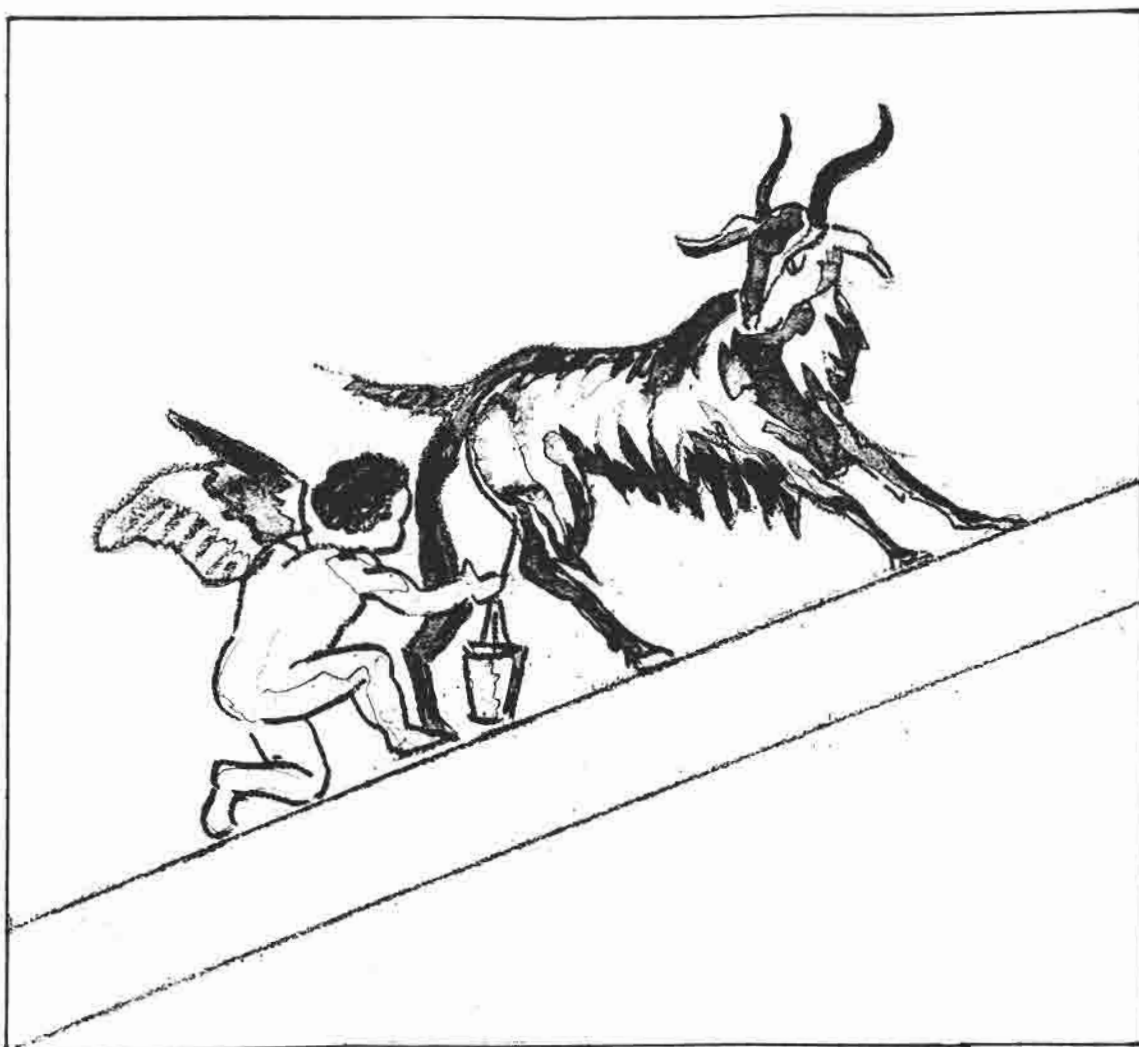


DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 16



February 1998

DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

Newsletter Number 16, February 1998

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

1997 was another active year for the Group. Although with further shrinkage of the specifically designated workers – we have not come up with a higher profile Secretary and have lost yet another Editor – I have had plenty of support from our widely talented Committee, who met six times during the period. The constituent members tended to vary, according to individual commitments, but have never failed to provide a quorum and constructive discussion and decisions. I think this is very much the point of largish committees like ours: those come who can and the rest provide a pool of expertise and occasional activity, to be called on when needed.

Newsletter 15 came out just after Easter and I apologise for some inaccuracies, particularly of numbering, occasioned by having to splice in two items and change all the pagination, after Jim had gone off on holiday. Doing this, getting it run, putting it together and getting it into the post before the 'Easter' banner looked out of date, was something of a scramble. We are currently seeking material for Newsletter 17 and should very much welcome articles, short or long – but perhaps particularly short ones, as a newsletter is really a vehicle for ideas, observations and correspondence. Comment on, criticism of and additions to what has been published all adds to our common understanding of different aspects of the historic buildings the Group was formed to serve.

Peter Roseveare is still trying to co-ordinate the often rather elusive members prepared to do some casework

for CBA and is urgently seeking more volunteers. The more Caseworkers we have, the lighter the individual work load and the better we can take an active part in the fate of our historic buildings. The official CBA caseworking system only works where the Local Authority sends CBA the details, for them to send to us. Rather too often, it appears that they are not doing so. Every district could really do with a member willing to look out for Listed Building applications, either in the local paper or in the Planning Office.

In this area, outside CBA Casework, I have made a number of representations, on behalf of the Group, throughout the year. We intervened on behalf of the unique SALEM CHAPEL, at EAST BUDLEIGH, which many members will remember visiting during our 1994 Summer Conference and which had since become redundant and suffering vandalism and neglect. We have been instrumental in moving two telecommunications masts, due to loom over Grade II* houses in Mid Devon, and submitted objections to a scheme at THE MINT in EXETER. We have also made representations to the County Council, on its consultative document, 'Planning for the Future' and also to the EIP into the first phase of the new County Structure Plan. In both cases, we have asked for a pro-active policy of conservation of the historic environment and staff of sufficient number and calibre of expertise to promote and/or enforce that policy.

On June 14th about sixty members attended the Summer Conference on 'Devon Church Woodwork' at Chulmleigh Community college and

afterwards in five representative churches. We are all enormously indebted to Hugh Harrison and Eddie Sinclair for giving such knowledgeable and wonderfully illustrated talks, for which they received especial votes of thanks at the AGM in October. Hugh, with over twenty years of professional involvement with the design and repair of church screens, has had what must be a unique opportunity to study them and he showed us some of the wealth of intricate and sophisticated decorative work they display – together with the astonishingly crude carpentry from which screens are actually constructed. Although much of his talk was devoted to screens, he did include other forms of church woodwork, touching on bosses, Golgothas – as at Cullompton – and even wooden piers – as at Nymet Rowland. We are also grateful to Todd Gray who, although not a member at the time, was kind enough to lend some of his collection of slides of Devon bench ends from outside the area we were to see – particularly from East Budleigh.

Eddie's talk took us into the realms of chemistry and geology, with her fascinating exposition on the pigments used in the Middle Ages, to decorate all this splendid woodwork. She was able to give us an idea of the vibrancy church interiors then displayed, from her researches into the tiny remnants of colour still lodged in the intricacies of carving.

The five churches we visited were CHULMLEIGH, where there is one of the longest screens extant in the county; ATHERINGTON, where is one of the very few surviving sections of a complete rood loft anywhere – and

which gave us the bonus of a rare view of a church roof, from that loft, being able to stand within touching distance of a Green Man boss; HIGH BICKINGTON, with its huge number and variety of carved bench ends; COLDRIDGE, where Chris Brooks gave us one of his amazingly erudite expositions – from the pulpit – on the probable reasons for and source of the Flamboyant parclose screen there and the two others, at BRUSHFORD and COLEBROOKE; LAPFORD, with its splendid screen with high quality Renaissance detail. Everything over-ran, as is probably inevitable when so many knowledgeable and enthusiastic people get together, but the weather was superb and no one seemed to mind. Of the dozen or so who eventually found themselves at Hayne for tea – at considerably after six – the last left shortly before nine.

