

DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 19



Spring 2001

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REVIEW OF THE YEAR

This Newsletter comes out with Devon in the tragic grip of Foot & Mouth Disease, with rural travelling reduced to a minimum, the visiting of farmhouses out of the question and all village halls closed. In these circumstances, it is not possible to organise our usual June Summer Conference. The Committee has decided, therefore, to postpone the 2001 Conference to the date chosen for the AGM, Saturday 13th October. We are still intending to retain our chosen topic, suggested at the 2000 AGM, of the History of the Buildings of the Tamar Valley. As soon as conditions permit its organisation, members will be notified of the programme.

Conference 2000

Our 15th Summer Conference was held, on Saturday 10th of June, at Ilfracombe. It was titled 'A Victorian Seaside Town' and the morning session was held in The Lantern Community Centre, in the High Street. The Lantern is a converted C19 Congregational church and its premises, in which we were able to see the plain but happily proportioned body of the church, which is retained for functions – although we were in a top floor studio next door, normally used for art classes. 32 members and guests attended, illustrating once again how oddly reluctant many members are to travel to the northernmost parts of the county, despite the spectacular beauty of much of its scenery.

Those who made the effort were richly rewarded. The three morning speakers presented wonderfully diverse aspects of our subject, with Dr John Travers, who some will remember addressing us, at an AGM at Lynton, a few years ago, or as the author of the 'The Rise of the Devon Seaside Town'. He spoke, with slides, on the

social development of Ilfracombe, from a fishing village to a remote haven for gentry holiday villas, to its increasing middle class popularity and eventually its destination for steamship day visitors from industrial South Wales.

Dr Chris Brooks' talk, on The Parish Church, was a brilliant, documentarily inspired exposition of the social demography of congregations, over the period.

Michael Laithwaite, who listed the buildings of the town for the DOE and published an excellent book on them, in 1992, which is, sadly, now out of print, gave a wonderful illustrated talk on the buildings themselves, the various architects of them and their schemes.

As so often, our day was enhanced by the generous participation of knowledgeable local people. The Secretary of the Centre lent old photographs of the Lantern, before and after conversion, and Rev Jim Bates mounted us a little exhibition of his delightfully detailed drawings of many of the Victorian houses of the town and put out booklets, based on them, for sale.

After lunch, Michael led us on a pretty comprehensive, totally enthralling and, eventually, fairly exhausting walk-about of this very hilly little town, which he knows so well. Sadly, some of the most interesting buildings are not protected by listing. The weather was kind to us again and we were able to enjoy Ilfracombe in beautiful sunshine and, appropriately to the spirit of the place, refreshed by delicious ice cream. We owe a great deal to all those who contributed to this memorable day and a vote of thanks to them was recorded at the AGM, later in the year.

Newsletter 2000

Newsletter No 18 came out a little later than usual: in the summer, rather than the spring. Regrettably, the report on the 1999 AGM at Cullompton contained two errors, both on p5. The Sydenham/Wyndham papers are housed in the Somerset Record Office, in Taunton (not in Surrey) and the publishers of the map of the Courten estate and the town were Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries (not Devon & Cornwall Record Society, as stated). On p6, Trock should be read throughout.

AGM 2000

The AGM, on Saturday 7th October, was held at Colyton and attended by 31 members of DBG and 3 members of the Colyton Local History Society, of whom John Addie and John Cochrane provided highly informative guided tours of the town and the parish church, respectively, in the afternoon.

I was pleased to be able to report that the membership had risen from 127, at the previous AGM, to a much healthier 145 – almost entirely through renewals of lapsed memberships. Dawn Honeysett's suggestion of reminding all members of the Banker's Order facility, which saves them from forgetting their subs and the Treasurer from having to send out reminders, had brought in an additional 19 of them, extending Banker's Orders to about 80% of the membership.

As 14 of the Committee were already serving some part of their three years, only Su Jarwood remained to be re-elected.

Jenny Sanders reported on a remarkable collection of 112 architectural drawings, recently found in a basement in Tavistock Town Hall and currently being catalogued by staff at the Tavistock Museum. They are by Theophilus Jones and Edward Rundle, were all drawn for the Duke of

Bedford's C19 re-designing of the town and many never built. Jenny brought a selection of photocopies, for members to appreciate the quality for themselves. As it is hoped to publish the complete collection, the meeting agreed that DBG should subsidise the publication, possibly as a joint venture and up to £500, but only if copies could be provided for members at a very special price.

As part of the afternoon's tours, a visit to the remains of the once great mansion at Shute (now known as Shute Barton and administered by the National Trust) was planned. Until recently, very little had been known about the form of the house, before the greater part was demolished, for a new one, in the later C18, and something of a smoke-screen had been blown across what is left, by the publication of an extremely inaccurate interpretation, in 1955.

The London based architectural historian, Nicholas Cooper, has been investigating the house, on and off, for a few years now, as part of his published studies of great manor houses. In the process, he made the wonderful discovery of a detailed surveyor's report of 1559, presumably made for William Pole, who bought the former Bonville mansion the following year. Mr Cooper's transcription of this document he most generously made available to DBG, to assist visiting members in their interpretation of what remains, and each got a copy of a slightly modernised version. However, it seemed to me obvious that no one would have the time actually to read it, while going on a whistle-stop guided tour of the remaining, much altered block. So I asked fellow Committee member, Robert Waterhouse, to see whether he could make an interpretation, based only on the words of the C16 survey and his own

specialist understanding of early courtyard houses. This he found he was able to do, the surveyor's measured descriptions being so precise. He presented projections of the resulting drawings, at the end of the business of the AGM, describing the contemporary uses of the various parts of the house, including the blocks of lodgings (the best of which must have been delightful, fronting on to gardens) and sending the members away to their lunches with a mental image of the sort of house to which the present fragment once belonged.

It had been hoped that Mr Cooper would be able to write an account of his investigations into Shute for this Newsletter but, although willing in principle, unfortunately he found himself too busy at the present time. We hope he may be able to make a contribution for next year and, meanwhile, members may care to look out for an article commissioned by *Country Life*, due out in one of its editions some time this autumn.

In the afternoon, we divided into four groups, two going on a tour of the town and church, led by John Addie and John Cochrane, and two going to Shute and its church (Shute Barton, being still inhabited by the Pole-Carew family, is one of the very few NT properties to which access is only by guided tours and these are limited to 8 persons). The Shute groups exchanged and then went back to Colyton, with the town groups going on to Shute. It was a complicated arrangement, almost as involved as the visits to farmhouse roofs, during the 1999 Conference, and it very nearly went to plan. The town of Colyton proved delightful, with many most interesting buildings, including a shop and estate agent's office, formerly a late C16-early C17 merchant's house, with richly moulded coffered ceilings, one with decorative plasterwork, and a painted panel,

perhaps once an overmantel. The church, remarkable for its central octagon tower, is full of good details and many important monuments, including those to the Poles of Shute.

Once again, we owe a great debt to those who contributed to the day: to Nicholas Cooper, for the use of his transcription; to Robert, for his illuminating interpretation of it; to the two Johns of Colyton, for putting their considerable local knowledge at our disposal and giving so generously of their time; and last, but not least, to the patient NT guides, who found themselves coping with our parties' sometimes contentious avid thirst for knowledge, which is so typical of groups of DBG members but was so plainly out of the pattern of the tourists to whom they are normally accustomed.

Ann Adams

BOWDEN FARMSTEAD, **BUCKLAND-IN-THE-MOOR**

Bowden was surveyed in 1996, by kind permission of the owners, Mr & Mrs Stone, who had been there since 1950 and were still farming, though on a lesser scale than previously.

The farmhouse is Grade II* and some of its buildings are Grade II. Originally a medieval longhouse, it has survived the centuries remarkably well, with few major changes, although it underwent internal refurbishment in the C19.

Located at SX 727 737, this charming isolated farmstead, with its cobbled yard, lies within the Dartmoor National Park and includes two SSSIs. It is situated in a sheltered hollow, pro-

tected by Buckland Common and Buckland Beacon, to the east, and close to the Ruddyleave Water, near its junction with the river Dart.

