

Devon Buildings Group

Newsletter Number 15
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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 15, EASTER 1997

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Illustrations: Wallpapers at Saltram by courtesy of the National Trust. All others by the authors of the relevant articles.

Front cover: Detail of east window of Oldridge Chapel, by Robert Beer c 1843.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest issue of the *DBG Newsletter*. I am sorry it has taken so long to produce: this is due partly to a change of editor and partly to a lack of material. Both problems have now been remedied and I hope the Newsletter will make a more regular appearance in the future. Many thanks are due to Su Jarwood for all her hard work as editor since 1994.

With respect to further issues of the Newsletter it is important that anyone who wishes to contribute should feel free to do so. Short pieces are in some ways preferable to the longer ones in this issue, and so contribution of any size would be welcome. It would make my job far easier if articles could be sent to me on computer disc, as I can then paste the piece straight into the document. I can convert almost any word-processing package into the one I use (Microsoft Word), be it Mackintosh or PC. If you do not have access to a word-processor just send a script, but if you are writing on a computer anyway there is little point in my typing the whole thing out again.

Anyone wishing to contribute, or comment on format etc. can contact me at the following address:

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Many thanks to Marion Gibson for proof reading.

Jim Cheshire

THE BEER STUDIO. PART ONE:
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
BUSINESS AND THE WORK OF
ROBERT BEER

In what Martin Harrison has called "a conservative estimate" Birkin Haward suggests that over 80 000 stained glass windows were installed in England alone in the nineteenth century.ⁱ This is impressive in itself, but when it is considered that in the first forty years of the century production was both isolated and rare, the massive increase in production after 1840 becomes apparent. The stained glass studio started by Robert Beer in Exeter played a pioneering part in this revival of stained glass production and provides an example of the cultural context in which this production took place. In this article I will discuss the output of Robert Beer and the social factors which made a stained glass business viable in the early 1840s. The output of the Beer family was extensive: over 130 windows are known to have survived and this accounts for the majority, but not all, of their glass. This corpus of glass is an important survival and constitutes a major collection of locally produced Victorian art.

The genealogy of the Beer family is complicated, and has been inaccurately recorded in previous published information on the Beers.ⁱⁱ The Beers changed their name from Conibeer probably in the 1830s but seem to have used both names in the 1830s and 1840s which seems to have been the cause of much of the confusion.ⁱⁱⁱ Robert Beer was born on 6 November 1798, but no record of his baptism has yet been discovered. It is likely that the Beers were not Church of England: Robert's mother was Elizabeth Bulley and many her family were nonconformists. Robert Beer's grandfather described himself in his will as a yeoman and Robert's father was a cooper. The earliest existing stained

glass made by Robert Beer dates from 1842, in St. Andrew's chapel Exwick. He might, however, have been producing glass as early as 1820, but only one tantalising piece of documentation supports this. While this document is inconclusive, it does show that Robert Beer had contact with two major figures in the Georgian glass painting business: William Collins and Charles Muss.

Little other information survives about Robert Beer until he moved to Exeter in 1837. In 1839 he executed a coat of royal arms on a hatchment at Uffculm Church and so we know that he was a skilled painter by this date. He had been living in Teignmouth previous to this, from at least 1827, when he married Elizabeth Drake. By the time he moved to Exeter he had two sons and two daughters.^{iv} His studio was initially at 13 Okehampton Street, and five years later he had executed a set of stained glass windows in St. Andrews chapel, a few hundred yards away, in a building that was received with great enthusiasm by the *Ecclesiologist*.^v St. Andrew's chapel was an early product of a collaboration between the official architect and the founder member of the EDAS, and there is little doubt that Robert Beer's business had its foundations in the patronage EDAS gave him access to.

Attributing exactly who did what in the Beer studio is not easy and documentation to support this is scarce. What is known is that the studio was located at 10 Okehampton Street in St. Thomas from 1837 to 1847 at which date the Beers moved to 41 Bartholomew Street. By the 1841 census Robert Beer had taken on the 15 year old William Splatt as an apprentice and the 1851 census records that the new owners, Elizabeth and Alfred Beer, were employing five men. In 1852 another apprentice, Elizabeth's nephew Frederick Drake, was taken on having already been a

pupil for over a year. Drake stayed with the Beers until at least 1865, when he was described as a journeyman and was paid 30 shillings a week. This rate of pay gives an interesting hint of the actual size of the business: thirty shillings a week was comparable to the wage of bricklayers, carpenters and masons and well above the majority of working class wages.^{vi} It is likely that Drake was the best paid subordinate glass painter in the Beer studio, but the fact that the Beers could afford to pay Drake a wage comparable to the best paid artisans in the area, suggests that the income the studio generated placed the Beers well above the income of a working class family. On Alfred's death in 1866 the business continued as E and S Beer, almost certainly describing Elizabeth and Susan Beer, the respective widows of Robert and Alfred Beer. At this date Frederick Drake set up his own studio, having been refused a partnership by E and S Beer. Drake stayed on good terms with the Beer family, and his studio, established in the Cathedral yard, eventually superseded that of the Beers as the leading local studio. It does seem that the Beer studio carried out work other than stained glass, but the evidence is scarce. I have mentioned that Robert Beer painted the royal arms at Uffculm in 1839, and documentation also shows that Elizabeth Beer illuminated a reredos at Bishops Nympton in 1869.^{vii}

Several conclusions can be deduced from the above information. It seems almost certain that the move from Okehampton Street to Bartholomew Street constituted an upgrading of the business. Bartholomew Street is closer to the centre of town, and by the late 1840s Robert Beer was starting to gain a good quantity of business. It is clear that by the time Robert died in 1850, Alfred Beer was a skilled glass painter and the same could probably be said of Elizabeth Beer. Alfred Beer took over the running of the studio during

Robert's illness and he produced competent windows in 1850 and 1851 showing he had already served his apprenticeship. It strikes me as very unlikely Elizabeth and Susan Beer would go into business independently without having glass painting skills themselves and so they had probably played an active role in the production of windows from an early stage in the business. The most likely scenario is that Elizabeth in some capacity helped Robert Beer in the process of producing windows, and that Susan Beer fulfilled a similar role with respect to Alfred. What is extremely difficult to establish is exactly who painted what at what date. For instance in the late 1850s for a given piece of painted glass there are several possible painters: Alfred, Elizabeth or Susan Beer, Frederick Drake, or even William Splatt, if he was still with the studio. Despite this it is reasonable to assume that there was a hierarchy in the process of production with the most skilled glass painters executing the most delicate work - face painting, drapery and representational work generally - while the apprentices or more junior glass painters were probably responsible for the more repetitive pattern work of borders or quarries. This is suggested by the fact that the earliest windows produced after the death of Robert are distinguishable by differences in face painting and drapery, suggesting that this was the part of the window previously produced solely by Robert. In contrast some elements of pattern work that first appear in the mid 50s survive into the mid and late 60s, for example the distinctive border of the east window of Monkokehampton is still being used with slight variations at Bradninch. The most likely division of labour then is that the studio had one master glass painter who was responsible for the face and drapery painting, and several subordinate glass painters, either apprentices or relatives, who were responsible for less skilled parts of production. It is possible that one or

two workers at the Beer studio did no painting at all and were responsible solely for cutting, leading and erecting windows.

Although much glass survives virtually no documentation exists for the Beer business, and so comments about this side of their operation remain somewhat speculative. Much information, however, survives relating to the network of patrons who commissioned Beer's windows. This group was based around the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society (hereafter EDAS) which proved crucial for the establishment of the Beer business. EDAS was a group that propagated the ideas of High Church theology through a system of ethics and aesthetics based on the architectural theories of the arch - Goth Augustus Pugin. These theories championed medieval architecture and architectural art and created demand for the building and re building of gothic churches and the production of stained glass.