DBG's 12th AGM was held on 18th October, when 36 members, two prospective members and a representative of the Local History Society met at the BELL INN, MORETONHAMPSTEAD, in the painted room which is the subject of one of the following articles. In the afternoon, we saw the interior of one of the town's historic houses, the early UNITARIAN CHAPEL (led by Roger Thorne), a ground floor room of one of the ALMSHOUSES (led by Isabel Richardson) and a room of the manor house, where several members had tea, as well as a tour of the street view of many other buildings. The weather was as kind as it had been for the Conference.

Please note that the 1998 SUMMER CONFERENCE will be on

SATURDAY 13th JUNE, on
 'Conservation in a Cathedral City:
 Recent Practice & Current Problems in
 Exeter'. The morning session will be
 held in one of the galleries of the RAM
 Museum. In the afternoon we shall visit
 a number of key sites in the city.

The 13th AGM will be on SATURDAY
 10th OCTOBER 1998, at
 KINGSBRIDGE.

Ann Adams

SMOKING CHAMBERS IN DEVON, PART 2

Since the publication of my first article
 in Newsletter No. 14, 1996, several other
 examples have turned up. Two in
 particular are most interesting, as they
 represent an unrecorded design.
 GATEHOUSE FARM, BROWNSTON,
 near MODBURY was recorded during
 1996 as part of an ongoing programme
 of recording work on South Hams
 farmhouses. It is sited close to Higher
 Brownston Farmhouse, identified as a
 longhouse (Alcock & Laithwaite 1973, p
 109). Gatehouse may also have been a
 longhouse, being aligned down a steep
 slope, but any primary evidence for this
 has been destroyed by the total
 replacement of the cross passage and
 lower end by a 19th century agricultural
 building, now rather crudely converted
 into a separate house.

The plan, figure 1, shows the suggested
 phasing of this building. The hall and
 inner room survive in a heavily altered
 state and the roof structure is 19th
 century. A stone newel stair once gave
 access to the upper floor over the inner

room from the hall, but has been
 removed, leaving only one side wall
 standing. Against this stair, mainly
 enveloping it, was constructed a
 substantial 3 bay stone-built wing,
 probably in the first half of the 17th
 century. In the north end, a fireplace
 occupies two-thirds of the room width,
 with a cambered oak beam across. This
 continued to the west, over a charge-hole
 for the smoking chamber, which was
 tended from the *room*, not the fireplace,
 as is the norm. The access door to the
 chamber, whose fire-well is now filled
 in, enters from the west side of the
 fireplace. This means that the chamber
 is mainly alongside, rather than behind
 the hearth, thus saving space. Only one
 oven is thus possible, a small one,
 opening off the rear of the hearth.

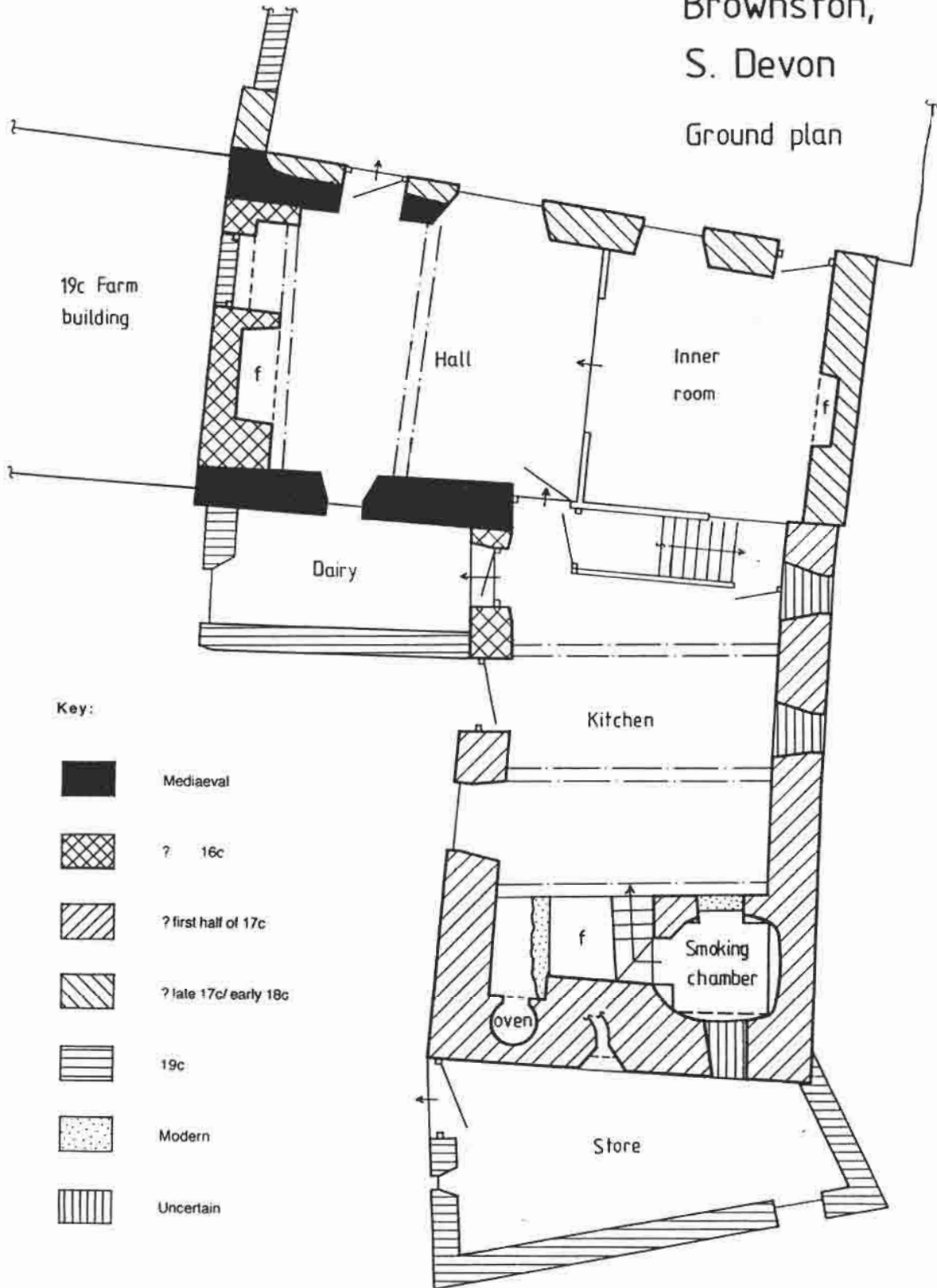
These are not the only differences. The
 chamber is corbelled into a flue in its
 ceiling which rejoins the chimney higher
 up. This is a known method in Somerset
 chambers (see Williams 1976 & 1990a),
 but is not common in Devon, except in
 those sites in north-east Devon which are
 part of the Somerset group and the few
 examples in south Devon noted in my
 previous article. These were described
 as type 2. The examples described here
 will be called type 3. A section drawing
 of one of them appears in figure 2. The
 flight of steps within the fireplace has
 been added since it was exposed in the
 late 1980's; it visibly overlies a pitched
 stone hearth. In the rear wall of the
 fireplace is a narrow stone lined passage,
 now blocked on the inside, but which
 splays on the outside in such a way that
 suggests it may have been intended to
 provide a draught for the chimney.

A similar vent exists at the second site to
 be described; confusingly called








Figure 1: Ground floor plan with phasing

GATE FARMHOUSE, Brownston, S. Devon

Ground plan



Key:

-  Mediaeval
-  ? 16c
-  ? first half of 17c
-  ? late 17c/ early 18c
-  19c
-  Modern
-  Uncertain

BROWNSTON FARMHOUSE, near RATTERY, only a few miles to the north-east. This is virtually the same design as Gatehouse, but has two ovens. The fireplace here is narrower, so a second oven can be fitted in, to the side (see figure 2). The draught vent enters directly into the back of one of the ovens, raising the suggestion that it may be a later hole, possibly for raking ash from the oven. The fireplace lintel has a rebate along its front with peg-holes, suggesting the former existence of a fire hood to prevent smoke being blown into the room. The smoking chamber design is identical to Gatehouse, although in plan it is smaller and differently shaped.