It is south facing, on a considerable west-east slope and a gentler north-south slope, with the upper gable end entered at first floor level. Two of the farm buildings – the detached shippon and the threshing barn – are bank barns.

The exterior

The house is constructed of granite rubble, with the front pitch of the house roof thatched and the shippon end slated. The roof has been raised and the pitch is steep – an estimated 45 degrees. The main additions are a two-storey porch, a cart linhay, a dairy and C20 lean-to at the rear, and a stable block to the shippon end.

The west wall of the porch is not square with the front and the projection created by this irregularity is capped with slate, which suggests there may have been a single storey porch, initially. Our survey shows that there is likely to be a void within the west wall (cf. later). The entrance is off-centre. The porch was re-fronted and the walls of the roof were raised, in the C18. The fascia is clad in Ashburton slate, the pieces covering the apex and purlins cut in an elaborate pattern (as drawn).

The interior

Roof

One complete raised cruck (closed earlier) is, as far as can be determined, located over beam B6 and is lightly smoke-blackened, on the west face only. It has an L1 type apex (CBA Cruck Catalogue: N.W. Alcock, 1981). The ridge piece has disappeared but there are mortises in the trusses, to take the ridge-pole. There is no clear evidence in the soffit of the principals, to show how the truss was closed. The

south half of another raised cruck is seen aligned about B4. This truss is heavily smoke-blackened. The roof is now supported on clean A-frame trusses. A numbering from 1 to 4 (but out of sequence!), of circular chisel marks, was noted on these trusses. There appear to have been three stages to the construction of the roof: a) the smoke-blackened raised cruck trusses; b) the later clean trusses, above the former, with chisel marks, some of the timber retaining its bark; c) the C20 scissor-braced timbers of the shippon end, which are of larch and dated 1910.

Walls

These vary in thickness from 83cm to 51cm, as drawn. Openings generally have timber lintels but the porch has a stone voussoir. Doorway D1 has a shoulder-headed form but is of pine and thought to be a replica of an earlier frame.

Beams

All are roughly finished, with one hall beam retaining its bark. Some have rudimentary chamfers but there are no end stops. B6 seems to be a tie-beam, associated with the surviving raised cruck truss, with B2, B3, B4 & B5 set higher.

Fireplaces

All have modern grates inserted. Both F1 & F2 are likely to have had open hearths. The slate fireplace to F3 is set in front of the original opening, the flue contained within the gable wall and no evidence for any earlier or more substantial flue. The stack to F1 is progressively stepped on all three sides.

Stairs

A 'shadow' of earlier stairs (ST1) can be seen on the wall adjoining F1. They rose within the turret to the hall chamber, where a recess is visible in

the front (south) wall. The present stairs (ST2) are a later insertion and may be those referred to as 'new', by Charles Stanbury, in c1769 (cf. below).

Partition/s

The plinth remaining in the hall, between it and the inner room, is probably the remnant (or the base) of the original partition, which may have been of timber (the present partition is a C19 brick wall). Another plinth runs along the south wall of the hall and its alignment suggests that it may have been the base of that wall, before it was rebuilt or refaced.

North wing

This contains a dairy, on the ground floor, with a chamber above. A chute (as drawn) is unexplained. There is a 7m deep well, further along, outside and close to the lean-to wall.

Shippon end

Part of the shippon was taken in, in the C18, to form a kitchen with hearth, and a stable was added to its end wall.

Interim interpretation

Phase 1: (C16)

The thickness of the walls and the smoke-blackened cruck trusses seem to indicate that the original house consisted of an open hall, which extended from the east side of the cross passage to the west gable, and dates from the early C16. During restoration of the hall chamber, there was evidence of wattle & daub, high up above the present stack, suggesting there may have been a smoke hood, before the stack was inserted. Doorway D1, rebuilt on the lines of an early C16 shoulder-headed frame, may also have been of this period. There is a possibility that there may have been a porch here, at this stage: the joists over the present porch are of cleft oak, indicating an early date. No positive

evidence remains of any low partitions, between the cross passage and the hall, or between the hall and the inner room. Similarly, there is no clear indication that there was a detached shippon, at that time, particularly as its south walls are not aligned with the house and are not as thick. However, its construction seems to be of an early date and the width of the central passage is 1.7m, easily wide enough for cattle to turn in to the shippon.

Phase II: (C17)

Upgrading is likely to have occurred during the early part of this phase, with the insertion of the large stack, F1. At a later stage, the newel stair turret, with stairs ST1 was added, probably at the time the hall was ceiled. On the evidence of the wall thicknesses, the shippon may also have been added, or rebuilt on a different alignment, at this time.

Phase III: (c1769)

This seems to have been a busy period for building and repair work, within the house, and the creation of farm buildings.

The dating evidence is more certain here, since much can be gleaned from the invaluable accounts of Charles Stanbury, a builder. He repaired the 'dwelling house, chambers, (put in?) new stairs, windows, (made) a new dearry, new dearns and doors, a new partition against the shipping, a new barns floor, timbered a new hogs house and new dearn and doors to the same, new barns, a new beam in the stable' – all for £2.15s labour costs for the 33 days' work. The interior decorating, the 'plaistring the dary, building of the wall, repairing of the kitching, the shipping and the hogs house' was achieved for a further £2.13s.6d.

From these accounts, although the sequence is not particularly clear, it may be assumed that, earlier in the

C18, part of the shippon had been taken in, to form a separate kitchen (with a tallet remaining above) and, around 1769, a stable was added, to the shippon end, and a hogs' house to the stable. Presumably the detached shippon and the threshing barn were the 'new barns' referred to.

During this period also, the stairs (assumed newel, from the indentation in the wall of the hall, as described above) were removed, the oven was inserted and the two-storey porch, which abuts awkwardly on to the remaining stair turret, constructed. The upper end of the house was probably rebuilt or re-fronted, at this stage, and the roof raised.

Phase IV: (C19 & C20)

The interior of the dwelling house was refurbished in the C19. At the time of the 1996 survey, the décor retained its essentially C19 appearance, with thin timber and glass partitions, in the hall, and a corridor on the first floor. In 1996, the hall hearth had a 1950s brick fireplace and that in the inner room a more recent one, in slate.

With regard to the farmstead, the 1841 Tithe Map omits the hogs' house but indicates the existence of the threshing barn and the detached shippon. The wall thicknesses of the latter are uniform, at 64-66cm and the roofs of both buildings have scissor trusses. As these barns are mentioned in 1769, the roof timbers must be later replacements, possibly of the same time as the scissor bracing of the shippon end of the house, which bears the date of 1910. Perhaps it was then that a lean-to was added at the rear.

Sadly, Mr Stone died, in 1997, and the house was put on the market, later the same year. Extensive restoration work took place between the end of 1997 and the end of 1998. This included the removal of many of the floors and some of the ceilings,

drainage work, complete re-roofing of the slated part, with recovered slates, renewal of the thatch ridge, removal of the later fireplaces and restoration of the originals, conversion of the detached shippon, etc. This list is by no means exhaustive.

As well as the remains of a possible wattle & daub smoke hood, these restorations revealed the evidence for the stairs, at the upper end, and for a partition across the first floor corridor, forming a separate tenement. The 'void', within the west wall of the porch, proved to be partly taken up by a large bread oven (102cm x 91cm), as conjectured, but a space still remained and was too large (152cm x 91cm) for that, alone. This space had been filled with rubble and perhaps served as a buttress (the architect's opinion) – or as fire insulation (ed.)

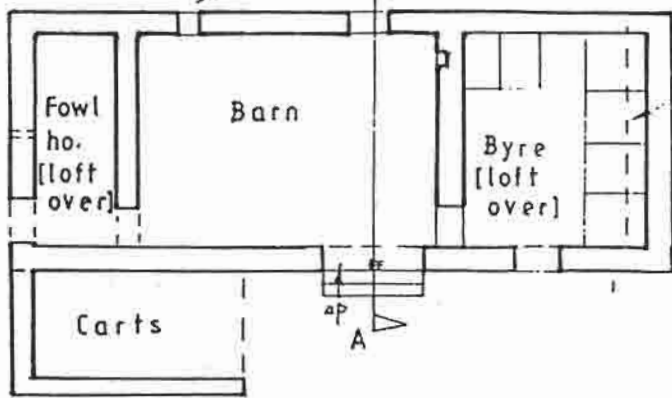
Future assessment

In addition to those above, other features have been revealed, which will make it necessary to re-assess the suggested sequencing of the house. Several questions remain to be answered and an up-date will be attempted in a later issue.