The first secretary and founder member of EDAS was John Medley, who was described as the "general designer" of the church of St. Andrew at Exwick. Robert Beer produced the glass for this church but Medley's role suggests that he played an active part in the design of the architecture and stained glass.^{viii} Medley's curate in the parish of St. Thomas was John Loveband Fulford who was another leading light of EDAS and a committee member. Fulford wrote an early paper on the medieval stained glass in Exeter Cathedral, significantly containing a description of how to trace stained glass.^{ix} Fulford's tracings of the medieval glass were published in the second volume of Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society and Robert Beer's east window of Dunsford draws heavily on these models for the design of the canopies. The restoration of Dunsford was funded by Colonel Fulford and the incumbent

Rev. Sub Dean Stephens, another member of EDAS.^x J. L. Fulford was also incumbent of Lympstone when a Beer window was erected there in 1845, which unfortunately has not survived.^{xi} Both windows were reviewed with great enthusiasm by the Exeter Flying Post which was starting to take great pride in the concept of a local producer of a novel cultural product, still rare on a national level.^{xii} Already Beer was achieving the kind of publicity that would eventually free his son from the restrictions of the strict ecclesiological market: the initial impetus from Medley and Fulford led to the exposure to, and creation, of a wider and in some respects less discriminating clientele.

Much of Robert Beer's early glass bears a strong resemblance to Fulford's tracings of medieval glass. For example the figure of the Virgin Mary with child, used at Dunsford and several other locations, though not exactly the same bears many similarities with Fulford's tracing. The canopies bear a striking resemblance and almost certainly came from Fulford's tracings. In addition to Exwick and Dunsford, Medley also paid for the rebuilding of the chancel at the chapel at Oldridge between 1841 and 1843. The east window contains stained glass by Beer [see cover photo], and there is also stained glass in the nave tracery lights. This tracery glass has a distinct amateur look about it, and is nothing like any existing glass by Beer. This glass may have been painted and designed by Fulford or Medley, but no documentation exists to support this. Beer's first five known commissions are directly connected to either Medley or Fulford, and when this information is combined with the actual appearance of the glass the involvement of one of them is highly probable. In 1845 Medley was appointed to the Canadian See of Frederickton, where he eventually built a church containing glass by Beer.^{xiii} By this time Beer had

made other contacts in EDAS and in 1846 he executed what I believe to be his first commission independent of Medley and Fulford at St. Michael and All Angels, Heavitree. During the restoration of this church Beer executed an East window containing figures of the evangelists, and a memorial window in the south wall of the chancel.^{xiv} The east window has gone, but what are probably fragments of other early Beer glass remain in the south aisle. The window was cited by the Exeter Flying Post as added evidence of Beer's skill as a glass painter. How Beer attained this commission is undocumented, but links with EDAS were probably instrumental: Rev Atherly, the incumbent, was a member, and so was the architect carrying out the restoration, David Mackintosh. The next year Mackintosh designed a window that Beer executed and which still remains in the east window of Chudleigh. Also in 1847 Beer executed five windows at Cruwys Morchard, where the incumbent G. S. Cruwys was an EDAS member. 1849 saw stained glass for more members of EDAS: the Coleridge family at Thorverton. By the last couple of years of the 1840s Beer may have been attracting commissions beyond EDAS: windows were installed at Aylesbeare and Combe Raleigh and no links with EDAS have yet come to light. This does not mean that there were not any, but suggests that already Beer may have been gaining autonomy from ecclesiological enthusiasts and operating in the new less specialised market of the mid - nineteenth century.

Assessment of Robert Beer's stylistic and technical development is difficult because of the small quantities of existing windows. Evidence of his glass in the early 1840s is restricted to partial windows at Exwick and Oldridge, and then there is a gap to 1845 where the glass he executed at Dunsford has survived in good condition. Beer's palette for this period remains restricted, but this may well have been

due to an aesthetic decision rather than a material restriction. The West window at Exwick shows Beer did have access to purple in the early 1840s but this is not used at Dunsford, probably due to the antiquarian nature of the glass which works within a blue, green, red and yellow colour scheme in line with much fourteenth century glass. Beer's glass of the late 1840s exhibits a palette similar to other glass painters in the late 1850s; no antique glass, but an extensive range of purples, blues, greens and pinks. Beer's face painting does suggest an interesting development. Beer's early style is exhibited by the face of Mary Magdelene in the south chancel of St. Andrew's Exwick. The shading technique is similar to that of John Toms, a contemporary glass painter who worked in West Somerset, but the graduation of the shadow is finer giving a more subtle appearance to the glass. The face in style however is "soft": the representation of the face is achieved through graduated shadow rather than the heavy individual lines of "hard" face painting. Beer's face painting at Dunsford and Cruwys Morchard has a distinctly Renaissance feel and the coloured enamel gives an added indication of a painterly approach. This soft style, typical of the Georgian glass painter, seems to have undergone modification when the commission was for a patron with ecclesiastical tendencies. The cover illustration shows a detail of a face from Oldridge, where Beer has used a combination of soft shading and strong hard lines. This suggests a stylistic push towards the fourteenth century style. This is particularly noticeable when this face is compared to another of Beer's painted for Cruwys Morchard in 1847. This face has a strong Renaissance feel and far fewer hard lines. The face of St. Luke in the north aisle east window of Thorverton, probably painted in 1849, also shows a style leaning towards a medieval rather than Renaissance manner. From the surviving evidence

then, Robert Beer's manner varies considerably between commissions which suggests strong input from patrons. One possible reason for this variation is that Beer tended towards a Renaissance manner, but when working for High Church patrons was encouraged to adopt a more medieval manner. Some of the silver stain at Exwick is very orange suggesting Beer's firing technique was still improving. The glass at Dunsford shows a balance of tone suggesting a glass painter thoroughly familiar with his technical processes.

It is extremely difficult to say much about Beer's architectural detail before Dunsford, because only a tiny amount remains in the west window of Exwick. Exwick does show credible flat canopies, similar to the fourteenth century glass at Exeter Cathedral. This correspondence is beyond doubt in the glass at Dunsford. The architectural work here is an antiquarian *tour de force*, and the overall design is balanced in tone and content. It would be fascinating to know who designed this glass. The connection to the Fulford family puts J. L. Fulford in the running, but the chancel restoration was almost certainly carried out by John Hayward who would have been quite capable of designing stained glass. What seems beyond doubt is the use somewhere in the process of Fulford's tracings.

It is possible, though I think unlikely, that Robert Beer never independently designed a representational window. Given the assurance of the glass at Dunsford involvement of Hayward or Fulford seems likely. The documentation for the East Window of Chudleigh shows that Mackintosh was responsible for the overall design. Beer reused the cartoons for the scenes at Chudleigh at Abbotsham where they are combined with new elements. What seems most likely is that Beer adapted the designs

provided for him at Chudleigh to subsequent commissions. An example of this is the reuse of the intense glazed background diaper used at both Chudleigh and the East window of Thorverton. At Thorverton it is combined with a frame used to link figure and pattern elements within a coherent overall window design. The use of the diaper at Chudleigh is simpler: the scene and pattern medallions are not linked by a general framework. Due to a absence of evidence the date of the Thorverton East window cannot be fixed, but a comparison with Chudleigh does show a correspondence between the style of both and shows a manipulation of elements of design and content, and not their mere reproduction. This suggests that though Beer was initially performing the artisan tasks of painting and firing the glass, the experience he gained through the active involvement of patrons and architects enabled him to start performing these tasks himself. So despite the limitations set up by a clergyman or architect designing the glass, this relationship eventually meant that the Beer studio could achieve a high level of autonomy. A similar process can be observed in the relationships between Pugin and glass painters of the 1840s. Although Pugin ended up rejecting the likes of Wailes, Warrington and O'Connor, all three of these glass painters received early praise from the Ecclesiologist and became major producers in the 1840s and 1850s. This suggests that the artistic status they acquired through collaborations with Pugin was sufficient to place them well in the market, even if Pugin eventually was unsatisfied with their products. Even if Robert Beer had achieved the aesthetic credibility necessary to become more of a designer than glass painter in his early career, he probably would not have had the expertise available amongst his subordinates to be able to delegate all the glass painting. This is one way in which the second generation of

Victorian glass painters had possibilities open to them in a way their predecessors did not.

