

DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 23



Autumn 2005

DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 23, AUTUMN 2005

Contents

SECRETARY'S REPORT <i>Peter Child</i>	3
EDITOR'S REVIEW of 2004 <i>Ann Adams</i>	7
HARTLAND <i>Ann Adams</i>	12
'TO PEW or NOT TO PEW?': A report on the English Heritage Lydiard Tregoze conference, June 2005. <i>Stuart Blaylock</i>	22
<u>Doors at Dartmouth</u> : a reader's query.	25
<u>Romanesque sculpture</u> : the Courtauld Institute's website	26
<u>New Members & members' changes of address</u>	26

Illustrations

Front cover: the extensively pewed St Michael & All Angels,
Mount Dinham, Exeter: *Stuart Blaylock*
Barn at Court Place, Yarcombe: *Ann Adams*
Yard and sheds at Uphay, Axminster: *Ann Adams*
Membury Court and chapel: *Ann Adams*
17th century barn roof at Uphay, Axminster: *Ann Adams*
Endsleigh House, Milton Abbot: engraving c1820.
Sketch map of Hartland
Blegberry, Hartland: *E M Jope*
Former ceiling & frieze at Blegberry: *unknown*
Gable & frieze at Docton Court, Appledore: *Ann Adams*
Longfurlong, Hartland: *N W Alcock*
Gorvin, Hartland: *N W Alcock*
'Pegasus' frieze at Higher Brownsham: *Ann Adams*
'Pegasus' frieze at Appledore: *David Carter*
Vine-enriched rib at Higher Brownsham: *Ann Adams*
Vine-enriched rib at Appledore: *David Carter*
Doors at Dartmouth: *Brian C Head*
Tympanum at Down St Mary: *Ann Adams*



Detached rubble-stone barn with rag-slate roof at Court Place, Yarcombe.



Part of the 19th century cobbled yard and red pan-tiled ancillary sheds at Uphay, Axminster.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

CONFERENCE 2005

The Summer Conference was held at Stockland, in East Devon, on the topic of Blackdowns farmsteads. The morning's talks were given in the parish hall; lunch was taken at the King's Arms; and visits to farmsteads were made in the afternoon. The weather was wonderfully hot and sunny. Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants have been working on an extensive survey of traditional farmsteads in the Blackdowns for the County Council, and John Thorp kindly agreed to organise a conference on this theme.

We started with two fascinating presentations on local farming practices, one from Robin Stanes and the other from Brian Clist, a Hemyock farmer and local historian. The latter introduced us to a 'new' source for local historians: the Defence Lists of 1798, a register of the men of the parish, together with their live and dead stock and their carts and wagons, ready for evacuation in the event of an invasion.

John Thorp followed as the principal speaker of the morning session, describing the nature of the typical Blackdown farmstead and the character of the buildings to be found in them.

Finally, Philip White, from the Rural Development Agency, gave an excellent explanation of the current state of environmental grant schemes, often the only potential source of funding for the repair of traditional farm buildings.

In the afternoon we visited three farms in the area: Court Place at

Yarcombe, an estate farm rebuilt in 1822 for the estate steward; Membury Court, a large farm with a very early example of a lincay (c1500); and Uphay, Axminster, which has a 19th century yard, as well as a very fine freestanding 17th century barn, with a jointed cruck roof and a Lias slab floor. The three farms had examples of all the typical Devon traditional farm building types; lincays, barns, cart sheds, pigsties and cider houses. At Membury court we were also able to see the fine 13th century private chapel, as well as some of the interior of the impressive medieval house. The Group is most grateful to the owners of these properties for allowing the visits.

Newsletter

Last year (Autumn 2004) saw the publication of Newsletter No 22, which is nearly a monograph in that, apart from a review of the preceding year, it consists of a single piece by Richard Parker (and illustrated by Stuart Blaylock) on School Buildings in Exeter 1800-1939. Richard introduces the article with a description of the pressures on historic school buildings, largely the consequence of recent lavish allocation of funding for education in general and, in particular, the construction of new school buildings. He makes a plea for their proper consideration and suitable conservation in this process, and the Group has made representations over redevelopment proposals for two Exeter schools since publication (see below). The absence of an up-to-date List for Exeter compounds the problem. After this introduction, Richard describes the history of school and school building provision in Exeter, up to the Second World War. This is followed by a gazetteer of surviving school buildings from this period in the city; 34 individual

schools are described and illustrated. This is a monumental article, making available information on this neglected topic for the first time, and providing an essential tool in making any case for the conservation of these civic buildings. Interestingly, a few months after the publication of the Newsletter and this article, English Heritage has published advice on the same topic – there are some remarkable similarities between the two texts!

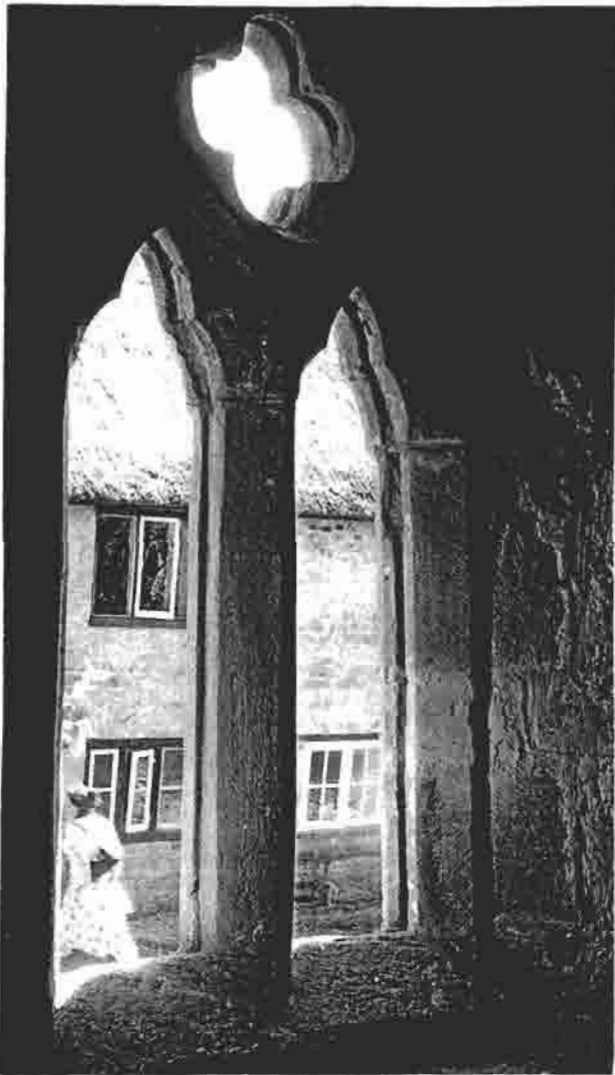
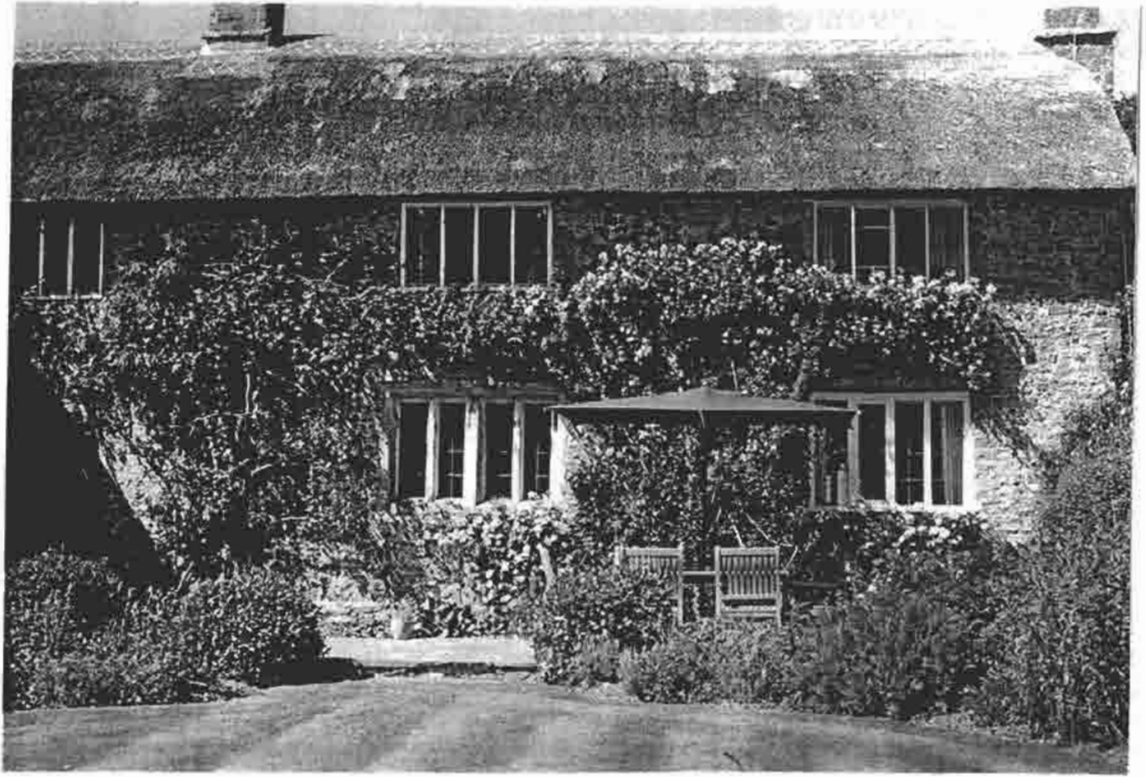
Casework

The Committee has met six times during the last year and resolved to make representations over various cases involving historic buildings. Strong objection was made to the proposed demolition and replacement of Edward Ashworth's St Sidwell's School of 1853-4 and English Heritage were asked to list it. Unfortunately, this request was refused, largely on the grounds that the building had been too altered. In fact, later alterations and additions could easily be reversed, so this was a disappointing decision. It would have been easy to incorporate the original building into any new development, but it seems that government funding is only available for completely new buildings. In any event, the planning application was approved and the old buildings will be demolished shortly. Subsequently, in August, proposals were submitted for the redevelopment, with residential development and a new school of the area, including St David's School, Mount Dinham. This would involve the demolition of the school, as well as two other buildings, in the remarkable Exeter complex of 19th century institutional structures. The Group has objected, both to the proposed demolitions and to the design of the replacement buildings. The application has yet to be determined and we wait

to see if our representations have any more effect than they did over St Sidwell's School. As a consequence of Richard Parker's work, it was decided that Cowick Street School (by A. Weslake 1861) was particularly worthy of protection and we requested English Heritage to list it in July. As yet, we have not been notified of any decision. We also asked English Heritage to list the Physics & Chemistry Block (by Basil Spence 1961-5) at Exeter University, as we felt this might be threatened by the forthcoming closure of departments there. This request was turned down, too, on the grounds that it was not the best example of his work and that it had been too much extended. A further rejection occurred with the Cullompton Hotel (latterly known as 'Toad Hall'), on the outskirts of Cullompton, an example of a 1930s roadhouse by local architects. Again, the quality of the building was considered insufficiently good to protect it, and permission has now been granted for the redevelopment of the site, with a poorly designed imitation of the existing building as its focus. Earlier, in 2004, we also made representations over the proposed development on the fringes of Appledore Dry Dock (listed grade II*) with housing. This application was eventually withdrawn.