A chamber has recently been brought to my attention at GREAT HOWTON, MORETONHAMPSTEAD. It is the first from this area and must mean there are more. The design (see gazetteer) is very similar to type 3, but both the stoke hole and the access door face the fireplace and the smoke did not exit by a flue, but over the top of the door in the same way as type 1. It will be given type 3A, but given the solitary nature of the example, it must remain a provisional classification.

The dating of smoking chambers is one which was touched on in the last article (p.27), but J. Thorp has pointed out recently that the kitchen wing at Broomham Farm, King's Nympton which he recorded, can be shown to link in with a rebuilding phase elsewhere in the house, recorded by a datestone of 1634. It would be dangerous to see this as being a precise date for the other chambers, owing to the broad geographical gap; to use it as a general guide would be more appropriate. It has been assumed from other sources, e.g.:

roof design, beam/door mouldings etc., that the date span of the kitchens containing smoking chambers covers the period circa 1600-1650. The Broomham date fits very nicely with this hypothesis.

Gazetteer

With new sites and updates of previously listed chambers.

Keynedon Barton, Sherford

SX 775433

First half of C17

Most probably a brewing vat, may have had large metal vessel above. Single storey lean-to on C15/16 service range. Unusual.

Leigh Barton, Churchstow

SX 721467

2nd half of C15/1st quarter of C16

Comments in previous article probably refer to oven or brewing vat. Large charnel box (wooden fire hood) in front of removed hearth arch would have functioned as a smoking chamber, albeit a very crude one. Examples of these devices are more common in South Wales, (see RCAHMW Glamorgan, Vol. IV, Part 2, Pp. 1152-3, 2298-9).

Gatehouse Farm, Brownston

SX 698527

First half of C17

Type 3

Details as text of current article.

Brownston Farm, Rattery

SX 752626

First half of C17

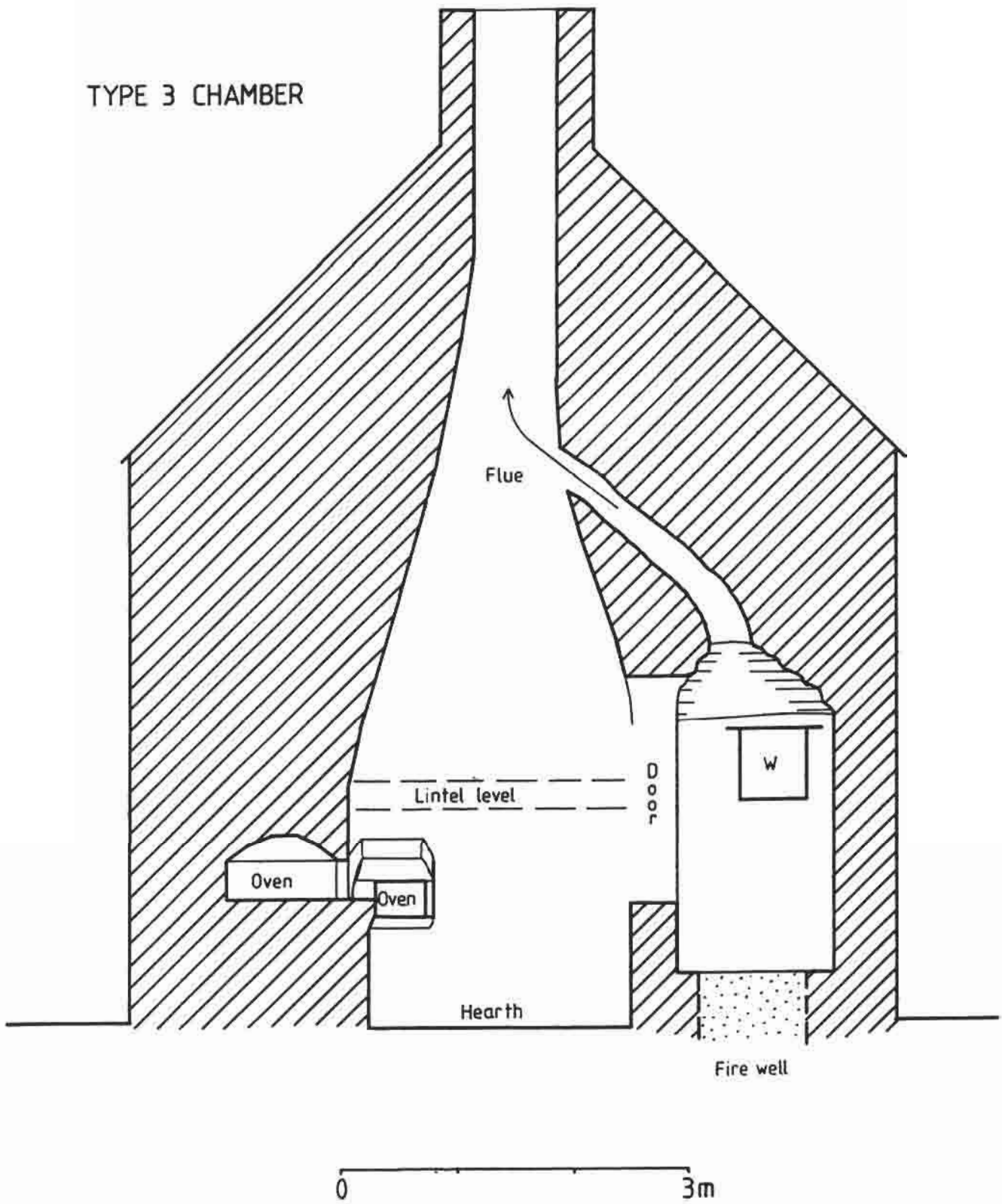
Type 3

Details as above.

Lower Beara, South Brent

Figure 2:

TYPE 3 CHAMBER



SX 710614

Demolished, may be type 3

Photographs in Totnes Museum show large high chamber with corbelled roof and pointed door-head. C16 arched door frame from cross passage also on display.

Penson, North Huish

SX 724543

May be type 1

Not visited personally, but described by a friend.

Site X*, South Brent

Type 2

Excavation of filled in fire-well in 1996 revealed circular well with wide shelf all the way round. Vertical slate slab in stoke-hole passage to hearth, probably to keep direct draughts from burning the fuel too fast. This was heavily worn as if it had been repeatedly struck by fire iron. Best preserved of type 2 chambers. No rake-out hole.

Longbrook, West Alvington

SX 723437

Type 1

In end of long three-storey wing on rear of medium sized mansion house of C16-C18. Opens off rear of small fireplace with newel stair beside, climbing over probable oven. Circular chamber and well with slit window in side, corbelled roof demolished. 2nd floor level was at top of chamber corbelling. Newel stair and first floor may have been entered from outside by door on gable end. Rather unusual arrangement.

Cranche's, Galmpton

SX 69-40-

Type 1

Same design as Longbrook, but corbelled dome is intact. Room over

oven may have been entered from outside at ground level.

Great Howton, Moretonhampstead

SX 744872

Type 3A

Not visited, but described by friend.

*Owner has requested anonymity

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Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank David & Lesley Neate for allowing me to include Gatehouse Farm in this article, also thanks must be extended to Mr Norman, of Brownston Farm, Rattery, who kindly let me

measure his chamber. Mr Robert Savery and Mrs Jenny Sanders told me of the chambers at Penson and Great Howton respectively.

Further comments / unrecorded chambers are welcomed.
I can be contacted on 01548 852570.

Robert Waterhouse

CASEWORK 1997

There has been little casework in the past year requiring 'coordination', which may have been due to some extent to the significant determination of the 'Shimizu' case, and the period of confusion which followed the deliverance of the House of Lords judgement on **Shimizu (UK) Limited v Westminster City Council (1977)** on 6th February 1997.

