Autumn 2020
Issue 14 – Part 2

DA NEWS

The magazine of The Devonshire Association

DEVON: OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE, OUR PASSION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The DA Interview
SUSIE HEWITT ON THE SUBJECT OF HER FATHER W.G. HOSKINS
Bridget Gillard

Moths on the Move

Photograph by Antony T. Buller

Welcome from the Editor

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of *DA News*. Like most other areas of our present life, we have had to adapt this issue to reflect the current circumstances. Consequently, there is no Diary section and we have not included the customary **From the Branches** feature. However, in order to maintain the DA output, we have included information on additional content which can be enjoyed on our website and news of the **Annual General Meeting** and the **President's Symposium** both of which will take

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Please note: copy for the next issue of *DA News* is required by 31 January 2021. The Editor is very keen to receive pictures relating to DA activities preferably as high resolution jpgs. Originals in print form (e.g. old postcards) will be scanned and returned.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in *DA News* are not necessarily those of the Association or its Editor, who reserve the right to edit material submitted for publication.

place in virtual form this October. Until we can all meet in person, we hope you can join us in the shared community of thought, learning and ideas which so helps us to appreciate our wonderful county. It seems particularly fitting, therefore, that in this edition we look back on the work of W. G. Hoskins, one of our county's greatest writers and enthusiasts.

We very much hope you will enjoy this edition.

Stay safe.

Editor-in-Chief: Bridget Gillard
Editorial Board: Sue Andrew
Antony Buller
John Maltby
Anthony Lewis
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by email at: **registrar@devonassoc.org.uk**
through our website at: **devonassoc.org.uk/contact/**
or through any of our branches or sections (back cover)

We welcome new members

From the Chair

It has been a most unusual spring and summer. Life has been fragmented, and, at times, frightening, unfolding in ways both unprecedented and unforeseen. Our associational life has, at least in a physical sense, been put on hold. With the conference cancelled, we have been unable to thank our outgoing President, John Allan, and welcome our incoming President, Clare Broom, in the usual way. Yet we are resourceful in learning to adapt to changed circumstances and are determined that The Devonshire Association will emerge from this worldwide crisis stronger than ever.

We continue to plan for events, although we cannot include the usual diary with this issue of DA News because of the uncertainties of the course of the pandemic. But we will endeavour to resume all our activities as soon as it is safe to do so, hopefully in early 2021, acting in accordance with government advice, and with regard to the interests and wellbeing of our volunteers and members. In the meantime, our website continues to expand, with new forums set up for discussion and debate (see John Maltby's article on page 19) and new additions to our Devon pages. Plans are underway for a virtual AGM and President's Symposium, and Bridget, our Registrar, has returned to work after being furloughed for six weeks, so is happy, once again, to respond to queries. Our Honorary Editor, Malcolm Hart, has continued with his preparation of *Transactions*, which we anticipate should be delivered in November.

Although it has undoubtedly been a difficult time, in some ways, the restrictions applied during the lockdown have fostered a greater appreciation of Devon and all it has to offer. Wandering from home and finding new paths in an area thought to be familiar has been a delight, and a more intense focus can certainly lead to a deeper understanding of people and places. In these months, I have been brought treasure by a river; photographed weathervanes, old quarries, and owl trees; become acquainted with the Dukes of Bedford, Napoleon Bonaparte and bridge

inspectors; studied stained glass makers, signs and shops; listened to the songs of the moor, and learned to look more carefully at our layered past.*

At every turn, I have been inspired by a favourite book – Peter Beacham's and James Ravilious's *Down the Deep Lanes* (Bardwell Press, 2008), which highlights the local distinctiveness and regional identity of our county through its emphasis on the everyday. A perfect fusion of Peter's words with James's stunning black and white images, the book is, as its introduction tells us, 'much more about mud and manure than sun and sand'. Peter notes that 'Ordinary lives are actually extraordinary, often heroic and humorous in equal part; the commonplace turns out to have uniqueness, the familiar is too rarely savoured for the richness and diversity there is on offer every day'.

That is what The Devonshire Association does best – celebrates lives ordinary and extraordinary; recognises the uniqueness of our landscape and species, and savours the richness and diversity of our past, all the while offering a sharing and supportive social network for our members. We are an amazing Association and I look forward to the resumption of all our events with much excitement.

**Articles on these themes have appeared in 'From the Chair' to be found on the DA's website.*

Clare Broom wearing her chain of office.
Photo: Ian Varndell

Presentation to John Allan, President,

The Devonshire Association, 2019–2020

Photo credits: Top left: Sue Andrew
Top right/bottom left: Ian Varndell

On Thursday 4th June, Sue Andrew, DA Chair, and Ian Varndell, Hon. Secretary, met with John Allan outside a deserted Exeter Cathedral to present him with a token of The Devonshire Association's gratitude for the energy, support, and infectious enthusiasm he has shown throughout his presidential year.
The gift took the form of a specially commissioned plate, made at Bideford Pottery by Nick Juniper, and decorated by Nick's father, the renowned potter Harry Juniper. The plate features a design based upon the reverse of a late tenth- or early eleventh-century penny minted at Lydford in west Devon, and thus reflects John's special interests in north Devon pottery, and Lydford Mint, about which he published a paper in the *Transactions of The Devonshire Association*, vol. 134 (2002).

Usually we would thank our retiring President at our Annual Conference in June, but, with current restrictions imposed by the government to combat COVID-19, our conference had to be cancelled and the presentation was

suitably socially distanced. We have, however, invited John to join us next year in Bideford so that we can express our appreciation to him more fully.

John's contribution to The Devonshire Association stretches back many years, and he has been a most worthy and distinguished President. From his fascinating lecture on Polynesian Artefacts in Georgian Devon delivered in Launceston last June, to his outstanding Presidential Symposium on Exeter Cathedral, held in Tiverton in October, John has made an indelible mark. He has attended Executive Committee meetings, given informative and inspiring lectures for Branches, and acted as leader on visits by DA Sections. For those of us privileged to walk with him around Okehampton and Lydford Castles last September, his erudition and ease of manner made the experience unforgettable.

Despite his many commitments as Consultant Archaeologist to the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral, and as Archaeological Adviser to Glastonbury Abbey, John hopes to retain his strong links with The Devonshire Association and we very much look forward to his continued engagement with us.

Sue Andrew

Renowed potter Harry Juniper decorating the plate.
Photos: Sue Juniper

The Annual General Meeting of The Devonshire Association

will be held by **videoconference** on **Saturday 3rd October 2020** at 11am.
Details of how to register for the meeting may be obtained by contacting the Registrar.

Agenda

1. Statement from the Chair regarding the temporary amendment to the quorum (Rule 22).
2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.
3. Members and Associates: a) elected; b) resigned; or c) deceased since the last AGM.
4. Report of the Executive Committee.
5. Annual Financial Report.
6. To elect the Officers for 2020/2021 (Rules 20 & 31).
7. To re-elect Dr Jennifer Bennett and Mr John Maltby who have completed one term of three years on the Executive Committee and are eligible for re-election.
8. To elect one Member to serve on the Executive Committee for three years (Rule 25).
9. To appoint an 'independent examiner' for the current financial year 2020 (Rule 20).
10. List of papers accepted by the Executive Committee for publication in the *Transactions*.
11. Vote of thanks to the Officers of the Association, including those of the Branches and Sections, and the Registrar.

Please note. Items may be added to, or omitted from, the above agenda before the AGM.

Ian Varndell, Hon. Secretary
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Exeter, EX5 4DB.
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Notes regarding The Annual General Meeting

Owing to the restrictions imposed to combat the coronavirus pandemic the 2020 AGM will be restricted to statutory business. A Special General Meeting may be held early in 2021 to include additional items of business.