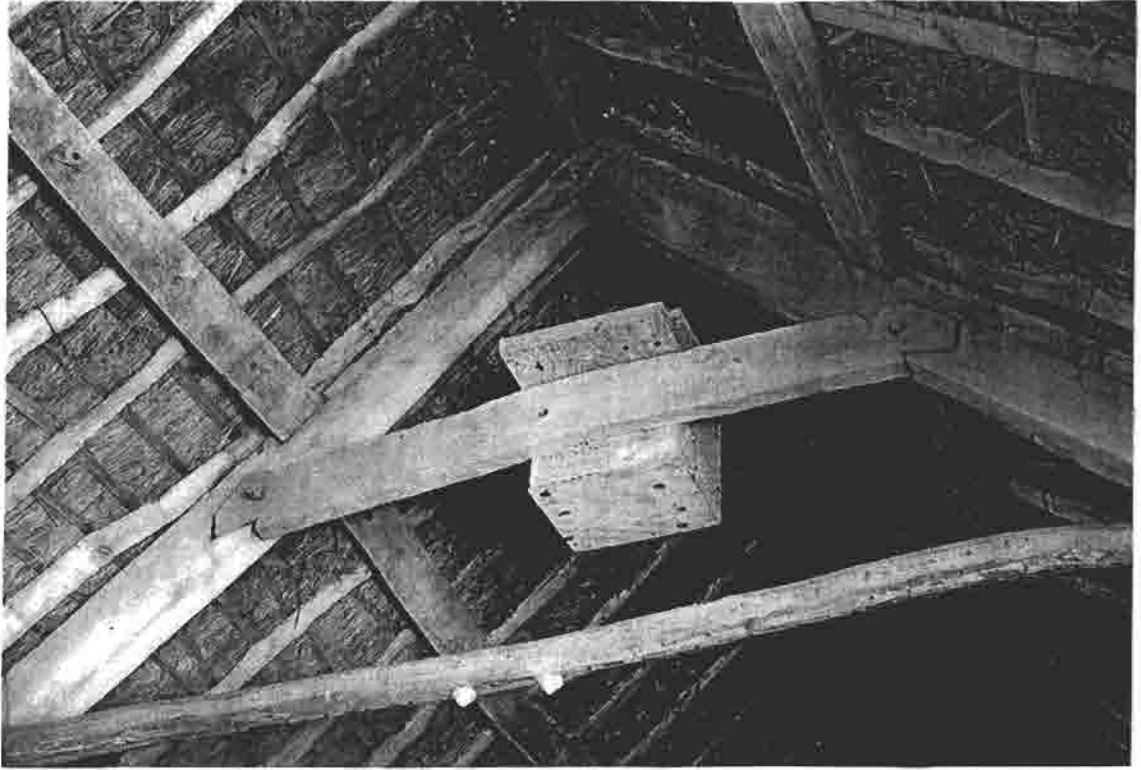
The Committee is aware that there must be other cases in the county, where historic buildings are threatened by unsuitable proposals about which we have not heard. We should welcome members letting us know of these, so that we can consider making representations.

Finally, a small contribution from the Group's funds was made towards the cost of placing a copy of the 'chevalier' ridge tile on top of the pub at the top of Fore Street, Exeter, which

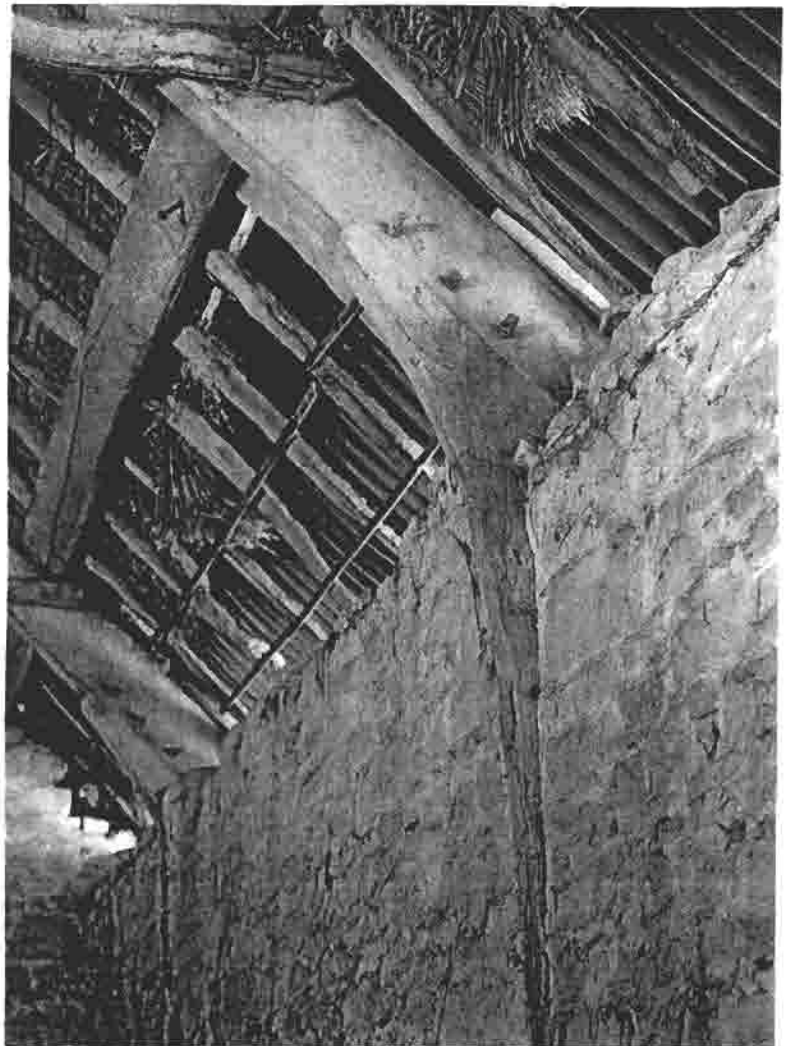


The south front of the stone and thatch Membury Court, showing the fine ovolo-moulded stone mullions of the four light parlour window (probably 1568, as on a plaque inside).

The south window of the detached 13th century chapel at Membury Court, which has a large 19th century cider press at the two-storey west end of the same building.



Two views of the roof interior of the fine detached 17th century stone barn at Uphay, showing one of the typical collars & the apex, one of the jointed crucks, and the remains of the thatch, now under a protective sheeting.



stands on the site of the building which was destroyed in the Blitz and where the tile originally sat.

Peter Child

EDITOR'S REVIEW OF 2004

This year's Newsletter is, regrettably, rather later than usual. Pressure of work has prevented most of the promised contributors from being able to complete their papers. There is, however, rather more than usual to report on DBG events, as the last, jumbo issue, on Exeter Schools, left very little room for other items and the Conference and AGM of 2004 had not yet been reported on.

With this Newsletter is enclosed a gazetteer of the dates, venues and subjects of all DBG's Conferences & AGMs, and the numbers & contents of all previous Newsletters, which we hope members will find useful. Back copies of any of these latter, Nos 1-22, may be obtained, at various charges, from Dawn Honeysett (01363 866230).

Stuart Blaylock's review of an English Heritage conference very much reflects our other chief topical issue. Together with the future of Exeter's school buildings, the widespread reorganisation of church seating has been the principal object of the Committee's concern, in the current year.

CONFERENCE 2004

Our 19th Summer Conference was on *Buildings of the Tavistock Estate* – a title designed to reflect the whole of its very long history – and was held, on

Saturday 19 June, in the Village Hall at Lamerton. There were four excellent speakers, who each illustrated a quite different aspect of the buildings of this huge estate, built by its owners, from the abbots of Tavistock Abbey to the many Russell dukes of Bedford who succeeded them. It was a beautiful sunny day, enjoyed by 48 members & 4 guests.

Tavistock Abbey was founded a century before the Norman Conquest and was some 600 years old, when Henry VIII swept it away in 1539. By that time, it was the richest abbey in Devon and second only to Glastonbury, in the whole of the south west. The abbey was a vast complex, with lodgings, cloisters, workshops and, of course, the abbey and parish churches. Prof. Finberg's wife made a useful reconstruction drawing which, together with some photographs of the surviving ruins, was shown on the small display I made for the occasion. Anyone wanting to know how such a great estate was managed, in the Middle Ages, should read Prof. Finberg's economic history *Tavistock Abbey*, published in 1969. Most of the monastic buildings were probably reduced to ruins almost at once, as any moves to restore the monastic way of life would have been made obviously impossible, with no house to support it.

The abbey & its huge estate were leased by the king to John Russell, a soldier risen from a comparatively modest family from south Dorset, who was of great use to him in 'pacifying' the west country and whom he created first Baron Russell. It was on an annual fee of approximately a quarter of its income but still an astonishingly rich holding. The Russells also got Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire, which became their principal seat and from which

they took their title, when they rose to be dukes.

Stuart Blaylock spoke on the remains of Tavistock's monastic buildings, parts of which, apart from the parish church and the restored gatehouse, lie scattered over the town. In an encyclopaedic overview, he showed what the later Russells had done with them and their eventual influence on the 'gothic' style adopted by the C19 Dukes of Bedford, in their near total rebuilding of the town. He also showed one or two classical style buildings, of earlier in the century, which briefly suggested the very different appearance this rebuilding might have given.

John Goodridge, an historian of the area, gave a fascinating exposition of the extensive – and highly distinctive – new estate buildings erected by Francis Russell, 7th Duke of Bedford (1788-1861) and the financial imperatives which inspired his efforts. His father and grandfather had both incurred astronomical debts, which would certainly have bankrupted any estate lower than a dukedom, and he had urgent need to increase the prosperity of his inheritance.

Colin Buck spoke more briefly, on the archaeology of the former industrial and domestic buildings associated with the Russells' Great Consols Mine and its workers – all of which were later erased after it was worked out, for the creation of a sporting estate. It was extraordinary to see how a large industrial complex was returned to landscape so relatively soon after its building. The restored Morwellham Quay gives some idea of what was formerly at the mine itself.