The main questions are:

- a) Was the original house extended further up the slope? The raising of the roof might have been in two phases, in view of the chisel marks. However, further investigation would probably not be possible and there is no evidence of a join in the lateral stonework, on the re-fronted south side. Was the present inner room a single storey, originally? The stack in the upper gable end has been built within the thickness of the wall and there is evidence of disturbance at this end. The original hearth, with rough

end of beam
associated with
earlier horse engine A



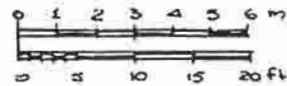
hay drop

pitching door in gable



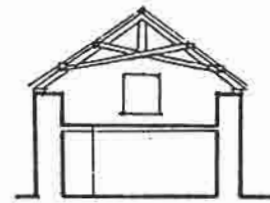
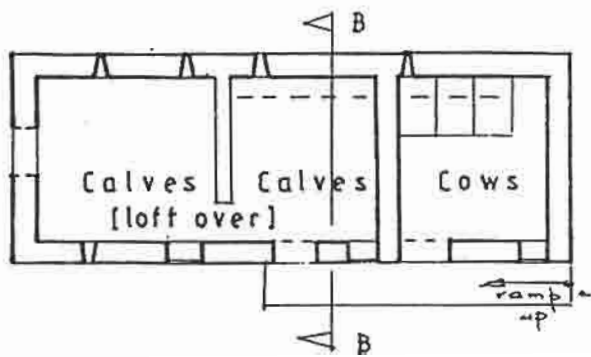
section A-A

Barn [4]



SCALE

pitching door in gable



section B-B

Shippon [6]

BOWDEN FARM

Buckland in the Moor

JS JD 4/96

THE INVENTORY OF JOHN AYSHFORD 1691

One of the major losses to Devon, during the World War II bombing of Exeter, was the destruction of the building in which Devon inventories had been stored for safe-keeping. This was a major and irrevocable loss to the study of Devon houses. Building historians, in counties where inventories are abundant, have the advantage, not only of good information on which to judge the status of owners of different dates, but also of room use.

The following inventory, of the goods of the late C17 owner of Ayshford Court in Devon, is available because it survives in the Public Record Office in London (PRO PROB 4/20046). John Ayshford had landed interests in Somerset and there is another version of the inventory, in the Somerset Record Office in Taunton (SomRO DD/SF 370). An un-referenced transcript of a third, slightly different version, was supplied to John Thorp, of Keystone, by a previous owner. Each inventory differs slightly in the order – and, occasionally, in the value – of the items. The inventory at the SomRO, for example, does not refer to the barn and neither does the transcript.

The PRO version was transcribed by Dr Anita Travers for Keystone, in 1995, and compared with the Somerset version, as part of documentary research relating to a collapsed Grade II* barn, of C16 origins. Unfortunately, the barn was eventually lost.

Ayshford

Ayshford is a small hamlet, close to the western edge of the parish of Burlescombe; closer, in fact, to the small town of Sampford Peverell than it is to the village of Burlescombe

itself. This is an area of relatively rich agricultural land, around the headwaters of the river Culm, as it rises from the broad valleys and rolling countryside of east Devon, to the Blackdown Hills and the Somerset border. The landscape is made up of small fields, enclosed by earth banks crowned with oak and ash standards. It is an area of ancient enclosure and many of the farmhouses have medieval origins. Unusually for Devon, there are also a number of relatively grand manor houses here. Ayshford Court is one and Holcombe Rogus Court is less than four miles to the north.

The house

The present house appears to be the core of an old manor house. Certainly the inventory suggests a larger establishment there, then, and an exceptionally wealthy owner. What remains is a stone-built, L plan house. The main block is on a rough north-south axis, facing east, with a taller parlour block projecting at right angles to the rear of the south end. This parlour block faces south, over the broad valley. It is a complex, multi-phase house, with late medieval origins, and many changes between then and the last major alterations, of 1910. The southern part of the main block has a smoke-blackened roof, indicating that it was the medieval hall. The superior parlour block probably dates from 1607 (the date on a stone recording the refurbishment of 1910) and ornamental plasterwork in the main block is dated 1631. Disregarding the obvious additions of 1910, the basic layout of the house appears to date from the early or mid C17, with the principal rooms in the parlour wing and south end of the main block, the kitchen in the centre of the main block, and the services and agricultural storage at the much rebuilt north end. A short distance south west

of the house is an attractive detached private chapel, dating from the C15, with a memorial to John Ashford, who died in 1689.

The inventory

The inventory is a valuable document for many reasons but is particularly interesting for showing the uses to which some of the ancillary buildings were put. They are not

exactly what one might assume. Horses, some with memorable names, appear to have been kept in the barn. Sheaves of reed, presumably for thatching, were kept in the 'bull house', along with barley and wheat. This building, or probably building range, seems to have been all-purpose and included livestock of all sorts, as well as being used as a furniture store.

<i>Item</i>	his Wearing apparel		£20	0s	0d
	Money in purse		£242	1s	10d
	In plate - 791½oz at 4s 10d		£19	15s	7d
	In gold - 5oz 16d at £3 10s, 29oz 19d at £4		£140	2s	0d
	Two gold watches		£13	0s	0d
<i>Torn</i>	In the Oriale				
	Eight turkey worke chaires & one turkey worke elbow chaire		£1	12s	0d
	Two oval tables		£0	18s	0d
	One old hanging shelf		£0	0s	6d
	One pair of iron doggs, One pair of iron doggs with brass topps				
	One pair iron tongs, one iron fire shovel, one pair of iron tobacco tongs, one pair of iron chimney hooks, one paire of bellows		£0	6s	8d
<i>Item</i>	In the Hall				
	Eighteen leather chaires	quite illegible	£2	14s	0d
	One timber elbow chaire		£0	3s	0d
	One long table & carpett		£1	0s	0d
	One oval table & carpett		£0	8s	0d
	One settle		£0	5s	0d
	One clock		£1	0s	0d
	Nine green cloth cussions				
	One large mapp with frame				
	One brass globe candlestick with six socketts		£0	15s	0d
	One pair of iron doggs, one pair of high iron andirons, one pair of iron tongues and & fire shovell		£0	5s	0d
	Two pair of playing tables		£0	13s	4d
<i>Item</i>	In the Great Parlour				
	Twenty two chairs & one couch all Turkey work		£4	0s	0d
	One oval table & leather carpet & one side table		£1	0s	0d
	One pair of iron doggs, one pair brass andirons, fire shovel tongs and bellows		£0	10s	0d
<i>Item</i>	In the Great Staire Case				
	Two tables leaves		£0	3s	0d
	Three pictures		£0	12s	0d
<i>Item</i>	In the Great Parlour Chamber				
	Twelve chairs one elbow chaire, one couch with one arm all cane with the padds		£3	0s	0d
	One bedstead with hangings, counterpane & chamber hangings of green & white druggett, one feather bed and bolster, two pillows				
	one rugg & three blanketts		£6	0s	0d
	One small table & two stands		£0	3s	6d
	Two callico curtains & rods		£0	6s	0d
	One pair of iron doggs, one pair of brass andirons, one pair of tongs fire shovell and bellows		£0	6s	0d