Robert Beer died at the age of 52 in 1850, after the amputation of a leg. He left behind a studio with a well established reputation, which his son Alfred proved able to build on for the next fifteen years. Robert Beer is buried in St. Bartholomew's graveyard, near to his studio. In the next newsletter I will discuss how Alfred Beer freed himself from the influence of architects and ecclesiologists and was able to use the new materials that became available to glass painters in the 1850s to design and produce a number of dramatic and original windows.

Jim Cheshire

CHINESE WALLPAPERS AT SALTRAM

Saltram has long been known for its wealth of Chinoiserie decoration. No fewer than four rooms hung with Chinese wall paper clearly demonstrate that the Parker family were keen to follow the vogue for all things Chinese which gripped fashionable society in the eighteenth century. References to Chinese wallpaper began to emerge at the end of the seventeenth century, but the height of its popularity seems to have been the period c.1740-1790, when Chinoiserie was particularly favoured for bedrooms and dressing rooms. Early examples include Lord Carlisle's bedroom at Castle Howard, and the Chapel Drawing Room, formerly the dressing room of the state bedroom, at Belton House. When staying at Cornbury in 1746, Mrs Delany commented on the rooms she had been given: "the next room is hung with the finest Indian paper of flowers



Image from 'The Story of Tea' - The Chinese Chippendale Room
Saltram House

and all sorts of birds (that is my dressing room); the ceilings are ornamented in the Indian taste, the frames of the glass and all the finishing are well-suited; the bedchamber is also hung with Indian paper on a gold ground, and the bed is Indian work of silks and gold on white satin.^{xv} Only later did the Chinese taste spread consistently to drawing rooms and dining rooms - the Chinese Drawing room at Carlton House, created by the Prince of Wales in the 1790s, was one of the first of its kind.

To complement the Saltram wallpapers, the Parker family purchased Chinese or Chinese - influenced furnishings and decorative pieces, which included a magnificent mahogany Chinese Chippendale bed, a set of padouk Chinese Chippendale chairs with pagoda-shaped cresting rails, Chinese mirror paintings, and a substantial collection of Chinese porcelain. Chinese wallpaper was often referred to as "India paper" because it was imported by the East India Company, and the lack of distinction between Indian and Chinese seems to have extended to Chinoiserie in general. Saltram has an eighteenth - century painting, probably by a Chinese artist, of an Indian girl dancing, and the Chinese Chippendale bed has a valence of Indian embroidery. Frustratingly the family archives do not mention this Chinese phase, which must have been introduced by John Parker (1703-68) and his wife, Lady Catherine (1706-58) as part of their improvements to the house. The evidence which does survive, however, suggests that the impact of the latest fashion may have been greater at Saltram than was previously thought.

Together, the Chinese wallpapers of Saltram represent almost every stylistic variation of the medium. The Chinese Dressing Room is hung with the "Lang Eliza" type of paper, (from the Dutch "lange Lyzen", and so-

called for the elongated appearance of its figures, which at Saltram are unusually tall, being approximately two feet in height). The room formerly known as Lord Morley's room (open to the public by appointment only) is hung with wallpaper of the landscape and figures type, as well as individual pictures of landscapes and buildings with figures. (John Conforth has pointed out the strong similarity between panels in this room and a panel inserted in 1764 in a bedroom at Stoneleigh Abbey, suggesting that both sets were supplied by Thomas Bromwich). The papers from the Collopy Room and Collopy Dressing Room are of the figure type which depict scenes from daily life in China, with emphasis on industrial and agricultural activities, known as "factory papers"; one tells the story of tea, and shows people picking, curing and packing the leaves. Both have been patched with fragments from unrelated papers which do not exist at Saltram. These unrelated papers appear to have been the figure type described above, and the "bird and flower" type, in which birds and insects ornament the branches of a flowering tree growing from a bed of rocks.

It is possible, therefore, that there were originally six rooms at Saltram hung with Chinese wallpaper. Moreover, the surviving papers all incorporate figures in some way, and these papers would have been even more expensive than the non-figure type. An eighteenth - century letter at Dunster Castle states that papers representing Chinese manufacturing processes could not be obtained for less than seven shillings a yard, whereas those representing trees, birds and flowers cost four shillings a yard. If there was once a "bird and flower" room at Saltram it may have been dismantled because it was the least expensive of a very expensive collection.



Image from 'The Story of Tea' - The Chinese Chippendale Room
Saltram House

If there were indeed six Chinese rooms at Saltram, it is interesting to speculate where the two additional rooms might have been. Certainly, the present arrangement does little justice to a house which was carefully decorated and furnished to make the most favourable impression on visitors. (In the 1740s, the Parkers began a program of improvements, starting with the creation of fashionable classical facades for the South, East and West elevations of the old house.) Of the surviving papers, two were originally hung in the bedrooms, and two in the dressing rooms, at the north-east, south-east, and south-west corners of the first floor. It is just possible that the lay-out of the additional two rooms followed the pattern of the Collopy Room and the Collopy Dressing Room, to provide a fashionable arrangement of Chinese bedrooms and dressing rooms, in tune with the Parkers' architectural face-lift for the house, and reached via their new staircase hall. If this was the case, the lost figure and "bird and flower" papers may have hung in the Chinese Chippendale Bedroom and Lord Morley's Dressing Room.

In 1768, John Parker died leaving unfinished a new and very grand double cube saloon, twenty-five feet high. His son, later first Lord Boringdon, succeeded, and with his connoisseur wife concentrated on acquiring for the house the latest fashions in furnishing and decoration. The double cube saloon became Robert Adam's famous "Great Drawing Room". It is an interesting indication of the comparative decline in favour of the Saltram Chinese wallpapers, that by 1795 one of the Chinese rooms was being used as a studio by Mr. Collopy, a painting restorer.

Concern about the condition of the Saltram Chinese wallpapers began in the 1980s, leading to conservation of the Chinese Dressing Room Lang Eliza paper in 1987. This paper is composed

of many thin layers glued together with a starch-based adhesive. The second wallpaper to be conserved, in 1994, was the paper in the Chinese Chippendale Bedroom, "The Story of Tea". This has a top layer of silk, on which the picture is painted, and below this are several layers of paper. There are still very few conservators working on the Chinese wallpaper, and it is interesting to note the evolution that has taken place at Saltram, particularly with regard to backing material. Originally, both wallpapers were lined with textile - a loose form of linen called scrim. For the Chinese Dressing Room, the decision was to replace the scrim with a modern linen, on the grounds that it most closely resembled the original material, and the new material's tendency to distort with fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity is known, although not desirable for the preservation of the wallpaper. (Distortions in the backing material can create stresses in the wallpaper, leading to damage). In the Chinese Chippendale Bedroom, polyester was used because its use in America and Holland had demonstrated its suitability as a relatively stable backing material. As with the linen, however, the polyester is not without its problems - it has not been widely used in locations subject to changing environmental conditions and the long-term effect of this on its use is not known in detail. In the third phase of the ongoing program of conservation, work recently started on the most sophisticated of the Saltram Chinese wallpapers, hanging in the room formerly known as Lord Morley's Room. Here, a linen backing material has again been used, with the decision to monitor the environmental conditions, and the condition of the paper in this room and the Chinese Chippendale Bedroom. In this way the Trust hopes to build up a long-term record of how the two materials are performing, and to inform decisions of the conservation of the fourth Chinese wallpaper in the Mirror Room.

