Autumn 2023
Issue 17 – Part 2

DA NEWS

The magazine of The Devonshire Association

DEVON: OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE, OUR PASSION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The DA Interview – CAMILLA HAMPSHIRE AND THE POWER OF SEEING
Bridget Gillard

News of the recently formed Devonshire Association Music and Folklore Section

DIARY 2023/24

Welcome from the Editor

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of *DA News*. The DA has been very active over the last few months and this edition celebrates some of the inspiring and diverse activities which have taken place. There is a particular focus on the Music Section and news of its exciting new partnership with Folklore.

There was a fantastic turnout for our President, John Mather's Symposium and, for those of you who were not able to make the event, Peter Beacham has provided a wonderful report.

Elsewhere we celebrate the impressive achievements of our Secretary to the Entomology Section, Stella Beavan, and learn more about the distinctive bridges of our county ancient and modern.

We very much hope you will enjoy this edition.

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Please note: copy for the next issue of ***DA News*** is required by **31 January 2024**. The Editor is very keen to receive pictures relating to DA activities from all members, preferably as high res jpegs. 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.

Photograph by Antony T. Buller

HOLD THE DATE

Carols in the Caves, 12th December – further details to be provided nearer the time.

Photo: Kents Cavern

Erratum

Spring Edition of DA NEWS

Insects of Devon-Triangle *Heterogenea asella* – this article was written by Bob Heckford not Robert Wolton.

Editor-in-Chief: Bridget Gillard
Editorial Board: Sue Andrew
Antony Buller
John Maltby
Helen Wilson
Graphic Designer: Delphine Jones

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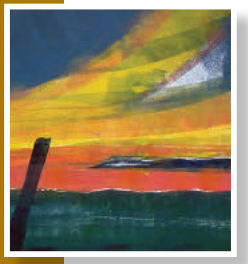
or through any of our Branches or Sections (back cover)

We welcome new members

From the Chair

A recent visit to the little church at Haccombe, with the DA's South Devon Branch, allowed us to explore its many treasures. Not least among these are a very fine miniature alabaster tomb, possibly marking the heart burial of Edward Courtenay in the early fifteenth century, and a bronze bell, believed to be thirteenth century in date and therefore one of the oldest in Devon. We were privileged to be introduced to the church by former DA President, Andrew Cooper, a wildlife filmmaker and environmentalist, who spent part of the pandemic lockdown rewriting the church guide.

Each year we welcome a new President at our AGM, who visits Branches and Sections throughout their period in office, organizes a Symposium and brings their own special interests and knowledge to bear on the Association. This year Jenny Pery will share with us her insight as a practising artist and art historian.



The annual change in President is important in allowing us to continue to develop the spirit of enquiry across many fields that has been the hallmark of the DA since its inception in 1862. Changes are necessary in our governance and administration too as we seek to ensure that the Association has a strong future in changing times.

At the time of writing, in advance of the AGM, our intentions are that Bridget Gillard will become our Executive Secretary, combining the roles of Registrar with that of the statutory duties of the Honorary Secretary, and new working groups, in addition to the existing Finance Working Group, will be established by the Executive Committee to share developments in matters such as governance and communications and publicity. The DA will also move towards Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status from its current position as an unincorporated charitable association.

Through our constantly expanding programme of events and robust governance and administration, we feel sure that the DA will have a bright (and colourful!) future.

Sue Andrew

1. Scottish Evening by Jenny Pery
2. Alabaster tomb, Haccombe Photos: Sue Andrew

From the Branches

BIDEFORD AND NORTH DEVON BRANCH

The Christine Halstead bequest of studio pottery was the subject of a well-illustrated talk by Warren Collum, Exhibition and Collections Manager, at Bideford's The Burton on 21 April. Afterwards participants viewed a selection of items from the bequest on view at the gallery, many of these being vessels in a wide variety of styles, designs and glazes. The bequest includes examples by David Leach, John Maltby, Tim Andrews, Clive Bowen, Mary Rich, Blandine Anderson and other distinguished potters.