Nominations are invited from Members for the positions of Officers, i.e. Chair, Vice-Chair, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Editor, to serve for one year (Rules 20 & 21) and for one member to serve for three years on the Executive Committee (Rule 25).

A Nomination Form is not included; those wishing to make nominations for the posts of Officers and the Committee should apply in writing to the Honorary Secretary for the appropriate Nomination Form. Completed forms must be received by the Honorary Secretary no later than Saturday 5th September 2020. It should be noted that those nominated are requested to provide a few words about themselves that could accompany any ballot papers.

Under Rule 23 members unable to attend the Annual General Meeting may request a ballot paper if a ballot becomes necessary for any position. Please inform the Honorary Secretary in writing if you require this and a ballot paper will then be sent to you once all nominations have been received.

Members who wish to receive an electronic version of the Annual Accounts in advance of the AGM should contact the Registrar Dr Bridget Gillard (registrar@devonassoc.org.uk).

The President's Symposium:
Valuing and Restoring Nature

To be launched on the DA website
from noon on Saturday 3rd October 2020
https://devonassoc.org.uk/s20

Although the coronavirus restrictions imposed by HM Government have forced a change of plan for the 2020 Presidential Symposium, DA President Clare Broom is delighted to invite you to view presentations from five influential speakers.

Clare Broom, DA President 2020-2021.
Welcome and introduction to the theme of her Presidency.

Ian Bateman, Professor of Environmental Economics, University of Exeter.
Valuing Nature: Unavoidable and necessary.

Rosie Hails, Director of Nature and Science, National Trust.
Restoring nature for public benefit.

Harry Barton, CEO, Devon Wildlife Trust.
Building a nature recovery network in Devon.

Rachel Thomas, Chair, Exmoor Society.
Battleground bred the Exmoor Society.

Melanie Squires, Regional Director, NFU Southwest.
South West farming's positive role in delivering the Net Zero Solution.

In a speech delivered at Kew Gardens, in July 2019, Michael Gove, then Secretary of State for the Environment admitted that, ***"... the United Kingdom is among the most nature depleted countries in the world".***

The decline in nature is well documented and the need for recovery widely accepted. While there are many conservation successes to be celebrated, traditional scientific and ethical arguments for the conservation of nature have failed to protect our natural capital assets, such as species and soils and the ecosystem services they provide.

Researchers and practitioners in Devon are helping to lead the way in finding and testing solutions to the nature crisis. This symposium explores some of this work and demonstrates how attempts are being made to value, restore and enhance nature for the benefit of all.

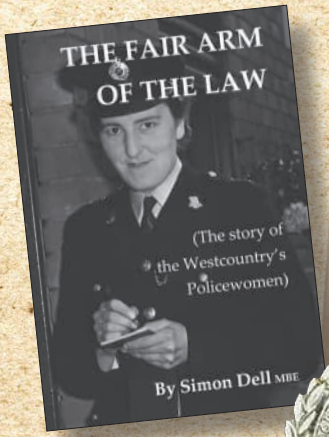
News from East Devon

Presentation to Marienne Carnochan by Hazel Harland.

Photo: Michael Harland

At our Branch Annual General Meeting in February thanks were extended to Marienne Carnochan for her outstanding contribution to the branch, following her retirement from the committee after thirty-three years of service. Jean Turner and David Mountford were unanimously voted on to the committee and were welcomed and thanked for filling the gap left by Marienne. After the AGM **Dr Todd Gray MBE**, always a highly popular speaker at our branch, gave a challenging talk entitled 'Not One of Us'. Spanning the six centuries from 1451 to 1952, Todd considered the lives of individuals who were singled out in Exeter for being different. Many factors, including politics and religion, alienated certain citizens from the rest of Exeter and there were different outcomes, including execution, for those deemed to be 'not one of us'. The session concluded with a lively question time and discussion which continued over a cup of tea.

In March our last talk of the winter season was held just before lockdown, a fact which was reflected in a lower than normal attendance. **Mr Simon Dell MBE** spoke on the history of policewomen, and in particular policewomen in the West Country. Taking as his title *"The Fair Arm of the Law",* Simon began by showing a Punch cartoon of 1829, the year of the foundation of the Metropolitan police, lampooning the concept of female police officers. Throughout the nineteenth century male police officers were often assisted by their wives in matters related to the arrest of female prisoners. By the twentieth century the Suffragette Movement became closely linked to the recognition of women in the police force and in 1915 Mrs Edith Smith of Grantham became the first paid female police officer with powers of arrest. Much of Simon's research has involved interviewing retired female members of the West Country Police Force whose fascinating photographs and experiences he shared with us. His last photograph of Cressida Dick, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service in London, emphasised how far women have come in the police service in just under two hundred years.



Photographs from Simon Dell's book.
Reproduced by kind permission of the author.

As I write this the decision has been made to suspend all DA events until the end of the year. Ways are being explored to keep members in touch, including an online Forum on the DA website, which hopefully East Devon Branch members will support. We might even Zoom! Our next meeting is therefore scheduled to be on 8th January, 2021 when our President-elect, and good friend of the Branch, **Dr Robin Wootton**, will be speaking on 'Charles Kingsley-his writings and times'. I look forward to reuniting with our members and getting back to normal then.

Hazel Harland, Chair East Devon Branch

DA Still Active During Lockdown

While we have not been able to hold our usual progamme of events due to the lockdown restrictions, a number of talks and presentations have been shared on the Devon pages of our website (**https://devonassoc.org.uk/category/devon**) to keep the DA output going, albeit in a virtual rather than a physical form. We appreciate that not all our members have access to a computer in their home, but might have access through members of their support bubble. If this is the case, now could be an ideal time to introduce members of your family or friends to the DA!

In addition to her 'From the Chair' features on the website, Dr Sue Andrew has allowed us to share a number of articles and papers she has written for other publications. These include the enigmatic story of 'The Three Hares in Medieval Devon and Beyond' – a chapter which appeared in the book she co-authored with Tom Greeves and Chris Chapman *The Three Hares: A Curiosity Worth Regarding*, published by Skerryvore Productions in 2016. Sue explores various theories behind the significance of the motif of the three running hares, joined by their ears, which are known to survive on medieval roof bosses in sixteen Devon churches. Behind this seemingly simple device, lies a history freighted with meaning from disparate cultures and traditions.

Sue has also contributed two articles from her series 'Stories on the Stones', written for *Dartmoor Magazine*, which bring to life the tales behind the memorials found in our churchyards. In 'William Shillibeer: Sculptor, Schoolmaster, Surveyor' she traces the life of a talented and knowledgeable local man who ended up having to defend himself in court against the unjust charges of the Lord of the Manor. In 'Peter Hill, Parish Clerk and Sexton, Lydford' Sue tells the quietly heroic tale of a man who devoted his life to the church and his blind brother at the cost of romantic love.

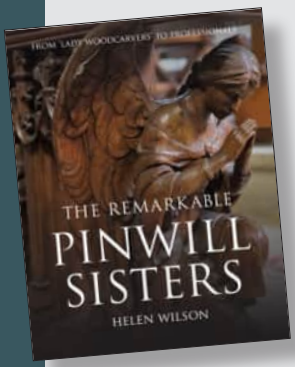
Slate gravestone, believed to have been carved by William Shillibeer in 1780, Walkhampton churchyard. Photo: Sue Andrew

William Shillibeer signature. Photo: Sue Andrew

By kind permission of The Ecclesiological Society there is a copy of the paper Sue wrote for *Ecclesiology Today* on Harry Hems and St Peter's Revelstoke. Sue notes that sadly most of the archive of sculptor and carver Harry Hems from his internationally renowned Ecclesiastical Art Works in Exeter has been lost, but she has pieced together the story of his work furnishing and decorating the church of St Peter's Revelstoke, Noss Mayo, through surviving correspondence with his patrons and contemporary photographs taken at Hems's studio. The sheer exuberance and assurance of Hems's work is echoed in his written style making the loss of his correspondence all the more tragic. Sue reveals how his energy and infectious enthusiasm – 'Madame, I feel anxious about the angels and roof being just what it ought to be. I shall run down tomorrow (Saturday) with an angel' – resulted in an extraordinary richly carved church interior.