Once the Lord Morley's Room paper was taken down from the walls, some interesting discoveries were made. Chinese papers were usually sold as sets of panels, 12 feet long and 3 or 4 feet wide, in a specific sequence to form a non-repetitive image which extended around the room. The paper in Lord Morley's room is less a wallpaper than a collection of water-colours of different sizes, representing landscapes and buildings with figures. The influence of Western art is evident in the use of single-point perspective, and the high degree of meticulously executed detail. This paper would have been unrecognisable as Chinese to the commentator in *The World*, 1755, who claimed "India" papers were characterised by "false lights, false shadows, false perspective and proportions."^{xvi} The water-colours are interspersed with pieces of true wallpaper, drawn in a much freer style, and all the pieces are united by a green and black key pattern border. Considerable thought has been given to the arrangement of the images, with clusters of smaller examples, some repetitive, framing the larger, more impressive architectural scenes. In common with many Chinese wallpapers from this period, the water-colours have been added to, with Lang Eliza figures from the Chinese Dressing Room, in a manner which suggests it is contemporary with the original hang.

The paper in Lord Morley's Room has long been admired for its unusually strong palette - the dominant colours are green and dark brown. We now know, however, that the dark brown ground has been drastically discoloured by the green copper pigment of the lining paper, and originally would have been an ivory colour. This information immediately makes sense of the room. For much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Saltram's decorative schemes were linked by woodwork

which was mahogany or grained to look like mahogany. In 1772, the Hon. Thomas Robinson, brother of Theresa Parker, wrote: "If ever Mr. Munro should go to England, I would advise him to go to Saltram, he is mahogany [sic] mad, the Doors, Staircase and terms would turn the head."^{xvii} Unusually, in Lord Morley's Room, the dado, doors and chimney-piece have been grained to look like bird's eye maple. This has darkened with time, but the intention must have been to reflect the colour of the walls, and the original combination of light wood and a pale ground to the bright greens, reds and golds of the paper must have been breathtaking.

Ceri Johnson

A VISIT TO RURAL WEST DEVON

Devon Buildings Group's tenth AGM, on 14th October 1995, was held at Bratton Clovelly, in West Devon - and was marked by a 10lb iced birthday cake. The meeting was held in the **Church Room**, originally the village school of 1837, where a useful C19 parish map hangs on the wall inside and the bargeboards outside are made from pierced and scalloped slates.

Afterwards, members lunched at the pub and went on a tour of the church, the village and three of the parish's historic farmhouses, of which the middle one is still a working farm. The following consists largely of the notes I provided on the day.

Like many remote rural areas Bratton has a history shy of discovery and often frustratingly so. There is a quantity of documentation of people associated with vanished sites and, and on the other hand, fascinating physical

features which seem to have no records at all.

Despite some documentary and exhaustive archaeological investigation of the parts of the district now under Roadford Reservoir, the area remains only partially understood. This is, perhaps, not really surprising as it seems to have sunk into obscurity at least two centuries ago. In reply to Dean Milles' enquiries of 1755, the then incumbent wrote that neither he nor his curate knew anything about the parish at all! In 1886, R. N. Worth dismissed the area as there being a "no more uninteresting part of Devon historically" - and this despite the fact that several prominent families of C16 and C17 had their seats there. The following were all within a couple of miles of Bratton: Woods' Orchard (of which the columned granite porch front of 1620 now adorns Lewtrenchard Manor); Harris' Hayne; Wreys' North Russell and Bidlakes' Bidlake.

However it is full of evidence of human activity, probably continuously from the Neolithic Period. Worked flints and round barrows abound, a Roman signal station guards the high cross-roads to the north, some of the place names - such as Breazle - are supposed to be of Celtic origin and Boasely was mentioned in a Saxon document of 1050. In 1086 Baldwin "the Sheriff" held the manor of Bratton himself. It was a fair size and sufficient to 15 ploughs. 1/3 was demesne and 2/3 shared by 12 villagers. There was another, separately valued, estate of only half the size; Boasely was also a separate unit - and the manors of Coombe and Guscott were in a detached part of Bratton, separated by a strip of Thruselton, which is now part of Broadwoodwidge but was still Bratton in 1840.

By C13 the manor Bratton was owned by the family of D'Eaudon and the parish's present name is said to

derive from the fact that one of the heiresses of Sir Hamlyn D'Eaudon married Sir Roger Clavill. However, this seems a tenuous connection as he died in 1280 - presumably s.p., as it was the other sister, married to Sir Baldwin Malet, who had the disposal of it and it eventually came to her great grandson, Walter Meriet (Chancellor of Exeter 1322, who died in 1345). It then went to the Somertons for three generations and Robert Somerton's daughters probably married into the Francis and Kirkham families. Certain it is that Henry Francis was lord of Bratton in 1437 - when it was called Bratton Francis - and Robert Kirkham was lord in 1466. Then the male line ran out again, in 1547, and the joint heirs were Langford, Pengelly and, probably, Corydon.

All the earlier families had their principal seats in Somerset and it is unlikely that any of them ever lived at Bratton. However, the heirs after 1547 undoubtedly did and the involvement of the Langford family of Swaddledown in particular is well documented for seven generations. They were a family with several seats in Cornwall and at least four in Devon, including Langford Week in Germansweek since at least 1243. After 1547 they soon bought out their co-heirs' share so that, by the 1641 Protestation returns, although there were still ten Pengellys in the parish, none was accorded a title of gentility. Another family that certainly lived in Bratton, from at least 1377, was the Burnbys of Burnby. There were no fewer than seven generations of them recorded in the Herald's Visitations of 1620. They set a beautiful window, recording their marriages, in the east end of the south aisle of the church (presumably between 1450 and 1490), so probably contributed substantially to the building of the aisle, and had a chapel there. (the window, re-set for the second time, is now in the vestry). Burnby, though, seems to have vanished completely. The only

documentary reference I can find comes in 1684, when John Harris and Nicholas Hicks, apparent heirs of John Dinham of Wortham, held Rexham and West Burnby, as free tenants. Lysons said it was owned together with Eastlake so, as Rexon and Eastlake are both in the Guscott part of the parish, Burnby must have stood in what is now Broadwoodwidge.

Perversely, the best and most interesting houses, apart from Swaddledown, seem to have no documentation at all, before some sale particulars of C18 and the tithe apportionment schedule of about 1840. There are no obvious surviving gentry houses but a number of substantial farmhouses of some antiquity. Wrixhill is a Grade II* house from the late C15; Chimsworthy and West Burrow (both also Grade II*) are longhouses probably from the early C15 and South Reed also has a smoke-blackened roof. Those from C16 and C17, Great Burrow, Swaddledown, Morson and Court Barton (all Grade II) are no grander. Although we may have lost a few - Fursdon has been rebuilt and, as we have seen, Burnby seems to have disappeared altogether (unless it is the present Banbury, a property called Bambury on Donn's map of Devon of 1765) - we should remember that all the joint lords of the manor and other local gentry were armigers and also largely of Cornish extraction. As Frank and Veronica Chesher have shown, the Cornish gentry did not often express their pride in extravagant buildings and I think we should bear this in mind, when looking at the houses of Bratton Clovelly. They probably need raising in status above our usual expectations, from their appearance as Devon houses.

From the mid C18 Bratton was in steady decline, as advertisements in the Exeter Flying Post clearly show. Baring Gould remembered it with much affection, as a ancient place under

threat, but the Bratton he knew was dying long before he was born. Culmpit, his own family's estate there (renamed Eversfield in the later C19) was up for auction in 1837 and again in 1842. The story is an increasingly sad one. The land is, for the most part, not of good quality and never possessed underneath it the valuable mineral deposits found on Dartmoor, only a few miles to the east, or in Cornwall, to the West. There can have been no fat to cushion agricultural crises: no recovery possible for the neglect of C18 absentee landlords. It was a landscape of fascinating fossilised practices and ancient customs. As late as 1775, Northcombe was offered for sale, with 140 acres - and also its manor's "500 acres of unenclosed land, to stock and till in common."