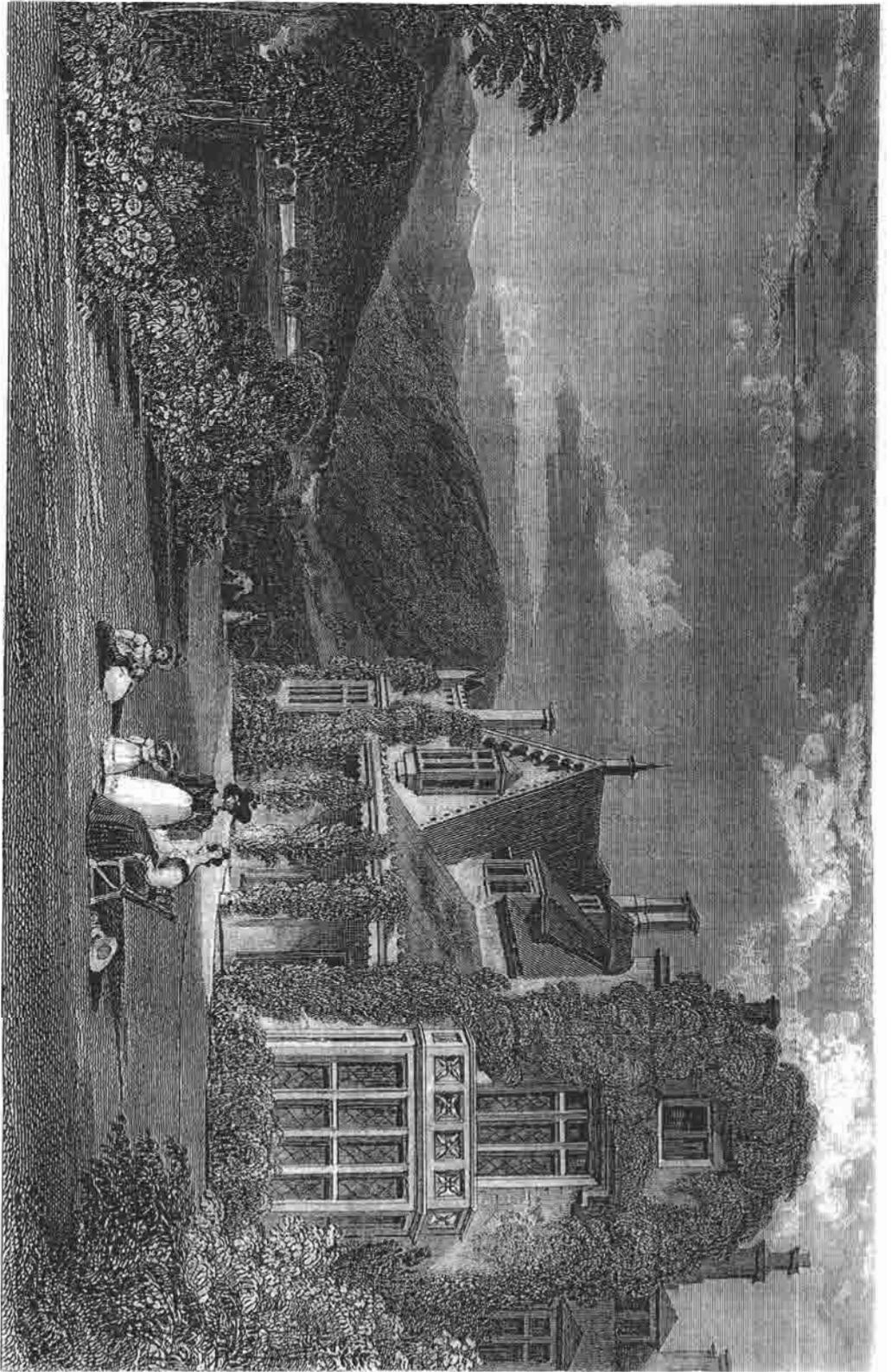
Our last speaker was Martin Watts, on the 7th Duke's extraordinary model

industrialised farm, built in the local Hurdwick stone and massive granite, in the early 1850s, and almost all of which was operated by water power and gravity. Kilworthy Farm was to be our final destination, in the afternoon.

For logistical reasons, we did not go to Tavistock itself, but our display boards also showed something of the Russell family's contribution to the town, which they took over in the C18, and included copies of some fine C19 architectural drawings, made for them towards the rebuilding, many by the estate's architect Theophilus Jones, and some of which were never built.

After a buffet lunch at Lamerton, the Group went on to Endsleigh, the country home built by the 6th Duke, in the *cottage ornee* style. We were only able to see the exterior, shown to us by Jo Cox, and the Repton designed gardens, as the house had recently been sold to become a private hotel. Later, we were dismayed to learn that all its original furniture, which had been *in situ* since the early C19, had been sold off - thus destroying much of the unique quality of the house. An interesting feature of recent renovation was the restoration of the game bone mosaic pavements under the verandas, parts of which had been severely damaged by feet and metal garden furniture. The best preserved pieces had been lifted and moved to unfrequented areas, and casts in a bone coloured hard plastic had been put down in the busier ones.

We moved on to Morwell Barton, which we saw by kind permission of Mr & Mrs N.Timpson. This reputed country seat of the later Abbots of Tavistock, much restored and altered by the Dukes of Bedford, was shown to us by Robert Waterhouse, who pointed out to us some of the very



Endsleigh, designed in 1810 by Sir Jeffrey Wyatville for the sixth Duke of Bedford. Engraved c1820.

many building stages exemplified by butt joints, changes in masonry style, etc. A very attractive courtyard house but very difficult of interpretation.

Our last destination was Kilworthy Farm, just north of Tavistock, which was shown to us by Martin Watts; and where the members marvelled at the extraordinary granite monoliths which support the model, louvre ventilated, cow houses above and were intended to receive the dung from them. We also saw the huge water wheel, in its original pit, which operated a great variety of belt driven machinery which performed, via a system of chutes, so many of the tasks of the farm. The whole complex is being gradually restored. It has to be said that it is not beautiful but it is a highly ingenious piece of architecture – probably largely designed by Theophilus Jones who, together with the duke's agent, John Benson, had been sent on a tour of improved farms in other western counties, in 1850 - and it is a probably unique piece of agricultural history. A copy of a full description of these buildings was included in the conference notes. The day was rounded off with a much needed home made tea, provided by the tenant, Mrs Vallance.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DBG's 2004 AGM was held on Saturday 16 October in the Methodist Church Hall, in the remote large parish of Hartland, in the north west of the county. Despite its being a fairly long drive from almost anywhere, 33 members attended.

As has become almost traditional of recent years, the meeting was chaired by Jo Cox. All those members of the Committee, Ann Adams, Jo Cox, Dawn Honeysett, Jenny Sanders, John

Thorp and Robert Waterhouse, who retired by rotation, were re-elected and Lyn Auty joined the new Committee. The principal business of the day was the election of the new officers. Joining in 1991, I had somehow reluctantly accumulated, over the years, all the administrative tasks. After some eight years as Secretary/Chairman (DBG has never had an official chairman), it was a great pleasure and relief to pass Chris Brooks' legacy into the capable hands of Peter Child. And after eleven years as Treasurer & Membership Secretary, I was equally pleased that Dawn Honeysett had agreed to undertake that task. With the prevailing difficulty of all societies in finding suitable members willing to fill the officers' posts, we are extremely fortunate to get two such splendid new Officers. It is greatly reassuring to know that DBG's future seems secure for several years. I hope, though, that other members will come forward before too long. DBG Committee members and Officers are elected for three-year periods, for continuity, but those who shoulder most of the work should not be obliged to undertake more than two consecutive terms.

In my time, I have always been supported by hard working Committee members, on the day, but usually also by a particular one with local knowledge, during the planning stage. Many of our venues have been a considerable distance from where I live, in the middle of the county, and local introductions have helped greatly in the smooth running of events organised, as it were, at arm's length. For such help with the Tavistock Estate Conference, as with Bere Ferrers, in 2001, I am especially grateful to Jenny Sanders. At Hartland, though, there was no one with any particular knowledge of it and certainly

no one living in the area, and we have all reason to be most grateful for the help of Stephen Hobbs, of the local history society and organiser of the Hartland Project, currently putting on electronic record all of Hartland's particularly rich documentation.

At my retirement, I was immensely touched by the warmth of the meeting's expression of appreciation for my own endeavours, voiced by Jo, and by the Committee's very generous gift of a framed print and a cash present, which I have converted into a ceramic memento.

For the speakers on the day, I was unlucky for the very first time. The one person known to have much knowledge of Hartland buildings was Nat Alcock, but he had to be elsewhere. Harold Fox had done a study of the medieval settlement patterns of the manor of Hartland, from its (Arundel) documents, but he, too, had to be somewhere else on the day. Although with very little basic knowledge of the subject, I decided I should have to undertake the talk myself. Nat Alcock generously provided his own sketches and notes on the various farmhouses he had examined, many years ago, Harold Fox's settlement map was published (in *Landscape and Townscape of the South West*: ed. Robert Higham, Exeter 1989), Stephen Hobbs kindly steered me towards sources, I obtained copies of all the listing descriptions and borrowed R Pearse Chope's *Book of Hartland* from the library. From these, I attempted a social overview of the buildings and principal historic inhabitants of Hartland, to show the wide inter-connections of this apparently remote grazing area, through its centuries of coastal and sea trading. All the illustrations were on OHP membranes and I am especially

grateful to Rebecca Child, for her skilful manipulation of these and swift repeated returns to the parish map, which I hope made the talk intelligible.

After lunch in Hartland, the group moved on to the Church House at Stoke – an interesting extension of our study at the 2003 Conference – where we were welcomed to the very well preserved but often altered house, by its organist tenant.

The second site was Higher Brownsham Farm, in the north east corner of the parish and owned by the National Trust. The tenant very kindly allowed us free access and we were able to see the remarkable decorative plasterwork in the main chamber, restored some years ago by members Jane Schofield and Jeremy Sharpe. Having been attached to decayed timbers for very many years, the ceiling has distorted – a great tribute to the hair in it, that it never fell – and swells not far above one's head, while the winged horse supporters in the frieze dance round the walls. The house was reduced, many years ago, to a small farmhouse but shows signs outside of having originally been larger.

The last house we visited was Gorvin, once a Holman house, which passed to the Prusts by marriage and became their seat for many generations. Today it belongs to a neighbouring farmer, who leases it to one of his staff, and the more modern wing is let for holidays. Once again, we were warmly welcomed, by the owner's wife who showed it to us.

The following is a summary of some of the aspects of the talk.



A sketch of HARTLAND, showing the places mentioned in the text.

Hartland

The very large parish of Hartland – which takes its name from its largest manor – was settled at least from Saxon times, when an abbey was founded at Stoke. This abbey was later to be rebuilt and re-founded, on its present site, by the land's new Norman lords, in a valley nearer to their town of Harton, which they founded in the 13th century. At the Dissolution, Henry VIII gave it to one of his principal servants, the 'Sergeant of the King's Cellar', William Abbott, whose descendants still own it.

Still on its elevated remote site, the great church, dedicated to the Celtic St Nectan, dominates the landscape. It seems to have no features, other than the Norman font, earlier than the late 14th century but its history suggests that it has a Saxon core.

