantled, and the staff departed to Eastney (Southsea), where Naval training – Seamanship, Damage Control, Ship Fire-fighting and Naval Gunnery was then centralised. By June 1954 the old Battery had been dismantled, and the New Drill Battery



Figure 11. 1900 c morris tube.



Figure 12. New battery 1.



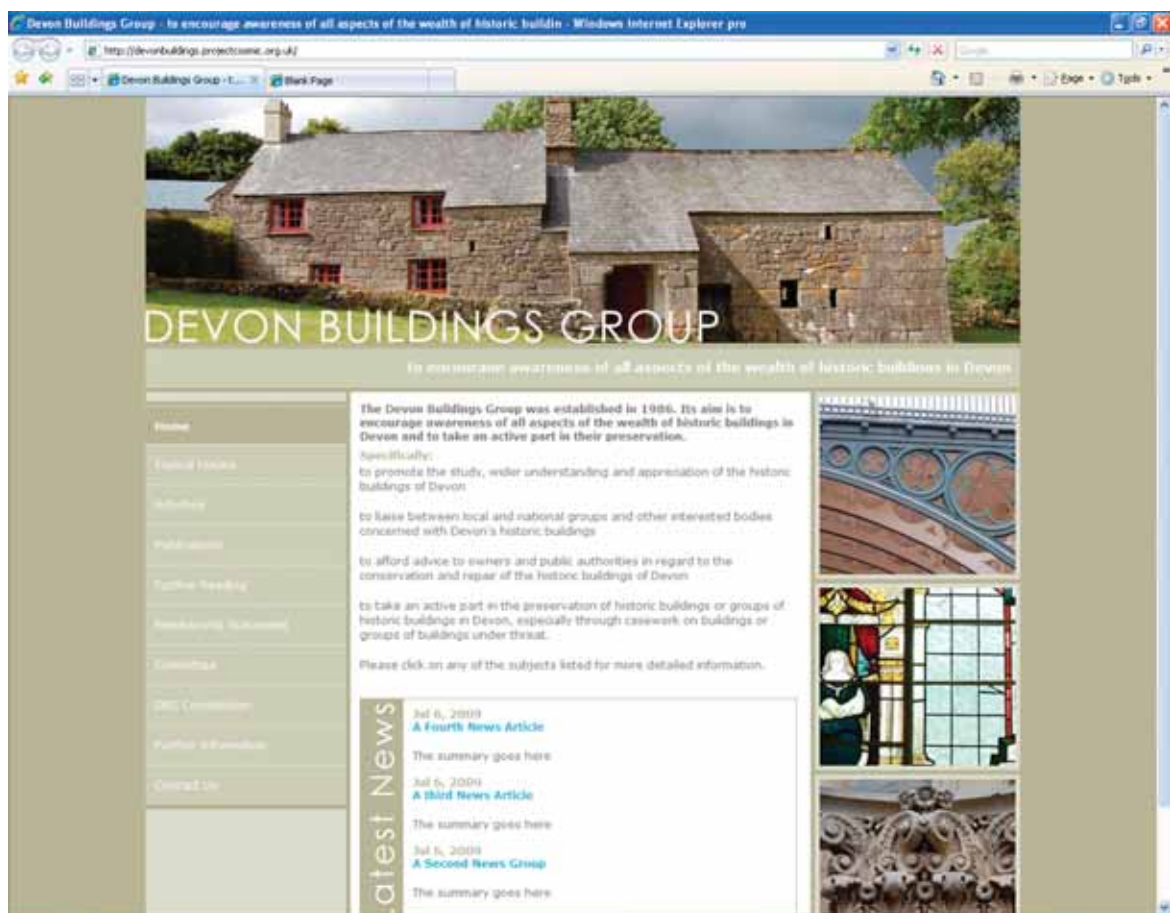
Figure 13. New battery 2.

renamed Old Gun Battery. As noted, the Morris Tube Gallery survives virtually unaltered. Greene's New Drill Battery also survives, though covered in modern cladding which effectively conceals its age. (Figures 12 and 13) Within, it is structurally unaltered.