For nearly 200 years now, the population of Bratton has been in almost continuous flux, mostly from financial failure and the perennial optimism of in-comers. It is no wonder that, today, there is no local remembrance of the men and women who made it a thriving place - probably from the backs of sheep - in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries.

But Bratton, just because it has not prospered and become overlain, allows some of its past to be, at least visually, revealed to us. As we have the Saxon churches of Sussex today, because there were no wealthy men to tear them down and re-build them in the C15, so we have the ancient farmhouses of Bratton, developed piecemeal through the generations, in accordance with their owners' and tenants' necessary thrift.

Wrixhill is, by description, a splendid example of this gradual process but, unfortunately, its owner was not willing to let us see it. However, we saw three others which, I hope demonstrated some of the diversity of the vernacular tradition in this part of

Devon. With the exception of **Swaddledown**, I have not, so far, been able to research anything of the original owners but the parish registers go back to 1555 and there must be some old title deeds extant. It would be good if someone were to make a proper study of this beautiful and evocative place.

The Church of St Mary is large and of rather mysterious construction, including a huge tower transept arch, on the north side, which goes nowhere and never seems to have done so. Another large arch leads from the south aisle to the tower but is on a different alignment. The tower, itself, is unusual in having no west door and shows two distinct styles of masonry.

It has been suggested that Bishop Grandisson, who acquired the patronage, apparently from Plympton Priory, in 1335/6, had plans to enlarge the church (perhaps on the lines of his work at Ottery St Mary) and made a start on it. However, according to Lysons, he granted it to the Dean and Chapter of Exeter in 1338 and then, only 13 years after that, transferred it to the "curators and canons secular" of Ottery St Mary. Such frequent transference of patronage would certainly account for changes of mind but cannot explain the original concept. Some of the work looks early for Grandisson, so perhaps Plympton had thoughts of a daughter house at Bratton, which were later abandoned.

The font is Norman, two roof bosses and some delightful primitive heads adorn the north side, both inside and out. They are suspected (Cherry and Pevsner) of being C15 "peasant art" but could equally be C12 re-set.

The south aisle was presumably given or re-furbished, in the mid to late C15, by the Burnby family, who lit it with the quality glass of their family armorials. This window was taken out, by an early C19 incumbent, and re-used to brighten up the east window. In

the later C19 it was more or less restored (some of it is sadly scrambled still) and placed in its present position, in the vestry.

Heraldry of the Medieval Windows

Larger vestry window:

Above: Both angels carry the arms of **Burnby** (Azure, 2 bars embattled /counter-embattled Ermine), quartered by **Meules** or **Moyles** (Gules, a mule passant Argent). This represents the marriage (c.1430) of Edward Burnby of Bratton Clovelly and the daughter and heir of Meules, of Bake in Cornwall.

Below left: The arms of **Henscott** of Bradford (Argent, between a chevron Azure charged with 3 palates Or, 3 leopards' heads Azure) quartered by **Milliton** (Gules, a chevron Or between 3 luces (fish) narrant Argent).

Below right: The arms of **Burnby** quartered by **Henscott**. This represents the marriage of Thomas Burnby and Wilmott, daughter and heiress of Henscott (c.1475). (Apparently Wilmott's mother was a Milliton).

(Carew gives **Milliton** quartered by **Kirkham**, which seems significant in view of the known **Kirkham** involvement in Bratton).

(Meules was also allied to **Prouze**, of Gidleigh and Chagford, and to **D'Abernon**, of Dunslad in Bradford. Roger de Meules, d.1323, was lord of Chagford, Throwleigh, Shilston and Speyton).

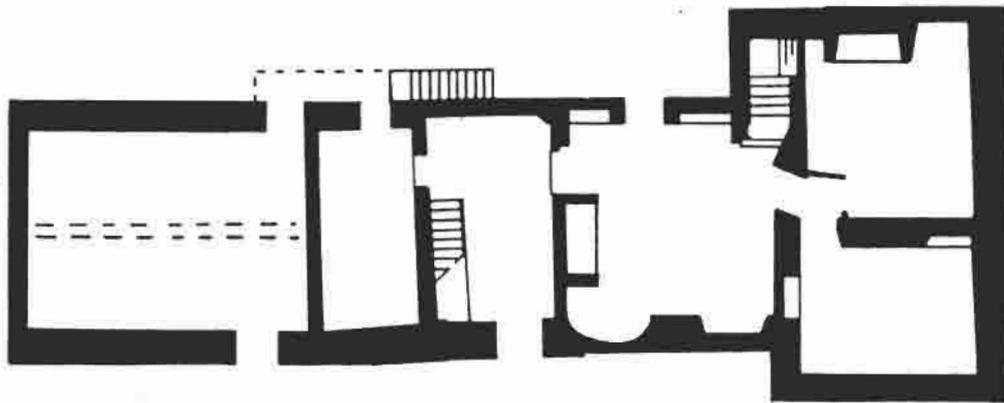
Smaller vestry window:

Above: The arms of **Kelly** (Argent, a chevron between 3 palates Gules 2 and 1) quartering **Meules**. (This border is engrailed, so it is presumably a different branch from below).



Above: Angel (detail), Burnby window, Bratton Clovelly, c.1480

Below: Plan of Chimsworthy, Bratton Clovelly



Below: The arms of Kelly quartering Fortescue (Azure, a bend engrailed Argent, cotised Or). A John Kelly of Kelly married Joan, daughter of Henry Fortesque of Preston.

(The significance of the arms in the smaller window is not apparent for the known direct Burnby pedigree. They might relate to Coryndon, known to be allied to Fortesque in later generations).

(Note that the glass maker of the Henscott chevrons has cheated and, rather than hang the required 3 palates Or on the Azure chevron, he has inserted 2 demi-pales - which appear to be Argent).

Another grand scheme was planned for this otherwise unremarkable parish church. Some time in the later C17, almost the entire interior was painted with biblical murals and decorative cartouches typical of the period. The swags and scrolls motifs are very similar to the secular wall paintings of the time, of which a well known example is dated 1686 ("Devon Building"). There is no great tradition of C17 church wall painting and we must be left wondering why this particularly elaborate scheme (celebrating the Restoration ?) was devised.

A look at the Protestation Returns of 1641 and the local court documents of 1684 gives us a good idea of the principal citizens who, we may presume, must have been at least partially responsible for commissioning it. Joint lords of the manor in 1684 were William Langford of Swaddledown and Henry Coryndon (of a family of North Cornish clergy) - and Pengellys and, probably, Burnbys were still active in the parish. The paintings only came to light comparatively recently and were conserved by Anna Hulbert between 1986 and 1988.

Apart from the church, there were once chapels of ease, licensed

by Bishop Stafford, at Boasely and at Guscott.

The Village

The Village houses form an attractive complex, round the church green and along the road NE from it. Although most of them show only C18-C19 facades, several have substantial chimney stacks, more suggestive of C17, and must occupy traditional sites, as there are many references to houses in "Bratton Town", in documents from at least 1566. Note that some of them have porches formed of single, very large slabs of slate - as the pentices of the now submerged Shop Farm in Germansweek.

Court Barton

We saw this house and buildings, immediately to the N of the church, by kind permission of Mr Roy Parfitt. The Barton itself comprises a house, with raised granary, a threshing barn and a round house (for a horse engine) adjacent to it and a block of barns on the S side of the yard. The larger of these seems to have started life as a much narrower building, of more C17 proportions, with a hipped roof. The tithe schedule gives this farm as having the only mentioned malthouse in the parish and it may well have occupied one of these buildings.

