

DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 20



Summer 2002

DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 20, SUMMER 2002

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REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Since the publication of Newsletter No.19, we have all been saddened and made much the poorer by the loss of three of our long-term members.

Just too late for mention in No.19, news reached us that Chris Henderson, former head of Exeter Archaeology and a founder member of DBG, had lost his long battle with cancer. The Committee sent condolences, on behalf of the whole membership, to his widow, Frances Griffith (an equally long-standing member), and I and several other members of DBG attended the Memorial, at the Guildhall Exeter. There, friends and colleagues, from his first coming to Devon in the early 1970s, spoke of their personal and professional memories of Chris and demonstrated what an enormous contribution he had made to the archaeology of Devon and of Exeter in particular. A tribute later appeared in Newsletter No.80 of the Devon Archaeological Society.

In November, an otherwise excellent DBG AGM was entirely overshadowed by tragedy, when Aidan Matthews was knocked off his motorcycle and killed, on his way home from it. Aidan was a most popular and enthusiastic member and regularly attended DBG events, since joining us in 1996. He leaves a widow, Julie, and two young children. Julie and some of his friends organised a very personal evening Memorial to Aidan, at St Nicholas' Priory, Exeter, which I attended, along with many others from DBG, particularly the archaeologists. It was a totally different but equally moving occasion. A tribute by Aidan's colleague, Stewart Brown, appears on page 13.

As if these were not sad losses enough, February 2002 saw the tragic accidental death of Chris Brooks, at his home in Crediton. Chris, as hardly any

members can need reminding, was founder Secretary of DBG, in 1986 and for the next ten years, and the Group was very much of his creating. His extraordinary erudition was always at our service and he leaves an irreplaceable gap in our midst. A number of us attended his funeral and a Thanksgiving is to be held at the Cathedral, on Saturday 23 November (details on page 25). A memory of Chris's very special relationship with DBG, by Jo Cox, appears on page 9.

Conference 2001

Despite the difficulties imposed by the Foot & Mouth Disease crisis, we did manage to hold our annual Conference, using the date in October chosen formerly for the AGM but retaining our intended subject of the historic buildings of the Bere Peninsula.

This, our 16th conference, was held on Saturday 13th October, at the Village Hall, Bere Alston. Forty members attended and we were joined, at the particular request of our principal speaker, by a great number of interested local people, including Mrs Betsy Gallup, whose help with the organisation of an event such a considerable distance from my home was invaluable.

Chris Brooks chaired the Conference and later spoke about the church of St Andrew, Bere Ferrers. Sadly, this was to be his last attendance at a DBG event, as the duties of his new Professorship prevented his coming to the AGM, the following month.

Prof. Avril Henry was our principal speaker and gave us a fascinating insight into the medieval settlements of this part of Devon. She had come upon a paper, among the documents of the Dean & Chapter of Exeter, which proved to be the itinerary of a late C15 confessor priest, throughout the parish of Bere Ferrers. Apart from numerous

social and ecclesiastical implications, this remarkable document shows that the confessor visited all but three of the parish's tenements – the exceptions being the Rectory, the Great House and one other, which was probably church property. These tenements numbered about forty five and, in previous years, Prof. Henry & Jenny Sanders had set out to see how many of them they could identify on the ground and how much of their structure might still show its medieval origin.

With two large screens, we were shown the relevant parts of the document and medieval architectural details and led round the map of the confessor's extensive tour – including the establishments at which he had spent his nights. It was an entirely fascinating exposition, showing how one can sometimes learn about the history of buildings from quite unexpected sources.

Jenny mounted an excellent small exhibition of her photographs of the ancient buildings of the parish, which was so much appreciated by the local guests (who had shown them much kindness, during their research) that DBG members sometimes had difficulty getting to see it, so we showed it again, at the AGM. It was good to see so many people keen to learn about and appreciate the historic buildings of their own area and we received many messages of thanks for our open invitation.

A detailed account of the medieval document, including an inserted colour-coded map, appeared in the Transactions of the Devonshire Association, Vol.133, 2001, pp17-96.

John Thorp gave us one of his superb slide talks, on some of the buildings he has studied in the area, including details of their roof structures, etc, before we all left for the pub at Bere Ferrers and the afternoon programme.

After lunch, we visited the beautiful cruciform church, much of its structure and detail still C14 and with some good medieval stained glass and important monuments and bench ends. Looking at this lovely and distinguished church today, it is almost unbelievable that its fate was nearly so different. The Church Commissioners had decided to remove the roof, reduce the walls and leave it as a ruin. It was Mrs Gallop and her late husband, Robin, who organised local and influential opinion to oppose this decision and enlist English Heritage support for restoration, instead, which took place in 1987-89.

Thanks to the kindness of its owner, Mrs Cutts, many members were able to see the interior of parts of the manor house, adjacent to the church, and still with medieval features in its walls. A doorway in the church formerly led directly into the house.

After leaving Bere Ferrers, we went north to Lamerton, where its new owner, Mr Forrest, and John Thorp showed us round the exterior and ground floor interior of Collacombe, a marvellous C16 manor house of the Tremaine family, especially notable for its great hall window and associated plaster ceiling and overmantels, very similar to the Arundels' Trerice in Cornwall, and where the Forrest family generously gave us a splendid tea, in the garden.

Once again, we owe a great deal to our speakers and guides and hosts – and to the weather, which gave us another beautiful, warm sunny day, making it feel very like June, after all.

Annual General Meeting

Being constitutionally obliged to hold the AGM within the calendar year, our 16th was held, hard on the heels of the Conference, at the Old School House, Hatherleigh, on Saturday 24th November.

24 members attended. Colin Humphreys had previously indicated his intention to retire from the Committee, due to his heavy commitments to archaeological projects in the extreme north of the county. The six members of the Committee retiring by rotation were all re-elected, although I gave official notice of my not intending to stand as an officer, at the expiry of this three-year term. By 2004, I shall have been Secretary or Acting Secretary for eight & a half years – and in charge of the Group's finances for eleven years – and it will be time for a change.

At the end of business, Jonathan Lomas, who had been involved with the restoration of the church, after the spire collapsed into the nave, was to have spoken on the resultant discoveries and the works. However, he had the misfortune to be rather badly shaken-up in a car crash, only a few days earlier, so Stuart Blaylock nobly took over, at very short notice, and gave a fascinating illustrated talk on the structure of Hatherleigh's medieval timber spire and roof – the accident having revealed vital construction details hitherto unknown.

After lunch, we visited the now fully restored church and Mrs Herrod-Taylor very kindly opened her Grade II* C16 house to us - No 18 Market Street, formerly The White Hart Inn.

Register of Members

I managed to create the, by then considerably overdue, new Register, in June. I hope members will continue to find it useful – and that there are not too many mistakes. It is almost impossible to proof read telephone numbers. The 2002 edition (golden yellow, this time, for the Jubilee) has a better appearance and comes at a better price than the two previous ones, so I hope it will be possible to update it rather more frequently, in future. Once

again (the last time was at Exeter, in 1998), we were able to save considerably on postage costs, by distributing many (nearly 50, this time) by hand at the Conference.