The case concerned the removal of a chimney breast from an office block in Piccadilly, for which the owners – Shimizu (UK) Ltd. – had applied for listed building consent. This was refused, and the owners then claimed some £1.8M compensation. This claim was rejected by Westminster City Council on the grounds that the proposed works constituted **demolition of part of the building**, for which compensation was not allowed under section 27 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Shimizu (UK) Ltd. appealed on the ground that the works were **alterations**, for which compensation was allowed, and the argument proceeded through the

Lands Tribunal, Court of Appeal, and finally the House of Lords, which determined that **demolition refers to the complete destruction of a building, or destruction to a significant extent**. Works involving demolition of a part of a building were to be categorised as **alterations**, but **“the question of what constitutes the demolition of the whole building is a question of fact and degree which will need to be decided on the facts of each case”**.

This judgement had an immediate effect upon local planning authorities and the national amenity societies, as it largely negated the provisions for consultation in the 1990 Act and Circular 8/87 (the procedural requirements, or 'directions', in Circular 8/87 were still in force at the time, as PPG15 had only replaced the policy statements in the Circular).

Para. 81 of Circular 8/87 contained the direction of the Secretary of State which required all local planning authorities in England to give notice of all applications for consent to demolish a listed building to the Ancient Monuments Society, The Council for British Archaeology, The Georgian Group, The Society for the Protection of Ancient Monuments, The Victorian Society and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.

The notes which followed the Secretary of State's direction referred to "giving notice of applications which involve only partial demolition", and also stated that the Department often received queries regarding works which did not involve total demolition. While the Secretary of State could not give an authoritative definition of the law, attention was drawn to Section 336 of

the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, where 'building' was defined as including any part of a building. Despite the lack of authoritative definition before Shimizu, the term 'demolition' was applied, by local planning authorities, national amenity societies, and others, to a wide range of works involving partial demolition, which gave statutory consultative access to all such applications.

The result of the Shimizu decision was to close the door to all consultative action unless applications involved complete or a significant extent of demolition, and it appeared that most development proposals relating to listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas were to be treated as alterations. In the latter case the need for conservation area consent was also removed by the new legal definition.

Some local planning authorities relied upon Section 67 of the P(LB&CA)Act 1990 (Publicity for applications affecting setting of listed buildings) to invite consultative comment, but this approach was of limited application, and it was evident that urgent Government action was required to restore valid planning control over listed buildings and conservation areas, preferably in a way which would restore previous principles.

Almost seven months of uncertainty ended on 29th August 1997 when the Department of the Environment published **Circular 14/97 – 'Planning and the Historic Environment – Notification and Directions by the Secretary of State'** which came into force on 1/10/97.

This new Circular revokes the notification and directions contained in Circular 8/87, and substitutes amended items. It also amends certain sections of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (P(LB&CA)Act 1990) together with parts of Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). The new Circular therefore addresses changes in procedure and the wording of policy statements – in PPG15, for example, all references to partial demolition are deleted to prevent any conflict with the House of Lords decision.

The amendments to PPG15 are set out in Appendix E to Circular 14/97, and as PPG15 is an important and useful reference with which all caseworkers should be familiar, these amendments are summarised below with comment, by reference to the PPG15 paragraph.

3.1

The words "in whole or in part" are deleted from third sentence. – *A listed building (or one subject to a building preservation notice) requires consent for its demolition (previously demolition in whole or in part) and for any works of alteration or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic influence.*

Caseworkers need to give careful thought to the affect of proposals on character, as this is often the most important aspect of an application, and one which is perhaps the most open to argument. Little change in general.

3.15A

New paragraph added, which reads:
 “Where works of alteration involve the demolition of a significant part of the listed building, the considerations set out in paragraph 3.19 should be addressed.”
 – See below.

3.18

Deleted. – *The reason for the deletion of this paragraph is not readily apparent, and is perhaps to be regretted, as it served as a useful reminder of the guidance given in paras. 3.12 to 3.15 regarding material considerations which should be taken into account by LPAs when considering applications. Caseworkers are recommended to pay special attention to these matters.*

3.19

The words ‘or any significant part of it’ are deleted from the first sentence. *This amendment has little effect on the intent of the original para., and are more to do with the need to follow the legal definition of demolition. Para. 3.19 sets out further considerations which LPAs are expected to take into account when dealing with applications for listed building consent for demolition, which may also need attention by a caseworker.*

3.44

The words ‘in whole or in part’ are deleted from the first sentence. *Paras. 3.44 – 3.48 deal with prosecution and penalties, and are not relevant to casework.*

4.28

Replaced by the first three paragraphs of Circular 14/97 Appendix E. *The first two paragraphs deal with the legal definition of ‘demolition’ and have*

been summarised in the first part of this report. The third paragraph is of some importance to work in conservation areas, and is quoted in full below:

“The House of Lords also considered that works for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area must also involve the total or substantial destruction of the building concerned. This means that many works which involve the destruction of the fabric of part only of a building will not be works of demolition and will not require conservation area consent.”

*It would seem that conservation areas are most at risk following the House of Lords’ decision, whereas listed buildings have been restored more or less to their former position regarding notification to the national amenity societies. Charles Mynor FRTPI ARICS Barrister, writing in **Context No.54 June 97** (Journal of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation) points out that “conservation area consent will only be needed for the carrying out of works in a conservation area provided that they ... amount to demolition of a whole building... it would not include the removal of a single window, or a whole shop front; not the removal of one wall of a building, prior to adding on an extension, not the removal of a porch, or knocking a hole in a wall; nor the removal of architectural details such as finials, gate piers and so on. These would all be alterations, which might or might not require planning permission. There is in practice a whole range of minor operations which do not require specific planning permission, because they are permitted automatically by the General Development Order 1995 –*

particularly in the context of dwellinghouses. It has always been thought until now that these constituted or included "demolition", and thus required conservation area consent. Well, thanks to Lord Hope, now we know better. They do not."

Caseworkers who yet have to add PPG15 to their reference library should note that copies can be obtained from HMSO Bookshops or by telephone from HMSO Books Enquiry Section on 0171 873 9090. The cost was £8.40 and Visa Cards are accepted. Those who wish to be totally confused could at the same time order the subject of this article – Environment Circular 14/97 for the princely sum of £9.09, including recently imposed handling charge and VAT.

Would caseworkers also note please that I do need a copy of any representations which they make, for record purposes. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or concerns regarding a case – I will do my best to respond, although my time and resources are still limited.

We have lost several experienced caseworkers over the past year due to pressure of work, and their invaluable contribution to the aims of the DBG will be sadly missed at a time when even greater efforts may be required to maintain satisfactory standards of building conservation.