Item	In the Great Parlour Chamber Closet			
	One bedstead with curtains and vallence, one feather bed with bolsters one pillow, one red worsted rug, three old blankets, one old leather couch, one close stool	£2	0s	0d
	One slate table		11s	
	One brass Globe candlestick with six dockett		10s	
	twelve Pictures of the cesars [these are located in the hall in the Somerset RO version)		12s	
Item	In the Green Chamber			
	One bedstead with parragon Curtains & vallens one feather bed with bolster, two pillows, three blankets, one rugg one looking glass; Six small & one elbow chairs of green & white druggetts, one pair of iron dogs, one pair of iron doggs with brasse topps, one pair of tongs and one stand	£5	0s	0d
Item	In the painted chamber			
	One bedstead with Sarge curtains & Vallens & inner callico curtains & Vallens, one feather bed with bolster, two pillows two blanketts, one rugg, one quilt, one small table, two stands, four low chairs, two elbow chairs, one looking glass with hangings in the adjoining closet, one pair of iron doggs one small pair of brass andirons, one pair of brass tongs, one brass fire shovel, one pair bellows	£5	15s	0d
Item	In the little chamber within the painted chamber			
	One bedstead with curtaines and vallens, one feather bed with bolster one pillow, two ruggs, two blanketts.	£2	0s	0d
Item	In the little hall chamber			
	One bedstead with slight curtains & vallens, one featherbed with bolster, one rugg, one blanket, three leather chairs, one old Spanish table, & one green cloth carpet	£2	0s	0d
Item	In the bigger hall chamber			
	One bedstead with curtains & vallens, one feather bed with bolster, one pillow, one blanket, two ruggs, one table, one leather chair, one joynt stool	£2	5s	0d
Item	In the passage between the Hall Chambers			
	One old Spanish table, two old chaires, & one Close stool	£0	6s	0d
Item	At the topp of the back stair case			
	One large old chest with old striped curtains & vallens and two ruch chairs	£0	14s	0d
	One old defective clock	£0	1s	0d
Item	In the bigger topp chamber			
	One bedstead with curtaines & vallens, one feather bed with bolster, one pillow, two blanketts, one rugg, one coverlet, two tables one joint stool, two small leather chairs, three rush chairs, one old sideboard, one small chest, two small globes, two pairs of iron dogs one pair of tongs, one fire shovell & one pair of bellows	£3	15s	0d
Item	In the top gallery chamber			
	One bedstead with curtains & vallens, one trundle bedstead, two feather bedds & five blanketts, one rugg, two coverlidds, three small chaires, one Small green chair one table	£3	10s	0d
Item	In the cockloft			
	Two trundle bedsteads, two feather beds with two bolsters, one pillow, two ruggs and coverlid, three blanketts & one small table	£2	10s	0d

Item	In the little top chamber			
	One bedstead with curtains & vallens, one feather bed with bolster one pillow, one rugg, two blanketts, one leather chaire & chamber hangings	£2	10s	0d
Item	In the top Stair Case			
	One chest & one close stool	£0	6s	8d
Item	In Masters Bed Chamber			
	One bedstead with Serge curtaines & vallens & counterpane, one feather bed with bolsters, two pillows, two blanketts, one rugg, Six low chaires one elbow chaire, three window curtaines with rodds	£7	0s	0d
	Four peeces Tapestry hangings	£7	0s	0d
	One black table & two stands	£0	5s	0d
	One chest of drawers of wallnutt	£1	15s	0d
	One wainscott chest of Drawers	£0	10s	0d
	One black ebony cabbinett with panes of looking glasse	£8	0s	0d
	One weather glass	£0	10s	0d
	One looking glass	£0	1s	6d
	One high standing Candlestick with brass Snuffers & snuffdish, one pair of small iron doggs, one pair of Brasse andirons one pair of tongs, fire shovell, one paire of bellows & one pair of brass chimney hooks	£0	11s	0d
	Two old trunks	£0	6s	0d
Item	In the porch closet			
	One old wallnutt table & two stands	£0	10s	0d
	One wainscott chest of drawers	£0	10s	0d
	One scriptore with frame	£2	10s	0d
	One turkish [blank] and one old hair trunk	£0	5s	0d
	One small walnut dressing box & one comb box	£0	7s	0d
	One small looking glass	£0	1s	0d
	One callicoe window curtain & rodd	£0	1s	0d
	Two small leather trunks	£0	2s	0d
	Two seats & back for chairs of cross-stitch	£0	10s	0d
Item	In the middle stair case			
	One leather couch & one leathr chair	£0	10s	0d
Item	In the broad chamber			
	One bedstead with worsted Gamblett curtains & vallens lined with sky coloured Sarsenett, one feather bed with bolster, two pillows, two blanketts, one rug, one quilt, six low chaires & one elbow chair	£8	0s	0d
	One olive mantlebox with two stands	£1	5s	0d
	Three peeces Tapestry hangings	£8	0s	0d
	One wainscott chest of Drawers	£0	8s	0d
	One green serge skreen	£0	15s	0d
	Two window curtaines, one door curtain with rodds	£0	12s	0d
	One small table & one stand	£0	3s	0d
	One looking glasse & one small red leather trunk	£0	8s	0d
	One pair of iron dogs one pair of brass andirons, one pair of brass tongs & fire shovel one pair of bellows & one brass snuff dish	£0	11s	0d
Item	The Kitchen Chamber			
	One bedstead with serge courtaines & vallens, one featherbed with bolster, two pillows, one rugg, two blanketts, two chaires, two stooles, one elbow chaire	£5	0s	0d
	One [blank] for sweetmeats, 2 old presses one old Coffe & one old wicker chaire	£1	10s	0d
Item	In the little parlour			
	One ovall table eight leather chaires one elbow leather chaire two pair of iron doggs & one pair of tongs	£1	14s	0d

Item In the larder chamber			
One bedstead with Grey Serge Curtaines & vallens, one feather bed with bolster, two pillows one counterpane, one rugg, two blankets, five chaires and one elbow chaire, one old small black table & two stands			
One pair of iron doggs, one pair of iron doggs with brass topps one pair of tongs, one fire shovel & one pair of bellows	£0	3s	6d
Item In the closet in the aforesaid chamber			
One small table & three hanging shelves	£0	3s	4d
Item In the little new adjoining chamber			
One trundle bedstead & canopye with curtaines & vallens, one feather bed with bolster, one rugg, one blankett, chamber hangings and one closestool	£2	5s	0d
Item In the Gallery			
Two presses	£1	10s	0d
Three trunks, one chest, one leather chaire, one timber chair, all old	£0	15s	0d
Six cushion coverings old & damaged	£0	6s	0d
Two yards red serge, three yards green serge, twenty yards red serge, four yards Sad coloured druggett, two yards Gingerlyne			
four yards sad coloured serge, twelve & one half yards green & white druggett	£4	0s	0d
One leather carpet	£0	10s	0d
Nine yards white & green druggett, six yards white cloth, three & one half yards grey cloth all Damnified	£0	18s	0d
Item In the Brewhouse chamber			
Three half headed bedsteads, three feather beds with bolsters, two ruggs & one coverslid four blanketts, two old sideboards one old Cask hutch	£4	10s	0d
Item In the inward Darye			
Nineteen brass pans	£4	10s	0d
Two butter churnes, four standes, two cheese tubbs, six milking payles			
ten cheese vates, one small butter tub	£1	10s	0d
Thirty six cheeses	£1	10s	0d
Item In the outward Darye			
Two cheese wrings			
One brandice and one fire pan	£0	2s	0d
Item In the brewhouse			
Four large ffatts six washing tubbs, three small tubbs two Cowles three brewing payles, three trundles one old forme & 2 paires of iron doggs	£3	10s	0d
Item In the malt house			
One great ffate one old hogshead one half hogshead & two small barrells	£1	1s	0d
Item In the granary chamber			
Eighty bushells of barley att	£5	0s	8d
Thirty bushels of pease att	£3	0s	0d
Eightytwo bushels of malt att	£5	9s	4d
Item In the Kitching			
Pewter best foure hundred sixty two pounds at	£11	11s	0d
Pewter broken one hundred & sixty pounds at	£4	0s	0d
Two pewter cisterns & one limbecke	£0	16s	0d
Two bedd panns	£0	6s	0d
Four dozen plates new	£1	2s	0d
Fourteen dozen & one half plates old	£3	0s	0d