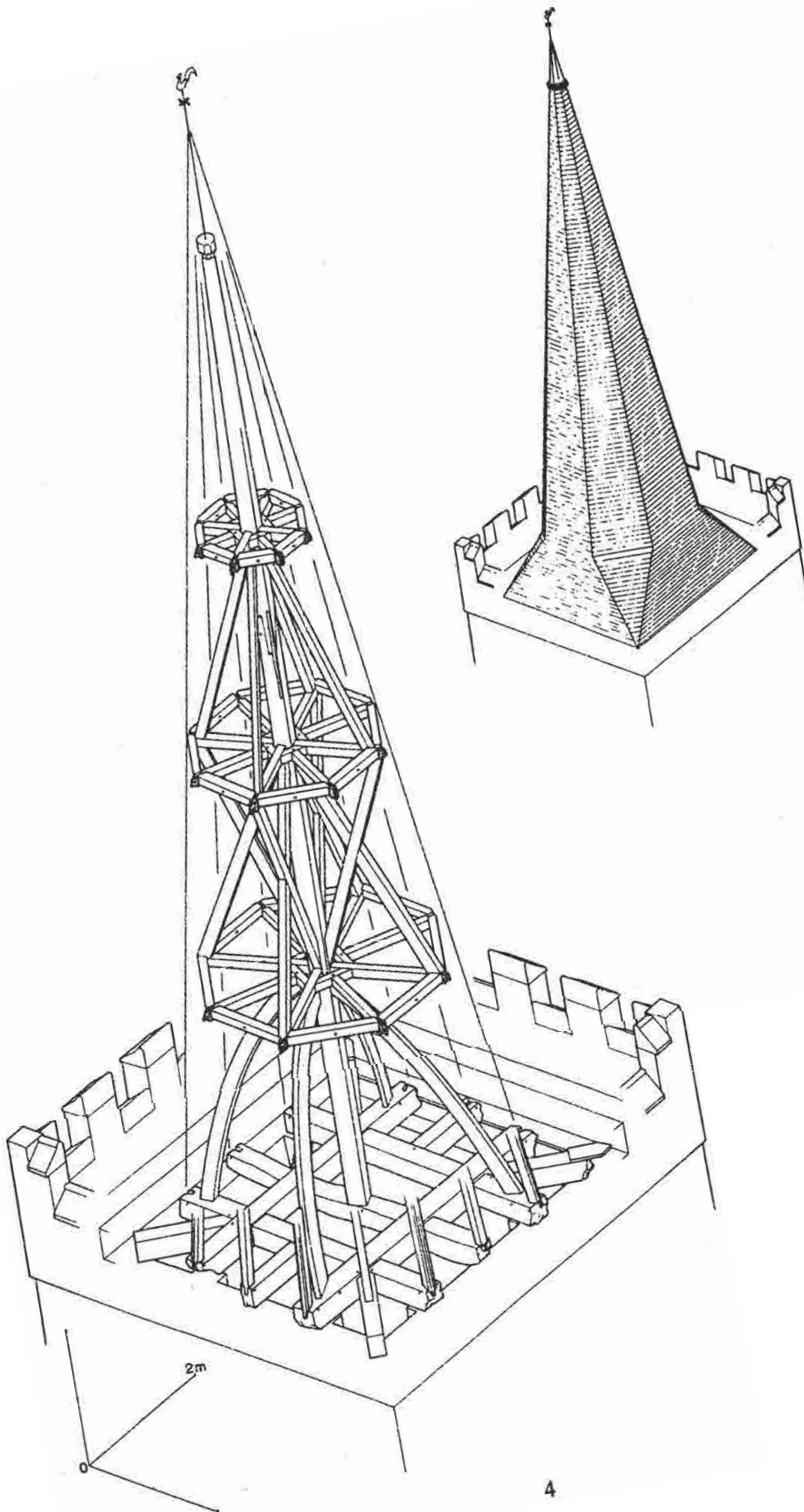
Conference 2002

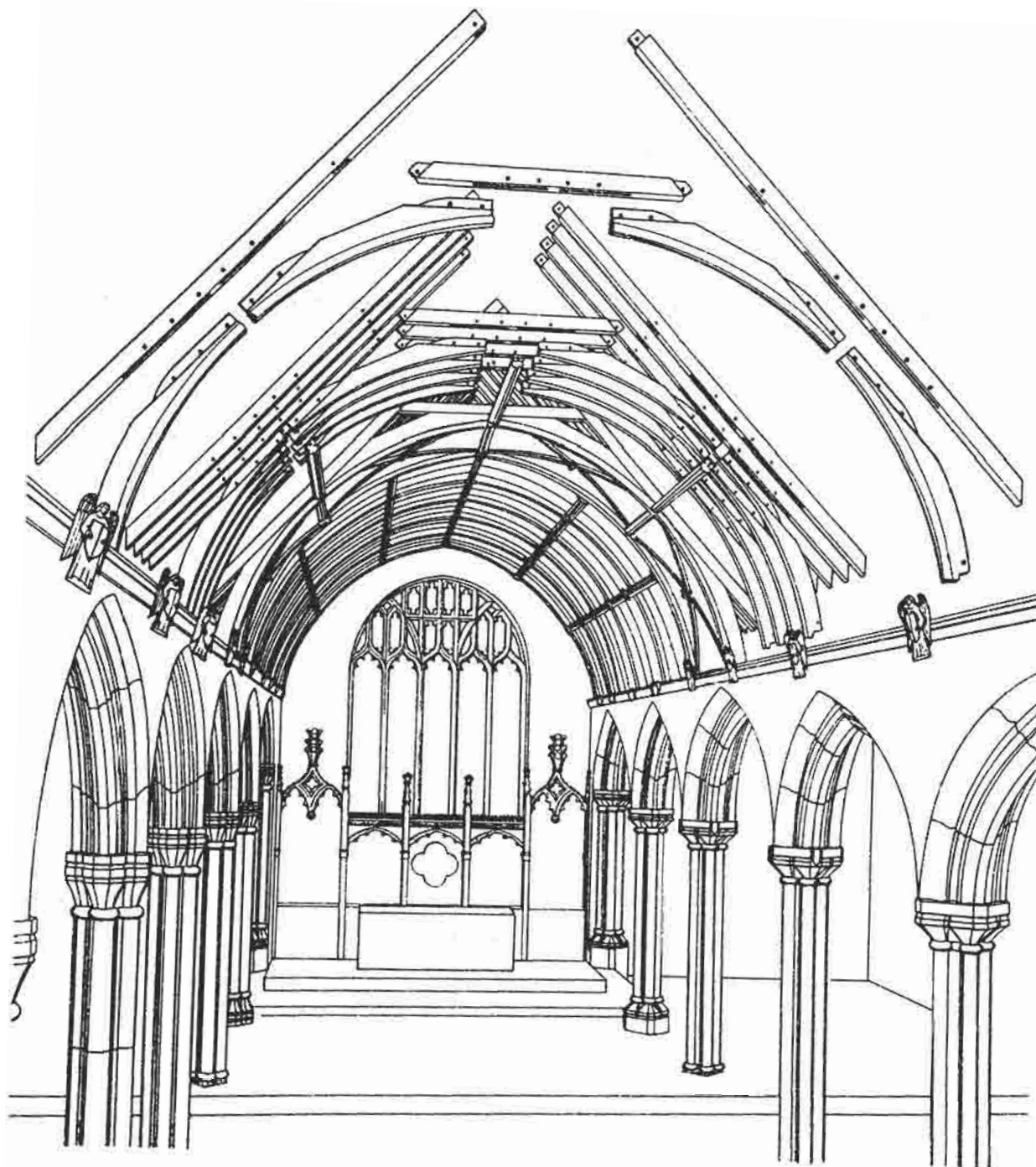
The subject of our 17th annual Conference was, loosely, the relationships of manor houses and churches, through their respective owners and patrons. It took place on Saturday 22nd June, at the Village Hall, Combe-in-Teignhead, near Newton Abbot, and 57 members and guests attended. The manors concerned were dictated by the highest combined factors of quality and convenient proximity – Haccombe, East Oggwell & Wolborough.

The members of the Committee worked really hard to make the event a success, from setting out & removing chairs and signing out Registers, to the perennial duty of the washing up. Todd Gray also manned a little bookstall, at which we had for sale Teignbridge DC's well illustrated 'History of Forde House, Newton Abbot' (which I had negotiated at a very special price, as we were not allowed to see the building on the day. Anyone wanting a copy now, or to visit the house, should contact Mrs Livingstone on 01626 361101), also several relevant books of his own and a small local history of mine. All sold quite briskly, as had the off-prints on Hatherleigh, at the AGM. Perhaps we should make it a regular feature.

Our first speaker was John Allan, Curator of Antiquities at the RAM Museum in Exeter, who described, with wonderful slides, the collection of high quality effigies and the largest group of medieval tiles – from the C13 to the C16 – to be found in Devon, all in the little church at Haccombe.

Next came Todd Gray, historian, editor of 'The Household Accounts of





The structure of the spire (left) & the nave roof at Hatherleigh, surveyed and drawn by Exeter Archaeology, published in the Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society, No.50, 1992. We need more work of this quality, if our understanding of churches is ever going to match our understanding of vernacular houses in Devon (see p15)
© Exeter Archaeology

Sir Richard & Lady Lucy Reynell of Forde (Wolborough), 1627-1648', who has an unrivalled knowledge of the domestic accounts that survive for great Devon houses, and gave a wide-ranging background to the manorial families and their lives. This gave members a rare insight into how houses were used by different owners – sometimes being little more than 'country cottages' for families who spent most of the year in London. The accounts reflect both the variable level of expenditure control exercised by the mistresses of the houses and also give fascinating local differences in entertainment and diet, from household to household. The talk was illustrated by historic documents and old paintings and prints.

To round off the programme, John Thorp, of Keystone Historic Buildings Consultancy, whose collection of wonderful slides is legendary, gave us another astonishing treat. Billed to talk about the famous plasterwork at Forde (which we were not going to be able to see, as we could not get the building opened to us on a Saturday) he, in fact, gave a complete history of decorative lime plaster in Devon, from the earliest single wavy ribs of the later Middle Ages to the hugely enriched exuberance of the late C17.

As the only decent sized pub in the vicinity was closed for refurbishment, we visited our first church before lunch. At Haccombe, John Allan pointed out to us the rare features he had shown us on slides, earlier – the painted alabaster half sized effigy, perhaps a 'heart tomb', the great range of English tiles and the occasional rare C16 imported enamelled tiles from Spain, the C13-14 effigies, some still with traces of their original coloured gesso, brasses from C15-17, among the many treasures of this little church. Today, Haccombe is just a church, a couple of cottages and a dull, late Georgian manor house,

converted into flats but, since the C13, it was at least sometimes the home of an unbroken succession of owners (Carews from the mid C15) and, it seems, always the place where they were buried. In the conference notes, we were able to show the succession and a photocopy of the map, illustrated here and probably of the late C16, showing the old manor house and its gardens, a village street lined with cottages, an outlying farm or two and at least two mills.