The house (listed Grade II) is tentatively given as late C18 - early C19 and possibly a remodelling. However, it is clearly older than that. At the E end and back it can be seen that the roof has been raised and a catslide on the N side elevated to a second storey. Quoins on the NW corner are suggestive of a date not later than C17. Inside, there is a scroll-stopped C17 chamfered oak fireplace lintel in the parlour and the two sides of a C16-C17 roll moulded granite fireplace have been divided, each to support one side of a fireplace lintel - in the hall and in

the kitchen. A large horizontal window in the hall has been Georgianised with sashes, to create a symmetrical exterior fenestration, but has never been filled in on the inside. The changed height and several new doorways create an interior of many stages of development and is very difficult to interpret. This is an unimproved Devon farmhouse and garden of great charm. Typical of its kind, it shows continuous adaptation to suit the changing needs of several centuries. The Baker family lived there in the C19 and are buried just inside the churchyard gate.

Through the yard westward and down the lane, a pair of C17 cottages, with back to back fireplaces in a large common stack. They are now in single occupancy but up to 3 families once lived in them. Listed Grade II.

The Clovelly Inn is unlisted but has an oak fireplace lintel crudely inscribed "1789". In the tithe schedule, the village pub is called the "Packhorse Inn" - which may indicate Bratton's former significance as a cross-roads on a trade route. The manor court rolls suggest that there were at least three innkeepers in Bratton in 1377.

Swaddledown

We saw this farm by kind permission of Mrs Rosie Moyse who, with her husband and his family before him, had previously farmed the now submerged Shop Farm in Germansweek. Apparently one of the principal farms of the manor of Bratton, with some 200-300 acres, Swaddledown was the home of the joint heirs for many generations. The Langfords of Bratton, who had differentiating arms (Paley of 6 Argent and Gules, on a chief Argent a lion passant Sable) were here at least between 1547 and 1689.

The farm is approached by an impressive driveway, with beautiful views S, to the village and beyond. The

present house is suspected of being early C17 and re-built on a medieval site, with a large L shaped wing added in the C19. There are some re-used smoke-blackened timbers in the present (C17-C18?) roof. It is a through passage house with a very small lower room (as at Chimsworthy), which may suggest a truncated longhouse. The hall fireplace backs the passage, which has a chamfered cross beam, with straight stops, and the head beam for a screen which was, unfortunately, removed since the Second World War. The lower room has chamfered joists, with diagonal stops; the inner room a particularly good beamed ceiling, with chamfered and stopped beam and matching joists. Both the hall and the inner room have granite framed fireplaces. Above, there is another granite framed fireplace, the substantial remains of a dividing, false panelled, plank and muntin screen and the doorway to a probable garderobe. The house is listed Grade II. The yard is surrounded by an exceptionally attractive group of traditional farm buildings (all with sound modern roofs), probably of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Chimsworthy

We saw this house by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Allan and Chris Oram. Not, apparently, a part of the manor of Bratton, Chimsworthy seems to have no so far discovered documentary history before the C18. However, it is almost certainly a site considerably older than its C15 standing structures. A still almost fully encircling stone bank and deep ditch suggest a semi-fortified and perhaps Saxon enclosure.

The farm is approached from the W by the remains of an avenue of limes and the yard was originally surrounded by a range of traditional buildings, some of which are still standing. This is a former longhouse, with its shippon end converted to domestic use in the late

C20. It is supposed to be of the early C15, with additions and re-modellings of the late C15 to the early C17, and all recently modernised. A variant of the usual longhouse plan, it has two small rooms between the hall and the shippon, though one of these appears to be a blocked passage (proportions as at *Swaddledown*). The hall had an open hearth and no full height partitions, as there is a smoke-blackening on all the roof trusses. There is a high quality cross wing, added in the later C15, which also had an open hearth originally. Much modification to both parts accompanied the insertion of floors and chimneys, presumably late C16 - early C17. There is a curved recess by the hall stack, suggesting the original stairs. The cross wing had a small room added, at one end, and a gable stack and stair, at the other. Of other early features, 2 granite windows and an oak shoulder-headed door frame survive.

The roof of the main range has all of its original crucks, with a yoke and a square set ridge. The roof of the cross wing is more sophisticated but no less impressive and the shippon hayloft (now a bedroom) roof is supported on enormous wany crucks - each a whole tree. And it is the roof timbers for which this house is most remarkable, with its massive, undressed long-legged crucks appearing over one's head like an amazing indoor forest, where the lower end has been converted to domestic use. Such timbers and those of the main house (as, indeed, all of the medieval houses) give some hint of the much greater woodland of this area and this county than we see today - particularly after the wholesale felling of the C19 and early C20, when so many landlords capitalised on the often only still valuable aspect of their estates. *Chimsworthy* is listed Grade II* and, like the whole of this fascinating parish, deserves a lot more research.

Ann Adams

GLEBE COTTAGE, SHAUGH PRIOR, WEST DEVON

Shaugh Prior sits on the south west edge of Dartmoor National Park, on the eastern side of Bickleigh Vale, above the confluence of the rivers Plym and Meavy. It is a small village of linear plan, sited in the north-western corner of its large parish which spans from the lower/central Plym valley right up onto the high moor near Plym Head. This is an area of dispersed settlement, of small farms on the moor edge between dense wooded valleys and open upland pastures.