What became the parish was composed of at least five manors in separate ownership, in 1086. Stoke and Hartland were the largest, Milford and Meddon are still owned by a family in Morwenstow in Cornwall, and South Hole was probably always the smallest. Part of the large manor of Hartland extended into the next parish of West Wolfardisworthy (Woolsery). As noted earlier, this area is exceptionally well documented, with estate surveys made in 1301, 1365, the 1390s, 1429, 1486 and 1566.

The ownership descent is quite important, as it shows how families in widely different places held land there and influenced its future. Two brothers of the Norman Dinham family, Geoffrey & Oliver (the latter Governor of Ludlow Castle, Salop) inherited Hartland and founded the new abbey. Tristram Risdon, writing c1630, says that they sometimes inhabited their

house on the manor, where they probably enjoyed the hunting in its two deer parks. In Devon, the Dinhams also owned the manors of Nutwell on the Exe, Harpford on the Otter, Upcott in Sheepwash – and they were, of course, later to make a seat at Wortham in Lifton. In Cornwall, they had Cardinham – or Castle Dinham. – of which some ruins remain. In 1299, the manor of Hartland must have supported a thriving community as, besides numerous farms and hamlets, it possessed three corn mills and two fulling mills – one of these latter known to have been at Edistone.

One of Geoffrey Dinham's granddaughters married Fulk Fitwarren, an ancestor of the Bouchiers of Tawstock, lords of Barnstaple, who became the Earls of Bath and whose household accounts of the early 17th century provided part of the subject of Todd Gray's brilliant lecture to us (at the 2002 Conference at Combeinteignhead), on how historic great houses were actually used. This granddaughter never obtained Hartland, but a sister of the last Lord Dinham brought a quarter of it to the Tawstock family. An old lease shows that John Lethbridge of Hatherleigh, a relation of the Thomas, whose little brick banqueting house at Winkleigh we saw (at the 2003 AGM) leased land in Hartland from Lord Bath, in 1648.

Lord Dinham's survey of 1566 lists 195 holdings, of which 26 were described as 'mansions' and which we can probably safely relate to most of the surviving principal farms. Holdings mentioned in the documents are: Blagdon, Titchberry, Gawlish, Blegberry, Longfurlong, Moor, Beckland, Brownsham, Cheristow, Norton, Velly, Milford, Philham, Elmescott, Edistone, Docton, Thorvey (gone), Hardisworthy, South Hole,

Goldenpark (formerly Boterberry), Firebeacon, Gorvin, Welcombe (now a separate parish), Meddon & Youlston.

The dispersed parish's spiritual needs were served by a number of private chapels, of which few traces still remain. There were once chapels licensed at Gawlish, Blegberry, Longfurlong, Cheristow, Harton, Velly, Milford, Philham, Thorvey, South Hole, Firebeacon, Welcombe & Meddon.

A high proportion of the existing farms, although often rebuilt, have documentary mention from at least the 16th century – and several of them from the early 14th. Of these tenements, we can still know something of some of their owners/tenants. Several bore arms and, even where they did not, preserved their pedigrees, which, together with the details from the lords' surveys, help greatly in fixing the status of their houses, at the various times.

In 1566, the Atkins family, who were later to be described as 'of Blegberry', were free tenants of 'the Castle' and its lands. Although it was destroyed in the 20th century, Blegberry once had a fine 17th century decorative plaster chamber ceiling, of which a photograph survives. The piece of curtain walling there is sometimes regarded as of the Civil War period, which its position makes rather unlikely. It might, more probably, be partly medieval and maintained for protection from coastal pirates. There is a piece of curtain wall, regarded as medieval by the National Trust, at West Challacombe in Combe Martin – a house on a similarly remote site, not far inland from the coast. It may be noted here that West Challacombe was a house connected with the Orchard family, of which a Kilkhampton

representative was to inherit Hartland Abbey in the 18th century, and whose son, Paul, was to pull down most of the surviving buildings and build the present house, in 1779 (which is always open to the public).

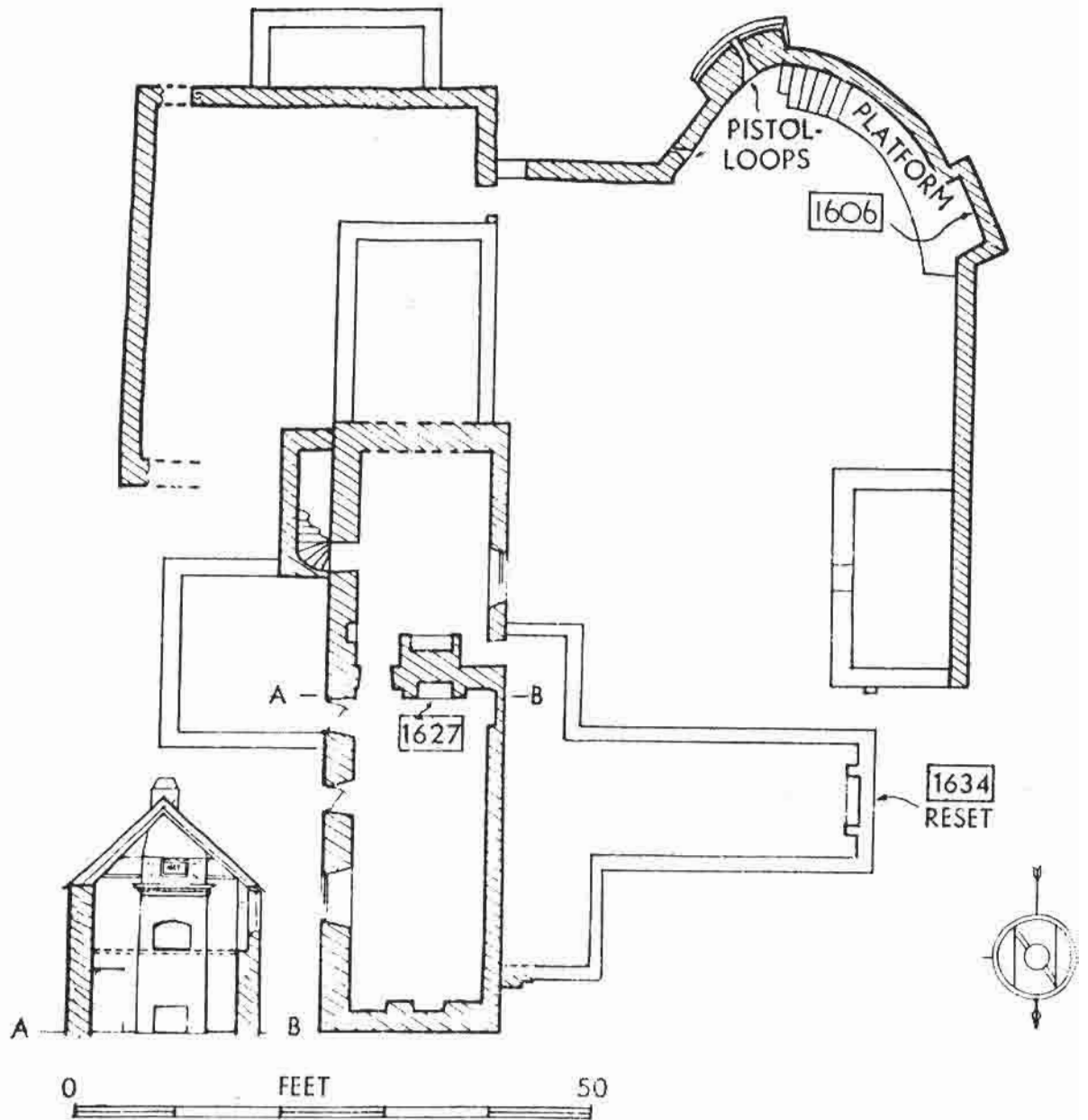
Blagdon (or Blakedon) was a free tenancy of Walerand Blakedon in 1301 and the family seems to have adopted the name Walerand (Walrond?) but locally took the name of Gifford.

There was a Thomas Titchberry of Titchberry in 1258 and a Richard Titchberry was an Exeter canon in 1406. By the 17th century it was a seat of the Cleverdon family. East Titchberry belongs to the National Trust and has the only purpose-built malt house owned by it, in the county.

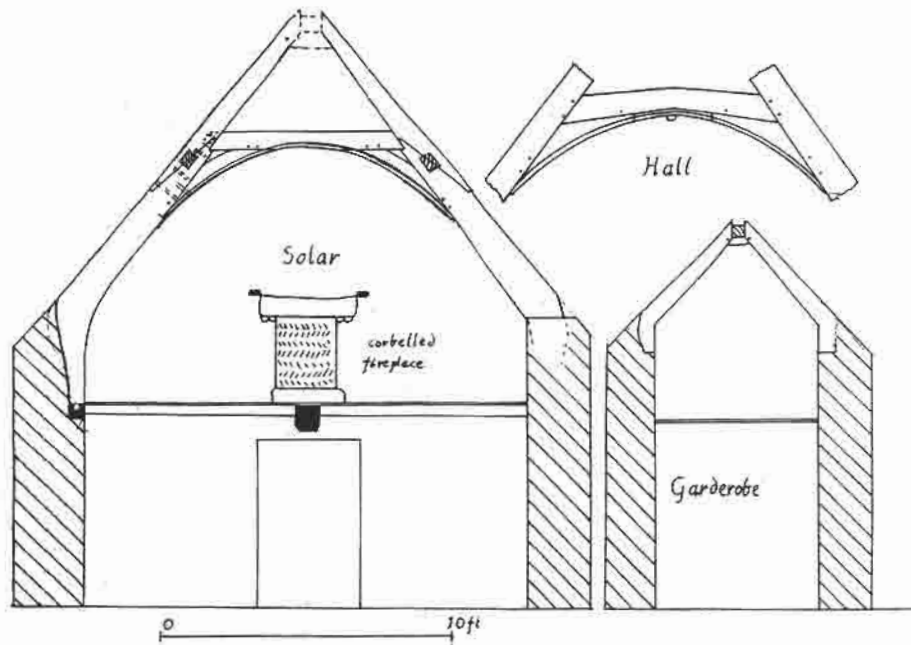
There were Longfurlongs of Long Furlong in 1301. William was there in the early 14th century and a Joel later the same century. They were still primary tenants in 1566, when John Tucker was their tenant, and the Tucker family was later to take over the free tenancy and to be there a long time. Mrs Joanna Tucker presented the church with a copy of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, in 1686.

Hugh Stucley, 4th son of Sir Hugh of Affeton in West Worlington, was tenant of the demesne farm Beckland, in 1566 – and the family was to inherit the Abbey, in the 19th century, via a complicated distaff descent.