From Haccombe we drove to East Ogwell (a Reynell manor) where, we regret, the one pub failed to cope with the very great number of lunches. This, I am afraid, was largely a failure in communication. The pub had instructions only to serve four different kinds of sandwiches; however our delegates were not labelled and every time one of them chose a more elaborate lunch someone else lost a chance to have one at all.

East Ogwell church, like all three of the churches we visited, was opened especially for us. Also, Mr Petit, owner of East Ogwell Manor House very kindly allowed Robert Waterhouse to show us round its exterior, with its apparent remains of a courtyard layout, medieval features and astonishing proximity to the church – its C13-14 chamber block almost touching the tower.

From there we moved on to Wolborough (church of the Reynells of Forde House now in Newton Abbot), where Stuart Blaylock showed us the church, with its early C17 effigies of Sir Richard & Lady Lucy Reynell of Forde and the great medieval bell, among other treasures. Amongst the curiosities of this place is a framed mix of alabaster fragments, stuck into plaster, which include parts of a 'Last Supper' and several other subjects.

Again we owe so much to our splendid speakers and guides. And we

had yet another fine day. For members who are interested in returning to these three churches, the following contact numbers are essential to getting into them. Haccombe: Wendy Jones & Pat Knight 01626 873615; E. Ogwell: Dr Rodger 01626 352580; Wolborough: Dr Furgusson 01626 353308.

Casework

DBG casework, as such, has almost ceased. Despite numerous appeals and suggestions for sharing the burden, no members have come forward to monitor planning applications on a regular basis. Gerry Nichols does still report on listed building applications within the Dartmoor National Park (taking on from Veronica Chesher, after her move back to Cornwall), for both CBA and DBG, and we are very grateful to him. However, it seems to be an inescapable fact that, at the present time, all our former older caseworkers now find themselves too old and almost all our younger ones too totally occupied with the demands of their professional careers. Response to planning applications is now most often driven by (usually last-minute) appeals from members or from local conservation groups. I normally deal with these by contacting the nearest member of the Committee and/or the one with the greatest expertise and then send a DBG letter to the Local Planning Authority, with copies to the relevant Amenity Societies, where appropriate, based on his/her advice. We do, of course, very much continue to promote Object One of our Constitution, *'To promote the study, wider understanding & appreciation of the historic buildings of Devon'*, through our publications, our conferences and, even, our AGMs, but maintaining Object Four, *'To take an active part in the preservation of historic buildings or groups of buildings in Devon, especially through*

casework on buildings or groups of buildings under threat' has become much more difficult. On the theme of 'Whither Object Four?' the Committee has been discussing other ways in which we might approach this objective, in the changed climate of the twenty first century. The distribution to Parish Councils of advisory leaflets of other bodies has been suggested. I, personally, would like to see DBG produce a snappy booklet on styles & structures, dos & don'ts, and with useful contact addresses, of its own. We have so much expertise within our membership. Hopefully, discussion at the AGM will come up with some ideas and decisions.

New Members

We welcome Dr Michael Fennessy, of Crediton; Ms Belinda O'Flynn, of Bere Ferrers; Simon & Valerie Tame, of Widdecombe-in-the-Moor, N.A.; Mrs Pamela McCann, of Sidbury; Vaughan Upson & Abigail Evans, of Liskeard. For full addresses & their interests, see the new Register 2002.

Administration

On a personal note, when reading Jo's memories of Chris Brooks, I feel quite regretful that I came to the Group too late (1991, Committee 1993) to have experienced its heady early days, *with convivial production teams*. For some seven years all envelopes have been addressed & stamped, and for the past five years Newsletters & Registers produced, stapled & stuffed in by a single woman in a remote farmhouse in the country – but the present long-arm stapler is a great deal more user-friendly and I always have a bottle of red wine on hand, to lubricate the jobs.

Ann Adams

Professor Chris Brooks **23.01.1949 - 22.02.2002**

DBG members may have read the obituaries of Chris Brooks that appeared in the *Independent* and the *Guardian* in March. Both mention Chris's role as a founding member of the Devon Buildings Group. This piece is not an obituary but some recollections of Chris's key role in our Group and his contribution to Devon's historic buildings.

Chris had an abiding influence on the DBG. At the preliminary meeting, held at his home in Park Street, Crediton in 1985, he was unanimously elected Secretary, remaining in the post until 1995. At the first meeting it was Chris who decided that we did not need a chairman and never would, on the grounds that we were good enough to manage without a figurehead. He must have appreciated the irony of the way in which, as his career developed and he became a national figure in conservation, he fulfilled just such a role but without the title.

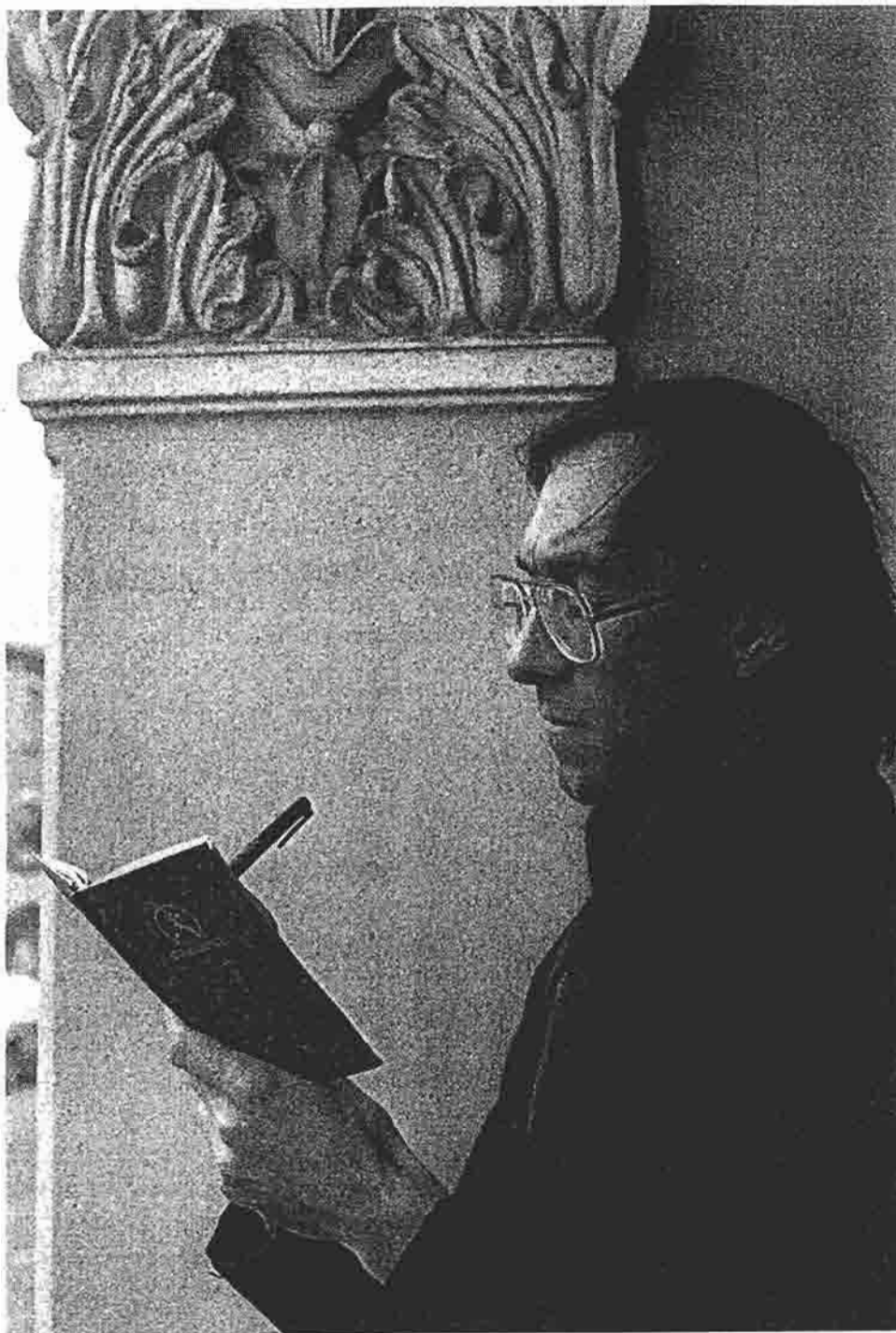
His sense of strategy meant that, from the beginning, it was understood that the DBG would be most effective as a county group if it joined forces with national bodies, adding national weight to the Group's local force. Chris fostered connections with the *Victorian Society*, the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* and the *Council for British Archaeology*, amongst others. He also pressurised a number of people he regarded as key individuals in conservation and whose opinions and company he valued, to become members, whether or not they lived in Devon. Thanks to this, the Group continues to have distinguished national experts on the membership list.