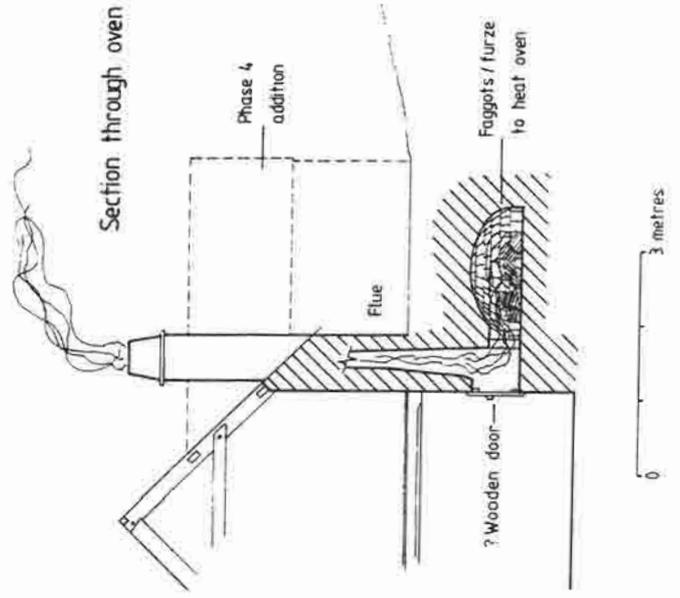
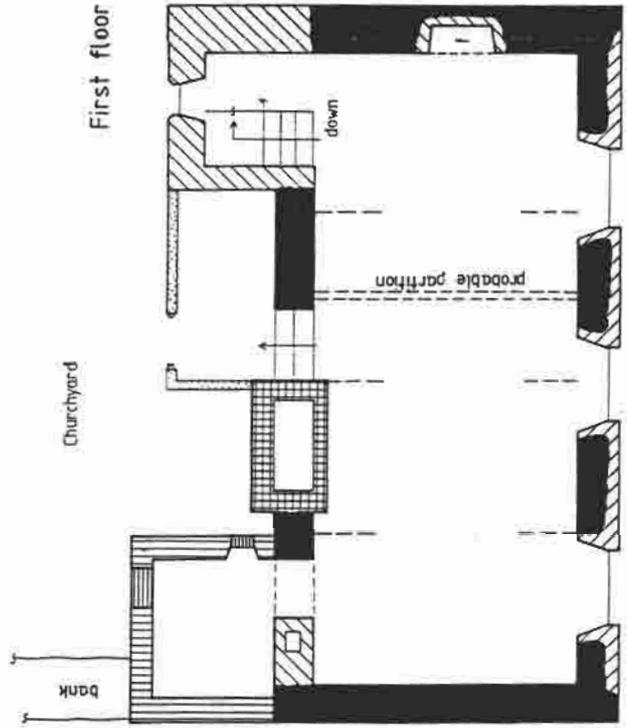
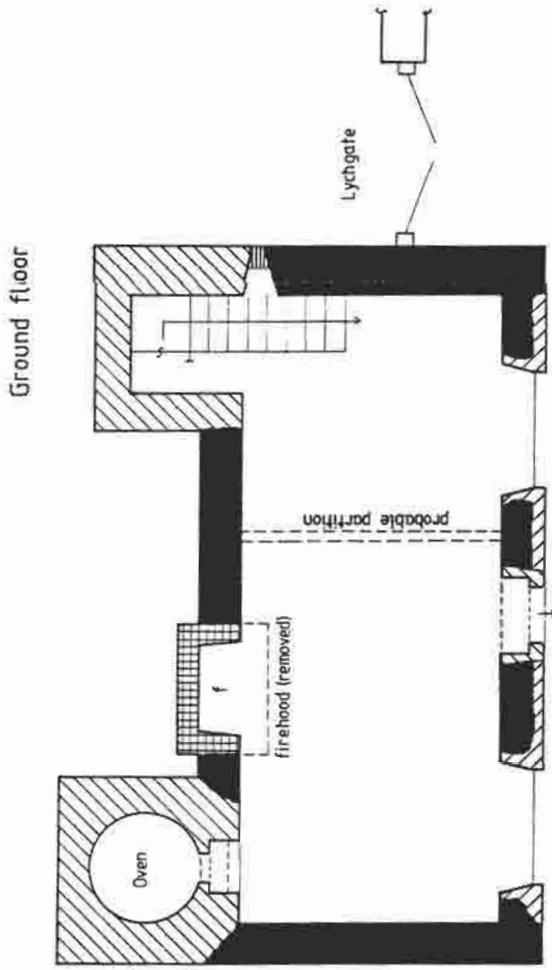
Glebe Cottage fronts Shaugh Prior's village street, in the south west corner of the churchyard, at NGR SX 5425 6310. The cottage sits on a terrace above the road, with the lychgate to the east and a row of later cottages abutting the west end. The churchyard to the rear is at present only about 50 cm below first floor level. The walls are of granite rubble, with a gabled slate roof. The front pitch has been raised about 30cm to accommodate the present first floor windows, but it seems likely that it was once thatched, at a pitch of about 45-50 degrees. On the gables are remains of corbels to support coping stones. These would probably have protected the thatch from wind damage. There is a small axial stack on the east gable and a tall, heavy lateral stack on the rear side wall, with oversailing course and tapered top. On the rear is a narrow stair turret at the eastern end with a larger extension to the west end. Both are gabled. Between is a 20th century lean-to store of brick with a single pitch roof.

During the early 1990s this tiny two room cottage was renovated from a

GLEBE COTTAGE, Shaugh Prior, West Devon

SKETCH PLANS & SECTION

- Suggested phasing
- 1 Mediaeval
 - 2 ? 16c
 - 3 16c / 17c
 - 4 ? Early 17c
 - ? Uncertain, but probably 19c
 - 20c
 - 5 18c / 19c



derelict condition. Its poor state meant that all internal partitions had to be renewed. For this reason, the sketch plans reproduced below do not show modern partitions, but indicate only the probable positions of removed features. These include a screen to divide up the ground floor and possibly the first floor also, and the probable configuration of the stair in the rear turret. The position of the removed fire hood is projected down from its surviving upper half.

Glebe Cottage appears to have begun life as a mediaeval open hall house, with open plan-form. Three trusses survive, of A-frame type with morticed and tenoned apexes, face-pegged collars, threaded scarfed purlins, diamond set ridgepole and common rafters. All these are evenly sooted, indicating exposure over a considerable period of time to the smoke of an open hearth, which was allowed to drift throughout the roof. The recent reconstruction of the house has included the exposure of most of the wall surfaces in the ground floor area. This has proved invaluable in deducing the structural history of the house; the east end and south front external walls also are unrendered.

The stonework supporting the trusses is of random rubble form, large rounded or polygonal boulders with pieces of grey slatey material set horizontally in the cracks between. The majority of the interior walls are of this construction, suggesting a mediaeval date for most of the house shell. Later internal walls are much rougher, and have had less care involved in their construction. The shape of the boulders suggests moor-stone collected from the surface and roughly dressed on the front face only. This very neat construction is broken up at all doors and windows, indicating that these are later.

The plan produced by this analysis is of a two room house, probably of direct entry form, as the rise

of the ground to the north prevents a second door from exiting through the back wall.

Into the back wall of the western room, which with its front door was probably the main room of the house, was inserted, perhaps in the 16th century, a large lateral fireplace with a hood, projecting into the room. Prior to the recent reconstruction of the house, this had been totally removed, but the tapered upper part at first floor level had survived. It is possible that this fireplace was inserted into the open hall prior to its flooring over, with the hood provided as a means of avoiding smoke blowback. The stack above, of granite ashlar, survives intact and is very tall. If a good draw was hoped for, this may support the above theory, for which there is however, no structural evidence.

Probably in the later 16th century, a newel stair of unusually small dimensions was inserted in the north-eastern corner of the house. The reconstructed position of the (timber) stair on the drawing is based on the very small space available, which would have forced the first flight of steps to start within the room. This may explain the position of the narrow window in the east wall, which is within the east end room rather than the stair turret, but which is within the turret build. The upper part of the stair would have had to turn on a sixpence to enter the first floor room. This was accommodated by thinning down the west wall of the turret. This upper part was lit by a small square window in a tiny gablet. The turret is of granite ashlar outside with a deep chamfer around the window, yet within, this stair is the smallest the author has yet seen. This would seem to be a very definite case of 'facading' an impoverished property, purely for appearances' sake: It would have been seen by all parishioners when leaving church every Sunday.



Glebe Cottage, Shaugh Prior.

Above: Smoke blackened roof structure with threaded purlins and narrow common rafters.

Below: Oven interior with granite block dome, about 7ft diameter and 3ft high.



Possibly at the same time as the addition of the turret, the building may have undergone a complete change of use. To the west of the fireplace, but not directly connected with it, a very large oven was constructed. This was of a most unusual design and is reconstructed on the drawing. It is about 1.8 metres in diameter, with a beautiful low domed ceiling, of granite ashlar blocks. The floor is also ashlar, with joints so tight one cannot get a knife blade between them. The oven door-way is inset from the room, with an outer, wider entrance. Above this, a flue passes up through the wall, probably terminating in a stack, since demolished.

Small ovens can be heated by shovelling in embers or charcoal from a fire and closing the oven up for an hour or two. This oven is so vast that it must have taken burning faggots or furze to bring it up to operating temperature. If a door or piece of board was placed against the outer opening, the resultant smoke and flames would have been channelled up the flue with no adverse effects on its operators.

This form and size of oven is far too large to have served the needs of one small household. It could be argued that this oven marks the opening of a village bakehouse. However I suggest that the position of the building, close to the church and actually bordering on its graveyard, together with the name Glebe Cottage, implies that it may have been adapted for use as the Shaugh Prior Church House.

It is not known when church houses first started to appear in Devon, but the early 16th century saw several constructed for the purpose, their documented dates spanning from 1499 to 1535 (TDA 1960). They were intended to take the more secular social activities, such as drinking and public gatherings, away from the church, but

not so far distant that the parishioners' moral well-being could not be monitored. In this they may have reflected the earliest stirrings of the Reformation, seeking to set the practical management of the regular religious feasts which were so much a part of mediaeval Catholicism, away from the 'pure' spiritual atmosphere of the church.