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DA President, hydrogeologist Prof. John Mather, gave a fascinating talk at the Branch AGM on 19 May, when he was accompanied by his wife, Dr Jenny Bennett, also a geologist.

His subject *From gold mining to nuclear waste disposal – reflections on 60 years as a professional geologist* featured snapshots from his career. In 1958, aged eighteen, he emigrated to work as a junior official in a South African gold mine, returning to attend Liverpool University before, in 1966, joining what is now the British Geological Survey. There, one of his first tasks was to trace the movement of groundwater beneath the tip complex at Aberfan following the disastrous landslide. Assignments in the Caribbean and Pacific followed, defining the extent of the fresh-water lenses which formed island water supplies. In the 1970s his experience was applied to guide the British Governments approach to disposing of nuclear and other hazardous wastes. After some 24 years with the Survey, academia beckoned and he went to Royal Holloway, University of London, teaching and leading a small research group investigating groundwater pollution. Projects involved collaborative work in the USA, Middle East, Romania and China. Retiring to Devon in 2002, his interest and involvement in geology has remained strong, and although now mainly focused

3.

4.

on southwest England, he and his wife use geology as an excuse to visit far-away places such as Easter Island, Nepal and Japan!

At the AGM Chris Trigger stood down as Treasurer, after a number of years of supportive service and was replaced by David Chappell. The Committee was pleased to welcome Paul Green, who was co-opted.

Attendance at meetings having increased over the last year, with high quality speakers and supported by the enthusiasm of Hon. Secretary Jane Whittaker and Programme Secretary Pam Orchard, the Committee is considering the possibility of other venues.

Our Programme Secretary, Pam Orchard, has planned the next season's meetings, with subjects including Hartland Abbey (as a field visit on 20 September); the Exmoor National Park (20 October); and *Pirates and Merchants in Spain* (17 November).

Barbara Hilton

1. Christine Halstead Collection, vase by John Maltby Image reproduced by kind permission of the Burton at Bideford Art Gallery and Museum
2. Christine Halstead Collection, slipware vase by Clive Bowen. Image reproduced by kind permission of the Burton at Bideford Art Gallery and Museum
3. Exploring for groundwater on the intermontane plains of Yemen in 1972. Photo J D Mather
4. Bideford Signal box
   Photo: © Martin Bodman, CC BY-SA 2.0
5. Hartland Abbey. Image: public domain

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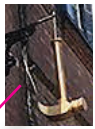

1. The Garton and King shop, 19 North Street Exeter with a replica of the Golden Hammer, first used as a business sign in 1661, hanging to the right of the upstairs window.

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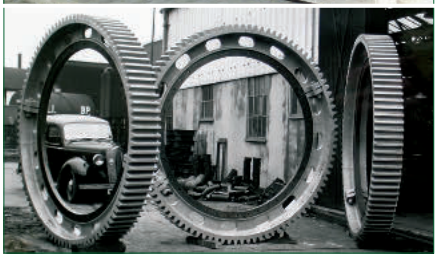

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2. Company stand at the Devon County Agricultural Association Show 1935

3. Ring gears for the Barberton Cement Company, British Vancouver (1950s)
Photos by kind permission of Garton and King.

4. Inside the engineering shed, Seaton Tramway, where tramcars are still restored today
Photo: Mike Harland

EAST DEVON BRANCH

Since my last report the East Devon Branch has met for three talks and an enjoyable visit to Beer Quarry Caves. In January Richard Holladay returned to present *A History of Garton and King, Exeter*. This firm of ironmongers and foundry masters had connections to his family and is generally recognised as being Exeter's oldest business. In a well-researched presentation Richard traced its development from its beginnings as an ironmonger's shop in 1661 to the present day. By the nineteenth century the firm had expanded and was producing a wide range of goods in a foundry in Waterbeer Street. At the Great Exhibition of 1851 they were awarded two bronze medals and their customers included Prince Albert, who installed their stoves in his model cottages in Hyde Park. In 1898 Hugo Holladay became a partner in the firm, being joined by his brother Edgar in 1900. In 1933 the shop at 190 High Street, which had served the city for 272 years, moved firstly to Central Station and then to North Street. Although the Holladay connection does not exist today, the business still continues to trade as Garton King Appliances, selling Aga and Rayburn cookers from showrooms at Darts Farm, Topsham.