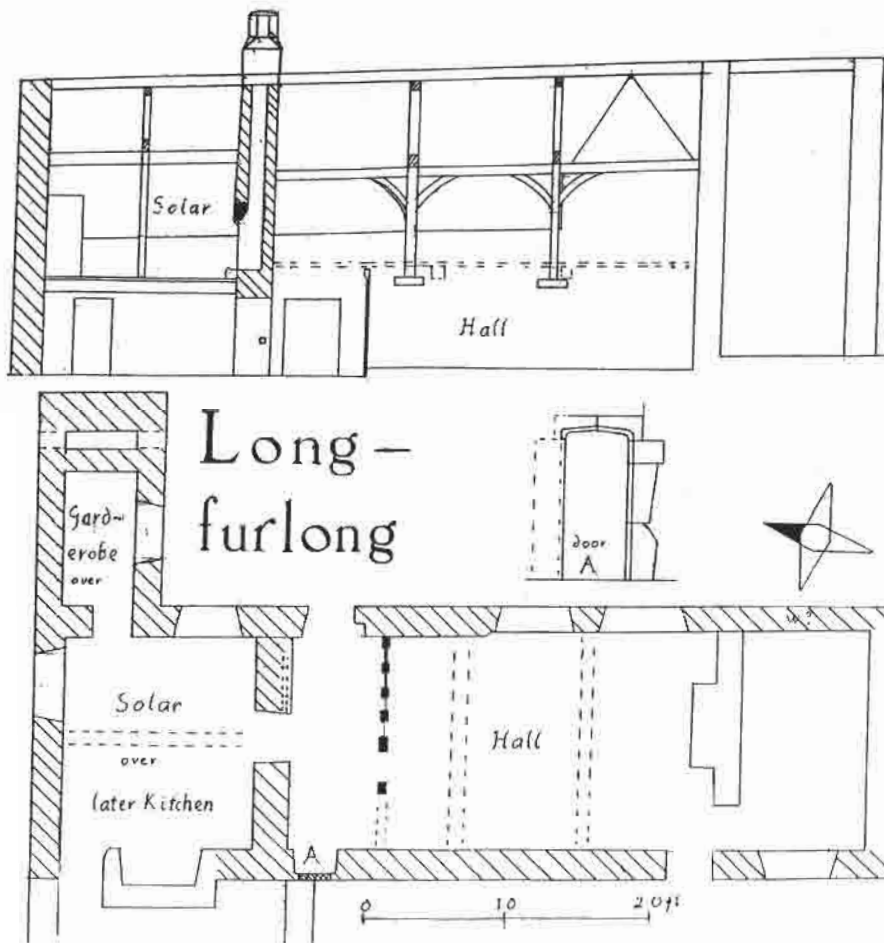
Norton and Cheristow were free-tenanted by Thomas Holman, in 1566, and the family may have been there longer. Agnes Holman, whose family had been 'of Gorvin' for at least two generations, brought it to John Prust, when they married in the 15th century. The Holmans of Hartland were the forebears of the later well-known ship

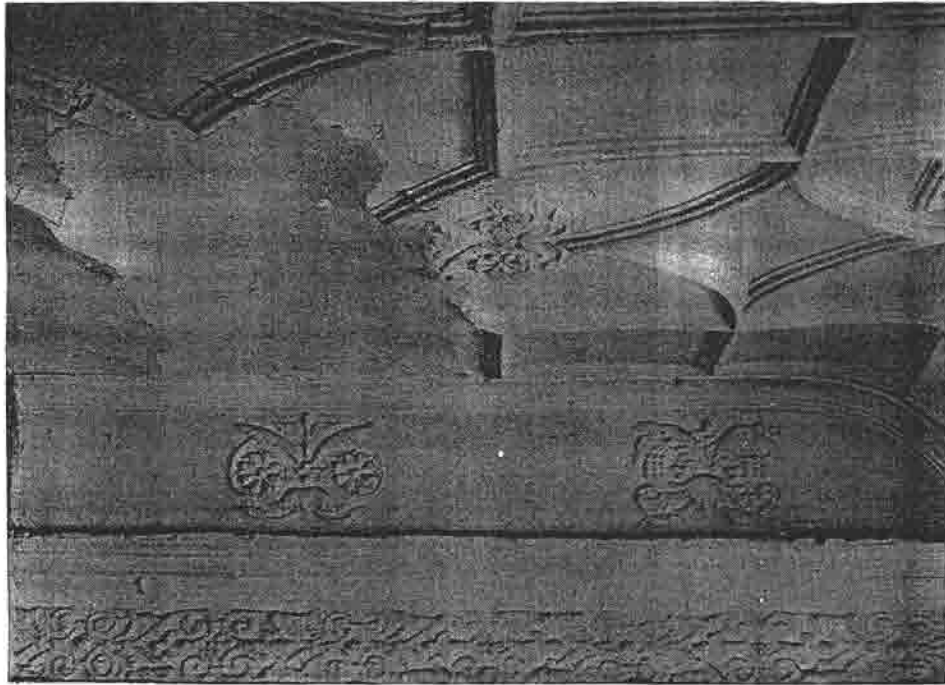


Blegberry, Hartland, apparently an early 17th century house, possibly on the medieval castle site, altered and extended in the 18th & 19th centuries. The 17th century buildings and embellishments were the work of two successive William Atkins (1578-1608 & 1599-1662). They also built or, more probably, strengthened the defensive courtyard wall; and the second built the gabled well-head, to the west of the house, in 1657. The chamber plaster overmantel records the marriage of William Atkins II and Margery Cleverdon of Titchberry, in 1627.

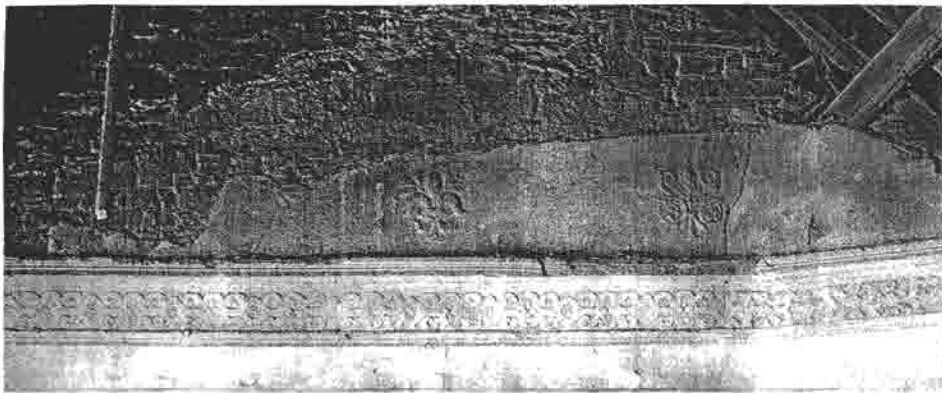


Longfurlong, Hartland, an obviously high status house, probably of the late 15th century with early 17th century alterations; extensively altered when modernised in the late 20th century. When drawn in 1972 it still retained its garderobe block, wind-braces over the hall, most of a screen and other early timbering, including some original flat floor joists. An important feature is the medieval first-floor fireplace in the solar, with paired stone corbels to support the hood and a pair of projecting stone candle brackets.





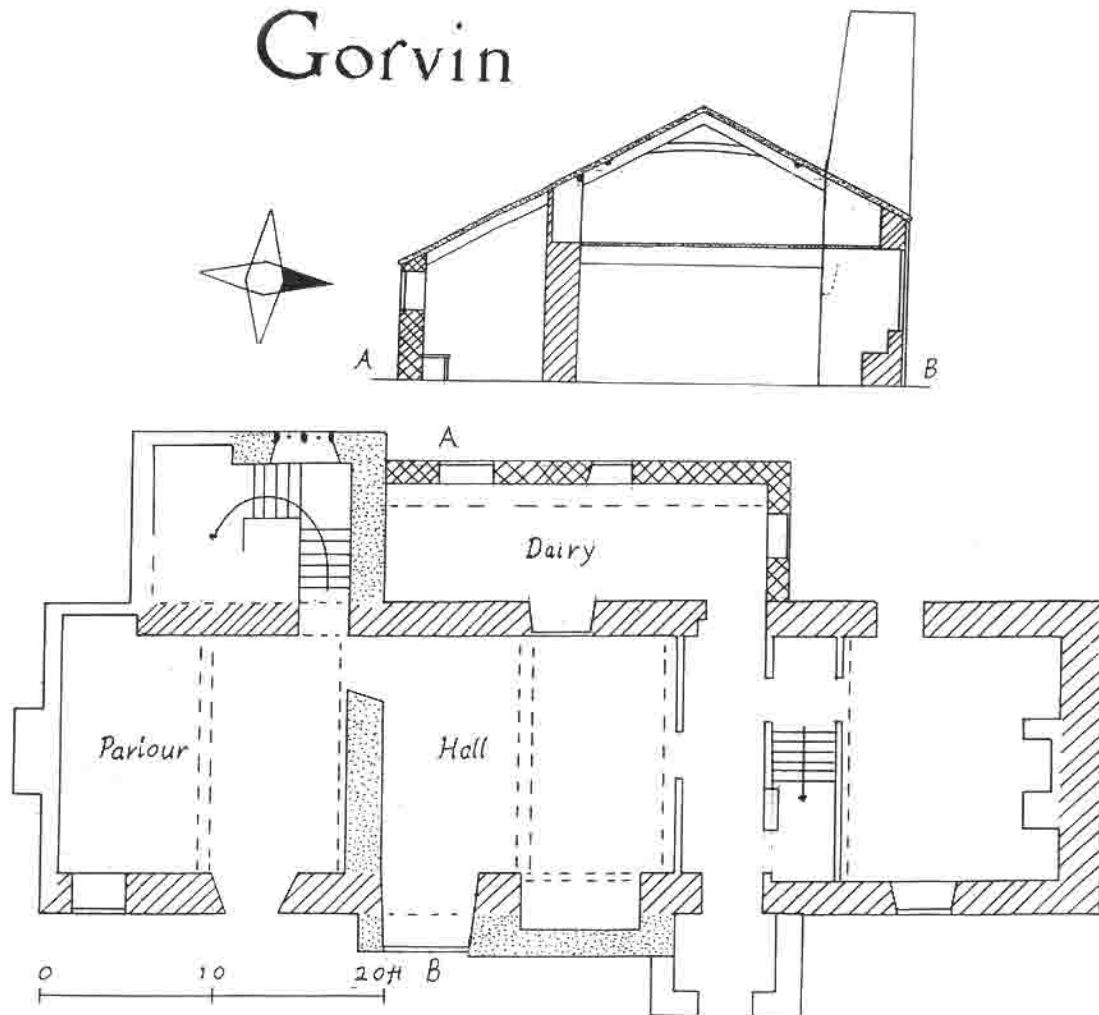
Former ceiling and frieze at Blegberry, showing the gable motifs in a shallow coving.