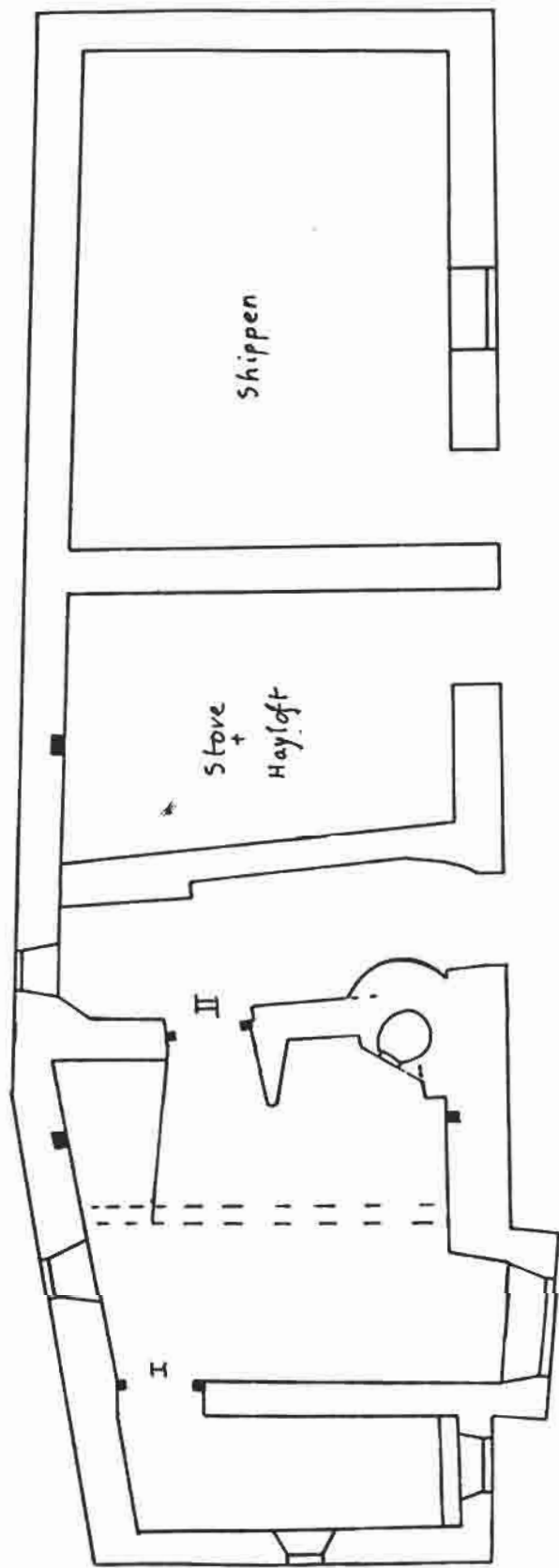
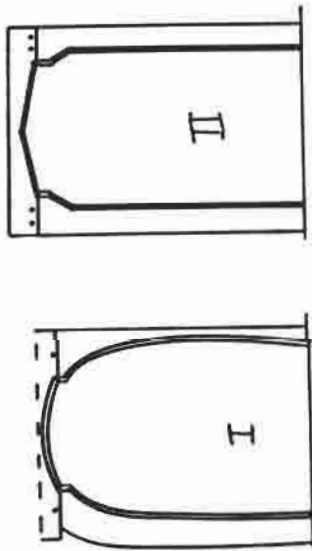
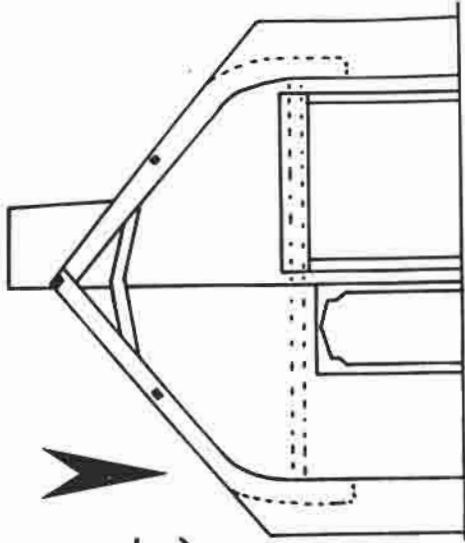
Peter Roseveare
Casework Coordinator
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TWO MID-DEVON LONGHOUSES

It has been suggested that the *Devon Buildings Group Newsletter* should include some of the unpublished building surveys that I carried out in the 1970's and 1980's. These were originally intended as the basis for an extensive publication on Devon vernacular architecture, but this project never progressed beyond the planning stage, because of the intervention of other endeavours. Inevitably, these reports will describe the buildings *as they were*, and I have not revisited them to see whether they have been altered, or whether structural evidence has been exposed or concealed; however, the DOE listed building descriptions have been checked and any obvious differences from my records are noted. It has also not been possible to carry out any new documentary research on the social background to the buildings. Perhaps Group members with easier access to the Devon Record Office might be able to check on the ownership and farm size on the Tithe Map and include a note in a future newsletter. Those with more recent and wider experience in the county might also have comparative examples and better ideas on dates.

This first report describes two houses in mid/west Devon, that were significant in indicating that true long-houses existed in this part of the county, with shippons that remained unconverted into the present century. Both are notably small late medieval/sixteenth century houses, and suggest an association of the long-house plan with small farms, although other examples with unconverted shippons (notably CHIMSWORTHY) are much more substantial. Only a

Lower Chichacott



wider-ranging survey with many more examples would clarify this ambiguity.

LOWER CHICHACOTT COTTAGE,
OKEHAMPTON HAMLETS
(SX603965) (recorded 1973)

Site:

In a hamlet of 3 houses.

Materials:

Walls 8 ft of stone with cob over, roof thatched, hipped to larder end.

Layout:

Wedge-shaped hall and narrow larder/inner room; passage now closed at far end. Lower end: store and hayloft separated from passage and shippon by head-height walls (usage as in 1960).

Features:

Larder: end wall partly rebuilt in brick, under hipped roof; no internal features. Hall: Projecting gabled window (C17). Door to larder (I) with shouldered head, segmental lintel and slightly bowed jambs; door to passage (II) with cranked shouldered head; its wall not quite reaching roof. Beam with draw stops. Fireplace with granite jambs, lintel with straight-cut stops (above ceiling –DOE).

Roof:

Truss I (over hall; drawn) true cruck with threaded purlins and cranked collar, encrustation apparently with soot (DOE); no access to check smoke-blackening in roof (and apex inferred). Truss II apparently similar but front foot cut off and collar removed, not sooted. Other trusses in shippon of C19?

Date and Development:

Original house presumably with open hearth (if evidence of sooting on truss correct), 1500 or earlier (from door I). Addition of chimney heating full-height hall, 2nd half of C16 (from door II). Alternatively, built with original chimney and all of later C16. In C17, flooring of hall and addition of projecting gable. Shippon reconstructed and perhaps lengthened in C19.

BUDDLE, BROADWOODWIDGER
(SX402900) (recorded 1980)

Materials:

Cob over stone with a thatched roof.

Plan:

Three units with cross-passage and two rear lean-tos; 19th century stair and additional door inner room (and brick chimney). The inner room is 6in wider than the hall, and the shippon and hall are mis-aligned, indicating multiple building/rebuilding phases. The lean-tos are in continuous cob; a straight joint near the passage door is inexplicable. Inserted low wall separating shippon from passage.