St Peter's, Revelstoke, Noss Mayo. Photo: Sue Andrew

The patrons of St Peter's Revelstoke were members of the Baring banking family and it was a senior employee from this bank who paid for the restoration of the parish church dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul at Ermington, where a remarkable family of Devon craftswomen first learnt their trade. In 'The Emergence of the Pinwill Sisters', a paper by Dr Helen Wilson originally published in *Devon Buildings Group Newsletter* in 2016, Helen charts the stories of Mary, Ethel and Violet who established their own extremely successful business in the male-dominated field of carving. For nearly 50 years, the extraordinary Violet single-handedly managed the business, which at its height employed 29 men and produced carvings in stone and wood for over 180 churches in Devon and Cornwall and a further 18 in counties elsewhere. Helen will be gathering all her extensive knowledge on this subject into an eagerly anticipated book on the Pinwill Sisters which is due out later this year.



Detail from the Pinwill's chancel screen at Lew Trenchard church. Photo: Helen Wilson

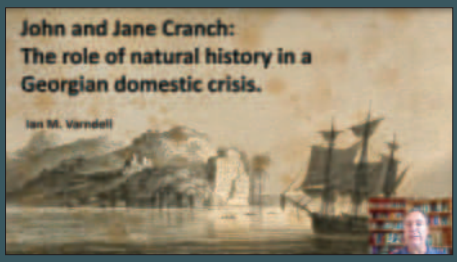
Captain William Ambrose Grose. Photo: John Rose Collection

In her paper 'The Grose Family of Ilsington', adapted from an article originally published in the *Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group Newsletter*, Helen Wilson examines the lives of two brothers from Cornwall, William Ambrose and the magnificently named Pharaoh Grose, who became respected Devon mine agents and managers. Her story follows the careers of the two brothers and William Ambrose's descendants, many of whom also worked in the mining industry with careers which took them around the world.

Our **Hon. Sec, Dr Ian Varndell**, has shared video presentations based on papers he wrote researching two very different but equally compelling stories. In 'The Life and Tragic Death of Simon Levy, Silversmith', based on an article Ian wrote for the Devon History Society in 2019, he traces the story of a respectable member of Exeter's Hebrew congregation who ended up shot in a case of mistaken identity and the subsequent fate of his assailant.

In 'John and Jane Cranch. The role of natural history in a Georgian domestic crisis' Ian gives an abbreviated version of his 2019 Conference presentation, telling the remarkable tale of a marriage and a passion for collecting, both of which survived an act of extreme destruction.

Title slide from Ian 's presentation on Simon Levy



Title slide from Ian's presentation on John & Jane Cranch

Professor Malcolm Hart has shared an annotated presentation 'Geology Section: history, interests and the importance of Devon's geology' based on his very well received talk given at the DA Forum meeting in Sidmouth in March, just before the lockdown. His wide-ranging presentation encompasses significant geologists and their links to Devon, the creation of the Devonian System, the founding of the DA during a geological expedition in 1861, the geology of Devon, the challenges facing the environment and how initiatives such as the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and the English Riviera Geopark aim to provide increased understanding and protection for areas of great geological significance.

'The 66th Report on Devonshire Verbal Provincialisms' by Gillian F. Moore first appeared in *Transactions* in 1962 and has been posted on the website after permission to publish online was given by the author following our Webmaster's appeal in the 2019 Autumn edition of *DA News*. The report includes the excellent Dialect Map on the various terms used for the plain bun which forms part of the Devon cream tea. Discussion around this map has taken place on the new **DA website Forum** further details of which are given in the following article by John Maltby.

Bridget Gillard

THE ANGLO-SAXON MINT AT LYDFORD *Obverses (above) and reverses (below).* Lydford coins of each of the major issues of Æthelred II: (a) First Hand, (b) Second Hand, (c) Crux, (d) Long Cross, (e) Helmet, (f) Last Small Cross, *(Exeter City Museums). The coins are shown enlarged.*

John Allan's paper 'The Anglo-Saxon Mint at Lydford', first published in *Transactions* in 2002 examines the role this remote Devon settlement played in the production of coins during the late 10th and early 11th centuries, while enabling readers to understand the significance of John's Presidential plate (page 6-7). *The design on the presentation plate was taken from the reverse of coin (e).*

Website Update

DA launches Online Forum

With the enforced cancellation of all our events and knowing that our members will be spending more time indoors, we have been adding more reading material to the website – see Bridget's piece for details of some of the interesting articles.

We have also launched an online forum where people can ask questions, post notices, and generally chat about anything within our educational remit. Forums are good both for learning and for providing help to others.

COMMUNICATE

There is a generic 'Devon' forum which is open for everyone, member or not, to read. Each of our Branches and Sections also has its own closed forum – these can only be seen after registration and logging in. To be able to post anything to any of the forums, it's also necessary to have registered and logged in. Details of the simple registration process can be found by following the link in the sidebar of any page of the website (devonassoc.org.uk). All members and bona fide non-members are welcome to register and take part in forum discussions.

Branch and Section committees are encouraged to use their own forums as another way of communicating with their members and receiving feedback from them. Note that although the Branch and Section forums are hidden from non-members, they are all visible to all logged-in members, so the reach is potentially wider than that provided by email.

Topics on the forums so far have included a query about the dearth of swallows this year; a discussion about Zoom and similar systems for holding online meetings; the possibility of publishing *DA News* on the website; notice of a research project about the closing of the Topsham Gap; and chat about Devon cream teas. It is still early days, but there is much more too.

To finish this short report, a quick summary of the website as a whole. It now has over 800 pages and in the 12 months to end-June we have had a verified 23,000 visits from humans (not counting search engine crawlers etc). There was a marked drop in visits as COVID-19 struck, but after a couple of weeks the figures bounced back and have been higher than ever since.

I look forward to chatting with some of you online!

John Maltby,
DA website administrator

Robert Burnard
1848–1920

Photograph from *Robert Burnard's Dartmoor Pictorial Records,* published by Devon Books.

This year sees the 100th anniversary of the death of Robert Burnard. He left an enormous legacy in terms of his writing and photography, as well as making his mark as a successful businessman and an active politician. The Devonshire Association, which he joined in 1887, was the beneficiary of much of his writing, principally on the archaeology of Dartmoor. Between 1889 and 1911, Burnard contributed to eleven reports by the Dartmoor Exploration Committee, a group within the DA actively involved in innovative archaeology that included the likes of Sabine Baring-Gould, R. Hansford Worth and Joshua Brooking-Rowe. He produced a total of nine papers in his own name, and another joint paper, on a range of subjects: 'Notes on Dartmoor Kistvaens' (1890), 'Dartmoor Stone Implements and Weapons' (1897), 'The Disappearing Stone Monuments of Dartmoor' (1902) and 'The Pack-horse on Dartmoor' (1905).

The last of his papers, in 1911, was his Presidential address, entitled 'Prehistoric Devon'. All these papers are available to read at devonassoc.org.uk, some accompanied by immaculate drawings. Also on the DA website, is a full transcript of Robert Burnard's obituary, published in the 1920 *Transactions*.

In 1883, Robert Burnard joined the Dartmoor Preservation Association (DPA) and started campaigning for the safeguarding of public access to Dartmoor. He advocated the acquisition of the Forest of Dartmoor by Devon County Council, an idea that would crystallise 50 years later into the creation of National Parks. His publication 'Plundered Dartmoor' was instrumental in raising public awareness of the threats to access and to moorland antiquities.