These two buildings appear to be unique survivals, and are historically more significant than the architectural proprieties of the Barracks themselves.

*David Evans*

## **The Rebirth of the DBG website**



In 2008 the DBG Committee approved in principle that the DBG website should be looked at with the intention of revising and refreshing its contents. Caroline Garrett and Peter Marlow were pleased to take this project forward.

The first website was compiled virtually single-handedly by Mike Fennessy. It has served the Group well and, until the 2009 AGM, remained the principal point of access to information for the general public. But times, technology and expectations change. Among the main reasons for revising the website were a wish to become more proactive, inviting response and participation, to be more outward looking, especially to attract a younger membership, and to provide evidence of the wide

breadth of the Group's interests and responsibilities.

An assessment of the existing text reassuringly showed that most was suitable for retention. Certain aspects needed to be brought up to date and the odd typo corrected, but there was an excellent foundation on which to build.

We felt that there were a number of additional categories that might be added.

"LATEST NEWS", appearing on the Home Page, provides an eye-catching opportunity to highlight timely issues. We hope that members will alert us to such concerns. It is inevitable that many of these will be negative but we would like to think that the tide will turn and that "good news" will come to prevail.

"TOPICAL ISSUES" provides the chance to raise planning policy and other broader matters. Unless the public at large make their views known to the Planning Authority, the legislative context within which our architectural heritage and urban environment can be enhanced will be diminished.

"ACTIVITIES" is obvious enough but does give an insight into where and when we've held conferences and AGMs. Not to mention some pictures of those attending. We try to cover as wide an area throughout Devon as possible.

The early discussions surrounding "FURTHER READING" were characterised by "but where do you stop?", such is the wealth of good books about the architecture of Devon. What appears is a compromise which tries to suggest a basic bibliography for the interested amateur. Specialists will no doubt have additional suggestions (which we welcome). The list could have been many times longer, but perhaps would not have entirely served the purpose of enthusing the new-comer to the subject.

It was not possible to include photographs in the original website. For this revision we have tried to feature photographs of characteristic Devon buildings from ancient to modern. Most have been submitted by committee members but we would be delighted to receive suggestions of additional subjects either by photographs or for suggestions of where we might go to take some ourselves. If the number of good subjects warrant, we may add a "photographic gallery" in due course. The goal is to show as many examples of good Devon building as possible.

Additions to the business aspect of the website include expanded material on the COMMITTEE, MEMBERSHIP, and the Group's CONSTITUTION (where else could a prospective member find it ???!) while information about accessing help in "FURTHER INFORMATION" makes contacting them straightforward.

Finally, and perhaps most relevant in the context of this publication, the "NEWSLETTER" and "CASESTUDY SUMMARIES" will appear in full, all but the most recent issues which can be purchased in hard copy. This will be phased-in during the next few months when time and resources permit.

The technology used in this revised website is critical to its appearance. We are grateful to COSMIC of Ottery St Mary for helping us develop and implement our ideas. Having presented them with a series of other websites we liked and disliked, the designers at Cosmic very skillfully understood our vision for the DBG site. The design that they created is simple and classic, rich with photographs, and free from any fancy gimmicks.

Another important element of this website renaissance is to train a group of DBG committee members

to alter and add things to the site. Although this will be a steep learning curve for us all, it will mean that we can take control of the website ourselves and keep it an up-to-date and useful resource for everyone.

We would welcome any comments, pro or con, that you might have about the new site. As stated in the “Publications” section, we are always looking for appropriate articles for the Newsletter. Please contact us if you have material for consideration.