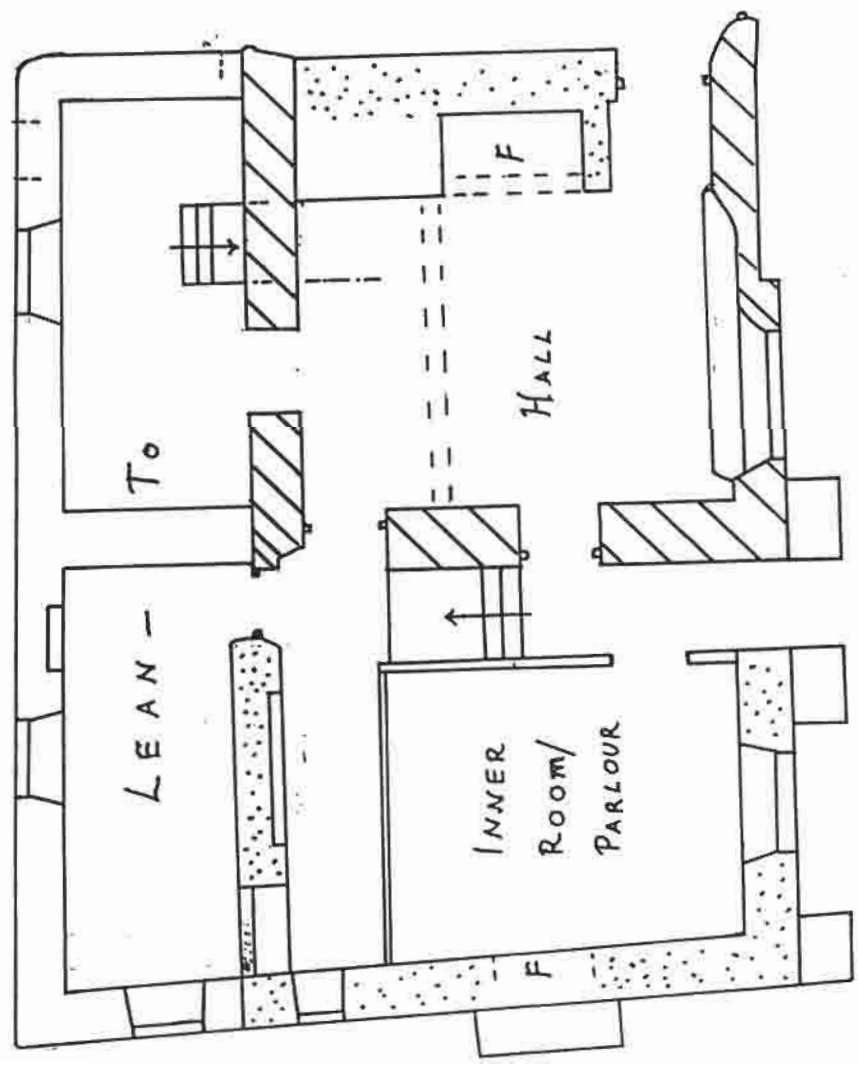
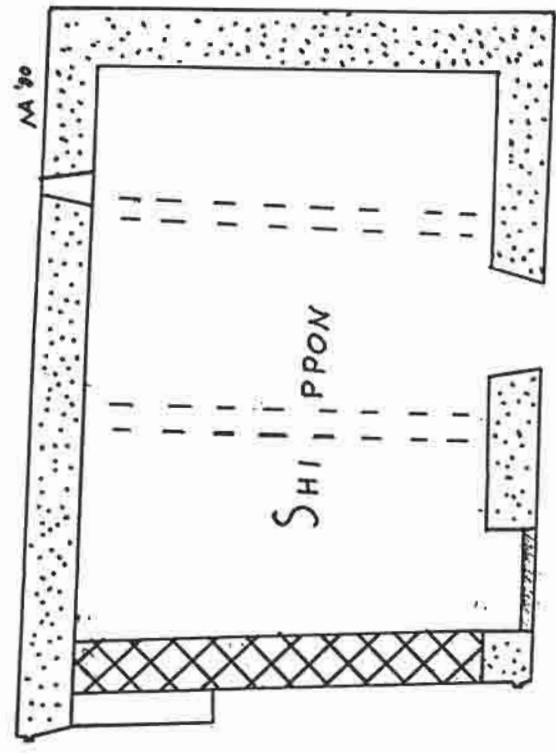
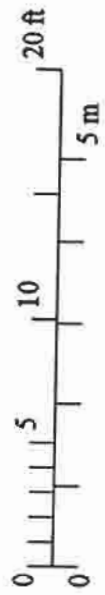
Features:

Relatively few internal features. Hall: granite jambs for fireplace; C17/18 window seat. Shippon: axial drain apparently present (under straw, etc.); beams for hayloft (floor removed). N. lean-to has long shelf for dairy use; blocked door at N end; existing door from inner room has chamfered frame with mason's mitre.

Roof:

Inner Room: two pairs of purlins only, spanning between solid gables, smoke-

Buddle



blackened. Hall: one truss, feet of principals very slightly curved; E-apex (morticed on diagonal); collar lap-dovetailed (DOE); two pairs of trenched purlins. Principals, rafters and thatch all smoke-blackened. Masonry of Hall chimney perfectly clean, not completely cutting off shippon. Shippon: three free-standing trusses and one butted up to chimney. Principals with straight feet and halved collars, unsooted, apart from possible traces on truss beside chimney.

Date and Development:

A significant example of a small late medieval house, perhaps typical of many that have since vanished. Originally one room hall, with shippon (possibly smaller), late medieval, possibly late in the period (E-apex); date of 1550+ initially proposed. Inner room with its own open hearth, 1575? [*These dates seem too late now, and perhaps 1525 and 1550 could be suggested.*] Hall ceiled and chimney inserted. No direct dating evidence, but 17th century? (Cf. Window noted below). Shippon probably rebuilt and perhaps enlarged c. 1700.

Out-buildings:

18/19th century stable/shippon with hayloft including re-used ovolo-mullioned three-light wooden window with original shutters.

The listed building description indicates that the house has been renovated since it was recorded, though with relatively little change to the structure. The 19th century passage and stair in the inner room have been removed, and the hall fireplace unblocked.

N.W. Alcock

WALL PAINTINGS AT THE BELL INN, MORETONHAMPTSTEAD

Discovery & Restoration

The wall paintings came to light in an upstairs room at the Bell in 1994. The landlord was engaged in renovation work during which timber boarding was removed from the walls and areas of painting discovered. He contacted the Dartmoor National Park to inform them of the find and, as the building was not listed and work was continuing rapidly, it was decided at least to record the paintings before they were lost.

Then the National Park Authority agreed to grant aid the repair and preservation of the wall painting, and work started in February 1995 with the condition that there should be public access to view for a minimum of three years after completion.

The first job was to remove dust from the walls so that a proper photographic record could be made. This in itself presented problems as the paint surface was, in places, so friable that it could be brushed off as easily as the dust!

The work carried out on the painted room included: repairing the areas of lost plaster with new hair-reinforced lime plaster; refixing areas of loose plaster by injecting with lime grout; consolidating the paint surface by repeated mist spraying with a dilute consolidant (a water based acrylic polymer); fixing areas of loose lime wash, the backing of the painted work, by injecting with adhesive; painting the areas of new plaster and damaged areas with water based colours.

Context

In style this room clearly belongs to that small group of late C18/early C19 buildings which still retain their original interior decorative schemes derived from gentry visits to the Continent and, in particular, to Italy. In this county we have many examples of interesting houses of the period, particularly 'Endsleigh' in South Milton and the villas of the East Devon coastal towns, but only a few, such as 'Tor Royal' at Princetown (with its painted doors from Carlton House) and, most complete, 'A la Ronde' at Exmouth, still retain painted decoration of the period. The room at the Bell Inn must class as a very rare treasure and its rescue from dereliction and its restoration is a tribute to the farsightedness of both the owner, Roger McEvansoneya, and the Dartmoor National Park Authority, who equally financed it.

Inspiration

In a letter to the owner and in reply to his attempt to identify the heraldic motifs, the Institute of Heraldic & Genealogical Studies suggested the decorative idea to be based on an Etruscan tomb and the purpose perhaps Masonic. There seems some justification for the former, if not for the latter. The formal arrangement of the panels might owe something to the 6th century BC 'Tomb of the Bulls' at Tarquinia but the palette, with its bright pastel shades (accurately if unkindly described by one art critic as 'Opal Fruit' colours) is more reminiscent of Italian medieval frescoes, while the little scenes look Roman.

As with other schemes devised in compliment to Grand Tour images, it is probably entirely hybrid. Herculaneum was discovered in 1738 and was steadily plundered from then on. The same fate befell Pompeii after its discovery ten years later and, although archaeological investigation did not begin properly until the second half of the nineteenth century, no doubt pieces of wall painting were removed long before then. In any case Rome itself had been giving up its treasures for centuries and the late eighteenth century English traveller in Italy would have had plenty of assorted motifs to collect from buildings, artefacts and books. The provenance though of classical motifs was seldom clear to these travellers. The inspiration of Josiah Wedgwood's works was quite incorrectly believed 'Etruscan', and the painted walls of Newtimber Place near Brighton, while literal copies of scenes from Greek black figure vases, are called 'Pompeian' to this day.

The scheme

The scheme divides the walls into landscape proportioned, rectangular panels and was carried around at least one original window opening. The room was once longer than we see it today and the design presumably once extended round the east end, where the wall beside the present entrance rudely cuts the scheme.

The panels are separated vertically by painted pilasters and framed horizontally by a plinth, to about a foot above the floor, topped with paired panels to chair height, and have a flat cornice band to the ceiling. (The later is entirely new with exposed joists and there seems to

be no recorded evidence of what the original was like.)