It was his idea that the DBG Newsletter should be circulated not only to local libraries but also to national conservation bodies. The early

Newsletters, which he edited, were produced on his Amstrad computer and photocopied at the expense – and without the knowledge – of the University of Exeter. They were put together on the large table in the front room at Park Street, with the help of other committee members, using a giant industrial stapler and much leaping in the air for the force necessary to make it work. The postmen dealing with the results of these labours must have been relieved when members' addresses were written in Chris's unfailingly immaculate copperplate hand. Addresses written by other helpers deteriorated to the illegible, as a result of the large quantities of wine and beer consumed on these occasions. However unsophisticated the presentation, or blood-stained the stapling, the content of the early Newsletters, a large proportion of which was written by Chris, set the very highest standards for quality and the first issue came in for particular praise from the *Ancient Monuments Society*.

Early committee meetings, always chaired by Chris at a cracking pace, were long, accompanied by alcohol and heavily preoccupied with casework. Committee members jostled for the room to read and comment on listed building consent application drawings, through a haze of tobacco smoke. Chris sat at one end of the Park Street table and composed immediate letters of objection, beautifully constructed, blistering in their contempt for clumsy or destructive proposals, and always closing with the disarmingly civil: 'for the reasons outlined above, may we respectfully urge the Local Planning Authority to reject this application'.

It was Chris's personal contacts that made some of the early DBG conferences so inspiring. He was solely responsible for organising the



CHRIS BROOKS
1949-2002

DBG Casework Conference, held at Reed Hall at the University of Exeter, with papers by some of the leading national figures in conservation. His sense of the value of crossing boundaries established what, in the 1980s, were pioneering DBG conferences. Devon plasterwork was the theme of the first conference, at Forde House, Newton Abbot. The history of plasterwork locally was covered by John Thorp. Bridget Cherry gave a national context, by a paper on the decoration of Nonesuch Palace. John Schofield described materials and techniques and Jane Schofield spoke on repair and conservation. The morning papers were followed by a visit to examples of Totnes plasterwork, led by Michael Laithwaite. This fruitful combination of the regional and national historical approach with the nuts and bolts of technique and conservation practice has become the norm in conservation circles, within the past ten years but, encouraged by Chris, has been part of the DBG approach, from the outset.

Chris relished the opportunity to appear at Public Enquiries in which, representing the DBG as well as other bodies, he fought under the colours of love for 19th century buildings and scholarship against mercenary lawyers who merely supplied arguments in return for fees. How could he fail to triumph? He was particularly pleased at victory over what he described as 'two whole rows of grey suits' (Health Authority barristers) in one of the phases of the Exe Vale Hospital case. His eloquent explanation of Charles Fowler's innovative plan for the hospital, quoting and illustrating all the influences on Fowler's design (including those on the Continent) was completely persuasive, even if the inspector grumbled that the plan could be appreciated only by a low-flying hawk. He was both flattered but

disappointed when a single, devastatingly scornful response of his to the first question on his proof of evidence, at an enquiry in Barnstaple, meant that the lawyers abandoned all further interrogation. It cheated him of the opportunity for further joyous humiliation of the opposition. His love of military history gave him a real zest for the conservation battle. He was not only sympathetic to but hugely admiring of the first (and fortunately only) incident in which a DBG committee member, vigorously pursuing a case, was knocked to the ground by an outraged developer. He suggested that a medal should be struck for this and similar heroic services and wondered whether a DBG vigilante squad, fully armed, should be established, to terrify those insensitive to the conservation of Devon buildings into a state of total submission.

Chris's knowledge of 19th century Devon buildings of all types was unparalleled and backed up by his understanding of the national and international Gothic inheritance. His book, *The Gothic Revival*, published by Phaidon in 1999, is simultaneously ground-breaking and readable. It will now, sadly, stand as his *magnum opus*. He is personally responsible for a far greater appreciation of the 19th century architectural inheritance in Devon in 2002 than was the case in the 1980s. It is difficult to remember how little was understood or valued, before he set his mind to the task, of Devon's very special role in the Gothic revival. His meticulous research underpinned the entries on 19th century church architecture in Bridget Cherry's revision of Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's *Devon* in *The Buildings of England* series, published in 1989.

Chris's contribution to the study of medieval glass in the county, as well as in Cornwall, should not be overshadowed by his work on

Victorian buildings. His monograph, *The Great East Window of Exeter Cathedral: A Glazing History*, published in 1988, was co-authored with Dr David Evans, also a DBG member. The authors unravelled the history of a breath-takingly complex object, the understanding of which had been dogged by false history and misinterpretation. In the course of the work, they also established the range and character of the so-called 'Doddiscombsleigh School' of glass painters, responsible for most of the 15th century stained glass surviving in the county's parish churches. Chris subsequently published chapters on the stained glass of the cathedral and on its architecture since the Reformation in *Exeter Cathedral – A Celebration*, edited by Professor Michael Swanton and published in 1991.

DBG members, whether reading the Newsletters and the Research Papers, or attending conferences and AGMs, have enjoyed an educational journey into 19th century architecture – understood in its broadest terms, with Chris as guide. If this has been a privilege for us, Chris would not have seen it that way. He would have regarded it as our right and probably even our duty. He would be the first to acknowledge that one of his greatest pleasures in the DBG was what other members taught him about Devon buildings. He was never profoundly interested in vernacular buildings, unless they were 19th century, but wanted to know more about them and, through the DBG, he did. What he enjoyed so much, both about the early days of the Group and its subsequent development, was his sense of the DBG as inclusive of anyone with an interest in Devon buildings, on absolutely equal terms, as co-operative education.

DBG conferences on vernacular buildings, if less absorbing to him than

those on 19th century buildings, had the huge merit of taking place in the Devon landscape, which was a perpetual delight to him. Having moved with his family from London to Plympton, when he was a teenager, he spent much of his adolescence exploring Dartmoor. He regarded his re-arrival in Devon in 1974, to join the staff of the University of Exeter, as a homecoming to a county he loved. I can recollect, with him and Martin Cherry, signposting what seemed to be most of the byways of Dartmoor, early one spring morning, when we wanted to be sure that DBG members could find their way to a barn in which the summer conference was to be held. Martin and I had hangovers. Chris, unaffected as usual, was unbelievably cheerful to be on the moor on a lovely morning, hammering DBG signposts into mossy crossroads, next to granite boulders but carefully avoiding damage to primroses. At one point we spotted a small boy in the distance, who was undoing our good work by adjusting the direction of our signposts for the greater confusion of intruders onto his Dartmoor. Chris, ever sympathetic to a sense of territory, as possessive about Dartmoor as anyone and nobody's psychological fool, got out of the car and asked him very nicely if he would be so kind as to give us a hand with putting in the last signpost and then defend it and any others from enemies. It did the trick.

Chris will be sorely missed by the DBG. I hope he will always be remembered for his exuberant enthusiasm, his inspirational knowledge and thinking, his conviviality and sense of comedy, his righteous anger - and lecturing to us all, *extempore*, on 19th century church architecture from the pulpits of many Devon churches.

Jo Cox, March 2002

Aidan Matthews

1962 – 2001

It is with very great sorrow that I write of Aidan Matthews, who met a tragically early death, following a road accident. Aidan had been a member of the DBG for five years and was returning from the 2001 AGM at Hatherleigh, on Saturday 24th November, when the accident occurred. Other DBG members came upon the accident, which at first seemed much less serious than it really was, and contributed whatever help they could. From Exeter, he was rushed to a specialist unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, but sadly died the following Monday. His wife Julie was by his side. Aidan also leaves behind two young children, Minette, five and Hugh, three.

Aidan was fascinated by old buildings from an early age. His father Gerry is a vicar, now retired, so Aidan was brought up in rectories, first at Brent Tor and then at Lydford. As a boy, he was taken round many of Devon's old churches in his parents' company. He also found adventure by investigating the old stables at Brent Tor and was, on more than one occasion, discovered by his mother Liz clambering around its roof, much to her alarm. At the ancient Stannery town of Lydford he was surrounded by remains dating back to Saxon and Norman times. He went to school in Devon and took his A-levels at Exeter College. As well as his interest in buildings, he had a facility for technical drawing, a combination that was to lead him to the Hull School of Architecture, where he completed a BA degree in architecture. Whilst at Hull, he greatly enjoyed visiting the impressive remains of medieval monasteries such as Fountains and Riveaux, making a photographic record wherever he went.

Always a Devon man at heart, Aidan returned to the county and joined the Exeter Archaeological Field Unit (now Exeter Archaeology), for whom he undertook the recording of numerous old buildings in Exeter and Devon, over a period of ten years. In 1996, he struck out as an independent archaeologist. He contributed to numerous archaeological projects, in this and neighbouring counties, for various clients, including Keystone Historic Building Consultants, Paul Gibbons Associates and Buckfast Abbey. He and I worked together on projects for English Heritage, Devon County, Dartmoor National Park, The National Trust, Plymouth City Council and Exeter Cathedral.