The address of the website remains [www.devonbuildingsgroup.org.uk](http://www.devonbuildingsgroup.org.uk)

*Caroline Garrett and Peter Marlow*

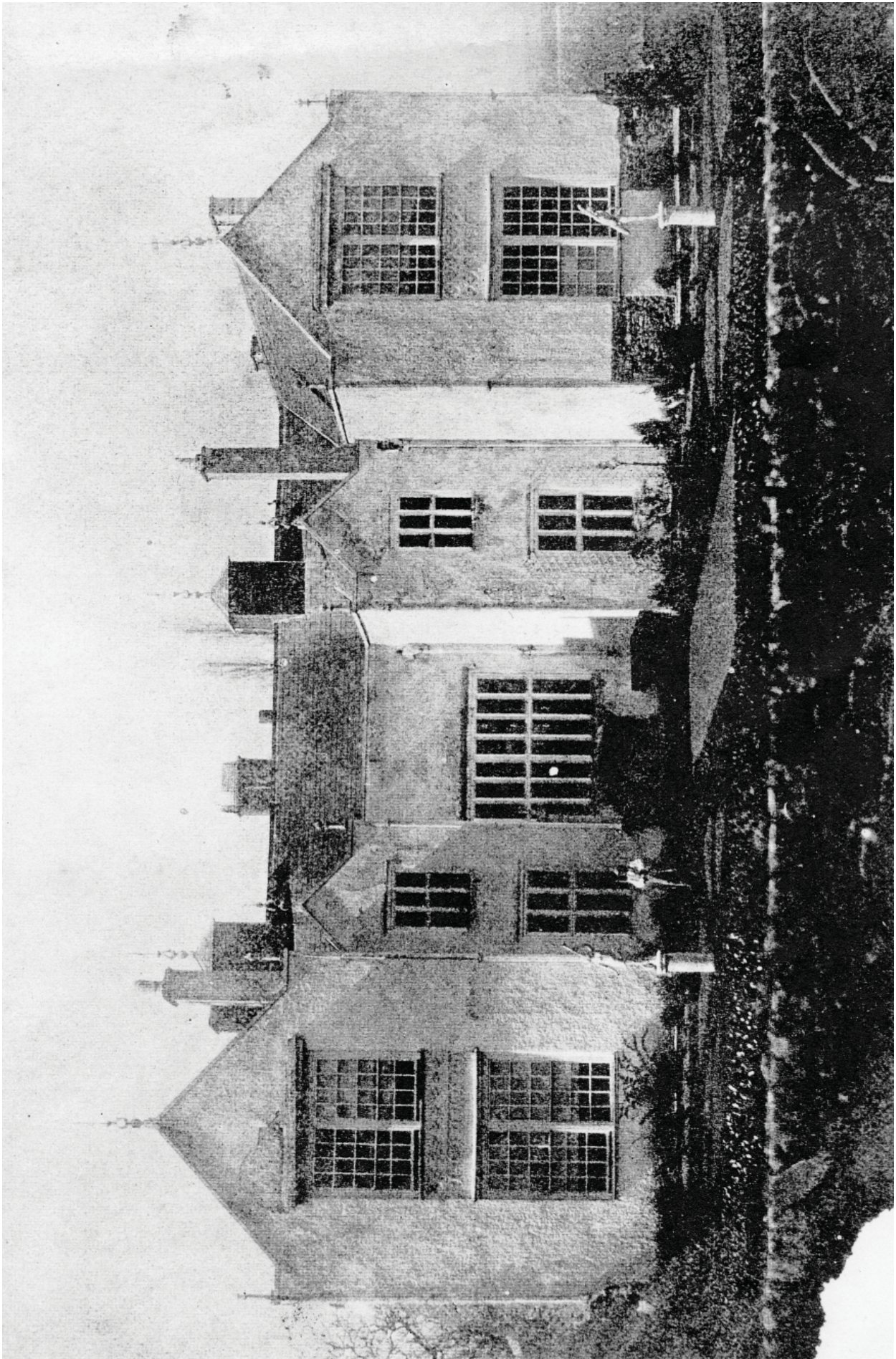
## **Some early photographs of Bradfield Manor from the National Monuments Record**

The National Monuments Record, a public archive, now part of English Heritage and based at Swindon, is a wonderful resource for historic buildings, including photographs. If you type ‘Public archive (NMR)’ into Google you will land safely in this section of English Heritage and can see what is on offer.