The colours are both vibrant and sugary. The cornice, the end pediments and the core of each pilaster is bright, laundry blue, bordered with yellow. The main panels are pea green bordered with pink. The paired dado panels are a reddish brown divided by near-black stripes bordered in green. The plinth is near-black. The pink borders are outlined in red (as are the pilasters) and decorated with a framed husk design, perhaps stencilled on, in green, with green eight petalled rosettes in the corners. The capitals each carry a band of three red roses. A little below half way down each pilaster is a shield of arms in full colour surrounded by a rococo frame in yellowy brown. The reddish brown dado is decorated with rushy leaved plants in green, with four to six red or orangey four to six petalled flowers to each plant.

The decoration seems never to have been fully completed, with the stencilling and some other small details absent, even from some of the undamaged areas. Only a start had been made to decorate some of the pilasters with an intricate, stylised flower vase design in white on the blue ground.

Techniques

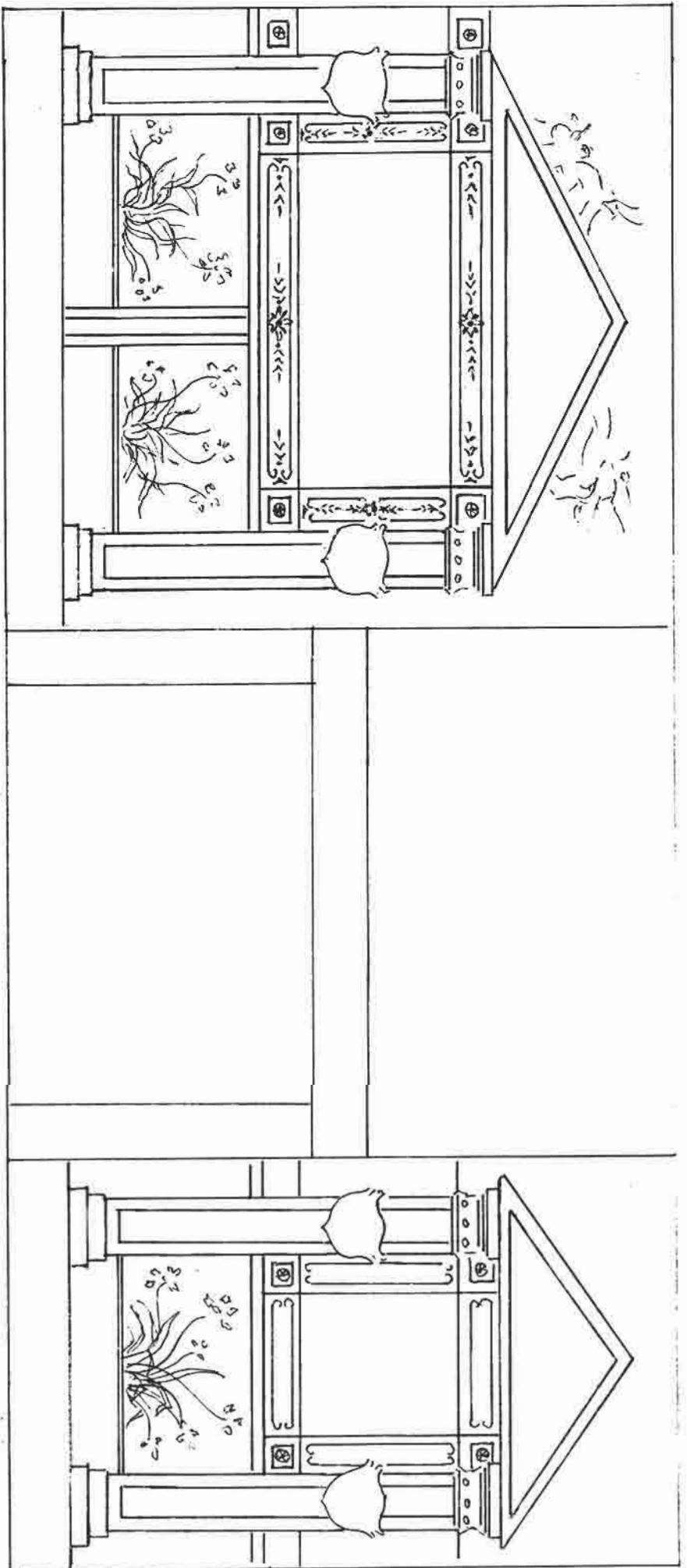
The whole is executed in flat paint, with the capitals and feet of the pilasters made out of cut paper – presumably to simplify the making of a symmetrical outline. The remains of setting out lines are visible in places, as are colour indications in English.

The Themes

At the far end of the chamber there is a fireplace off centre (which appears to be late medieval as it retains worn hood corbelling), on either side of which is a pedimented panel with mythological scenes above. Those on the right side are more or less obliterated. However, those above the left hand pediment show what appears to be a naked Amazon with a red cloak killing a centaur with a lance on the right hand side, and Cupid (or Eros) milking a goat into a bucket on the left. The symbolism, if any, is at present entirely mysterious.

Ovid is the obvious origin of the myths portrayed but cannot have been directly so. Our classics advisors know of no literal parallels. The scene on the right of the pediment, it has been suggested, might portray Deioneira on the back of Nessus, rather than on that of an Amazon. The centaur, Nessus, was entrusted by Heracles to carry his bride, Deioneira, across a river but attempted to rape her. Heracles, hearing her cries, immediately rushed to her rescue and killed him. The lady's nakedness might well symbolise her status as a new bride and perhaps the lance in her hand, the fate of Nessus.

The goat and the winged child with the bucket might be a version of the tale of the infant Jupiter with his wet nurse, Amalthea. She was sometimes portrayed as a goat; her bounty of milk was the origin of the 'cornucopia', or horn of plenty, and she was immortalised as the constellation Capella. The wings are a problem here. Cupid appears to be the only classical winged child; however, he is not usually associated with milch goats and his



The scheme at the east end, which probably continued across the now rebuilt chimney breast.

attribute is a bow, and not a bucket. It is, of course, possible that the wings were used merely to indicate the celestial status of the infant Jupiter.

Among many helpful suggestions is the fascinating possibility that these scenes are intended as a decorative rebus on the names of the people connected with Moretonhampstead. J.A.: N.D., for instance. The authors would greatly appreciate further suggestions from those more versed in the classics, and classically derived art, than themselves.

The heraldry

Here the puzzles continue. Of the remaining coats of arms depicted, only two can be possibly identified with Devon families, and of these one is of the Cliffords (of Ugbrooke House) who were Roman Catholics (chequey Or & Azure, a bend Gules). This raises the possibility that they might all belong to Catholic families who, for obvious reasons, would have married within their faith, if not their county. However, Moreton was a town with strong non-conformist tendencies at the time, and so a Catholic social enclave seems very unlikely. We may have to assume that the heraldry, like the classical imagery, is purely fanciful decoration.