Robert Burnard was a prolific and keen photographer of his beloved Dartmoor and published four limited edition volumes of *Dartmoor Pictorial Record* between 1891 and 1894. These are now rare and highly regarded publications. They contain not only his photographs but also many of his superb archaeological drawings. The originals of these and his other photographs were kept as glass plates by his family and later donated to what became the Devon Heritage Centre. These, in turn, were scanned by the Dartmoor Trust (DT) and form the basis of the Burnard Collection in their online archive, which can be viewed at dartmoortrust.org/archive.

Robert Burnard was born in 1848 at Southdown, near Millbrook, Cornwall, where his father Charles ran a chemical manufactory. The family later moved to Plymouth and Robert joined the highly successful chemical fertiliser company of Burnard & Algar of Cattedown. He married Fanny Louise Pearce in 1887 and they spent much of their married life at Hillsborough, Compton Gifford, with their four children. In 1904 they moved to Huccaby House, seven miles from Princetown, where they enjoyed Dartmoor life to the full. The couple also enjoyed travelling and took several long-distance trips, including one to Egypt in 1909 and another to the Malay Peninsula in 1913. These related to Robert's interest in the antiquities of those countries, reflected in lectures he gave at the Plymouth Institution. In later years, the couple moved to the Rectory at Stoke-in-Teignhead and this is where Robert died on 15 April 1920.

In late 2019, representatives of the DA and the DT were invited by Phil Hutt, Chief Executive of the DPA, to attend a meeting with a view to commemorating Robert Burnard in this centenary year. A plan evolved to celebrate his life with an exhibition at the Museum of Dartmoor Life at Okehampton in early September 2020.

As a result of COVID-19 and consequent restrictions, the exhibition will not be going ahead. We have every intention, however, of finding another time to honour and celebrate this esteemed and valued member of The Devonshire Association.

Helen Wilson

'This is where I belong, this is my landscape

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A reflection on the role of Devon in the life of W. G. Hoskins

Bridget Gillard

The profundity of W. G. Hoskins's association with Devon is perhaps unique: born in Exeter to a family who had lived in the city for 150 years, descended from yeomen who farmed East Devon land for five centuries and author of the authoritative *Devon*, a book without which no West Country library is complete. I was delighted, therefore, when Hoskins's daughter, Susie Hewitt, agreed to talk to me about her father at her home in Exeter – a meeting which fortunately took place before the implementation of the lockdown restrictions.

Susie told me that Hoskins was born in 1908 on St David's Hill where his father and grandfather had a bakery, close to where his parents lived in Little Silver. She believes the primary school he attended in Rack Street was in a poor part of the city, a fact confirmed by a report quoted on the Exeter Memories site, made shortly before Hoskins attended the school which describes the children as 'almost without exception of the poorest class'. Despite the deprivations of his early schooling, Hoskins won a scholarship to Hele's grammar school and by the age of nineteen had been awarded his first degree in economics from the University College of the South West of England (as the University of Exeter was then known). By 21 he had completed his MSc; the title of his thesis 'The Rise and Decline of the Serge Industry in the South-West of England' reflecting his already developing interest in

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4.

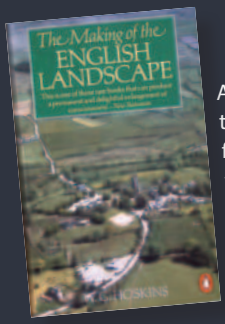
the history of his home county. When not at his studies the young Hoskins would explore the countryside surrounding Exeter by bicycle.

His career as a young academic took him away from the West Country to Leicestershire where he taught economics in the Department of Geography and Commerce at Leicester University College. In 1933 he married Frances Jackson, who was to prove the most tremendous domestic support throughout his life, enabling an output of work which could surely not otherwise have been possible. His PhD, awarded in 1937 on 'The Ownership and Occupation of Land in Devonshire, 1650-1800' applied his background in economics to the study of the history and development of the English countryside, and in particular his home county.

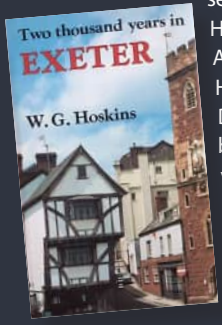
During the war Hoskins went reluctantly to London to work as a statistician for the Board of Trade. Joan Thirsk in her paper on Hoskins for the *Proceedings of the British Academy* noted 'Hoskins detested London, and so it never aroused in him any desire to write about its history'. Instead, she observes, he spent his lunch hours in the Public Record Office, working on articles which were published in a number of journals including *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*.

5.

1. **W.G. Hoskins**
   Photo: Peter Jones
2. **Blue Plaque, St David's Hill, Exeter**
3. **Tuckers Hall (gate, showing emblems of the serge industry)**
   Photo: Antony T Buller
4. **Tuckers Hall interior**
   Photo: Antony T Buller
5. **Widecombe Church**
   Photo: Sue Andrew
6. **Upper Market (detail), Exeter**
7. **Upper Market, Queen's Street, Exeter**
   Photos: Antony T Buller
8. **W.G. Hoskins filming**
   Photos: Peter Jones
9. **The White Hart Hotel, Exeter** (exterior)
   Photo: Antony T Buller



After the war he resumed his teaching in Leicester where he formed two significant friendships: with the University Principal, F. L. Attenborough, an Anglo-Saxon historian who encouraged Hoskins to set up the country's first Department of English Local History, and Jack Simmons, Head of the History Department, a fellow Devonian who formulated the idea for a series of county histories for which Hoskins agreed to write on Devon. As a consequence, from 1948 Hoskins spent every vacation in Devon consulting the archives and beginning the herculean task of visiting every one of the county's 450 parishes. This endeavour was all the more impressive for being accomplished via public transport or, in some instances, on foot. Hoskins, nor any of his three brothers, ever learnt to drive; his daughter Susie puts this down to the abysmal driving of Hoskins's father.



It's extraordinary to think that during this period not only was Hoskins methodically combing the Devon countryside (in July 1947, according to Joan Thirsk, he visited 29 parishes in twelve days) but shortly afterwards another non-driver with an equally impressive work ethic, Nikolaus Pevsner, was visiting the same towns and villages for his *Buildings of England* series.

Hoskins continued to work on *Devon* following his appointment to the Readership in Economic History at Oxford in 1951. The family moved to a rented vicarage in Steeple Barton outside Oxford where distinguished visitors included John Betjeman, who Susie recalls accidentally reversing over Hoskins's carefully tended circular lawn. Hoskins did not react and Betjeman departed oblivious to the damage caused. Less happy was the encounter between the young Susie, her father and the historian A. L. Rouse. Susie recalls 'I can only have been about six or seven and he looked at me with horror as if to say "a woman in All Souls!" and I was only in the quad'.

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The lure of Devon was such that, following a spell of poor health for both Hoskins and Susie, the family moved in 1955 to St Leonards in Exeter, with Hoskins travelling to Oxford during the week in term times. Following the publication of *Devon* in 1954 he wrote the enormously influential *The Making of the English Landscape* which cemented his reputation, in Thirsk's description, as 'the master and populariser of landscape history'. The impact of the book was to be wide reaching and remains long-lasting. The author, William Boyd, writing in the Guardian in 2013 recalls how he looked at his surroundings anew after reading the book: 'What initially had seemed a stereotypically charming Cotswold scene became gravid with meaning and replete with markers of the remorseless passage of time. A landscape would never be the same.'