We became close colleagues and good friends, establishing a regular and easy-going working routine. He was efficient, conscientious, cheerful and ever the enthusiast. On recording projects at old buildings, he would quickly sort out the survey requirements and get on with the job in an ordered and practical manner. He had a keen eye for spotting tell-tale traces of architectural features that had largely disappeared amongst later alterations and an uncanny knack of pointing them out before others. He could predict what might lie unseen behind an apparently uninspiring building's façade. His good working knowledge of old buildings and how they were constructed was always very welcome, when discussing their likely origin and development. I can recall many on-site discussions, in which we would debate to & fro' regarding different possible interpretations – Aidan would always argue his case with vigour – each acting as a sounding board for the other, until we would finally agree on the most likely version between us. As all buildings archaeologists and historians will know, such debates are invaluable,

since two minds working on the same problem almost invariably produce a more rapid and complete result.

Aidan loved church architecture, especially that dating from the Romanesque period. He would seldom miss an opportunity to visit or re-visit a Norman church and was avidly reading about the Romanesque in France, shortly before he died. He spent many years recording the fabric of Exeter Cathedral, first while with the Exeter Field Unit and later when we worked together. This gave him a perceptive and literally tactile appreciation of the medieval mason's craft and achievement and led him to become adept at identifying the Cathedral's many different periods of masonry, as well as the numerous different types of building stone used in its construction. Our seven joint reports on the former north walk of the Cathedral cloister owe a great deal to his long experience and expertise. The same is true with regard to our survey and archaeological recording of the Cathedral roof, in which Aidan's surveying talents were invaluable.

Our other projects of recent years included work at Sherborne Old Castle, Portland Castle, Totnes Castle and Buckfast Abbey. Some of these involved excavation, as well as standing fabric recording. Aidan professed to finding 'dirt' archaeology somewhat less engaging than recording standing buildings but I will always remember his sheer delight, when he unearthed a large collection of 12th century pottery, from a pit at Sherborne, and hundreds of prehistoric flints, at Portland. Since we were usually a team of only two, versatility was important and it was my good fortune that Aidan had developed various skills, making him a good all-rounder. Back in the office, he skilfully manipulated our site survey records to produce attractive, colourful and

informative illustrations, to accompany our reports. He had become something of a whiz on his computer graphics package.

Aidan was an excellent colleague and a good-natured companion. It was a pleasure to work alongside him. He would strike up an affable report with the masons, workmen and contractors we encountered on site – always a good idea when archaeological projects rely on co-operation and good working relations, to get things done on time. DBG members will remember how much the friendliness and enthusiasm of Aidan and Julie, both when looking at buildings and debating them in the pub at lunchtime, contributed to the good-hearted atmosphere of DBG events.

Aidan and I enjoyed wide-ranging conversations over lunch and while travelling to sites, covering not only archaeology and the day's work ahead but almost everything else imaginable. We had got to know each other very well and I will miss him terribly, as will all those who knew him.

Stewart Brown, February 2002

INVESTIGATING DEVON'S PARISH CHURCHES and SOME USEFUL LOCAL SOURCES

At the Hatherleigh AGM 01, Stuart Blaylock gave an excellent paper on the work of recording and interpreting the medieval parish church. This was undertaken in the 1990s by Exeter Archaeology, prior to the repair of the fallen spire and associated damage to the roof. The morning paper and our visit to the church in the afternoon and discussion of the wagon roofs, in particular, was a reminder of just how much there is to be discovered when recording, documentary research and analysis are applied to medieval churches. It was also a reminder of how few churches in the county have been looked at in archaeological detail.

In the last fifteen years, the kind of careful investigation that has been applied to many houses in the county has simply not been directed towards the standing fabric of more than half a dozen parish churches. At least half of those projects - the fall of the spire and damage to the roofs at Hatherleigh; damage to the carved work on the Greenway Chapel at Tiverton and arson at Buckfastleigh, were the result of major disasters, rather than 'protective' investigation, undertaken in advance of planned alterations.

Funding is at the root of the problem. It now seems acceptable to ask the owner of a house or a farm building, prior to permission for change, to pay for a professional assessment of the building and, usually at least a rapid trawl through relevant records. Archaeological recording work in this context is likely to be limited to areas of the building that are at risk from change. This may be frustrating for the recorder but keeps

costs at a manageable level for the owner.

Work of this kind is seen as acceptable on the basis that the owner is usually gaining financial advantage from the proposals. The same cannot be said for churches. The impression is that Diocesan Advisory Committees and English Heritage are willing to require archaeological investigation for works below ground when, say, a church is applying for permission to build loos or a kitchen area, but they see the cost of investigating standing fabric as an unacceptable burden on churches asking for faculties (the ecclesiastical equivalent of Listed Building Consent) or in receipt of public money for repairs.

Recording and research work on the standing fabric of churches in the county, when faculties are granted, has been, and still is, very reliant on the unpaid work of individual members of the Exeter Diocesan Advisory Committee and their archaeological advisor, out of personal interest in the archaeology of standing buildings. With 613 parish churches in the diocese, this reliance on voluntary work is bound to leave glaring gaps.

The more work that is done on a building type and in circulation, the better the understanding of patterns of change, of parallels and the identification of useful sources of information, whether written or images. If we are now familiar with the obvious secondary and primary source material for investigating houses, local sources for church architecture are less well known. It seemed worth listing some of these for any members who may be interested in researching their local parish church or embarking on more extensive church research. If members are aware of other useful sources for 19th century and medieval churches in the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter or other local history

libraries, please write in and we will publish them in the next newsletter. Comments on the character of the sources would be useful. At a later date the authors of this piece hope to provide a list of useful non-Devon sources, too, and any information on these from members would be welcome.

Parish Cuttings and Parish Records

A very good short-cut for background can be the 'parish cuttings file' maintained at the West Country Studies Library. These files draw together early antiquarian extracts and 20th century newscuttings and they are still added to.

For original sources, it is perhaps obvious to point to the parish records in the Devon Record Office, its northern branch at Barnstaple, and the Plymouth Record Office. If a good run of churchwardens' accounts survive, they may indicate major building works and their character and the materials used, but it can be quite tricky distinguishing major works from the continuous run of maintenance. The diocesan records in the Record Office at Exeter include faculty papers. They survive in two series: 'Faculty Causes', c.1660-1855, which relate to church alterations but also such matters as disputed pews, and 'Faculty Petitions', 1855-c.1940, which relate to church alterations but also parsonage houses. Both series are arranged by parish. Faculty petitions sometimes provide a 19th century architect's plan of the church, usually provided because the church was being re-seated and showing the proposed arrangement of benches.

Published Sources

Cherry, Bridget & Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Buildings of England: Devon*, Penguin Books 1989.

This is an invaluable starting point for anyone. Having made use of the records of the Devon Nineteenth-Century Churches Project, the Devon Pevsner is unusually good on the architects and restoration work of the 19th century.

The Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society

This journal, held by the West Country Studies Library and the Devon and Exeter Institution is a revelation of what was known about Devon churches between 1843 and 1933, but has been forgotten since. Before the creation of the Diocese of Cornwall in 1877, it covered Cornish churches, too. Contributors often wrote on churches outside the diocese. *TEDAS* includes descriptions of the condition of many Devon churches prior to restoration, articles of synthesis, accounts of the philosophy of church restoration and wonderful drawings. The minor drawback is the complicated numbering of the three published series, and the major drawback is the poor index. If you are looking for a particular church, do not imagine that scanning the index will point you at all the references to be found to individual buildings.