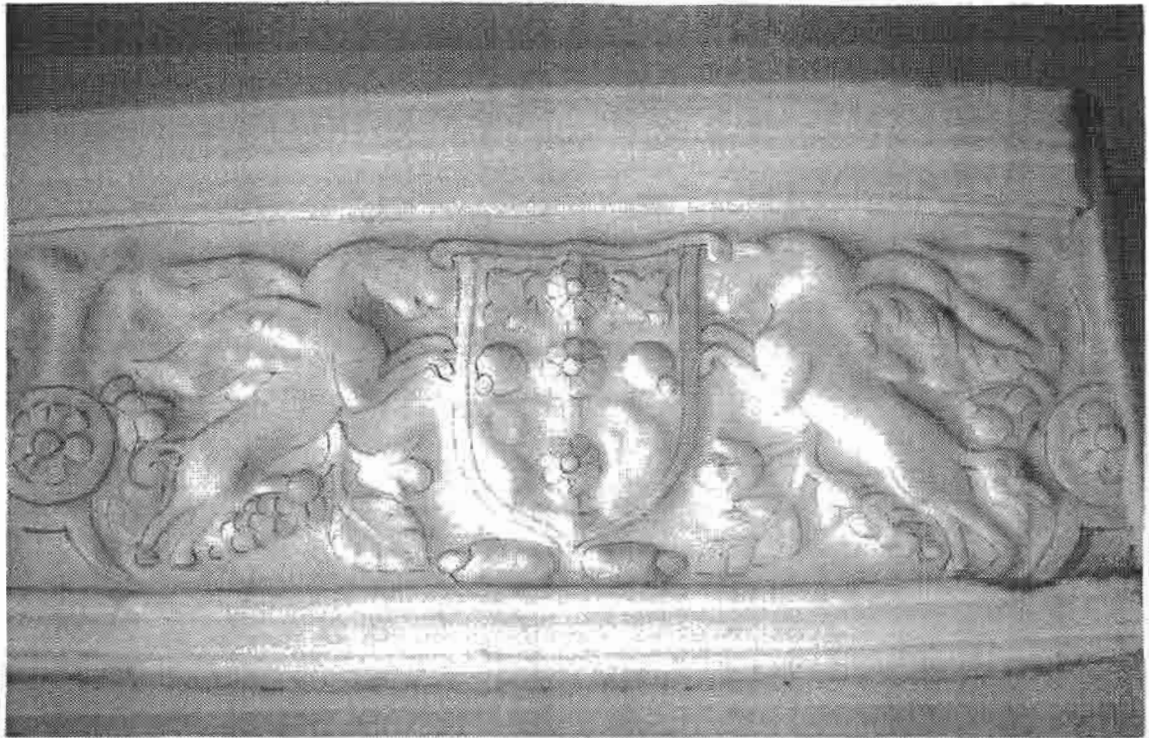
Frieze and gable motifs, before restoration, at Docton Court, Appledore.



Gorvin



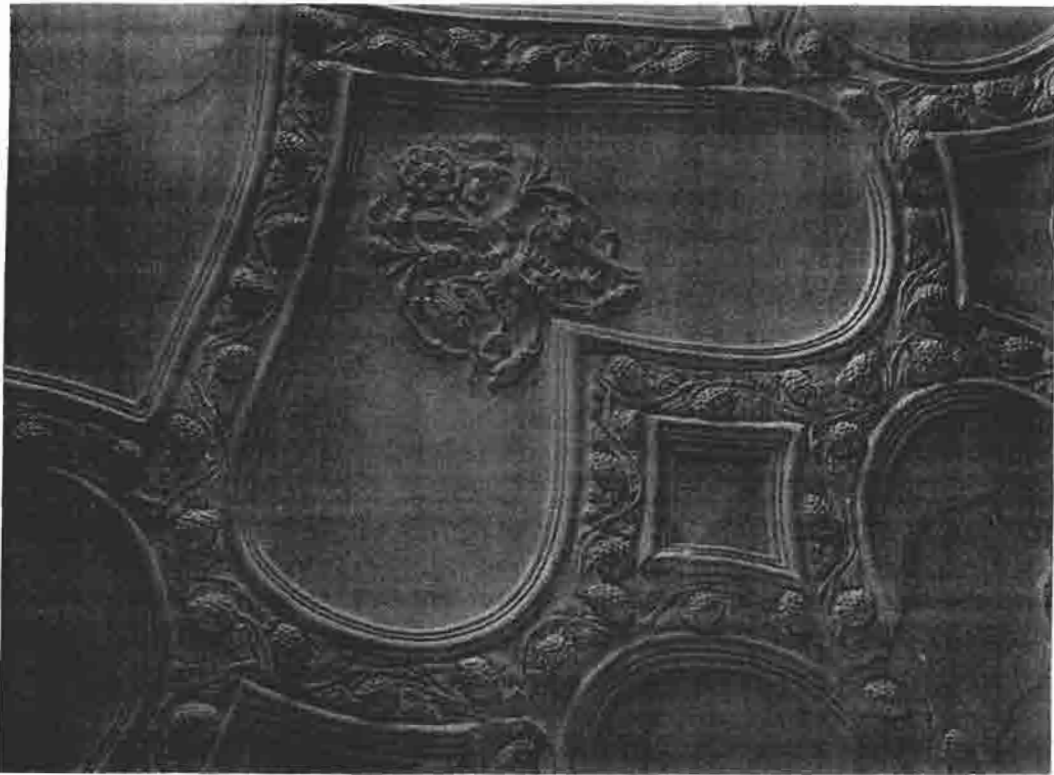
Gorvin, Hartland was probably originally a single-storey medieval hall house, floored and extended on at least two occasions in the 17th century and with 19th century alterations and new wing. The stair to the raised parlour end has a two-light chamfered granite window. It is no longer there, but the parlour chamber is said to have had a dated armorial plaster feature.



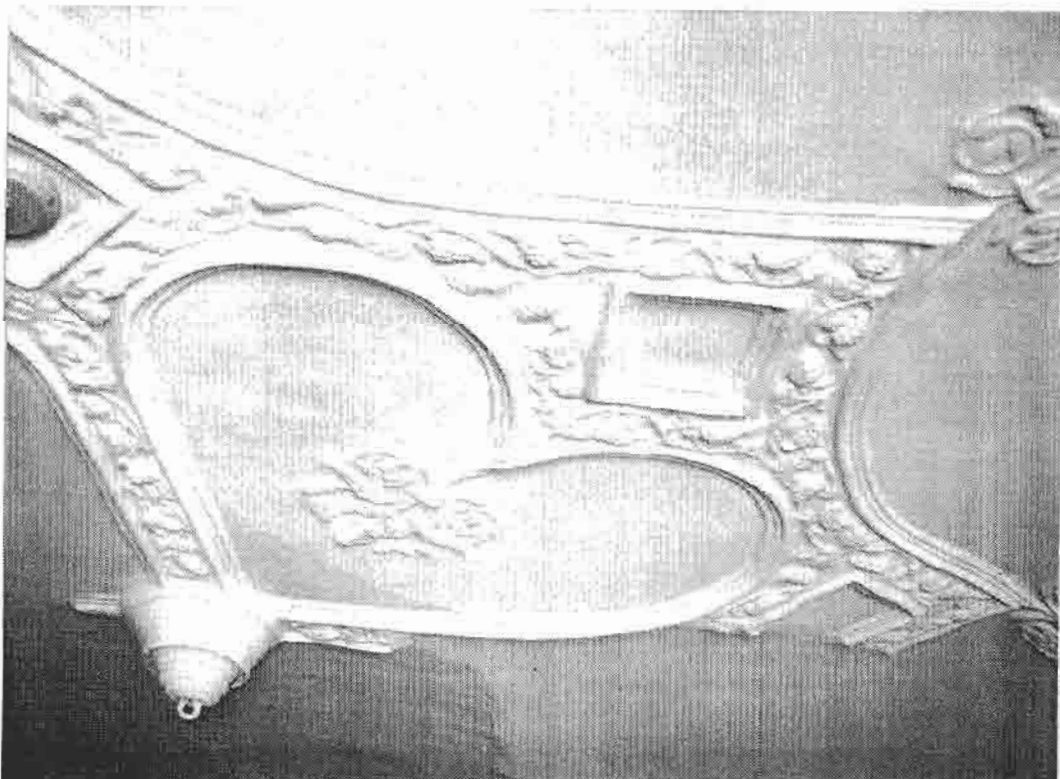
Winged horse supporters on a chamber frieze in Appledore.



Winged horse supporters on the chamber frieze at Higher Brownsham, Hartland.



Vine-enriched rib and heart motif chamber ceiling (probably by John Abbott of Frithelstock) in Higher Brownsham, Hartland, and a very similar ceiling in a house in Appledore.



builders and owners, at Bideford and Topsham.

Brownsham, once a hamlet of fourteen small farms, amalgamated to eight by 1365 and shrunk to only three by 1566, was part of the quarter inherited by the sister of Lord Dinham who married Sir John Arundel of Lanherne. Most of its late medieval records are probably in the Arundel papers at Truro. The Nicholls – apparently a family of glove makers – were tenants of both Higher & Lower Brownsham, in the 17th century. Peter married Mary Cleverdon (presumably of Titchberry) in 1635, and this might be the date of the plasterwork, but, with vine-enriched ribs, it looks later. Some of the Brownsham family's connections may well be found among the commercial families of the larger North Devon ports. Certainly, a very similar ceiling (though without fruit) and frieze are still to be seen in a house in Appledore.

There were Doctons at Docton from at least the 16th century, the first mentioned being son of a 15th century John of Kilkhampton. In 1566 another John was free-tenant of Ashcroft and parts of both deer parks. Thomas of Docton, whose mother was Agnes Chantrell, married Alice Atkins of Blegberry. They died without a surviving son but have a handsome armorial slab in St Nectan's. A daughter of Thomas' first cousin married William Luttrell, whose mother was Prudence Abbott of Hartland Abbey. This is, no doubt, how one of these Doctons came to build a house on a quay-side site belonging to the former abbey, at Appledore. It still has an armorial cartouche above the door, showing the arms of Docton & Chantrell and, inside, the remains of an upper hall

plaster ceiling and frieze, very similar to those once at Blegberry.

Gorvin (once Gorven or Gorfin) was free-tenanted by a Gorven in 1301. Later it became a seat of at least two generations of Holmans, before passing to the Prusts, when Agnes Holman married John Prust. The Prust family of Thorvey (now gone but believed to be near Docton) provided two of the last Abbots of Hartland. Part of the Dinham estate, called 'Goroenby' (presumably 'Thorvey' or 'Thorrey') descended to Osbert, son of Richard Courtenay, and his heiress seems to have brought it to the Prusts. Gorvin became the principal seat of this well-documented and prominent Royalist family, who married into the Drewe, Pollard, Cary, Wood, Coffin and Keynes families. One of the several Hughs gave the benches in St Nectan's south aisle, in 1530. Joseph, second son of a later Hugh of Gorvin, was Lieut. Colonel in Sir Thomas Stucley's royalist regiment. Many subsequent generations became clergy in other places, which may be how the old house became abandoned and lost its former status. It still survives but, sadly, no longer with the decorative plasterwork and armorial, dated overmantel, which are reputed to have once been there.