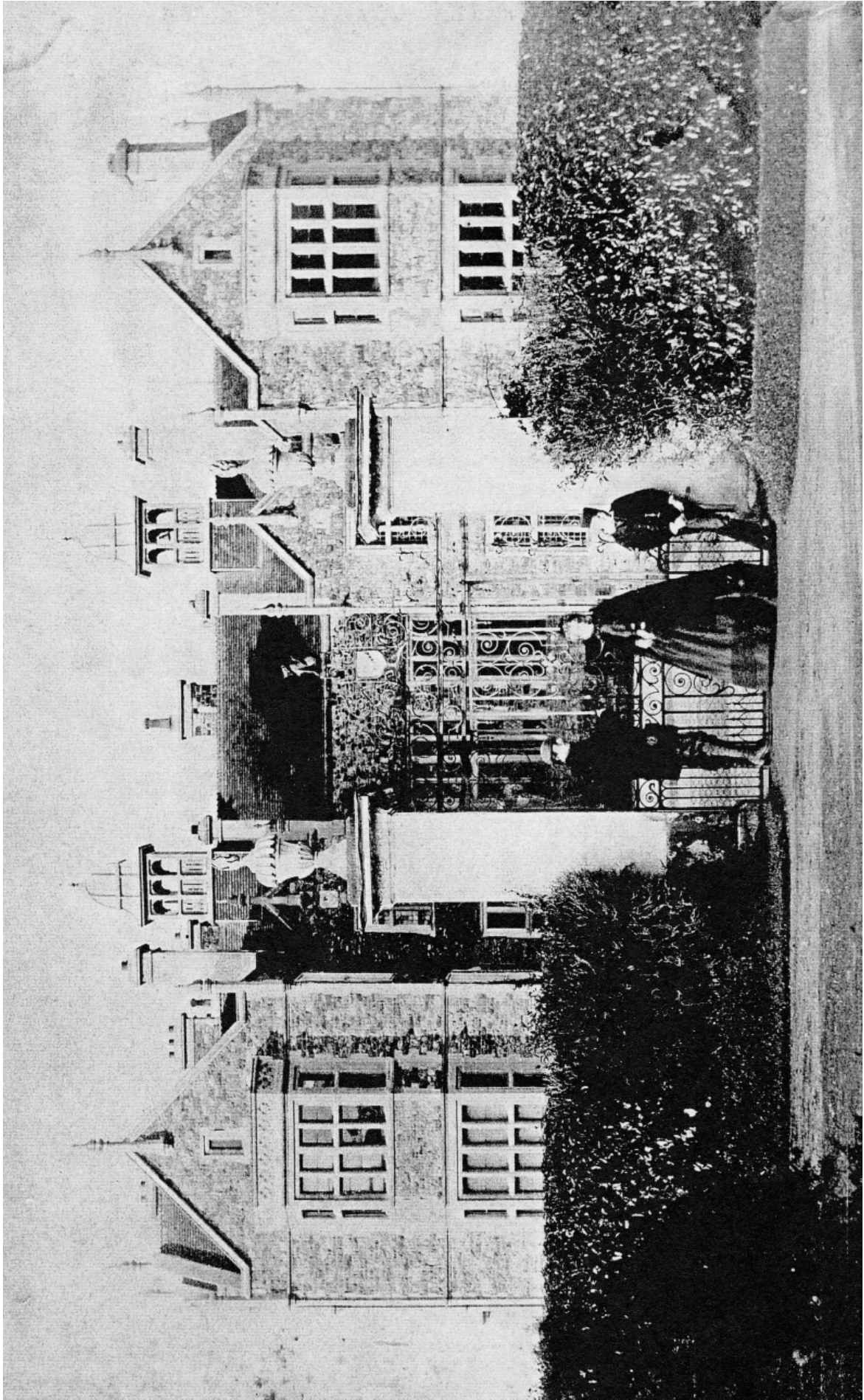
At Swindon the ‘red boxes’, as they are known, are large box files arranged by county and town/city or parish, and a treasure house of old photographs. You never know quite what you may find in a parish red box, but medieval churches are nearly always covered with high quality black and white photographs, often taken in the 1940s and 1950s. Most country houses are represented, some including late 20<sup>th</sup> century estate agent’s particulars, along with copies of any key *Country Life* articles. There are often very good photographs of town houses, some no longer with us and taken just before demolition. In some (but by no means all) rural parishes there is good coverage of smaller vernacular buildings, often photographed in unrestored and poor condition. The Swindon staff are extremely helpful and, so long as the NMR holds copyright of the red box photographs, you can either photocopy them yourself in the public search room, or pay more to obtain laser, photographic or digital copies. In addition to the red box photographs, Swindon holds a huge collection of aerial photographs, some taken by the RAF from 1945, others more recently. You need to book in advance to see the aerial photographic collection. Of course, if you want to use any of the NMR photographs in a report or for publication, rather than just for research purposes, you have to obtain formal permission. Permission to publish the photographs in the DBG Newsletter was granted without charging a fee as this was deemed to be a non-commercial use.