Back in Devon, Hoskins continued to write prolifically while still engaged in his teaching duties at Oxford during the week. Susie recalls not being allowed to interrupt her father in his study if the door was closed. *Devon and its People* was published in 1959 followed by *Two Thousand Years in Exeter* in 1960. In the latter he voices his frustration that 'The old house comes down, and the beautiful trees, inherited from our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, are sacrificed in order to cram two or three more tatty little houses into the old garden'. These concerns led him to stand successfully as a Liberal councillor for St Leonards, where his fearless and outspoken views on the planning committee made him very unpopular amongst the majority of his fellow councillors. Hoskins was not alone, however, in his concerns over the threat to Exeter's historic fabric. In 1962 the Exeter Civic Trust

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was launched, the first Civic Society formed outside London, with the Civic Hall packed for its inaugural meeting where Hoskins was elected its Chairman. The Civic Society lobbied successfully for the retention of the Classical façade of the Higher Market on Queen Street and the dismissal of plans to widen the High Street at its western end through the demolition of the Tudor merchants' houses.

During this period, he was an active member of the DA and Susie recalls going on DA outings, the only child present. She also accompanied her father on many of his research trips, 'I suppose I went up more pulpits than any other eleven-year-old'. Hoskins was lured back to Leicester in 1964 by the offer of the post of Head of Department of English Local History but he found the associated committee work increasingly irksome. Susie recalls the last straw being the requirement to count all the chairs in the department, which led to him resigning 'in despair', according to his Who's Who entry in 1968.

Hoskins returned permanently to Devon and in 1978 became the President of The Devonshire Association. Interestingly for his Presidential Address on 'The Development of the Small House' he chose to take a nationwide overview, but with many Devon-specific references. At this point when many people would be settling into a quiet retirement, Hoskins took the opportunity of bringing his seminal ideas

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on the development of the English landscape to a wider audience through two series of television programmes filmed in 1972 and 1975. Susie recalls her mother's concern seeing shots of her husband standing in a stream in his ordinary shoes or out in a snowstorm wearing a thin anorak. Peter Jones, Hoskins's producer on the *Landscapes of England* series, recalls how 'unlike so many narrators who may know nothing about a subject until a programme researcher provides the script, Bill spoke from hard won knowledge acquired by endless walking, looking and relating what he saw to the old charters and maps that he had earlier examined'. His years of study and teaching, coupled with his lack of pomposity and connection with ordinary people, developed through his time as a Liberal councillor, resulted in a style of communication described by Joan Thirsk as 'friendly and conversational, quickly involving his listeners in an experience which they felt they could share'. Consequently, the series was a great success not only in this country but throughout Europe and North America.

It is typical of Hoskins that he chose to end the series in Devon. As he sits on a bench outside the White Hart in Exeter, he quotes the poet Horace '"*Hic amor, haec patria est*' – this is my love, this is my country. In short this is where I belong. This is my landscape.'

Bridget Gillard

The Music of Bideford

History books can tell us so much, but the songs of any area will often give us a personal perspective not reported or documented elsewhere. These few words will touch on half a dozen musical projects and provide snippets of song lyrics to illustrate Bideford's distinctiveness. There are manuscripts, field recordings, media broadcasts and CDs of much of the song material quoted.

We know there used to be a coal mine in Bideford, as this song of the trades from the late 19th century Baring-Gould archives reminds us

In Bideford I was a coal merchant,
In Bristol was a baker,
In Barnstaple a druggist
Was in Bow an undertaker

Shamwickshire - The Way Of The Wharves (WOTW) is a project linking the history of East The Water quayside through trading, pottery and art. An alternative name for this area is Shamwickshire and the WOTW brought to light a local anthem popular especially in the earlier part of 20th century. Thanks to Sadie and Dave Green for bringing this to my notice.

O! Shamwickshire, Dear Shamwickshire.
Wherever we may roam,
To distant lands or other towns
There's naught to us like home.
O! Shamwickshire, dear home of mine,
We love thee and adore,
So pass around the old pottery jug,
And never mind the score.

The Postman Poet – Edward Capern (1819-1894) was born in Tiverton and served as a Bideford based postman. He built up a strong reputation as a poet and wrote melodies for some of his verses. Nick Wye and Becki Driscoll of Bideford have set some of his words to new tunes.

Now the days are dark and dreary
And the year is growing weary
And the leaves have left the branches
Of the sycamore and lime
I am thinking of thy bounty
My dear old native county
It's O! to be in Devon at the merry Christmas Time

Trade Roots Project - Some pottery tiles on Bideford Quay served as the starting point for this musical project, reflecting the triangular trade between Europe, North America and the Caribbean in song, spoken word and projected images. The project did not dodge the issue of slavery and The North Devon Folk Orchestra led by Becki Driscoll and The North Devon Folk Choir led by Nick Wyke combined their talents to present this performance in 2019. Bideford was second only to London for

the importing of tobacco and of several songs circulating about the 'weed' this one from the Baring-Gould archive has proved persistently popular.

Tobacco is an Indian weed
Grows green at morn, cut down at eve
Shows our decay, we are but hay
Pray think on this, when you smoke tobacco

The Pilot Boat Song – This song was recorded by Paul Wilson in 1970s from Mrs Leaworthy of Appledore, about one occasion which pre-dated the Trinity Pilots (i.e. pre 1923) when rival pilot boat crews would risk life and limb, racing out to any larger vessel in the bay, to get there first and pilot the large vessel in.

Goodbye to Tucky Evans
Farewell to Skinny too
Over the bar tonight boys
There's a vessel there for you
Sometimes if I remember
Jack Bowdens' the handy man
For we're going out tonight to bring in the Kindly Light
And the pilot's the long haired Jan.

Shore To Shore is an ongoing project featuring folk artists from both Devon and Newfoundland celebrating family links, economic connections and interactions through 500 years between Devon and the former Dominion of Newfoundland. Many people in Newfoundland, who took the Devon songs with them, can trace their ancestry to Devon. In this series, Jim Payne, Marilyn Tucker and Paul Wilson compare and contrast various versions from both sides of the Atlantic.

Oh you Western Ocean Labourers I would have you all beware
When you go on board of a packet ship no dungaree jumpers wear
But have a big monkey jacket always at your command
For there blow some cold Nor'Westers on the banks of Newfoundland

The number of ships leaving and entering the port of Bideford throughout the 19th century was huge and the issues of not only trade but slavery and emigration were evident. In 1830 it was reported that 5,000 people waved farewell to Bideford in ships bound for New York City, Newfoundland and Montreal. Piracy was a real threat and this and the weather made crossing the Atlantic a highly hazardous journey.

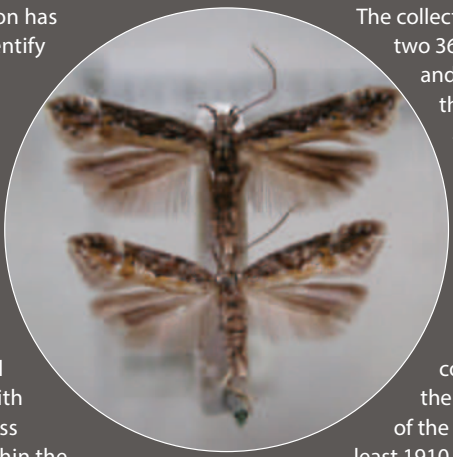
Oh then says our captain what can we do now
Here comes a bold pirate down to us I vow
They fired shots after us but could not prevail
And the bold Princess Royal soon showed them her tail

CODA

John Gay, creator of The Beggar's Opera in 1728, was a native of Barnstaple where the tunes he used would have been current in the minds of the people of Bideford. The libretto was a biting satire on the social conditions of the time and the piece spawned a host of contemporary imitators but has successfully outlived all of them. There have been many later imitations and developments of the form and the theme – notably *The Threepenny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill.