The idea certainly caught on. During a study of the church houses of south Devon in 1989-91, the author managed to identify 56 possible sites between the Plym and Teign valleys. It is notable that in several cases, existing houses were adapted to serve as church houses. After the unfortunate fire in the Church House Inn at Stoke-in-Teignhead in 1992, inspection revealed a mediaeval cob and stone cruck built house with a surviving mediaeval window in one end wall. It is probable that less wealthy communities without a benefactor to give the land or money would look for an existing building in a suitable position, to modify. This certainly happened at Dartington in 1403 (TDA 1975) and may have been the case at Shaugh Prior, as the existing house was available alongside the church, on sloping ground, where insertion of a rear door for first floor access from the churchyard would be easy. One major feature of church houses was the provision of a first floor hall to hold church feasts such as Harvest Supper in, with separate first floor access for the parishioners. The oven might have been built to cook the large amounts of food required for such events.

Associated with the oven construction, may be the insertion into the mediaeval fabric of a granite framed front door. This only retains its chamfered western durn, the eastern durn and arch having been removed when the front of the house was refaced, probably during the 19th century.

Subsequent to the insertion of the oven, a small first floor room was built over it. This had a narrow window and an outer door. This is now blocked and the room is now entered from the main house, via a doorway of unknown date. Such rooms over ovens are known from early 17th century contexts in south Devon (see DBG Newsletter No. 14, 1996). It may have been used for storage of perishables, being warmed by the oven. It is known that church houses had a brewing function, the churchwardens being responsible for this and it is not unreasonable to suggest that barley could have been stored here.

It seems obvious that more work needs to be done in relation to 'conversion' versus 'new-build' church houses. Both Glebe Cottage and Stoke-in-Teignhead indicate that conversion may have been more common than was previously thought and may shed some light on the relatively 'vernacular' design of many probable church houses.

A future article will look at the regional styles of church houses identified by the author in 1989-91 and will attempt to date some of them.

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particular reference to the South Hams", by R. E. Waterhouse. Devon Buildings Group Newsletter No. 14, Pp 25-31, January 1996.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Mr & Mrs Younge of Glebe Cottage for their kind hospitality and for permission to publish this article. Thanks must also go to Rebecca Child for bringing the house to my attention.

Robert Waterhouse

FRANK CHESHER (1916 - 1996)

Frank Cheshier, who died in November, had lived in Devon only since 1982 but his name had long been familiar in this county and beyond, as a specialist in Cornish vernacular architecture. In 1968 he and his wife, Veronica, published 'The Cornishman's House', a pioneering study of the rural vernacular in an English county. Regional books of this kind were then rare in Britain. Fox & Raglan's 'Monmouthshire Houses' (1951-4) and Wood-Jones' 'Traditional Domestic Architecture of the Banbury Region' (1963) had preceded it but neither had made anything like as much use of documentary evidence.

Frank was born in South Norwood, on the outskirts of London, and read history at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. From 1960 until he retired, he taught history at Helston Grammar School (later Helston Comprehensive), including local history, which was unusual at that time. He was an early member of the

Vernacular Architecture Group and, in 1969, was joint organiser, with Veronica, of the Group's spring conference in Cornwall.

Latterly much of his time was spent investigating listed building planning applications in Cornwall, for the Council for British Archaeology. He was also on the Council of the Cornish Buildings Group and the Advisory Committee of the Cornish Archaeology Unit. On arrival in Devon, he added to these memberships of the Devon Buildings Group and the Buildings Section of the Devonshire Association. Yet to those who knew him, Frank will be remembered chiefly as a warm and friendly man, ever willing to help others to develop their interest in historic buildings.

Michael Laithwaite

GROUP NEWS

Since the last Newsletter, some 60 members enjoyed a most successful Summer Conference, on 'Gentry Houses of the South Hams', at Kitley last June. This was organised by David Jeremiah, with stalwart local help from Malcolm & Peggie Upham. Morning speakers were Chris Brooks, Bridget Cherry & Martin Cherry. Part of Kitley itself, Puslinch, Higher Hareston Manor & Littlehempston Old Manor were visited in the afternoon - in synchronised groups, requiring almost military planning, owing to the number limitations at each venue and the narrowness of most of the access lanes.

In October, 37 members attended the AGM at Great Torrington. By this time, David had, most unfortunately, found that he would be unable to serve any longer as Secretary, from pressure of professional & family commitments. As the only nominee at the time, I agreed to act as Secretary until the next AGM, when we may have found someone with a higher public profile. We also lost David Evans and Roger Thorne, both after many years service on the Committee. However, the following were elected for 1996/7: Ann Adams (Acting Secretary), Oliver Bosence, Chris Brooks, Jim Cheshire (now Newsletter Editor, as Su Jarwood found herself with too little time), Sally Cotton, Jo Cox, Su Jarwood, David Jeremiah, Marion Gibson, Isabel Richardson, Peter Roseveare (Caseworkers' Co-ordinator), Jane Schofield, Jeremy Sharpe, John Thorp, Robert Waterhouse - a good blend of old and new blood.

After the AGM, members visited the Museum or the Parish Church. After lunch, John Thorp led us over the Landmark Trust's remarkable early C18 Town Clerk's house in S. Street. Later Chris Brooks showed us the pioneering C19 inter-denominational cemetery, with its twin chapels.

In November, we were all saddened to learn of the death of Frank Cheshier (see obituary, p23). The Committee wrote to Veronica, expressing our sympathy, & I represented the Group at the funeral.

In December, Martin Cherry was back, speaking on the principles & problems of listing, at a joint Devon Archaeological Society/DBG public lecture, at the RAM Museum in Exeter.

Dates for 1997:
Saturday 14th June, Summer Conference on 'Church Woodwork', at Chulmleigh.
Saturday 18th October, AGM at Moretonhampstead.

Ann Adams (Acting Sec.)
Hayne, Zeal Monachorum,
Crediton EX17 6DE
01363 82292

Notes to Beer and Saltram articles:-

- ⁱHaward, Birkin. Nineteenth Century Norfolk Stained Glass. Boydell: Woodbridge, 1984.
- ⁱⁱDaphne Drake. "Robert Beer, Devonshire Glasspainter 1799-1850". Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters 17, 1 (1980-81) 69-77. This article by one of Beer's relatives contains many errors. I am indebted to Joy Daniels for all the corrections of the genealogical details of the Beer family, and much other information.
- ⁱⁱⁱJoy Daniels has recorded that Robert Beer married under the name Conibeer in 1827. His father paid land tax as Conibeer in 1830 and as Beer in 1831, and his death certificate in 1841 uses Conibeer.
- ^{iv}Daphne Drake. "Robert Beer, Devonshire Glasspainter 1799-1850". Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters 17 1 (1980-81) 70-71.
- ^vEcclesiologist 2 (1843) 23.
- ^{vi}Robert Newton. Victorian Exeter 1837 - 1914. Leicester, Leicester University Press: 1968. 343.
- ^{vii}North Devon Journal 13/5/1869.
- ^{viii}Ecclesiologist 2 (1843) 23.
- ^{ix}Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society 2 (1843- 1846) 133.
- ^xExeter Flying Post 11/12/45.
- ^{xi}Exeter Flying Post 20/11/45.
- ^{xii}Exeter Flying Post 20/11/45.
- ^{xiii}Ecclesiologist 8 (1849) 362.
- ^{xiv}Exeter Flying Post 23/7/46
- ^{xv}Quoted in John Conforth "A Role for Chinoiserie?", Country Life 7/12/1989, pp146-7.
- ^{xvi}Quoted in Margaret Jourdain "Chinese Paper-Hangings", Country Life 1/10/1948, p 684.
- ^{xvii}Thomas Robinson, 2nd Lord Grantham, letter to Anne Robinson, 17 August 1772, 430/1/1 West Devon Record Office.