The photographic collection of buildings at Swindon is always being expanded. A recent acquisition is a wonderful group of 1850s photographs of Bradfield House, Uffculme. These photos are so special that the original prints are kept apart from the public search room, but can be seen if this is arranged in advance. Good quality copies are also kept in the red boxes. Devon Buildings Group members will be interested in these prints as a very rare record at that date of the renovation of Bradfield House by our best-known 19<sup>th</sup> century local architect, John Hayward.

Bradfield House was the home of the important Walrond family from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The entry for Bradfield in Cherry and Pevsner’s *Devon* (1989 edn.), includes a floor plan and describes the building as a major late medieval hall, re-windowed and enlarged in c.1600 and restored c.1860







Figs. 1, 2. The east front of Bradfield House in photographs of April 1852 (above) and 1853/4 (below). Copyright English Heritage/NMR, BB91/27629 and BB/27626. Reproduced with permission.

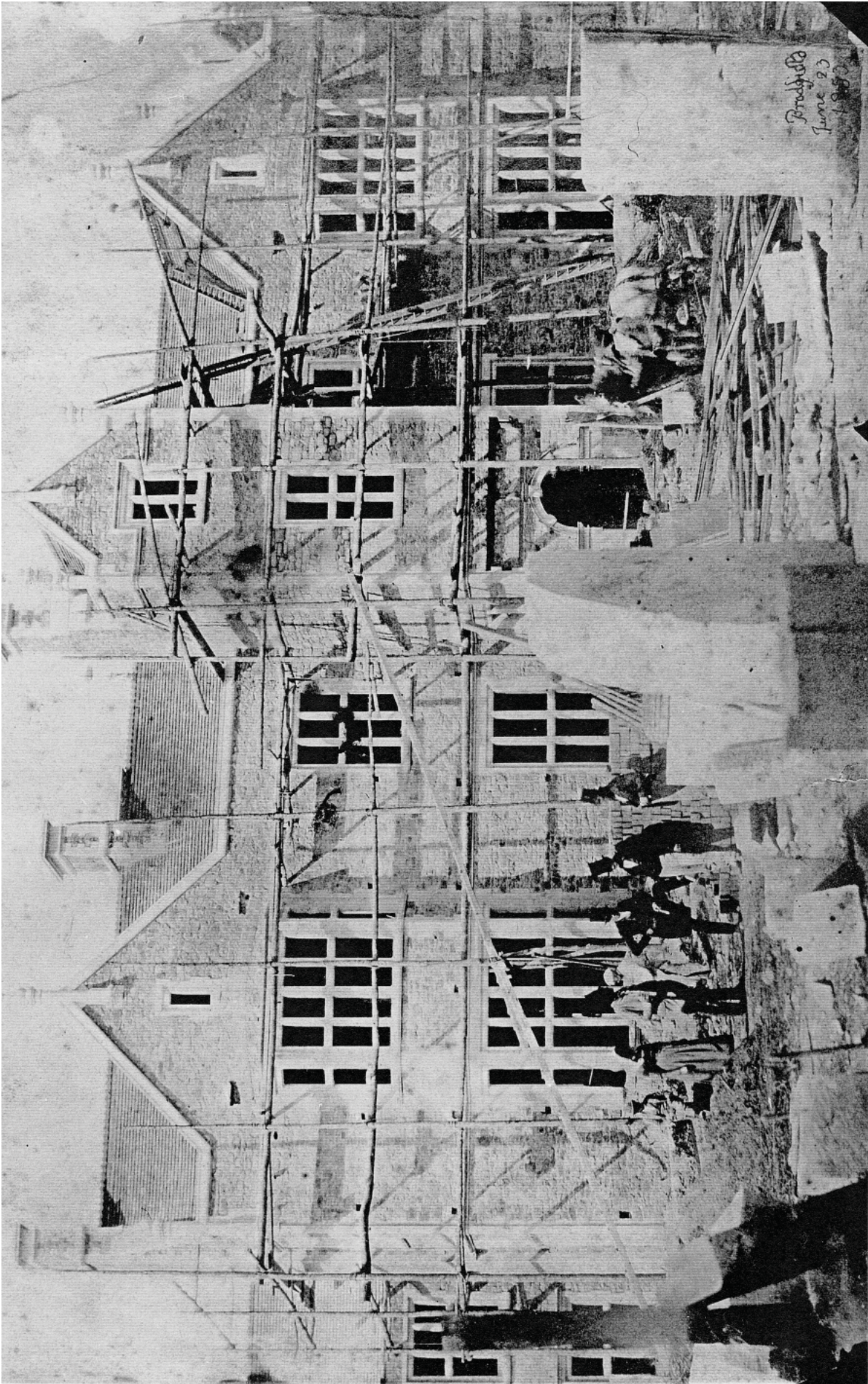


Fig. 3. The south side of the main block of the house in a photograph taken 23 June 1853. Copyright English Heritage/NMR, BB91/27625. Reproduced with permission.

by John Hayward for Sir John Walrond. The house had a bumpy history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For a time it was a private school for difficult boys – a bad use for an historic house with inevitable wear and tear on the building. Bradfield is now back in (divided) private ownership. The dates on the photographs at Swindon show that the Bradfield restoration was earlier than Pevsner states, 1852-3/4. Hayward wrote an account of his restoration in The Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society, vol. 1, 1867, 79-84.