	Two small pewter stands	£0	2s	0d
	Six pewter flagons	£0	15s	0d
	Five paire & one pewter candlesticks old	£0	11s	0d
	Six single ring stands & one sweetmeat stand	£0	10s	0d
	Fifteen small sawcers	£0	2s	6d
	Broken pewter twentysix pound	£0	8s	0d
	Three covers, one dredge box, one Callander, two small potts, one slice three pasty panns all of Latin	£0	3s	6d
	Two apple roasters lattin	£0	1s	0d
	Two preserving pans, two sawcepanns one [blank] & one [blank] pott all of copper	£0	12s	6d
	One posnett, one Stew pann with Cover two small mortars, one broken pestle one ladle one pudding panne & six petty panns all of brass	£0	15s	0d
	Two warming pans	£0	4s	0d
	Seven pottage potts and one skillett two hundred twenty five	£4	13s	9d
	three cauldrons and two Skillets brass fifty one pound att 6d	£1	5s	6d
	Nine chamber pots & five close stool panns pewter	£0	13s	0d
	Two iron dripping panns and one lattin dripping panne	£0	9s	0d
	Two frying panns	£0	3s	0d
	Five spits Seventy five pound att 2d	£0	13s	0d
	Five pair of pothookes three gridirons, one fire forke one slice one andiron & one fender	£0	18s	0d
Item	In the inward buttry			
	Eight hogsheds	£1	12s	0d
	One Tierce & two half hogsheds	£0	9s	0d
	Seven small barrels old	£0	7s	0d
	One old ffate & one little stand tubb	£0	3s	0d
Item	In the outward buttry			
	Six hogsheds	£1	4s	0d
	One napkin press & one old chair	£0	11s	0d
	Glass bottles in all	£7	10s	0d
	One Caloicfox	£0	2s	0d
	Four pair brass candlesticks	£0	12s	0d
	Three hand brass candlesticks	£0	3s	0d
	Four small brass condlestickes one brass rowle & a wax candle one punch bowle one dozen & a duzzen halfe of old knives six forks brass several, One small black jack		12s	
Item	In the Cellar			
	Three old hogsheds	£0	10s	0d
	One [blank]	£0	8s	0d
	One cupboard	£0	5s	0d
	One spannish table & one joynt stoole	£0	4s	0d
	Fourteen stocklocks & one Springlock	£0	10s	0d
	Seven gate locks	£0	3s	0d
	One parcel of Iron locks, latches & nails	£1	0s	0d
	One leather chair two pasty pyles one barm tub one iron weighing beam	£0	4s	0d
Item	In the Workmans Hall			
	One settle bed, two blanketts, two pillows & one rugg	£1	0s	0d
	Two tables, two formes, one side table, one small napkin presse & one old timber chair	£1	5s	0d
	Four firkins	£0	4s	0d
Item	In the Larder			
	Two salting troughs, three standards, three timber bowles one little tubb and chopping block, one butchers axe & one cleaver	£1	0s	0d
Item	In the Brewhouse			
	Twenty bushells of malt in ye floors	£1	6s	8d

Item	In ye store chamber			
	Bacon four hundred & forty four pounds at	£6	9s	6d
	Martelmass beef thirty six pounds at 3d	£0	9s	0d
	One cheddar & one Cheshire cheese	£0	8s	4d
	Three bags of hopps - two hundred, Eighteen pounds	£3	12s	8d
	Eighty two bushels & one peck of malt	£5	6s	8d
	Ninety nine bushels of barley	£6	12s	0d
	Blois pease twenty bushels	£2	0s	0d
	White pease twentythree bushells & three pecks	£2	6s	0d
	Six raw milk cheeses fifty five pounds	£0	11s	5d
	Scalled milk cheeses three hundred & seaventy pound	£2	1s	8d
	Three new barrels, two small standards, two old fatts one old bacon hutch, two small tubs, one old coffer, one joint stool, One old pair of andirons	£1	5s	0d
	One candle mould	£0	1s	0d
Item	In the pastry			
	Five joynt stools, one small old chaire, three small tubs, one little flower barrel, one old iron [blank] one wooden bowle a smallish quantity of Holland [blank] one chopping board & chopping knife	£0	6s	0d
Item	In the Gatehouse chamber			
	One old bad bed & furniture one old cupboard & one chair	£0	16s	0d
Item	In the old Dary chamber			
	One old bad bed, bedstead & two chairs	£0	16s	0d
Item	In the distilling house			
	One old table & three cold Still topps	£0	10s	0d
Item	In the bowling green house			
	Two joynt stools, one spanish table	£0	3s	0d
Item	In the chamber over the bowling green house			
	One Spanish table, one green chaire, one sideboard, one old joynt stool	£0	10s	6d
Item	In the Waine House			
	One wagon & wheels, one Dungbutt and wheels, one small Dung butt & wheels, two dungbutts without wheels, two waines & wheels two pair of horrows, six pair of dung pots, fower pair of long crooks fower pair of short crooks & five yokes & bows, eight plough chains One pair of draggd, two setts old coach wheels, fower wheelbarrowes two sooles, two pair of small cart wheels one little cart fower pack saddles & two pair of panniers	£20	0s	0d
	Two ladders	£0	10s	0d
	Dulverton Stone	£1	10s	0d
Item	Over the Waine house			
	Old hogsheads, pipes, spoakes for wheels, bellows for wheels, timber for coaches boards planks Soole timber hoopoes two timber chairs lasts vessell timber yokes	£10	0s	0d
Item	In the toole house			
	Husbandry tooles, tackle for cart horse, old iron & ropes	£1	10s	0d
Item	In the pound house			
	Four ffatts & a syder press	£2	0s	0d
Item	In the chamber over the pound house			
	Five small barrells, one tunner, ash planks for coach wheeles and other coach timber	£1	0s	9d

<i>Item</i>	The stall [blank in Somerset version but 'Stockes' in PRO copy] for wheels	£1	0s	0d
	In the barn at Ayshford			
<i>Item</i>	Barley	£7	0s	0d
<i>Item</i>	wood in ye wood court	£4		
<i>Item</i>	Lamb tow [?]	£3	10s	
<i>Item</i>	Coach and harnes for six horses	£6		
<i>Item</i>	fifteen piggs one boar two sowes and piggs	£12	12s	7d
<i>Item</i>	twenty wethers	£13	10s	
	Eight heifers & calves	£32	0s	0d
	The cele heifer	£3	0s	0d
	Twenty two ewes & thirty five lambs	£17	12s	0d
	One Black Bishop mare	£3	0s	0d
	One sorrel nag Wollan Nagg	£3	0s	0d
	Grey Weaver mare	£4	0s	0d
	One bay nag weavers colt	£2	0s	0d
	One bay Nagg Clarkes colt	£2	10s	0d
	roan Forrister nag	£4	0s	0d
	bay Clarke mare	£4	0s	0d
	one wood horse Old Nose	£5	5s	0d
	One colt of Tiverton mare	£5	0s	0d
	One mare Tiverton	£3	0s	0d
	One young horse Binniger	£5	0s	0d
	one old coach mare Betty	£5	5s	0d
	one old coach mare Doll	£5	0s	0d
	one old coach mare Miller	£8	0s	0d
	black mare Savin	£4		
	nag Fairfield	£7		
	Bay gelding Clerke	£10		
	Twenty ewes & fifteen lambs	£7	0s	0d
	Nine weathers	£4	0s	0d
	one old horse Wicke	£2		
<i>Item</i>	planks and outfalls in Boobery 1100 appletree wood	£5		10s
<i>Item</i>	In the stable Ten sadles, five pair holsters, six old horse clothes ten bridles three pair Gambadoes, one side saddle one old pillion with covering	£3	0s	0d
<i>Item</i>	Books in the study over the oriale & in the porch closet in all	£10	0s	0d
<i>Item</i>	In the study over the oriale One iron cash chest, three trunks, two small tables, three desks, two chairs, one table carpett, eight boxes one stone bow, one pair of iron doggs with brass topps one pair of tongs one fire shovel one fire	£2	10s	2d
	One brass blunderbuss	£0	10s	0d
	Two musketoons	£0	12s	0d
	Four carbines	£1	0s	0d
	Two musketts	£0	10s	0d
	One riffle gun	£0	5s	0d
	Ten birding peeces	£3	0s	0d
	Five pair of horse pistols	£1	7s	6d
	Two pair of pockett pistols	£0	16s	0d
	One baginet	£0	2s	6d
	Two swords with silver hilts	£3	0s	0d
	Three ordinary swords	£0	10s	0d
	Three carbine belts	£0	3s	0d
	One buff [blank] bolt	£0	1s	0d
	One long bow	£0	1s	6d
<i>Item</i>	In the closet within the oriale One small desk	£0	1s	6d