Paul Wilson, Chair, Music Section

Moths on the Move



The Entomology Section has started a project to identify collections of insects held in Devon as well as their importance. Also, we wish to establish whether their long-term future has been arranged. Curation has been cut back so much that there are few experts in local museums equipped with the knowledge to assess collections and yet within the Section we are fortunate in having national experts in several Orders. Insect collections cannot just be housed since they need safeguarding from damp and very small injurious pests which can do considerable damage. Many chemicals previously used to prevent attack by these pests are now banned and alternative methods (for example deep-freezing) are not easily available.

Bob Heckford was aware that the National Trust property at Overbeck's, Sharpitor, Salcombe had an extensive collection of moths and butterflies and, with agreement of the National Trust (for which he is a Volunteer Specialist), an audit of this collection was carried out.

The collection was housed in two 36-drawer cabinets and comprised most of the British butterflies and moths (including the so-called 'micro-moths'). The collection had been assembled by Mr J. M. Jaques (of the games producing family) of Sussex with specimens coming from some of the leading lepidopterists of the time ranging from at least 1910 to 1947 and was one of the most comprehensive collections not housed in a museum.

Overbeck's has collections of various items (for example sea-shells) and we understand that at some point they obtained this collection from another National Trust property in Surrey.

Examination in detail of 72 drawers takes a considerable time, especially as the identification of a number of the micro-moths needed to be checked and a number were re-identified by us as they were found to be incorrect. Also, it was evident that some of the drawers housed specimens which were affected by mould and some had been attacked by pests in the past.

Overbeck's is open the public for the summer period but the house is shut during the winter and so we were able to work without interruption during that period (wearing long-johns, fingerless gloves and overcoats).

We made seven visits over a four-year time-span and produced a detailed 28 page report on significant specimens in the collection. Our examination showed that, amongst other things, the collection contained 22 species which are now extinct in Britain. Amongst the extinct species there were two specimens of one, *Aristotelia subdecurtella* – a micro-moth with a wingspan of 14-15 mm, taken in 1931 where the previously known last date was in the 19th century and two of another species from 1939 which are also the last known British specimens.

Two other historic specimens were taken in 1945 at Mullion, Cornwall and were misidentified as a similar species – not surprising because the true species, *Agonopterix kuznetzovi*, was not described as new to science until 1983! These two specimens are the third and fourth known in the world!

The collection also had the second British specimen of a very rare immigrant species, the Goldwing, the other being in the Natural History Museum, London.

The report we produced was not only for the Entomology Section but also, of course, for the National Trust. It detailed what an important collection this is and the National Trust decided that they did not have the facilities to care appropriately for it in the future. We were therefore asked if we could find it a suitable home.

Bob is a Scientific Associate at the Natural History Museum and both he and Stella are regular visitors to the Entomology Department there. As a consequence, during one of those visits, we had the chance to discuss it with the Senior Curator of Lepidoptera, Geoff Martin. We then sent him our report.

The Natural History Museum has over 8 million Lepidoptera specimens in approximately 80,000 drawers and is certainly not in need of more material of species already represented there. Indeed, we know that offers of some other collections have been declined in the past. However, because of our conversation, expertise and report Geoff Martin decided it would be a good collection to have. He and a colleague personally drove from London to collect it, a delicate job, in summer 2019 and it arrived at the museum unharmed.

As a consequence of this work we are delighted that the Jaques collection is now in the best possible home. The environmentally controlled rooms there will ensure no further harm befalls it.

We are grateful to the National Trust at Overbeck's for hosting our visits while the house was not open to the public.

This article is based on a talk given at the October 2019 Forum meeting in Tavistock.

Bob Heckford and Stella Beavan

Photos: *Aristotelia subdecurtella* specimens in the Jaques collection.
© Bob Heckford

Brian / *Overbecks, National Trust Gardens and Museum* / CC BY-SA 2.0.

People of the DA

From algorithms to snarligogs. Murray Laver (President, 1990-91)

Quite a few DA Presidents have been Devon-born and have returned in retirement after distinguished careers elsewhere. The first President, Sir John Bowring, was one example. So, 128 years later, was Dr Frederick Murray Laver CBE.

Murray Laver was one of Britain's foremost electronic engineers. Born in Devonport and educated at Plymouth College and Medway Technical College, he worked for most of his career in the Post Office where among many other achievements he co-designed the Booth-Laver quartz crystal clock, accurate to one part in 10^8 and adopted and used for many years by the Greenwich Royal Observatory to calculate Greenwich Mean Time. After the war he was hugely influential in the development of computing in Britain, far-sightedly realising that computers would become ubiquitous, not just remain as a handful of big machines in major centres. He helped develop 'Ernie', the Premium Bond computer, advised the Treasury, was Assistant Chief Engineer in Tony Benn's Ministry of Technology, led the wholesale computerisation of the Post Office and persuaded the Government to fund the British connection to what would later become the internet. He was awarded the CBE in 1971 for services to the computer industry.

He retired to East Devon in 1973, and instantly became active in the DA. His papers in the *Transactions* ranged widely, from Sidmouth shingle to the Dartmoor books of Beatrice Chase, but his main – and extraordinary – contribution was as Recorder of Dialect from 1986 to 1995, collecting words and phrases from all over Devon, publishing them annually in the *Transactions*, and producing in 1990 a Devonshire Word List with an astonishing 17,362 entries – THE resource on the Devon dialect. The DA also published his Dialect Tapes [now available to special order from the Registrar – Ed]. These and Dr John Smith's excellent article in the 2008 TDA 'From Granfer-Grig to Tiddly-Tope: a look at names for representatives of the Natural World in the Laver corpus' are good introductions to his work.

Murray was a particularly effective Pro-Chancellor and an Honorary DSc of Exeter University, whose Laver Building is named for him. Older DA members, particularly in the East Devon Branch, will remember him as a delightful, unassuming, humorous man, and an excellent, entertaining speaker: his presidential address in Tiverton was one of the very best, and is well worth reading.

I mentioned Sir John Bowring. A polymath like Murray, he too joined the DA and promptly wrote papers for the *Transactions* on a remarkable range of subjects. These included one on Devon dialect; and Murray contributed a chapter to the DA's book on Bowring, edited by Joyce Youings in 1993. Both were great men, with interests in common but very different personalities. One wonders how they would have got on, had they ever met.

Robin Wootton

FLORA OF DEVON

Plants as parasites

Living as a parasite in the animal kingdom is commonplace and some species have evolved highly complex behaviours in order to infect their hosts and pass on to a new one. It's simpler with plants but taking advantage of the efforts of another species has developed in several different ways.

As stem hemi-parasites: Plants that derive some of their nutrients from the host plant but have green leaves and photosynthesise their own carbon compounds. Mistletoe *(Viscum album)* is such a plant and is locally abundant in some parts of Devon.

As stem parasites: Plants which don't photosynthesis and are entirely reliant on the host species for all their nutrition. Dodder *(Cuscuta epithymum)* is locally abundant around our coasts where it can dominate moderately large areas of gorse. On Dartmoor and other heaths it favours heathers.

As root hemi-parasites: There are many examples of root hemi-parasites which, in some cases, may be able to survive without attachment to a host species. Yellow-rattle *(Rhinanthus minor)* is now widely recommended as a root hemi-parasite of grasses to reduce the vigour of the host and favour establishment of species-rich wild-flower meadows. Other common species in this group found in Devon include several species of Eyebright (*Euphrasia spp.)*, Louseworts *(Pedicularis spp.)*, Red Bartsia *(Odontites vernus)* and Yellow Bartsia *(Parentucellia viscosa)*.