Two of the photographs, the first dated 1852, the second 1853, show ‘before’ and ‘after’ elevations of the east front. These are an unforgettable record of the self-conscious Victorian aesthetic contrasted with the house as it was before. In April 1852 (Fig 1) the east front is shown rendered, the front projecting wings windowed with large pairs of double-hung sashes. The render has been stripped from two sections of the wing to the right, below the window sill. Perhaps these were test panels by Hayward to investigate the stone and allow the client to see what the front would look like without the render. Two large turrets on the ridge of the old hall probably ventilated the roof and, like all the gables and kneelers on the east front, are crowned with delicate squiggly finials, probably iron (and perhaps 17<sup>th</sup> century?) one with a weathervane. The east front garden is ornamented with two graceful lead statues on plinths and divided up into plots which might have been the remnant of a knot garden, but may be entirely an early 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier invention. As far as one can determine, the east boundary wall of the garden is a simple stone rubble affair, not unlike an agricultural wall.

The ‘after’ photograph, taken 1853/54 (Fig. 2) shows what Hayward did to transform the east elevation. The render has been stripped off. The sash windows, evidence of an 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century phase of the house, have been replaced with 2-tier canted bay windows with mullions and transoms and carved stone parapets, loosely quoting the carved stone banding under the sills of the earlier first floor windows. The new windows probably let in no more light than their predecessors (perhaps less), but gave more interesting and wider views out of the house from their returns. The roof profile has been made grander and more vertical, the old turrets on the ridge replaced with taller openwork versions with arcading and bell-shaped lead roofs, the right hand turret with a bell. The old slender finials have been replaced with chunky stone pinnacles. All the chimney shafts have been rationalised and rebuilt, at least at the top, with decorative stone bands.