Item Of Linen		
Twenty two pair sheets of Holland	£10	0s 0d
Eight pair sheets of Holland old	£4	0s 0d
Seven pair sheets of Dowlis	£2	10s 0d
Four pair sheets very old	£0	8s 0d
Fifteen pair sheets of canvas	£2	10s 0d
One pair sheets of Cotton old	£0	5s 0d
Four pair of pillow beeres Holland	£0	10s 0d
Three dozen & a half napkins diaper & two tableclothes of the same	£0	17s 0d
Two dozen napkins fine diaper one large table cloth & five small table clothes	£1	13s 0d
One dozen napkins damask	£0	15s 0d
Twenty two napkins damask	£0	18s 0d
Five table clothes	£1	0s 0d
One dozen & a half chamber table cloths	£0	18s 0d
Three dozen towells diaper in several sizes	£2	2s 0d
Two dozen & a half napkins diaper old	£0	10s 0d
One dozen napkins damask old	£0	4s 6d
Six towells dowlice	£0	5s 0d
Eight pair pillow beeres course	£0	16s 0d
Seven tables clothes Damask several sizes	£2	1s 0d
Fourteen table clothes diaper	£4	3s 4d
Eight tables clothes plain	£1	6s 8d
One dozen napkins	£0	6s 0d
Nine spettinge sheets	£1	2s 6d
Eighteen pair pillow	£2	14s 8d
One dozen napkins & one table cloth Damask	£0	16s 0d
Fourteen napkins diaper	£0	7s 0d
Old dresser cloths & kitching towells	£0	5s 8d
Four yards & a half tabling & twenty six yards & a half napkining diaper	£1	16s 0d
Two yards & a half tabling & thirteen yards & a half napkining diaper	£0	18s 0d
Nine yards fine Holland	£0	18s 0d
Four yards callicoe	£0	6s 0d
Three yards holland	£0	4s 6d
Seven yards & a half holland	£0	11s 3d
Four yards & three quarter course Holland	£0	6s 0d
One yard of Damask	£0	2s 0d
Five remnants in all Eighteen yards Holland	£3	0s 0d
Two yards & a half cambrick	£0	7s 6d
Item In Bule House		
Two stone & two gelt Colts two yeares old & upwards	£10	0s 0d
One small hay rick	£2	10s 0d
Six oxen	£32	0s 0d
One rick & one half rick barley & three Ricks wheat	£75	0s 0d
Nineteen ewes & twenty one lambs	£14	0s 0d
Thirtysix weather ewes & four ramms	£30	0s 0d
Two hundred & fifty reed sheaves	£1	10s 0d
Fifty hogg sheep	£24	0s 0d
Two iron bars one kilne barre one Sledge one kilne hammer & four griddle shovells	£0	19s 0d
One little wood rick	£0	15s 0d
Nine leather chairs	£1	4s 0d
One ovall table	£0	5s 0d
Fower oxen	£26	0s 0d

John Thorp, Jo Cox & Anita Travers

RECENT DISCOVERIES AT NO 21 THE MINT, EXETER

No 21 The Mint represents the north claustral range of the Benedictine Priory of St Nicholas, which was founded by the authority of William I, soon after the Conquest, as a daughter house of Battle Abbey. Though never a large or particularly powerful institution, the early medieval priory buildings were, in places, spectacular in their architecture. Many Romanesque architectural fragments, derived from particularly ornate late C12 buildings, have recently been uncovered from post-Reformation contexts on the site. These include Purbeck marble shafts, with spiral mouldings, ornate cushion capitals and arch voussiors decorated with chevrons, billets and beading. Extensive later medieval remodelling of the priory buildings is evident in the surviving buildings; however, the number of early fragments recovered and their context strongly suggests that several ornate Romanesque buildings had survived until the Reformation.

The priory was dissolved in 1536 and, although the church, chapter house and dormitory were demolished, the northern and western ranges survived, together with the outline of the cloister. In the later C16, these buildings were converted into a single large mansion, but were later subdivided into smaller residential units. In 1916, the western range of the priory was restored by the City Council, as a small museum, and opened to the public. Although it was hoped, at the time, that the north range would also be acquired and restored, this never occurred and it remained in private hands. Since 1996, the Exeter Historic Buildings Trust have campaigned to acquire and restore the building and the current scheme, to convert it to residential use, with

public access to parts of the interior, is now well advanced. The following text provides a brief description of the building and an account of some of the more interesting discoveries, made by Exeter Archaeology during the building works of 1999-2001.

The north range of the Priory contained the monastic refectory; a large open hall, extending to the east of the surviving kitchen in the west range. This hall still remains in its entirety, though now divided into several storeys. The walls of the building are largely constructed of the local volcanic trap but, although some parts may date from the late C11 or C12, the building seems to have been heavily reconstructed in the C15 and much of the surviving structure is late medieval. The refectory was originally about 14m long but has been truncated by the width of The Mint, which was driven through the former screens or service passage, in the C17. The hall was lit by tall, two-light, transomed windows on the north side, with two-centred arched heads, the lights below the transoms having nearly rounded heads, with no cusping. Many fragments of these refectory windows have been identified, some of which remain *in situ*. There were no windows on the south, due to the presence of the cloister.

The south wall of the refectory was dominated by an elaborate fireplace, recently discovered beneath late C18 cladding. This fireplace is extremely grand, with an opening 2.2m wide, beneath an elaborately carved Beer stone lintel. The carving has unfortunately been hacked off, to provide a flat surface for rendering, but the original design can be easily recovered due to the deep recession of the mouldings. The lintel was decorated with three large shields contained within low, almost round-headed,

arches with pronounced cusping. Alternating with these wide panels, were four tall narrow panels, in the form of cusped lancets. There were no flanking shafts and a wide relieving arch rose directly above the lintel, with no intervening mantelshelf. Unfortunately, the armorial bearings have all been hacked off and the iconography is lost.

The roof of the hall survives throughout. It is a handsome arch-braced roof with closely set trusses, opposed sets of curved wind braces and chamfered ornament to the wall plates, purlins and arch braces. Dendrochronological dating of the roof timbers has been undertaken, providing a date range for the construction of 1439-1453. The eastern end of the roof is of slightly different form, with a single wide bay and no wind braces, suggesting a storeyed element at this end of the building. The original arrangement here has been much altered, but evidence remains for a series of well appointed chambers on two storeys, possibly forming a set of lodgings. The ground floor room, east of the main hall, was heated by a C15 fireplace with a joggled lintel, with the first floor fireplace (only partly revealed) renewed in the C16 or C17. To the north east of the main building, further rooms lay in a cross wing, entered through an oriel off the end of the hall, by a wide, panelled arch of Beer stone. This wing is an extremely complex and much altered part of the building, but evidence remains to show that there was a newel staircase, to the first floor rooms, and also a further heated chamber, over the oriel. The fireplace in this chamber has recently been exposed. It was flanked by small cupboards, which were fitted with doors, rebated into the stonework.