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As root parasites: Broomrapes *(Orobanche ssp.)* are entirely reliant on the host plant and are mostly host specific or limited to a small number of closely related host species. Three species are confirmed from Devon of which Ivy Broomrape *(O. hederae)* is the most obvious since it tends to produce many flowering spikes close to the coastal areas which it favours. We also have two species of Toothwort *(Lathraea spp)*. in Devon. The usual host of our native Toothwort *(L. squamaria)* is Hazel *(Corylus avellane)* whereas the introduced Purple Toothwort *(L. clandestine)* favours Willow (*Salix spp.)* and Poplars *(Populus spp.)*.

Rafflesia, which produces the largest flower of any plant – up to a metre or so across – is a root parasite of tropical vines in South-east Asia.

Roger Smith

1. *Viscum album* at Chagford Town Orchard
2. *Cuscuta epithymum* on the coast west of Pig's Nose
3. *Parentucellia viscosa* at Dawlish Warren
4. *Lathraea squamaria* by the River Lemon at Newton Abbot

Photos: Roger Smith

INSECTS OF DEVON

Bog Hoverfly *(Eristalis cryptarum)*

Drone flies resemble honey bees. The Bog Hoverfly is the rarest of our ten 'drones', distinguished by its beautiful ginger pelage. It has nearly vanished and is known from only a few Dartmoor mires. It is one of Devon's Special Species for which we have a responsibility as it has all the dubious accolades of a species on the brink of extinction – Critically Endangered, subjected to a flurry of research when listed on the Biodiversity Action Plan, and remains a 'Section 41' species that public bodies need to take into consideration. Only two other British flies share this unenviable standing. But it is possible to glimpse it if you trek through inaccessible soggy Dartmoor and watch as it feeds on flowers. Its favourites are Bogbean and Marsh-marigold. You will have to be lucky, though, as you can spend ages searching in vain. A good day's hunting is two flies!

Early research aimed at understanding what the fly needs. Once known, there is a chance of tweaking land management to help it. This will almost certainly involve the right level of disturbance by cattle and ponies but we have only an intuitive hunch what to recommend. The adults are found at mires with flushes; but is that just because their favourite flowers grow here? A more helpful clue to understanding the fly is knowing where its larvae live. Drone flies have distinctive 'rat-tailed maggots' but finding them failed, whether by sifting through heaps of saturated vegetation or by testing for the fly's DNA in water samples from potentially suitable sites. The disappointing results are probably one reason why research has stagnated recently. As with so many elusive species, serendipity may one day give us the answer.

Martin Drake

Photo: Bog Hoverfly *(Eristalis cryptarum)*, Challacombe, Dartmoor
© Martin Drake

DEVON **DIALECT**

Fingling = fastidious

Jabberment = idle talk

Puggled = confused/deranged

WORDS OF DEVON from the **Murray Laver Devonshire Word List**.

Magging: short news items

Magging is a Devonshire dialect word for talking, chattering

Tavistock Roundels

Tavistock re-opened its non-essential shops, after the COVID-19 lockdown, on 15th June. 'Welcome back' signs and temporary footways to enable shoppers to pass safely form part of a revised streetscape. Special roundels encouraging social distancing, while giving an insight into Tavistock's historic development, have been strategically positioned on pavements throughout the town. Using information provided by Tavistock Heritage Trust, the roundels feature key dates and information from the town's past, and so provide visitors and local people with an interesting aside as they queue.

Sue Andrew

Tavistock roundels.
Photographs: Sue Andrew

Social Distancing

Inspired by his book ***Uncle Tom Cobbley and All***, historian and former DA President, Todd Gray produced the following light-hearted cautionary notice.

Obituaries

HUGH MACDONALD "DON" ARTHUR

Hugh MacDonald Arthur, known as Don, was born on 7th June 1937 in Sunderland, County Durham. His father, a marine engineer, moved Don and his family around a lot, but died when Don was fourteen. After five years at Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough and two years at Cranfield College of Aeronautics, Don qualified as a Chartered Engineer. His work in the field of research and development took him on adventures around the world, including China, although he remained based in the UK. Don married Vivien in 1963 and they had a son, Andrew, and a daughter, Alison, by whom they have three grandchildren. Retiring to Devon in 2001 Don and Vivien joined the DA in 2003 and became active members. Don once said that he was enriched by the Devonshire Association and that he wanted to give back what he received from his membership. He served on the Executive Committee from 2009 to 2012 and was treasurer of the Entomology Section for five years from 2012. His dry wit and gentle humour was enjoyed by many at DA functions and his help and support was always available and appreciated, at East Devon Branch events. Don died on 17th June 2020; he will be sadly missed by his friends in The Devonshire Association and by all who knew him. Our sincere condolences, and love, go to Vivien and family.

Hazel Harland

Don and Vivien Arthur.
Photo Michael Harland

JOYCE HALL

It is with great personal sadness that I have to report the death, in April, of committee member and friend Joyce Hall. Joyce joined our committee in 2005 and immediately took on the role of Publicity Officer, a position she worked hard at for twelve years. Joyce's distribution of posters around East Devon and of cups of tea at all our lectures, did much to attract members and non-members to our meetings. Her friendly smile and positive outlook will be missed, and our condolences go to Brian and family.

Hazel Harland

TONY HOLWILL

Tony was an active member of The Devonshire Association for more than 20 years being involved with both the Botany and the Entomology Sections. His kindness and witty humour made him a popular member and his keen eye resulted in some exciting finds amongst lichens as well as higher plants. His knowledge and enthusiasm sharing interesting finds on field and indoor meetings were greatly appreciated by all who knew him.

He was a founder member of the North Devon Botany Group and helped Bob Hodgson with a plant monitoring scheme in 2003. He gave his time generously surveying tetrads in North Devon, work which culminated in the production of the new *Devon Flora* in 2016.

Exploration of the less frequented backwaters of North Devon led to some significant discoveries over the years. He found sites for two Red Data Book lichens, *Opegrapha subelevata*, which grows on basic shale near Ilfracombe and in 2007 he discovered a site near Berrynarbor for *Parmelina carporrhizans*. These lichens are two of only eight lichen taxa included in a recent review of Devon's Special Species for Natural Devon.

During the last five years Tony was a tutor in Plantlife's training schemes on Exmoor, helped to lead the DWT local group's teaching workshops and field meetings and became joint editor of the British Lichen Society's magazine, *The Bulletin*. Tony became a highly respected moth recorder particularly in the difficult field of micromoth identification. His small coastal garden, where he would nightly set up his moth trap, was planted with a huge variety of plants and more than 400 different species of moth were recorded there including several scarce migrants.

He was a delightful man and a fount of knowledge on many aspects of natural history. He will be greatly missed by us all.

Maxine Putnam

JENNY SANDERS

Jenny Sanders, who died on 4th May, aged 83, was born in Cornwall, and grew up in Tavistock, where she attended the grammar school. With a flair for Modern Languages, Jenny taught French for twelve years, before becoming a translator and Member of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting. Jenny married Ken, a veterinary surgeon and thrice Mayor of Tavistock, who died in 2006. She was a keen Dartmoor walker and had an enthusiasm for its wildlife, but it is for her interest in local history, and especially buildings, that Jenny may best be remembered. In the 1970s Jenny's fascination for Dartmoor longhouses was sparked when a cousin, a member of the Hamlyn family of Widecombe in the Moor, was conserving an old farmhouse in the parish. Over twenty years later, Jenny would use her own extensive knowledge, together with the notes and drawings of the late Elizabeth Gawne, in the publication of a book *Early Dartmoor Farmhouses* (Orchard Publications, 1998).

Jenny's expertise was very much welcomed by The Devonshire Association's Buildings Section, and she succeeded the first Chair of the Section, Elizabeth Jarrold, in 1999. For the next nine years, Jenny devoted her considerable energies to education and engagement, giving talks, and arranging and leading visits in all weathers, and, with her Committee, promoting the Section across Devon. On retiring in 2008, she was thanked for 'her leadership, knowledge of Devon buildings and valuable contribution to the success of the Section'.