Moor, which is today the last thatched farmhouse in the parish, was described as having a house, garden, barn, orchard, and land totalling 46 acres, in 1566. It was then tenanted by one John Galsory (Galsworthy) - perhaps an ancestor of the novelist.

The churchwardens' accounts of the parish show what a busy place Hartland was. Apart from its commercial uses, the quay was evidently a regular entry point for those escaping to land, after capture of

their ships at sea or, in the 17th century, from the escalating troubles in Ireland. A number of people from France, Ireland and Holland, as well as many English towns, came through the parish every year. Hartland seems remote and rural today, but I think it is well to bear in mind its bustling, often troubled and sometimes quite cosmopolitan past, and its close commercial connections with other Bristol Channel ports, when looking at the present remnants of its houses.

Ann Adams

'To Pew or Not to Pew – Is this the Question?'

This was the title of an English Heritage conference held at Lydiard Tregoze, near Swindon on 9 June 2005. Attended by about 50 delegates, the conference was addressed by six speakers, who explored the history and typology of pews and aspects of the current vogue for re-ordering churches relating to pews (significance, redundancy, clearance, retention). Quotations in the following summary represent the words of the speaker, or a handout prepared for the day.

The day was introduced by Sarah Brown of English Heritage. She stressed that box pews with doors represented, in Victorian eyes, much of what was wrong with the churches of the 'long' 18th century; reminded us that pewed interiors were also typical of synagogues and non-conformist chapels, as well as Anglican churches; stressed that it is the seating that often imparts a good deal of the character to church interiors; that pews were the predominant, but not the only, form of seating (William Butterfield's All

Saints, Margaret Street, for instance, had chairs from the start), and were of multifarious design (a variety illustrated by quotations from Butterfield himself and William White, on pew design). A key point, she warned, is that we are in danger, through lack of knowledge, of losing the ordinary in the preservation of the extraordinary.

This point was clearly illustrated by Dr Geoff Brandwood's paper: *History and Typology: the Leicestershire evidence*. This represented the material on pews from his 1984 PhD thesis on church building & restoration 1800-1914, in Leicestershire and Rutland. One interest of this area was that 'it was not in the ecclesiological vanguard and it was 1845 before anyone did anything 'modern''; nor does it have much in the way of surviving medieval pews. The issues are therefore strongly centred on Victorian seating. 'Restoration (and, therefore, re-pewing) schemes got going in the 1840s, grew in the 1850s and exploded in the prosperous 1860s. Things tailed [off] in the mid 1870s, as an economic depression bit.' There is no more a typical Victorian pew (only that it was an open bench, rather than an enclosed 'pew') than there is a typical Victorian church. It is hard to determine what is common, and to what extent the Leicestershire evidence is representative. Some observations may have a wider application. Some places peak more in the 1870s than in the 1860s. An earlier 'copyist' phase gave way to one in which 'development was prized', and this gave rise to some very exotic pew forms. Poppy heads seem to be an early type, although one that also has a later flowering. Square-headed pew ends are ubiquitous as a simple type. Pews with doors are almost unheard of by 1850 (although pew doors and pew rents survived well

into the 20th century in non-conformity). Elbow pew forms were popular from the 1860s but did not appear before the 1850s. Round-shouldered pews do not appear before the 1860s, and continued popular until the end of the 19th century. East-facing pews were preferred, even in very awkward positions (e.g. against the east walls of aisles), and the ecclesiologists did not like north or south facing arrangements; this often leads to the loss of pews in such extreme positions. The most important point of this paper was that, if we are to have informed conservation, we need to know much more about seating.

David Hawkins then spoke on *The diocesan perspective* (both as a furniture designer and as the vice-chairman of Worcester Diocesan Advisory Committee [DAC]). There is a feeling among parishes that the cost and time taken to maintain churches (constituting a huge proportion of the nation's listed buildings) falls unevenly on the small minority who make up the congregations, and some resentment at conservation bodies and professionals is a result of this. DACs are often seen as censorious, rather than agencies to help, to guide people in the right direction, and their advice is often ignored or rejected by parishes. We are facing a period of enormous change, a fact often accepted by church-going congregations themselves, but resisted by the non-churchgoing majority. Across the board, a high percentage agree that more use should be made of church buildings, and this has implications for furnishings, and especially for seating. As a result of existing clearance and re-ordering, huge amounts of Victorian furnishings are being shipped abroad, especially to Holland, Germany and the USA. This is often hopelessly out

of sympathy with its destination, in terms of its style, but the Americans revere the craftsmanship of Victorian furnishings, in a way that we do not. [Although I am sure that we will come to value Victorian craftsmanship in the future, it may not be until the majority of Victorian pews have been discarded, or otherwise affected by re-orderings: this will lead to the very 'why ever did they do that?' type of judgement that we strive to avoid].

Charles Smith, Churches Officer of the Victorian Society, then spoke on *Assessing Significance: the Victorian Society and pews*. Again, the lack of national figures was noted, although the clear signs are that the majority of pews date from 1837-1914, thus falling within the brief of the VicSoc, which is inundated with applications for pew removal, often for wholesale clearance. As a result, the society's two casework committees have recently identified basic criteria for establishing significance: Are pews original to the building? Are the architect and/or craftsmen known? Is it a comprehensive scheme? Are the pews distinguished in any way, or of rare type/s? Do they make a significant contribution to the quality of the interior? Have they a significance in relation to the other elements of the interior? These criteria are broadly similar in scope to the guidelines on seating, prepared by the Council for the Care of Churches (a document that deserves to be widely known and used: Council for the Care of Churches 2003: *Seating in Churches*, a 4 page typescript document available from CCC, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ, and also via www.churchcare.co.uk).

Smith then discussed two case studies in detail, both of which happen to be in Devon:

St Andrews, Cullompton was comprehensively repaired c1849-50 by Edward Ashworth of Exeter, an important, though still undervalued, local architect. The interior retains most of its original pews of a hybrid type (benches with doors). Some pews have already been cleared, from in front of the screen. The pews are judged to be 'well crafted, well executed pews in a good state of preservation, which are a major component of the interior'. Unfortunately, they are also the target of a developing re-ordering proposal (from a growing evangelical congregation) and look likely to be the subject of an application for total removal. Research, consultation and discussion have led to the Society opposing this application.

St Giles and St Nicholas, Sidmouth was almost entirely rebuilt in 1859-60 by William White, 'a well known and well-regarded architect, whose profile seems to be rising'. The church is furnished in piecemeal fashion, with some pews surviving from White's original furnishing (in the aisles) and later pews in the nave (the subject of satirical sketches by the Sidmouth antiquary, Peter Orlando Hutchinson). The church is again the subject of an ambitious re-ordering proposal, and the application included a good deal of supporting research (among other things, a very useful report on the interior of the development, by Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants). In this case the Victorian Society was persuaded, by the arguments for a totally new scheme and issues of the quality of the surviving pews, and have not opposed the clearance of them.

Roy Porter then spoke on *The end of the road?: Pews and the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches*. In considering uses for a redundant

church, a key element is to consider how much change a building can embrace. The majority of churches can accept some degree of change, but redundancy can be devastating for seating schemes. The Board would usually recommend fixed seating of pre-1840 date for preservation *in situ*. Later material would depend on context and special features or circumstances, i.e. on an assessment of their significance. Only a minority of redundant churches end up vested in the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). For most alternative uses, the removal of seating is inevitable. The question is thus often the rather brutal 'which is more expendable: the seating or the church?' Removal should always trigger a process of recording, and Porter stressed the importance of recording and analysis of fabric, as an integral response to changes in churches: archaeology applies, whether it is above or below ground.

The day was completed by Hugh Harrison on *The seating of St Mary, Lydiard Tregoze*, a magnificent church with important 17th century interior decoration and monument of the St John family. It also possesses a dense set of pews, with a complex history that provide an excellent illustration of some of the problems that churches have to deal with, in balancing conservation needs with the demands of contemporary worship and liturgy. It also had the advantage of being on the spot, so that we could see the church for ourselves at the end of the conference. A model made by Thomas Lloyd in 1841, when the church was repaired, records the 18th century configuration of the interior (otherwise little documentary evidence is available). This shows the pulpit in the centre of the north aisle, and pews fitted in a dense pattern, facing in every direction. Hugh Harrison's

meticulous study of the woodwork (which identified up to 15 phases of work in the furnishings of the church) has shown that both the late 17th century scheme of Sir Walter St John, and the succeeding 18th century 'preaching box' scheme survive as substantial fragments. The 1838-41 repairs included the re-seating of the nave, and a programme of conservation and repair from the 1960s, under Canon Brian Corne, rescued the church from decay. The very plan, with its combination of squire's pew, remains of preaching box seating scheme and 19th century pews in the nave, is now seen as a problem, with no space to do anything, as it is entirely filled with pews.

Summary of some of the main points to emerge from the day.

It ought to be inconceivable that medieval or post-medieval (pre-dating 1840) seating is considered for removal, or even for substantial re-ordering, although cases of just this have arisen, from time to time, in Devon and Somerset. This suggests that there is still a substantial job of education and persuasion to be done, to dissuade parishes from contemplating the removal of significant early seating.

The 'pews issue' as a whole is, nevertheless, largely about Victorian pews. There is not much after 1910 that applies, partly because pews were giving way to chairs, partly that the great period of church woodwork and craftsmanship was drawing to an end. It should also be noted that 20th century furnishings are threatened by re-ordering proposals, and perhaps suffer from our preoccupations with earlier periods, and our inability to identify good work of this period and prioritise its study/appreciation and defence.

There is no national overview on or detailed knowledge of pews and their development, and none of the following is accurately known: the date and distribution of the main types; the popularity of given types at different dates and their use by different designers; the distribution of restorations by date on a national basis; the rate, scale or pattern of loss.

Geoff Brandwood's study of pews in Leicestershire and Rutland only served to highlight the potential, and the dangers of error, by extrapolating from this one (relatively well-understood) area of the country to others, where the situation is unknown or poorly understood. What Brandwood has done for Leicestershire and Rutland needs doing for the whole country, and there is not really any useful short cut. In the meantime, decisions are being made without an accurate basis for determining scarcity (or, for that matter, ubiquity) and, therefore, on a basis of ignorance and assumption, rather than of knowledge.