The dividing wall between the refectory and the eastern chambers has also been recently exposed. The lower

part of this wall is formed by a massive plank and muntin screen, with a doorway to the ground floor room and a top rail decorated with carved foliate paterae, many of which have, unfortunately, been damaged. Above this screen, a timber and plaster partition rises to the apex of the roof, where it is finished neatly, against the common rafters. This detail shows that the common rafters were visible on the interior of the roof. The partition was initially believed to be of medieval date; however dendrochronological analysis has since given a precise felling date of 1575, for one of the studs in its upper part. This partition and the existing first and second floors (which are integral with the partition) must, therefore, have been constructed during a late C16 remodelling of the eastern end of the building. The plank and muntin screen on the ground floor is earlier and appears to have been retained during the rebuilding. These alterations, at the east end, represent the earliest evidence yet recovered of post-Reformation building activity. It is not clear why it was necessary to replace entirely the earlier floors and partitions in this area, but it is possible that the building had been partially demolished or stripped and that reparations were required, to convert it into a dwelling. The refurbishment was of high quality and probably included the insertion of the heavily moulded, three-light transomed windows into the eastern rooms, three of which remain. Much reused material (including Romanesque and Gothic architectural fragments) was used, to block redundant openings in the oriel, and it is probable that a new stair was constructed in this area, to communicate with the new second floor.

In the later C17, the property was subdivided; the western and northern ranges became independent dwellings

and The Mint was driven through the western end of the hall. The hall itself was subdivided vertically and horizontally, with a new brick spine wall and floors, to provide rooms on several storeys. New timber windows and doors were inserted, some of which retain their ovolo-moulded frames. Large sections of small-field panelling and a number of doors survive, to show that this conversion was of no mean quality. Simple painted decorative schemes have been discovered, in the first floor chamber and on the screen east of the hall, and at least one fireplace retains geometric sgraffito decoration. Much reused material was utilised in this phase of alteration; the sections of highly ornate late medieval screen work, discovered in 1999 reused within one of the late C17 partitions, are almost certainly derived from the C15 screens passage.

By 1700, the plan of the existing building was almost fully established and few major structural alterations have occurred since that time. Fragments of wallpaper, decorated with Chinese motifs, and also fragments of a flock paper, have been observed overlying the earlier decorative schemes but, in the late C18, these were themselves covered by lath and plaster cladding to the interiors of some of the rooms, and *new doors, fireplaces and sash windows* were added. Much of the late C17 panelling appears to have been removed; the stiles and rails being utilised as studs to support new, plain lath and plaster surfaces. These alterations may well date from after the acquisition of the property by the local Roman Catholic Community, in the 1770s and 1780s. During the C19, the building was in multiple occupation, with parts being utilised as accommodation for the Roman Catholic clergy and other parts let to tenants. A major alteration occurred in 1864,

when part of the western end of the building was demolished, to widen The Mint. A new end wall of red brick was constructed, to terminate the building, and a new staircase, entrance hall and other rooms were formed at the west end of the house. During the C20, the projecting stack serving the hall fireplace was demolished and a new chimney substituted. Other C20 alterations were relatively minor, but included the loss of part of one of the refectory windows.

The recent building works at 21 The Mint have revealed the almost complete survival of the medieval priory refectory and a set of late medieval lodgings, at its east end. The two ornate timber screens, from the eastern and western ends of the hall, are of great interest, as is the presence of the large fireplace, which may reveal that the refectory was functioning as the prior's hall – a place of public display and hospitality, similar to the great halls of the secular clergy in the Cathedral Close. The fireplace is closely related to a group of ornate medieval fireplaces which survive (or are known) from several high status clergy houses in the city. It compares well with those provided for the principal rooms of the Bishop's Palace, the Vicar's College Hall and the Precentor's House. Part of a similar richly decorated fireplace, featuring figure sculpture, was recently discovered by Exeter Archaeology staff, at the former Palace Gate Convent. Later alterations at 21 The Mint, in the C16, C17 and C18, have introduced decorative treatments and features, such as windows, doors and fireplaces, which all provide excellent examples of their type and period. The long tenure of the Roman Catholic Church, during the C19 and C20, seems to have 'mothballed' the house and preserved it from serious

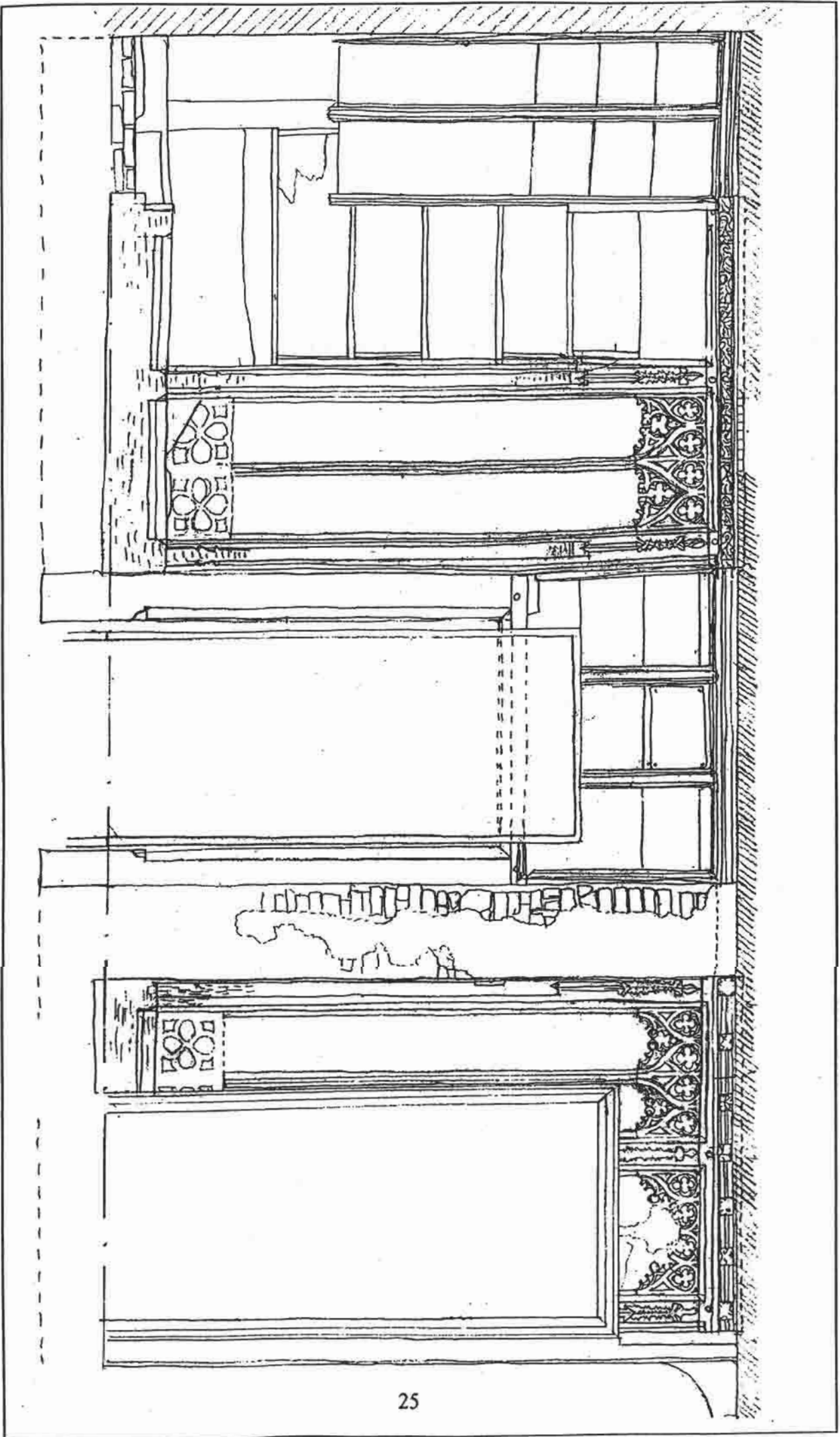
alteration, with the regrettable exception of the road widening of 1864

The current restoration project, undertaken by the Exeter Historic Buildings Trust and enabled by grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and Exeter City Council, aims to preserve, as far as possible, the work of all historic periods and to allow regular public access, while providing a viable use for the structure. One of the unexpected delights of the building is the opportunity it presents, due to the insertion of floors within the hall, to inspect a high-quality C15 arch-braced roof at close quarters – a pleasure not often available elsewhere.