The alterations to the east front of the house are completed by a transformation of the area in front of it, a reminder that the historic treatment of spaces around a building is an integral part of architectural character. Hayward completed the east front court with a pair of massive and rather intimidating gatepiers, topped with urns, and a pair of wrought iron gates, allowing the front to be seen, but identifying, beyond doubt, the private nature of the space in front of the house. Is the couple standing in front Sir John Walrond and his wife?

Hayward’s structural additions, rather than his re-working existing features on the east front, are confined to the canted bay windows. Nevertheless, the elevation has acquired a completely new aesthetic character: consistent, assertive and self-conscious with all its delicate and spindly features replaced, along with the visible evidence of its real antiquity.

Another photograph in the same series, dated 23rd June 1853, shows the south side of the main block of the house, entirely rebuilt, (according to the plan published in Pevsner) apart from the outer corners, in a style to match the new treatment of east front (Fig. 3). Is the architect one of the four gentlemen in stove-pipe hats, perhaps having an 1853/4 site meeting or, given the rarity of photography at this date, gathered for the photograph? Empty put-log holes (along with the relative completeness of the elevation), indicates that some of the scaffolding is coming down, although there is still a workman on the roof. The method of scaffolding shown here, using timbers passing through the masonry wall and attached to the uprights, made work much easier than modern steel

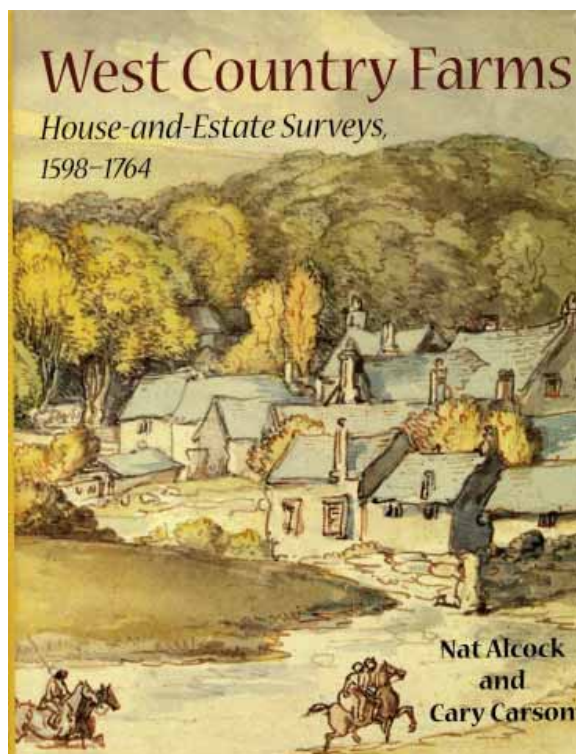
scaffolding, all supported off the ground, which intrudes between the mason and the wall-face. This is the same method that has left ‘put-log’ or ‘putlock’ holes in medieval church building. Rows of neat, squared stones can often be spotted in a rubble wall. These could be easily removed and used again for scaffolding when needed. Are the huge blocks of stone in the foreground intended for gate piers? If they are, they are proof that these did not arrive finished from the quarry (reducing the weight of what had to be transported) but were worked on site.

Jo Cox

August 2009

Thanks are due to the staff in the public search room of the National Monuments Record for efficiency and friendliness.

## **West Country Farms. House-and-Estate Surveys 1598-1764**



Nat Alcock and Cary Carson.