Its series are: 1st series vols 1-6, 1843-61, + Index

2nd series vols 1-5, 1867-92, + Index (whole series numbering 7-11)

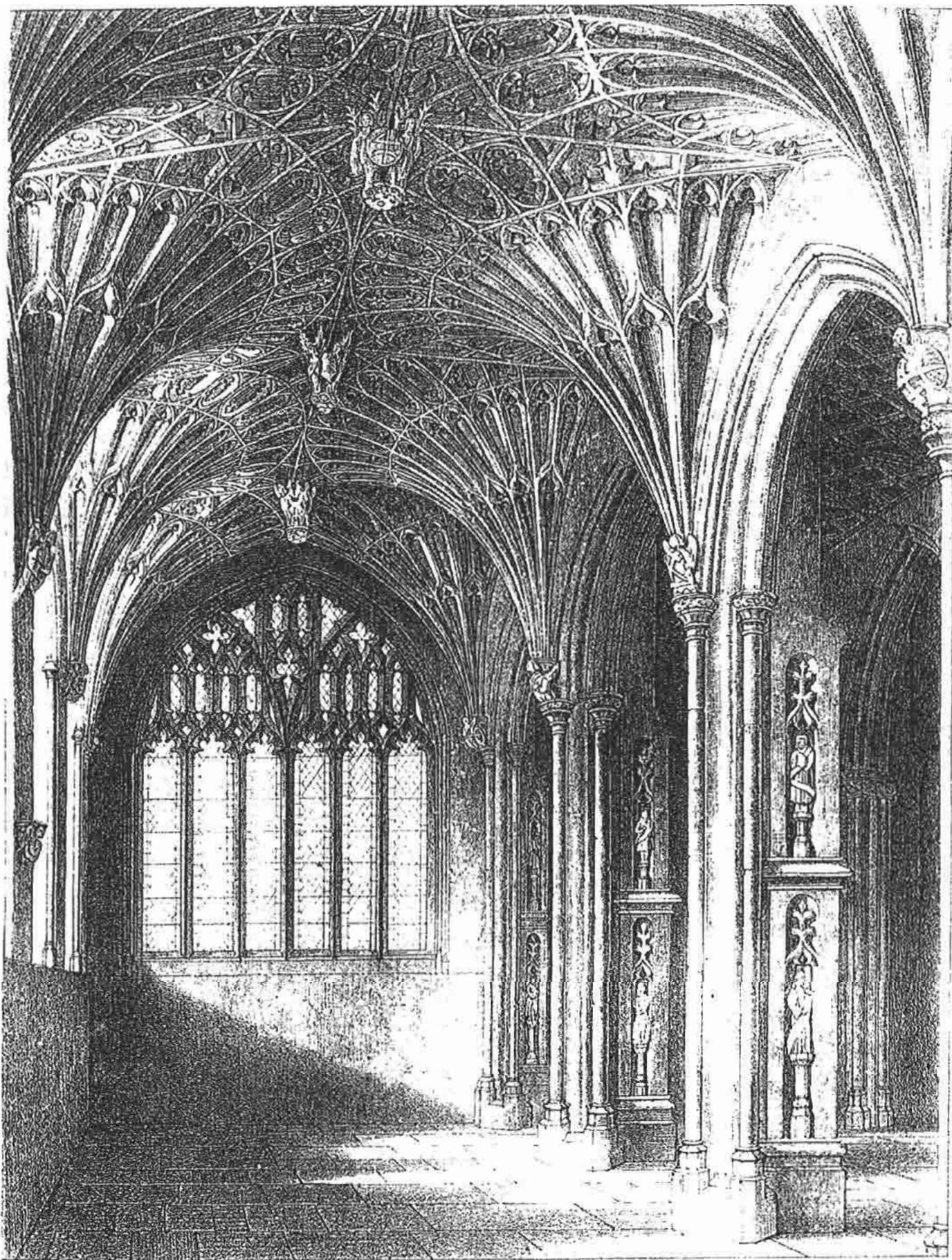
3rd series vols 1-5, part I, 1899-1933 (whole series numbering 12-16)

Another important published source is: Stabb, John, *Some Old Devon Churches: their rood screens, pulpits, fonts, etc.* With 26 illustrations from photographs by the author. 3 vols, London 1908, 1911, 1916.



SHE WAS TO GOD AND HVSBANDE TREWE
 A MIRROR FOR ALL WYVES TO VEIWE
 THE POORE THE LAME SICKE AND NEEDY
 SHE DID RELLEVE MOSTE LIBERALLY
 SHE LYVED SO GOOD AND GODLYE LIFE
 AS NEVER WRONGED MAN MAIDE NOR WIFE
 AND MADE SO GOOD AND GODLYE ENDE
 AS NONE THE SAME ON EARTH MAY MENDE.

A TEDAS illustration of a brass, commemorating Thomasin, wife of Thomas Petre, esq, in Okehampton church. It illustrated an article by W R Crabbe, on the monumental brasses of Devon. TEDAS, 1st series, Vol.6, 1857, Plate 5.



F. ASHWORTH ARCHT. DELT.

J. HUGHES LITH.

A TEDAS illustration of the Lane Aisle at Cullompton, drawn by Edward Ashworth, one of the county's major 19th century local church architects. It illustrated an article by Ashworth on 'English Church Architecture in its Several Periods', TEDAS, 1st series, Vol.6, Plate 1.

Beatrix F Cresswell compiled considerable quantities of manuscript notebooks about Devon churches, now deposited in the Westcountry Studies Library. The most noticeable is a series of 23 (or 24) on the churches in the various deaneries, with an additional two published. Her descriptions are good and she covers heraldry in some detail. The published volumes are:

Cresswell, Beatrix F, *Exeter Churches*, Exeter 1908.

Cresswell, Beatrix F, *Notes on the Churches of the Deanery of Kenn*, Exeter 1912.

The unpublished, typescript volumes on deaneries are as follows:

'Aylesbeare' 1920, 'Barnstaple' 1924, 'Cadbury' 1919, 'Chulmleigh' 1919, 'Cullompton' 1920, 'Hartland' 1923, 'Holsworthy' 1922, 'Honiton' 1920 (2 vols), 'Ipplepen' 1921, 'Moretonhampstead' 1921 (2 vols), 'Okehampton' 1921, 'Ottery St Mary' 1919, 'Plympton' 1922, 'Shirwell' 1924, 'South Molton' 1924, 'Tavistock' 1922, 'Tiverton' 1920, 'Torrington' 1925, 'Totnes' 1922, 'Woodleigh' 1923, 'Plymouth Churches' 1925.

There are other MS notes of Cresswell's and the Burnet Morris card index is probably the best overall guide to parishes.

Unpublished Sources

An early unpublished source is Milles, (Dean), Jeremiah, c1747-62, 'Parochial History of Devon', now Bodleian Library Oxford, ref MS Top. Devon C. 9-11.

The seven manuscript volumes of the original (two large folios of questionnaire returns and five volumes of 'parochial collections') are available on two microfilms in the Westcountry Studies Library (except for Zeal Monachorum, which is torn off). The returns to the questionnaires that Milles sent out to incumbents cover a

great deal more than churches (depending on how interested the incumbent was in responding to Milles' questions).

For a description, see Cresswell, B.F, 'Milles' Parochial Collections for Devon', *Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries*, vol.XI, pp 320-4, 1920-21.

Another MS compilation at the Westcountry Studies Library is:

Davidson, James, 'Church Notes on Devon'. Vol 1 'East Devon'; Vol 2 'South Devon'; Vol 3, 'Exeter'; Vol 4, 'North Devon', 1843-49. The Burnet Morris index is a useful guide to Davidson.

Davison was principally interested in monuments and he faithfully transcribed monumental inscriptions. Most of the churches he visited were seen by him prior to any major schemes of 19th century restoration, which makes both his record of inscriptions and his architectural descriptions (never very detailed) of especial value.

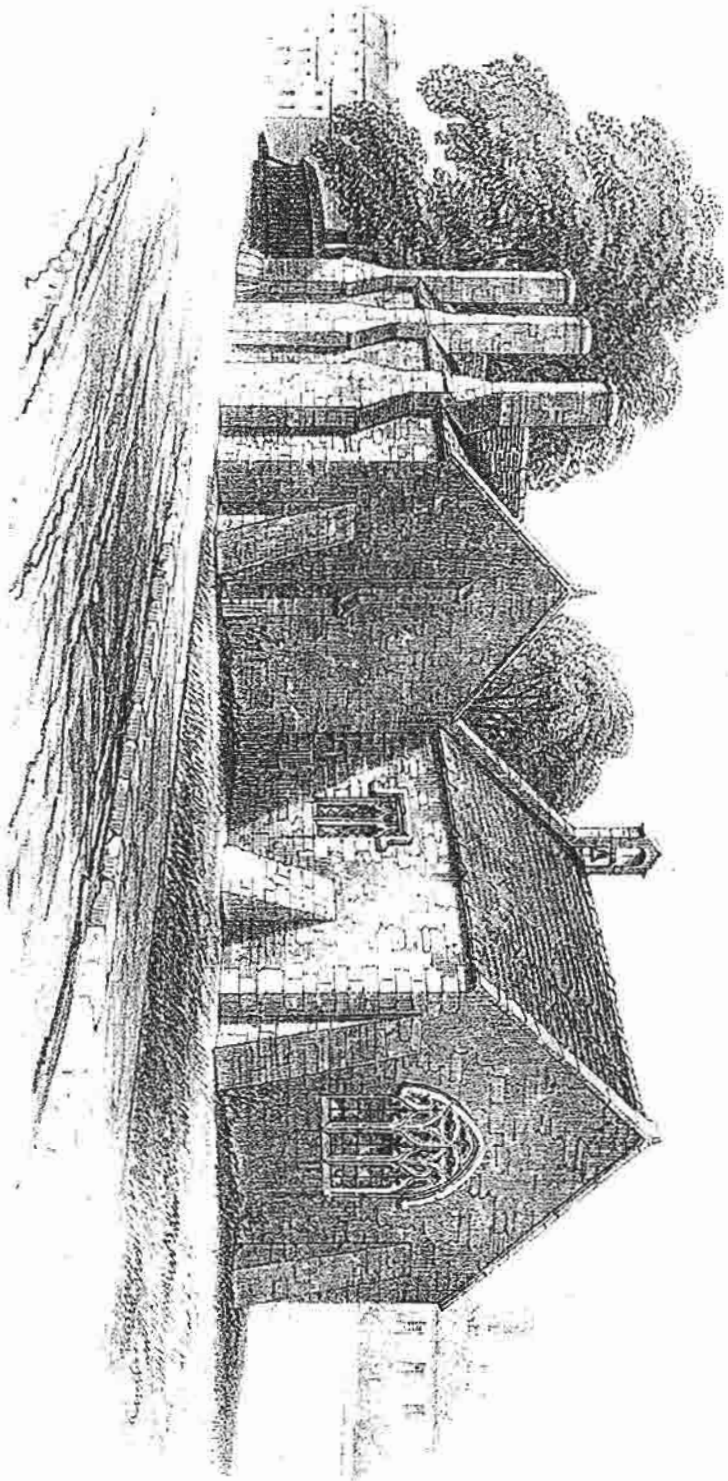
Beatrix Cresswell's unpublished material is referred to above.