Richard Parker

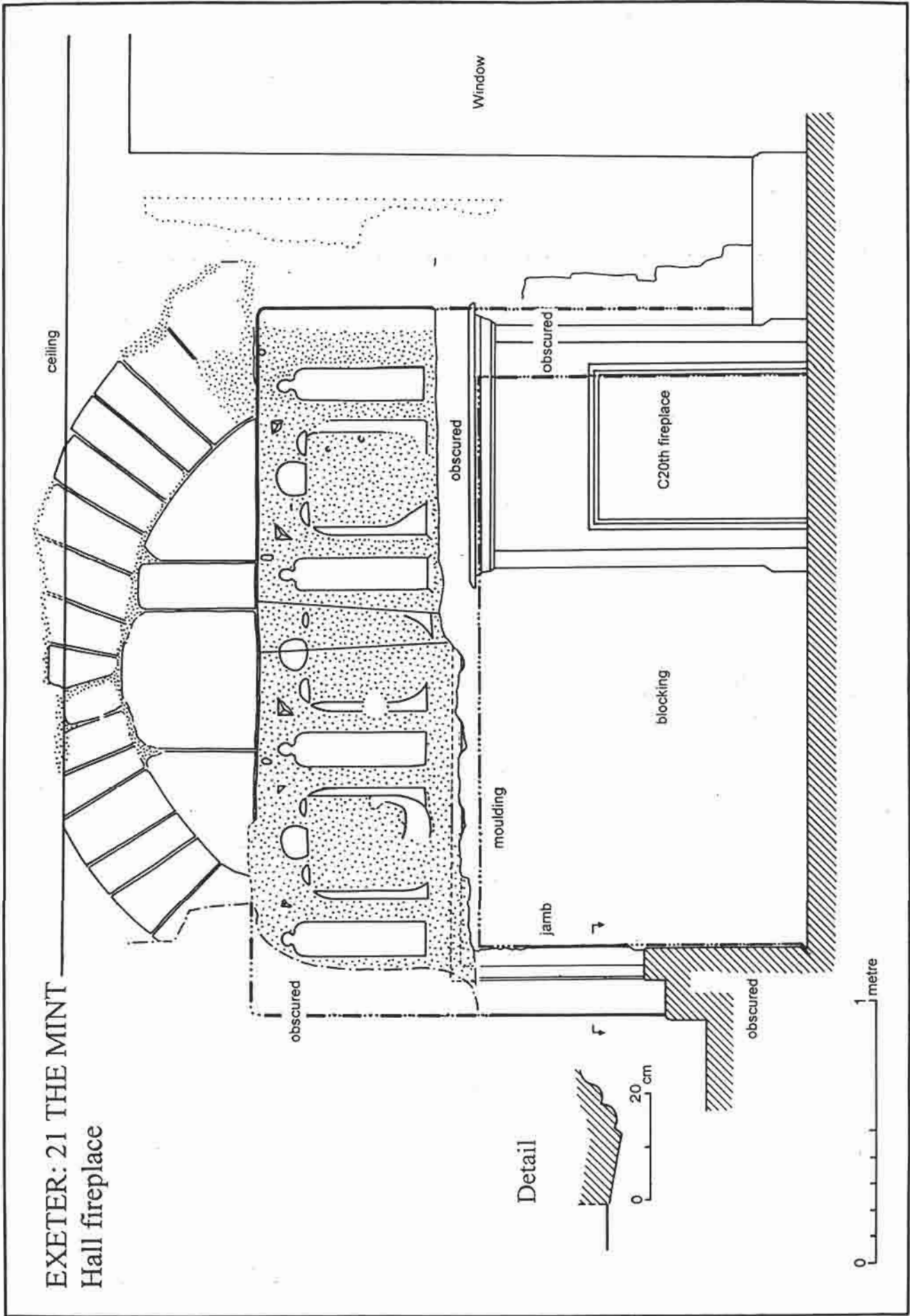


21 The Mint, Exeter. Entrance passage screen, to west side.



EXETER: 21 THE MINT

Hall fireplace



CONSERVATION PLANS

These documents originated in Australia. The guru of Australian Conservation Plans is James Semple Kerr, whose publication *The Conservation Plan* (1996) is short, pithy and extremely persuasive. In March 1998 the Heritage Lottery Fund launched *Conservation Plans for Historic Places* at an Oxford Conference. This document began to take Conservation Plans into a more formulaic 'English' phase, which is a shame. *Conservation Plans in Action: Proceedings of the Oxford Conference* was published by English Heritage in 1999 and usefully covers anxieties about, as well as support for, these documents voiced at the Oxford Conference.

The great advantage of Conservation Plans is that they encourage a broad and co-ordinated approach to conservation and one that is tailored to the place and its conservation needs, at a particular time. They deal in a very direct way with the old question, that has lost none of its good sense, of 'how can you decide how to conserve, unless you know what there is to conserve?'

Plans usually fall into four sections, each developing out of the previous ones.

The first section attempts to 'understand the place'. This is done by drawing together existing information and, if justified, filling out obvious gaps or, at any rate, noting where the obvious gaps are. For some sites this can mean dealing with issues that rarely rub shoulders in a single document. The site may be a habitat for wildlife, including protected species. Below-ground archaeological deposits and standing buildings may be set in an important historic landscape. Covering all these considerations together is one way of uniting specialist approaches, which have

become very fragmented, as they have become more specialised, each with their own statutory systems of protection and often with their own jargon.

The second section, 'cultural significance' tries to identify what is valuable about the place. This is not simply what may excite 'experts' but is a chance to see a place from other angles too. Visitors to a place where there is public access may value the chance to walk the dog, or a good view of the local landscape, more highly than the opportunity to see a Cistercian gatehouse and a Conservation Plan provides the space to point this out. Old socialists, Tories and Liberals amongst the DBG membership may see New Labour 'stakeholder' principles in this, at best, or dumbing down, at worst. Conservation, however, cannot work without a measure of popular support and, in a culture teaming with experts, there is a real risk of simply avoiding the question of 'who is conservation for?'

The third section analyses elements that may put the significance of a place or a building at risk and where significance might be improved. It also covers any aspirations to make changes, that the owner or caretaker may have. There are usually conflicts of interest. New tree planting might improve the site for wildlife but put below-ground archaeology at risk. Introducing a lift, for disabled access, may damage an important part of the historic fabric. An existing use, or proposed change of use, may have consequences – such as the need for parking, services, additional security – that are out of step significance.

The final section develops policies which are designed to minimise any risks to, and make the most of, what is valuable about the place. Once a full draft of a Conservation Plan has been written, it is circulated to 'consultees'.

These might include neighbours, the Parish Council, statutory bodies, fire officers, etc – a range of people and organisations who are judged to have a real interest. Consultees' comments are discussed, by whoever is putting the plan together and the client, and included where possible. The result should be a useful reference document, setting out widely agreed principles for conservation for a period of time, say five to ten years. It is assumed that Conservation Plans need periodic updating and are not the last word on any building or site.

To date, Conservation Plans in Devon have been produced on Cricklepit Mill, The Quay, Exeter, Exeter Cathedral and its precinct and the Royal William Yard, Stonehouse. There may be others. There is no reason why Conservation Plans should be confined to large, complicated places, or why some of their principles should not be included in more modest documents, including analysis of buildings. The reason why they have been associated, in England, with complex sites, often with a measure of public access, is a consequence of Heritage Lottery Funding, which frequently requires a Conservation Plan, as a condition for applying for funding. In Australia, they are produced as a matter of course, on buildings and structures large and small – including as small as a single urban drinking fountain.

Jo Cox

NEW MEMBERS

New members welcomed since Newsletter 18 are:

Tony COLLINGS, 25 Victor Street, Heavitree, EXETER EX1 3BU.

Henry & Norah LUXTON, 12 Courtenay Park, NEWTON ABBOT TQ12 2HD.

Catherine MARLOW, 62 Thurloxtan, TAUNTON, Som. TA2 8RH.

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DBG COMMITTEE

The Committee remains as in 2000:

Ann ADAMS (01363) 82292

Stuart BLAYLOCK (01884) 33966

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John THORP (01392) 259304

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Professor Chris Brooks

All members will wish to congratulate Chris Brooks, our founder Secretary (for 10 years), on his new appointment. From October, he will be Professor of Victorian Studies at the University of Exeter.