232pp. Drawings and colour illustrations.  
Oxbow Books 2007 ISBN 978-1-84217-299-5  
£35.00

Nat Alcock is a longstanding member of the DBG and both he and Cary Carson are distinguished practitioners in the fields of vernacular architecture and documentary history. They have sought out as many estate and manorial surveys as they can find from the counties of Cornwall [3 surveys], Somerset [6] and Devon [8] in which descriptions of the tenants’ actual buildings are included, beyond the more commonly recorded details of land holdings and leases. As the authors state in their introduction : “In house-and-estate surveys, we have a source from which to re-create a picture of the village scene in rural England that includes land, rents, agricultural buildings, domestic service buildings, dwellings – all associated with named individuals and virtually complete from mere cottagers to the largest leaseholders.”

The book is in two parts. The first part synthesises, puts in context and, most importantly, interprets the information from the surveys. The second part takes the reader through the surveys one-by-one. In the first part, the seventeen surveys which they unearthed have been subjected to detailed analysis, relating the size and type of house and farm buildings described to the scale of the tenant's landholding. The age and sex distribution of the tenants are also summarised, while supplementary work on leases in the area of two of the surveys [Seaton and Sidmouth] gives some indication in these places of the social status of the tenants as well. The statistical information is presented in the form of bar charts and tables but these are subjected to full analysis and interpretation in the accompanying text. To place this documentary information in context, there are two excellent chapters, illustrated with drawings and photographs, which describe from surviving examples contemporary types of vernacular houses and farm buildings in the region. The second section of the book analyses each estate individually and reproduces the surveys in full.

This is a mammoth work of synthesis and analysis which produces results which could not be obtained from any other source. It presents a detailed picture of the character of these estates which otherwise would be impossible to construct. As regards houses, it addresses the issue of the size of houses in relation to that of the holding, as well as considering the evidence that the surveys give for plan form and room use. As regards farm buildings, it demonstrates clearly a general correlation between the size of the holding and the numbers of farm buildings on it, although with some surprising exceptions as for instance with the farms in East Brent which had no farm buildings at all. It shows the common presence of housing for draught oxen in Devon for which now no physical evidence survives and similarly the existence of buildings for housing sheep in Cornwall. It produces good evidence for the survival of long houses with their attached byres into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, even in such a predominantly arable manor as Kenton near Exeter. Certainly no long houses survive here today.

The authors try not to leave unanswered questions which arise from the statistics, providing or attempting explanations for what the surveys reveal, both expected and unexpected. A short notice such as this cannot really do justice to the wealth of information in this well-presented book. It is a major work of scholarship but one that is wholly accessible and is much recommended to DBG members.

*Peter Child*

## **DBG NEWS**

### **New Members**

We welcome new and returning members, whose details will be added to the next Register:

Dr C Bainbridge, 6 East Street, CREDITON, EX17 3AT

Tony & Penny Barnard, 7 Penlee Road, Stoke, PLYMOUTH, PL3 4AT

Jenny Chesher & Cyril Harriss, Clerks Cottage, Barford Road, SPAXTON, Nr Bridgwater, TA5 1AF

Dr & Mrs J A Collier, 5 Heavitree Park, EXETER, EX1 3BP

Sandi Ellison, Bowdell, Cheriton Fitzpayne, Crediton, EX17 4JP

Jane Gawler, 2 Station Yard Cottages, Broadclyst Station, BROADCLYST, EX5 3AX

Maurice Hopper, 5 Sussex Close, EXETER, EX4 1LP

Dr Bruce & Lizzie Induni, 17 Kings Road East, SWANAGE, BH19 1ER

Lesley Lake, 22B Myrtle Close, Alphington, EXETER, EX2 8UX

David Lermon, Beech House, Cotswold Avenue, CARDIFF, CF1X 0TA

Richard & Kate Price, Wild Winds, Rising Sun, CALLINGTON, PL17 8JE

Jill da Silva, 4 Mount Pleasant, Park Street, CREDITON, EX17 3EG

Graham Tait, 11b Lower North Street ,EXETER, EX4 3ET

Michael & Anne de Wolf, 116 Stanborough Road, PLYMSTOCK, PL9 8PH

Mark & Rosemary Yallop, 71 Ladbroke Grove, LONDON, W11 2PD