Images

The Westcountry Studies Library has a large collection of prints and photographs, including postcards, of churches. W Spreat's *Picturesque Sketches of the Churches of Devon*, 1842, deserves a special mention. There are 74 plates, which, together, constitute a precious record of Devon churches (mostly exteriors, but some interiors) prior to restoration.

The photographic collection in the library includes, for example, photographs by Stabb which may not have been published in his books.

In the Copeland collection, reference 1733, the Devon Record Office has a large collection of



*Livery-dole Chapel.
-W. de la Old North Devon Journal, Devon, 1878.*

A TEDAS illustration of Livery Dole Chapel, Exeter, showing the almshouses demolished in 1850.

The roof of the chapel is shown covered with pegged slates, with larger slates at the eaves.

This illustrated an article by Lieut. Col. William Harding,

'An Account of the Ancient Ecclesiastical Edifices of Exeter', TEDAS, Vol. 4, 1853, Plate 19.

photographs from the first half of the 20th century, indexed in its 'places' (parish) card index.

Local photographic collections, e.g. the Beaford Photographic Archive held in the North Devon Library, Barnstaple and the Cookworthy Museum archive at Kingsbridge have some late 19th century and early 20th century photographs of churches

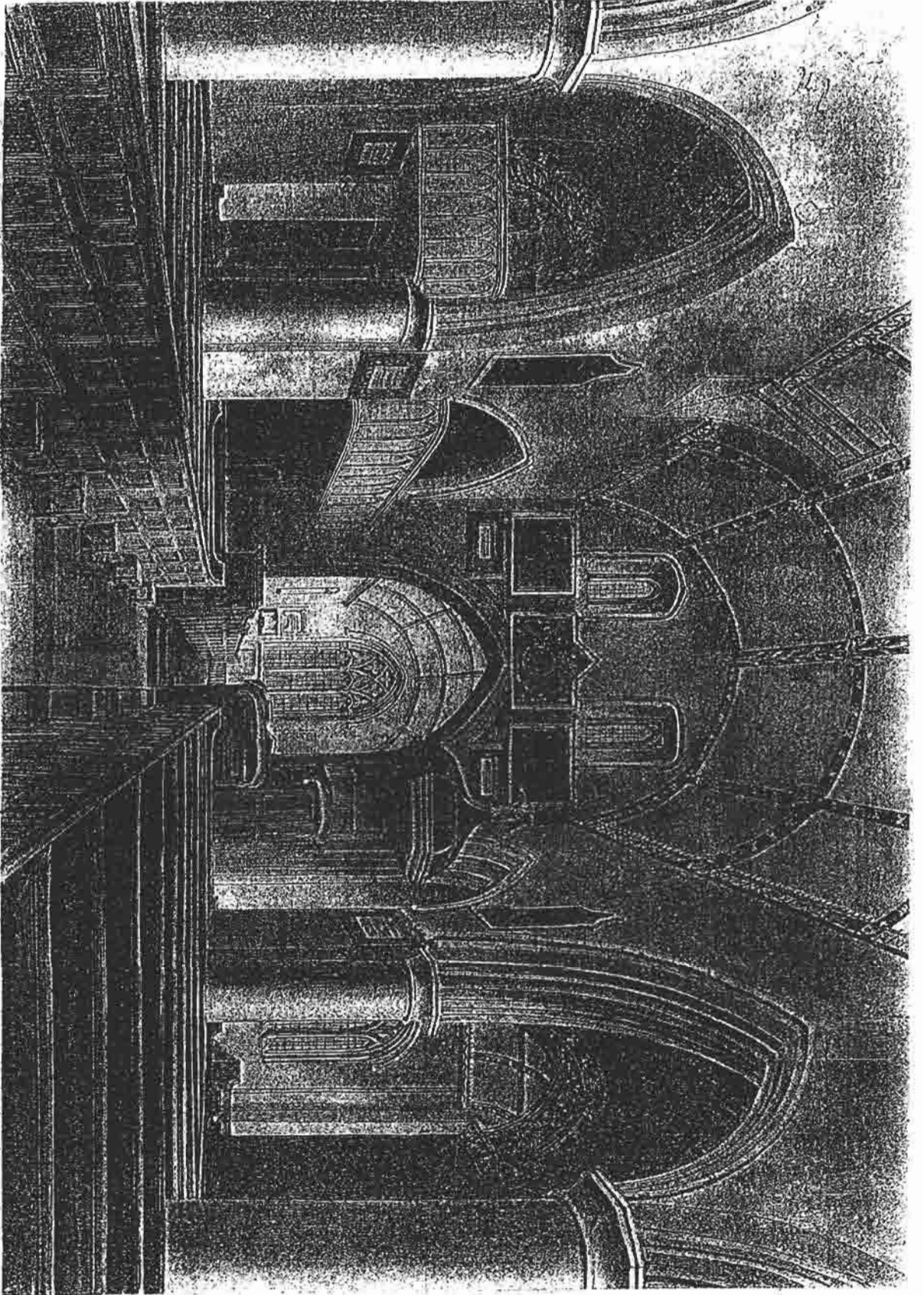
The Devon Nineteenth-Century Churches Project

This was begun in the 1970s by Chris Brooks, Martin Cherry and Jo Cox. Chris Brooks continued to add to it over the years. The aim of the project was to gather and collate documentary sources on all 19th century Anglican church work, whether new 19th century churches or restoration schemes. Critical summaries on the 19th century architecture and fittings (including stained glass) in each church were also planned. Given that it is hard to find a single Anglican church in Devon with no 19th work at all, it must be acknowledged that the aims of the project, which had no funding, were ambitious. As the project stands in 2002, by no means every church has a critical summary. Nevertheless, each parish has a record card with a list of relevant sources and pertinent quotes. Sources covered include: Faculty Causes and Petitions for 19th century schemes. Published sources searched included: *The Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society*, some volumes of *The Builder* (those volumes held in Exeter) and *The Ecclesiologist*. Harry Hems' scrap-books, recording his work on church fittings were also searched. The project includes a card index of 19th century architects, craftsmen and patrons. There is also a parish file for most parishes with hard copy articles, church guides etc. There is an incomplete slide collection of Devon

parish churches and a 19th century stained glass slide collection, both catalogued according to parish. The project is currently kept by Jo Cox, while she and Martin Cherry decide on what should eventually become of it as a research resource. If any DBG member would like to see project material on any individual church, give Jo Cox a ring (01392 435728).