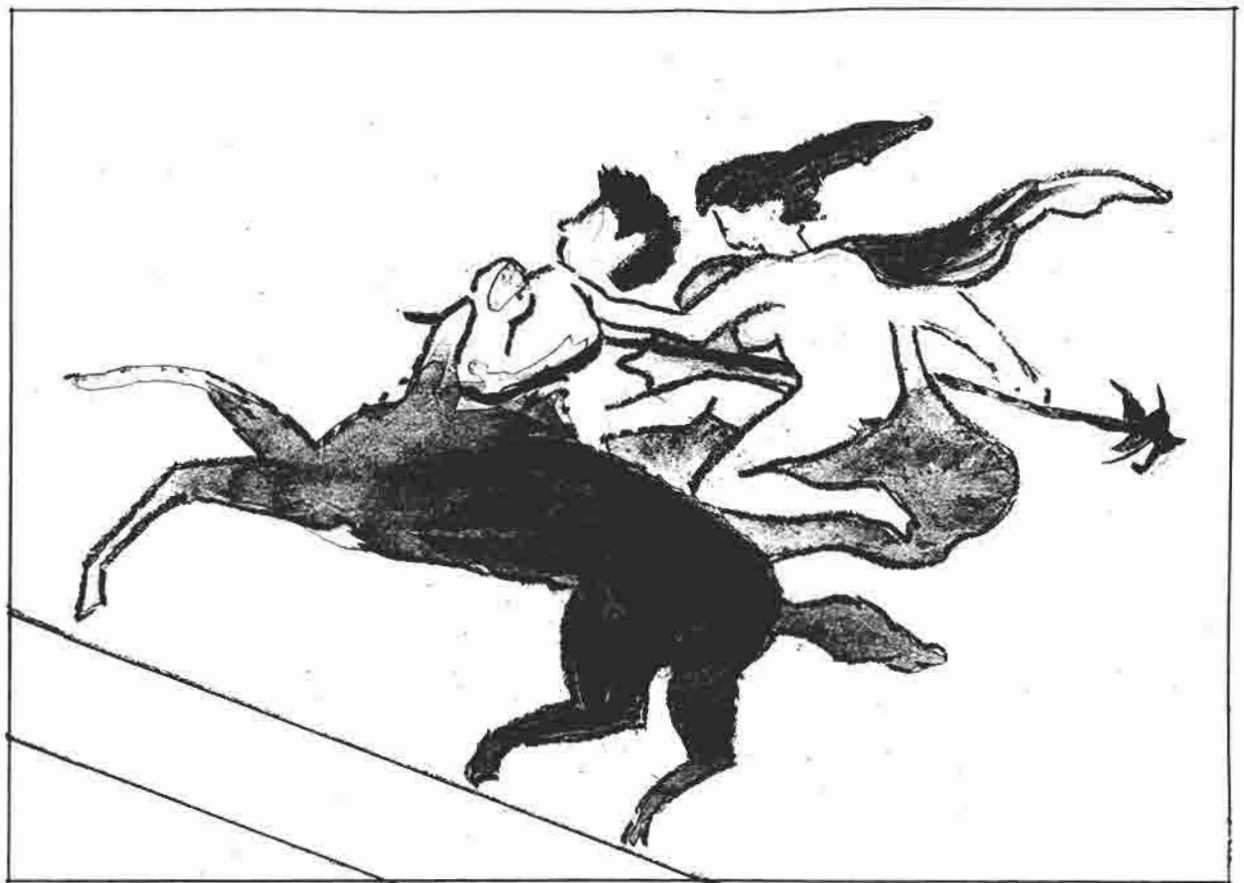
History

To date, only two references to the room at the Bell have come to light, both in the unpublished diary of one Silvester Treleven (1759-1824), who was a hairdresser in the town and younger brother to the postmaster and stationer. Search in the newspapers held at the West country Studies Library and in the Devon & Exeter Institution, has shown

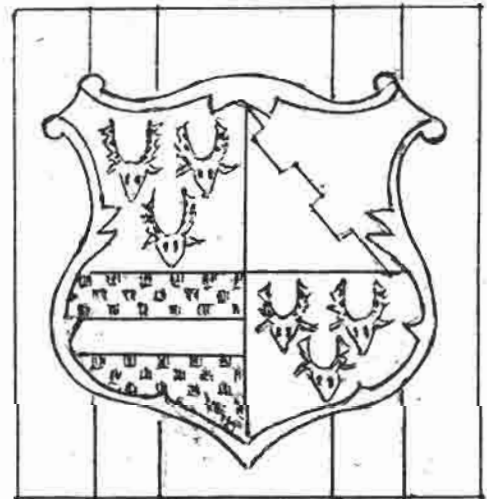
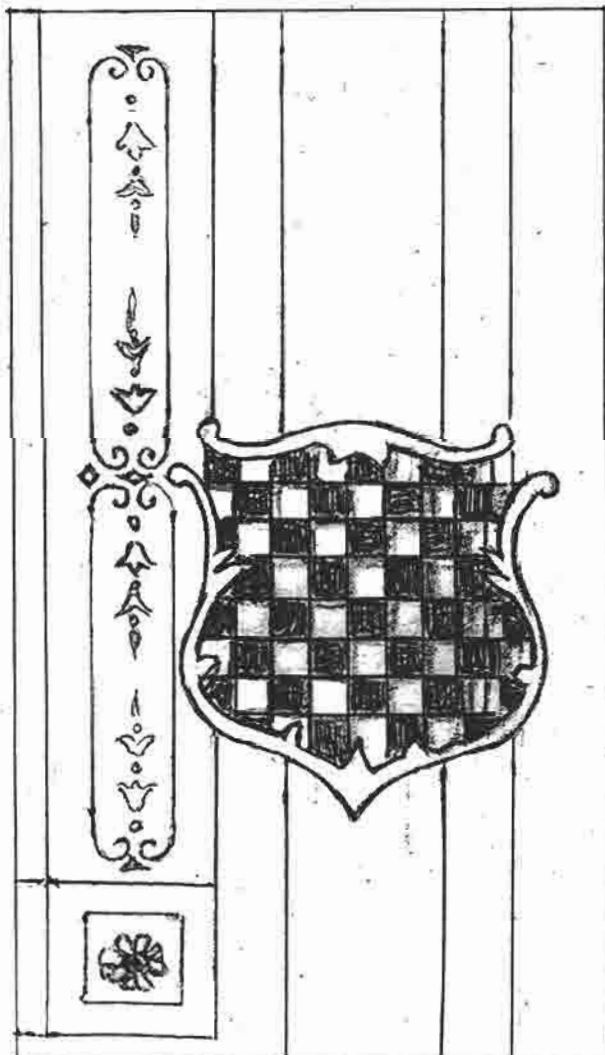
that social news, except occasionally of the highest society of Exeter and Plymouth, was never covered at the time.

However, Treleven's diaries, which he entitled 'Chronological Occurencies in Moretonhampstead', run intermittently from 1799 to 1816 and there are two references to the room at the Bell - known as the 'Concert Room' - both for 1800. The most delightful and evocative, of an occasion that might have been depicted by Jane Austen, is of a ball held there on the 10th of January 1800: 'A Ball this evening at the Concert Room. The Young Ladies and Gentlemen made a very neat and decent appearance, and parted about 12 O'Clock highly pleased with their Evening's amusement.'

There is a reference to the sale of the inn, in May 1800, and the only other mention of the 'Concert Room' is to an exhibition of musical clocks held there in October in the same year. By October 1807, the Bell was being used as a lock-up for escaped French officer prisoners of war. The socially observant Mr. Treleven records in detail the completion of the arboreal ballroom, in the nearby Cross Tree, in 1801 (with seating accommodation for thirty persons and room for six couples to dance, as well as an orchestra!). There are, however, no further entries mentioning the 'Concert Room' at the Bell and it seems likely that it went out of public use with the change of ownership. At some time the walls were covered with boarding and it is probably to this total abandonment that we owe the - albeit fragmentary - survival of the paintings.



The design on the right of the pediment



Two of the heraldic devices decorating the yellow edged blue pilasters: one with the green 'husk' design on a pink band; the other with caboshed stags' heads of cut paper, like the capitals

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Mrs Alison Simkins, of the Moretonhampstead Local History Society, for bringing Treleaven's diary to our attention; Richard Bass and Francis Kelly for suggestions on the mythology of the paintings; Ian Cressell for help with the Devon heraldry; the staff of the Devon & Exeter Institution and the Westcountry Studies Library, for help with the newspaper research. J.& J. Sharpe recorded the paintings and carried out their conservation and restoration.

Ann Adams and Jeremy Sharpe

NEW MEMBERS

Since the 1996/7 AGM, we have welcomed the following new members: Ms Lyn Auty; Mr & Mrs C. Baker; Ms L. Bartlett; D.J.B. Coulter; P. Dalton; D. Edwards; Dr T. Gray; Mrs V. Harrison; Prof W. Harvey; A. Johnson; J. Lomas; K. Murray; Mrs J. Sanders; Mr & Mrs K. Tanton.

NEW LISTED BUILDINGS SERVICE

The National Monuments Record (of RCHME) opened a new Information Service, with a data base covering England's listed buildings, in November of last year. A 24 hour service offers a guaranteed quick response to requests for information from the statutory lists. Telephone 0171 208 8221, asking for 'Listed Buildings Information Service', and entries for up to three individual buildings will be despatched the next working day.

Front cover: mural detail from the 'Concert Room' at the Bell Inn, Moretonhampstead.