Stuart Blaylock

Doors at Dartmouth

We have received an enquiry from the owner of the Mansion House, Dartmouth, curious about the rare features of its woodwork. The three-storey, double pile house was built in 1736 for one Capt. Edward Ashe and was quite elaborately decorated with plasterwork and panelling. A most unusual feature of the latter is the use, throughout the house, of ten-panelled doors, and architraves which are eared at both top and bottom, as illustrated here (the six-panelled door is a later replacement). The panels have the

usual cushion fields on the front side and are composed of a rather wayward progression of slightly irregular rectangles. They also appear to have been made in two vertical halves. They are believed to be made of the then new and very expensive mahogany and not always to have been painted, as was more usual in the C18.

Peter Child has tracked down a reference to a ten-panelled door – in Deptford! – but the owner would be most grateful to hear from anyone who knows of any similar doors or architraves in Devon.

Romanesque Sculpture

Readers are asked to keep a look out for any pieces of Romanesque (Norman) decorated stonework. Since the Dissolution of the Monasteries, much became broken up and dispersed but, though rare, pieces do still turn up, built into later walls – and even in garden rockeries. The Courtauld Institute is creating a website containing every known piece of Romanesque sculpture, with one or more good quality photographs of each, together with a scholarly description: www.crsbi.ac.uk The postal address is: Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain & Ireland (CRSBI), Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN. The project staff e-mail address is: info-crsbi@courtauld.ac.uk

Rita Wood of York is making a particular study of the much neglected meaning of Romanesque church sculpture – what the human and often grotesque animals portrayed were intended to teach, to the populace who viewed them. One of her articles, on the font at St Marychurch, Torquay,

appeared in Proceedings No 62 of the Devon Archaeological Society. At Down St Mary, near Crediton, there is a remarkable tympanum, now above the south door, widely – and surely most improbably – believed to represent ‘Daniel in the Lion’s Den’. Mrs Wood convincingly identifies it as an Ascension panel, showing Christ’s reception in Paradise, and one of a series about the country.

South Tawton Church House

The renovated Church House, visited during the 2003 Conference, and whose grant aid application was vigorously supported by the Group, will be officially opened, by Debbie Griffiths of DNP, on 30 November 05. Peter Child will represent DBG. John Thorp, of Keystone, has been a consultant throughout and Ann Adams and Jenny Sanders have been viewing the building progress, at its interim open days.

New Members

We welcome new members:

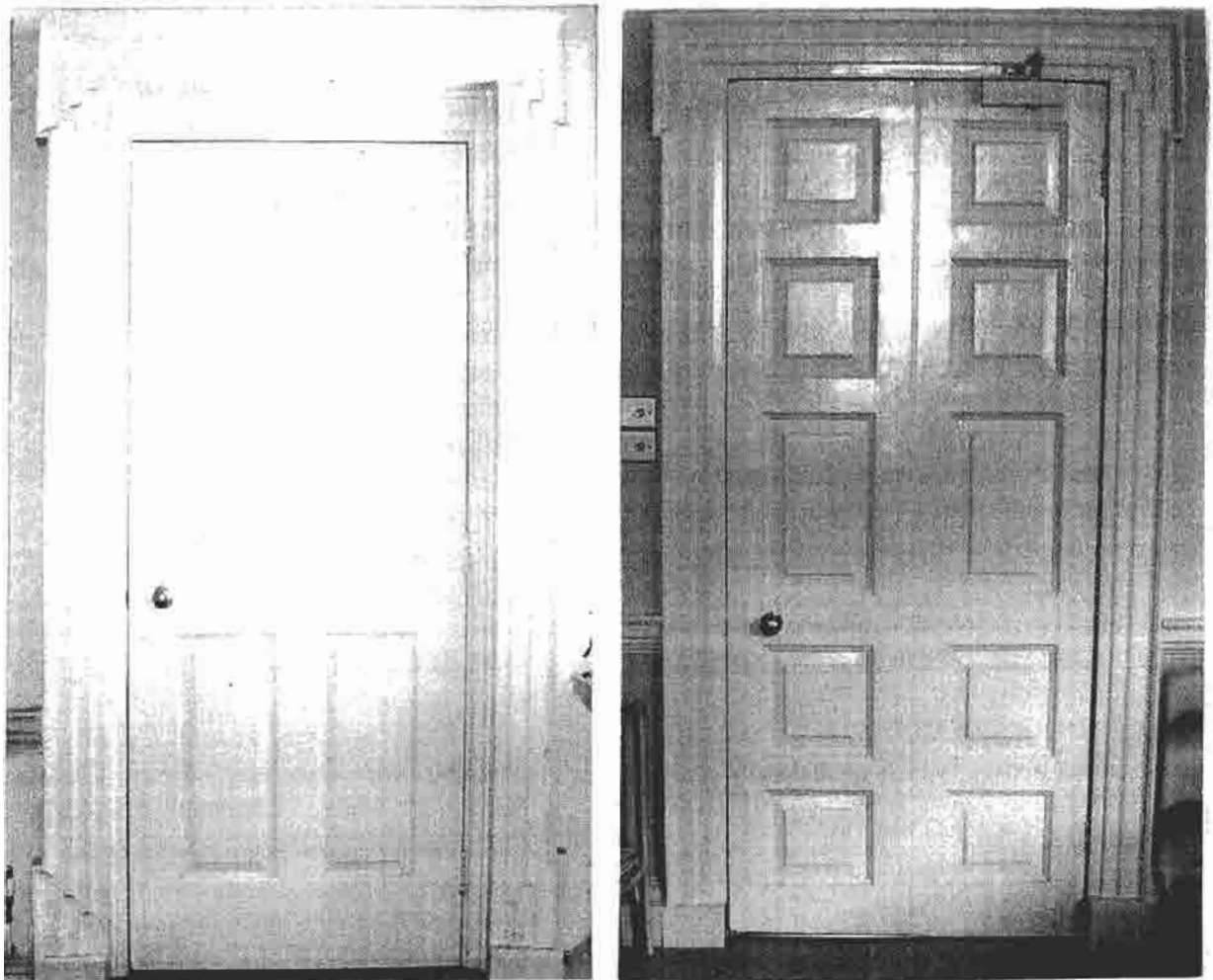
Miss Naomi KJ Archer, The Nest, N Street, North Tawton EX20 2ES
01837 82731

Mrs Alison J Bunning, Hatherland Mill Farm, Lower Washfield, Tiverton EX16 9PG
01398 351165

Thomas J Coleman, Town Tenement Farm, Clyst Hydon, Cullompton EX15 2NB

01884 277230

Geoffrey J Harding, 22 South brook Road, Countess Wear, Exeter EX2 6JA
01392 276176



A ten-panelled door and a door-case with ears at both top and bottom (the six-panelled door is a replacement) in Court House, Dartmouth (see query).



The Romanesque tympanum above the south door at Buckfast Abbey's manor church at Down St Mary.

Brian C Head, The Mansion House,
Mansion House Street, Dartmouth TQ6
9AG

01803 834509

Ms Jennifer A Nixon, Flat 4, 78 Exeter
Road, Exmouth EX8 1PZ

01392 273137

Mrs Susan Penaluna (married name
Burchell), Teasel Cottage, Kenton Hill,
Kenton EX6 8JD

01626 899178

Mrs Marian Wood, Glen Cott,
Cottwood, Riddlecombe, Chulmleigh
EX18 7PG

01769 520559

Renewing members who missed the
2004 Register:

Jonathan Lomas, Sheraton Cottage,
Old Sticklepath Hill, Barnstaple EX31
2BG

01271 378752

Ms Linda L Watson, 8A Church Park,
Kingston, Kingsbridge TQ7 4QB

01548 810725

Resignations

Dr Robert A Higham

Mr Henry & Mrs Norah Luxton

Miss Lynne Pardoe

Changes of address & phone numbers:

Stewart Brown, Tillicks Cottage,
Woodhayes, Honiton EX14 4TP

01404 47776

Dr Todd Gray, 76 Longbrook Street,
Exeter EX4 6AP

01392 272727

Dr David M G Halpin can be contacted
at his work address: Consultant
Physician & Sr Lecturer in Respiratory
Medicine, RD&E Hospital, Barrack
Road, Exeter EX2 5DW

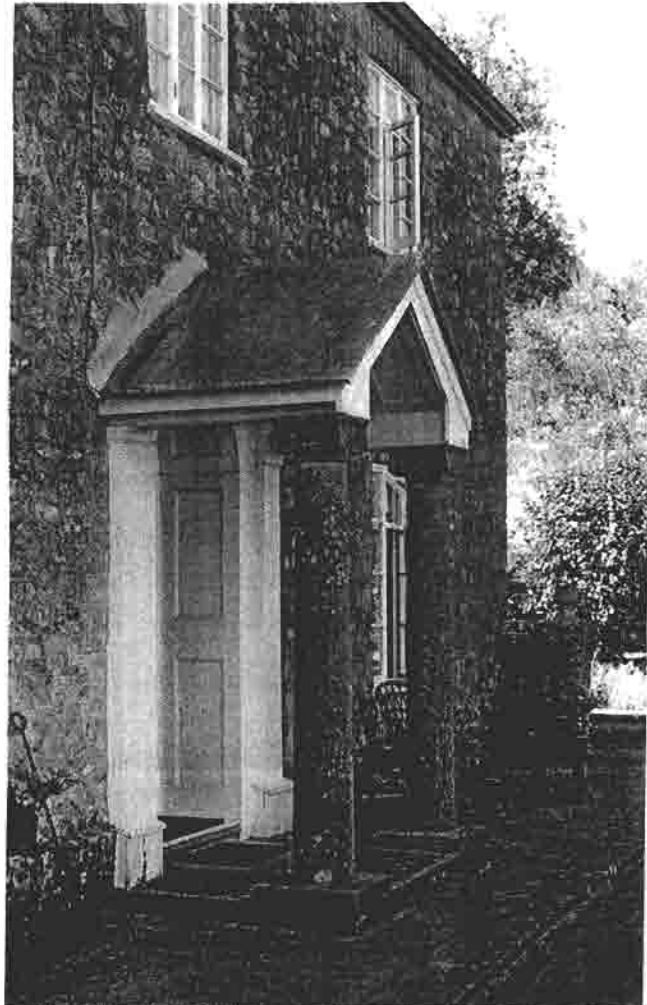
01392 402133

Catherine Marlow, 3 Brickfield Terr.,
Martins Lane, Tiverton EX16 6QZ

Notifications of change of address
and/or telephone number, payments of
subscriptions (due 1 January - or on the
date of joining, if before 30
September), applications for member-
ship, and requests for back copies of
the Newsletter should be sent to the
Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Mrs
Dawn Honeysett, Lower Woodbears,
Kennerleigh, Crediton EX17 4RS
(01363 866230)

Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter
and responses to queries should be sent
to the Editor: Mrs Ann Adams, Hayne,
Zeal Monachorum, Crediton EX17
6DE (01363 82292)

All other correspondence should be
sent to the Secretary: Peter Child,
South Coombe, Cheriton Fitzpaine,
Crediton EX17 4HP (01363 866813)



Smart early 19th century front,
with Ionic porch columns,
at Uphay Farm, Axminster.