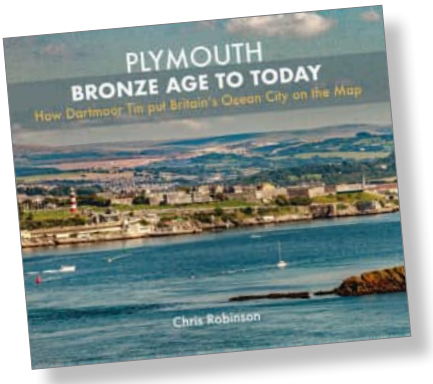
Jenny was warm and understanding, as I can attest. Many years ago, she visited my home, a medieval church house, which had been managed as an inn by one of Jenny's Hamlyn relatives in the nineteenth century. Leaving her voluminous handbag under a table, we went to explore. After tea and a chat, Jenny left to drive down to Launceston, and it was only then, to my horror, that I realised my English pointer puppy had stolen Jenny's chequebook from her bag, taken it to her bed, and chewed it up. Fortunately, and perhaps because she was married to a vet, Jenny saw the funny side.

Jenny was a friend to many in The Devonshire Association, regularly attending Tavistock Branch meetings. We were saddened by her absence of late, due to the ill health she had endured for some years. But we will remember her fondly and send our condolences and good wishes to her daughter, Janna, and son, Nathan.

Sue Andrew

Past Chairs of the DA Building Section at the 25th Anniversary Celebration at Forde House, 2012.
From left to right Elizabeth Jarrold, Jenny Sanders, Mary Rogers, Marion Gammell and Nicola Daniel.
Photo Anthony Lewis

Book Reviews



Chris Robinson, *Plymouth: Bronze Age to Today*. Pen & Ink Publishing, Plymouth, 2019, 256 pp. Softback.
ISBN 978-1-9160190-2-7.

Those familiar with Chris Robinson's books will expect a lavishly illustrated volume that is dominated by large illustrations of Plymouth's recent history. This offering is a great deal more 'text heavy', making it less of a coffee-table book and more of a reference volume. There are the customary old photographs and maps of how the Plymouth area has changed, especially since the industrial revolution. The subtitle is 'How Dartmoor Tin put Britain's Ocean City on the Map' and while there is some discussion of Dartmoor tin and the development of Plympton as a Stannary Town, this subject area is over-shadowed by the dominance of the text and images of the Hemerdon tungsten mine; now in administration and with a future less certain than was the case when much of the book was written.

While it refers to Plymouth as Britain's Ocean City, this appellation is not really explained, almost as though the author was assuming local sales to those who already know the title and why it has been applied.

There is a substantial amount of geological information in the book, including a helpful glossary. As a geologist, I found some of the definitions slightly odd, though I can imagine that they might be useful to a non-scientist. However, describing 'country rock' as often metamorphosed requires the non-scientist to look in the glossary for a definition of metamorphosed and finding the nonsensical word 'metamorphosised' by way of explanation.

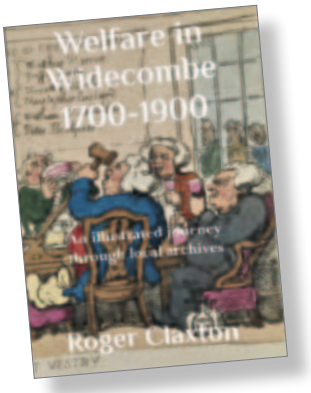
While there are a large number of old maps, of variable quality, mixed within them are some geological maps (pages 187, 188) and even a map-come-section through Hemerdon. Geologists always want to include diagrams such as these although, as recent research by Hazel Gibson (University of Plymouth) has shown, the general population have little grasp of what happens below their feet and struggle to understand explanatory diagrams of it, especially if they contain terminology that is not explained.

The Neolithic to the present day also includes some major changes in climate, including the Little Ice Age. This is not touched upon in any meaningful way, especially when one considers that we have a good record of the changes, especially in upland areas such as Dartmoor. The

weather extremes that Devon suffered are described in a recent paper by Sadru Bhanji in the *Report and Transactions* of the Devonshire Association (2015, Vol. 147, 45–72) and are a chilling reminder of what the local population endured in the 14th to 19th centuries.

The shape of the coastline around Plymouth has clearly been changed by the developments in recent centuries, but the coastline is under constant change as a result of sea level variations. The book tries to explain the mythical 'Cassiterides'; the Tin Islands of the ancient historians that might have been referring to the highly indented coastline of Plymouth Sound. That tin was exported to the developed areas of the Mediterranean in earlier times is not in dispute, and it clearly began the interest in tin and mining that took off in the 19th century.

Malcolm Hart



Claxton, R. 2019 *Welfare in Widecombe 1700–1900 An illustrated journey through local archives*, Widecombe History Group, 196pp., ISBN 978-1-9162849-0-6

In Welfare in Widecombe 1700–1900 Roger Claxton presents his own careful research on this particular topic while introducing us to the wonders of the Widecombe Digital Archive, containing over seventeen thousand scanned images from the parish chest and the history group archive. The book itself, intended for the general reader, is written in an accessible style, with guidance for those not overly familiar with the language and layout of old documents.

Over fourteen chapters the author takes us through two centuries, establishing the national context of welfare for the poor, against which the local material should be viewed, before leading us through documents relating to its provision in Widecombe-in-the-Moor. Photographs of many documents are included, so we find details from the Overseers' Account Book, a warrant for the apprehension of the father of an illegitimate child, indentures recording the binding of apprentices, removal orders, and statements of accounts of the Newton Abbot Union for the Parish of Widecombe. Here the A4 size of the book comes into its own, though it must be said that a magnifying glass proves most useful!

Claxton provides transcriptions and offers interpretation while noting the difficulties created by gaps in the information. His text is immensely readable, and his use of individual case studies brings home to us the vulnerability of those without the means to support themselves.

We learn, for example, of payments made for a pair of breeches for William Stancombe and a blanket for Mary Stancombe; of payment for a 'burying suit' for Robert French, and of Thomas

Widecombe Church House and church. Photo: Sue Andrew

Collins who was apprenticed, at the age of 8 ('or thereabouts'), to be instructed in 'husbandry work' until he reached the age of 21.

Yet, as Claxton points out, it is not the voices of the poor we actually hear – the documents being those required by law and written by officials – and there are no personal accounts of the dispossessed, who in all probability were illiterate. Nonetheless, the author is acutely sensitive to their plight, dedicating his book to those in Widecombe parish 'whose lives must have been a constant struggle, with very little independence of action and constant reliance on others for their survival'.

Claxton does, however, suggest that provision for the poor in Widecombe was regular and relatively well-organised, and that they were probably better off than the urban poor, not least as in a rural parish extended families supported each other and individuals and their circumstances were known to the community.

In his conclusion, the author reiterates that the selective approach adopted in his book should be supplemented by information available in the digital archive. In Appendices, he helpfully provides links, and advice on how best to use the archive, before suggesting further lines of research.

As an introductory volume for the non-specialist reader, Claxton's volume works very well. However, a little more discussion of the church house, central to the story of the poor in this, as in many other parishes, would have been welcome, especially as it crops up frequently in the documents. Perhaps an image of this iconic building, with the church beyond, may also have been more appropriate for the book's cover than Thomas Rowlandson's print of portly be-wigged alcohol-quaffing overseers in London – though these are but minor criticisms reflecting the interests of this reviewer.

Roger Claxton and the Widecombe History Group are to be congratulated for their achievement in bringing this book to publication, and for their excellent work in establishing and continuing to develop the Widecombe Digital Archive.

Sue Andrew

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