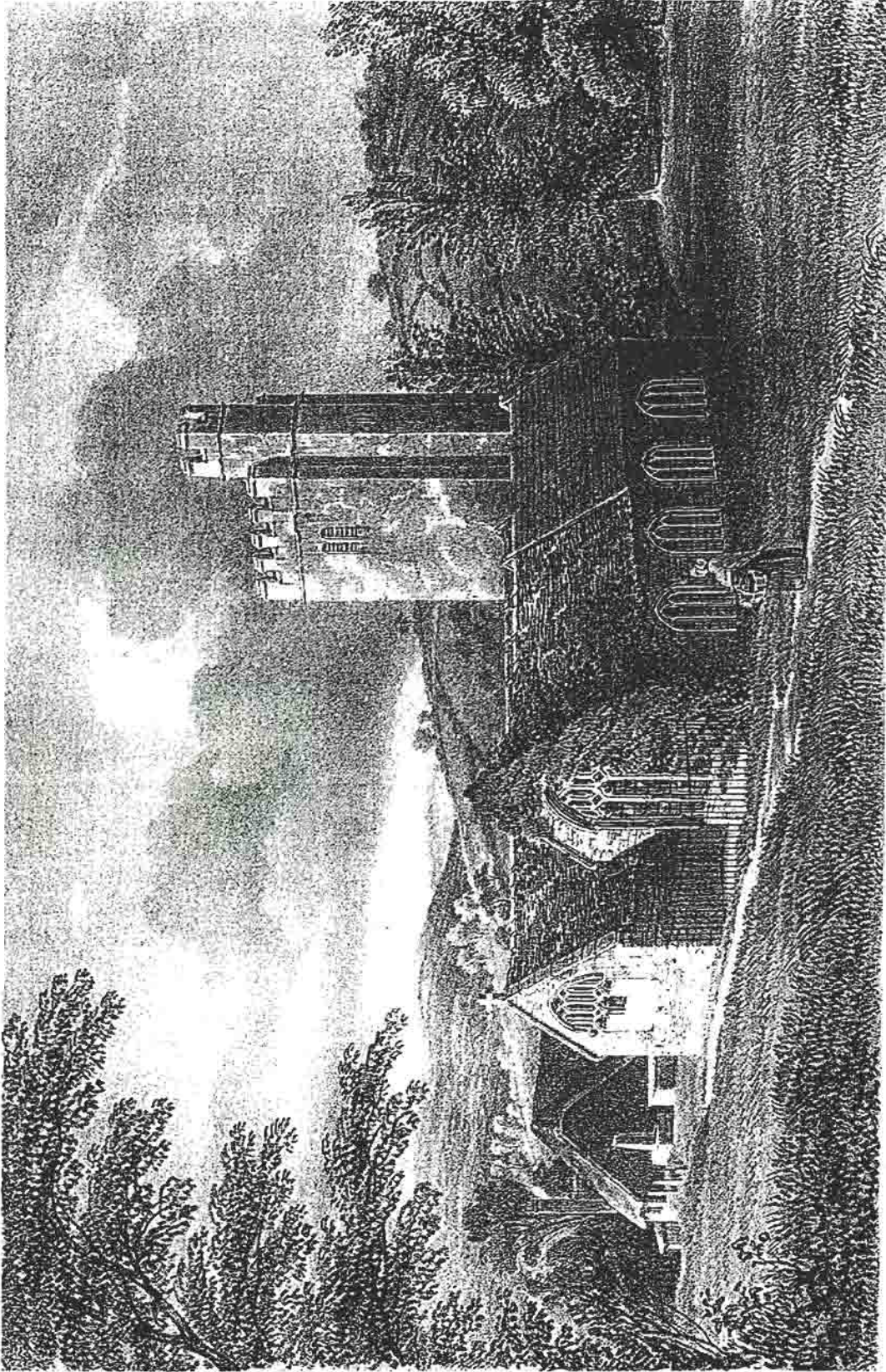
Jo Cox & Anita Travers

*with thanks to Stuart Blaylock for
helpful discussion August 2002*



W Spreat's litho of the interior of Sidbury Church.

Published in his 1842 'Picturesque Sketches of the Churches of Devon', this is a precious record of the interior of the church, before restorations by Hayward in 1843 and Micklethwaite & Clarke in 1884.



W Spreat's lithograph of Cadbury Church, published in his 1842 'Picturesque Sketches of the Churches of Devon', a valuable record of the exterior, prior to restoration by William White in 1856-58. The chancel & east end of the aisle are shown roofed with pegged slates, with larger slates at the eaves. The east window is shown partially blocked and the north aisle has uncusped tracery. All these elements were altered when the church was restored.

**AN UNUSUAL CARPENTRY
JOINT in the WAGGON ROOF at
ST CONSTANTINE'S CHURCH,
MILTON ABBOT**

Recent conservation work on the late medieval or 16th century wagon roof, over the nave at St Constantine's Church, Milton Abbot, revealed an unusual joint, beneath the ceiling bosses.

The joint connects the longitudinal ribs to the cross ribs. It comprises two parts: a rectangular barefaced tenon, which inserts into a mortise cut from the side of the cross ribs, forming a modified type of 'birdsmouth' joint. The joint was clearly designed to lock the roof assembly tightly into position and brace the structure, once the longitudinal ribs had been set in place. Some of these joints incorporate small wooden dowels, that pin the two timbers together, while others have no dowels.

As far as I am aware, this joint has not previously been recorded in Devon and I should be interested to hear from anyone in the DBG who has come across this or similar joints, in either church or domestic carpentry.

Stewart Brown

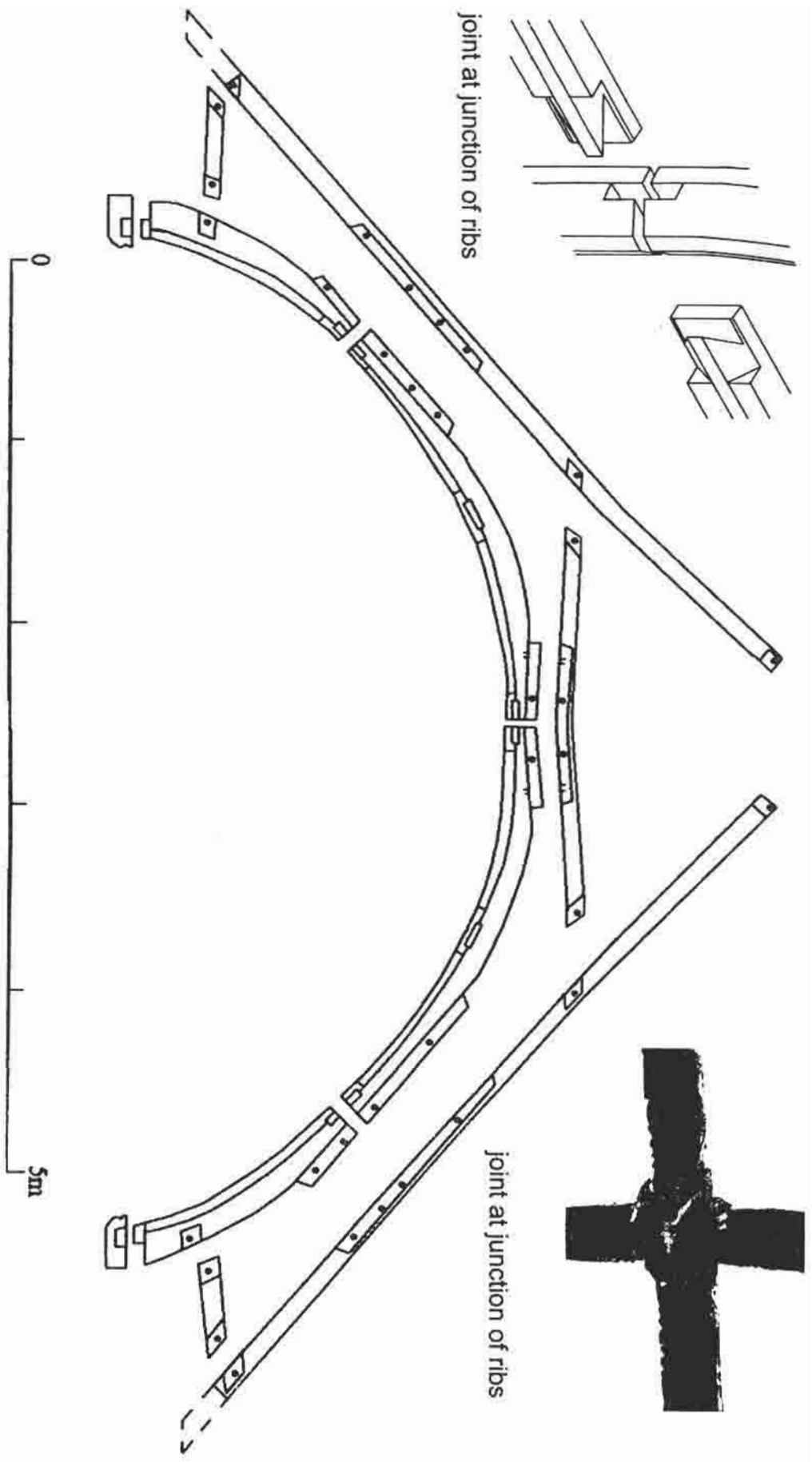
(01392 877284)

DEVON THATCH

What must be the definitive book on the subject, Jo Cox & John Thorp's long awaited *Devon Thatch: An Illustrated History of Thatching & Thatched Buildings in Devon* was published towards the end of 2001. Exhaustively researched and lavishly illustrated, this book should be on the shelves of anyone remotely interested in thatching and vernacular building in Devon. It is published by Devon Books, in large format (210 X 296 mm) hardback and is available from them at Halsgrove House, Lower Moor Way, TIVERTON, Devon EX16 6SS @£27.90 postage & packing included.

**Thanksgiving Service for the life of
Chris Brooks (from p1).**

Would anyone wishing to attend the memorial please contact Su Scotting (formerly Jarwood) at Flat 3, Number 7 The Beacon, EXMOUTH EX8 2AG. The organisers need to know the numbers in advance.



Exploded diagram showing a composite arch-braced common rafter truss, from the nave roof of St Constantine's Church, Milton Abbot. The insets show the 'birds-mouth' joint, normally hidden by the bosses at the junction of the cross ribs and the longitudinal ribs.