Following our successful visit to Seaton Tramway in September 2022, we invited Dave Rawlings to tell us more about its history at our February meeting. Dave began by explaining how the former Seaton Branch Line came to be built. When the London and South Western Railway opened a main line from Yeovil to Exeter in 1860 the difficult terrain of the Devon coast left Seaton four miles south of the nearest station. With the growing popularity of the town as a seaside resort, there was local demand for a branch line to Seaton, which eventually opened on 16 March 1868.

When the line was closed in 1966 as part of the Beeching cuts, Claude Lane, the founder of Modern Electric Tramways Ltd, bought it and moved his existing trams and equipment from Eastbourne to Seaton, running the first passenger tram on 28 August 1970 with a fare of one shilling. Dave rounded off his talk by explaining how particular tramcars were restored. This involved cutting the body lengthways in half and narrowing the width by two feet. Fourteen trams are currently in use which are ridden on by 100,000 visitors per year.

5.

In March we stayed at the seaside with Exmouth being the subject of Mike Tracey's talk, *Devon's first seaside resort – and what happened next*. Exmouth's scenic location at the mouth of the River Exe with sea bathing and a mild climate attracted early visitors and by 1768 a coach service ran from Exeter to Exmouth. Assembly Rooms and the Manor Hotel were built in the 1790s and the popularity of Exmouth as a fashionable resort grew. Famous residents included Lady Nelson and Lady Byron. Mike explained how visitor numbers continued to grow with the coming of the railway on 1 May 1861. Sports clubs, such as the sailing club were established, and the Manor Gardens were opened in 1893. In the twentieth century bathing machines survived until after WWI and the Pavilion, built in 1933, continues to provide entertainment for visitors today. In the 1960s Exmouth, unlike Seaton, survived Beeching's cuts and visitors still arrive by train to enjoy Exmouth's scenery, sea bathing and the amenities which were established during 250 years of tourism.

6.

In July, thirty-one members and friends enjoyed a tour of Beer Quarry Caves followed by a cream tea. Our tour guide began by stating that two thousand years of hand quarrying solid rock had produced the cave system we were about to enter. After studying miners' tools and carvings, including a Roman sarcophagus, in the entrance cave we set off to walk through time, passing Roman, Saxon, and Medieval workings before entering more recent times. Our guide helped us to build a picture of how the vast stone slabs, used in the building of many of England's cathedrals, stately homes and civic buildings, were quarried by badly paid quarrymen and child labourers before being dressed by the stonemasons in candlelight. We also learnt the caves contain a Roman Catholic chapel used during religious persecution in Tudor times, and a colony of bats, including the very rare Bechstein's bat. Stories connected to graffiti on the walls of the cave rounded off an excellent tour. Thanks go to James Baldwin for organising a very successful visit. I hope our next day out in September to RHS Garden Rosemoor will be equally well supported.

Hazel Harland

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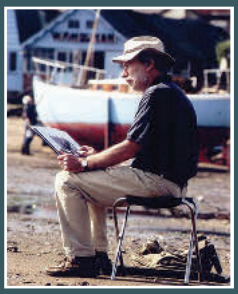
5. Poster for Exmouth currently displayed at Crediton Station
6. Blue plaque, Manor Hotel, Exmouth. Frank Liszt performed here in 1840.
7. Nelson House, The Beacon, Exmouth, home of Lady Nelson 1803-182.
8. Byron Court, The Beacon, Exmouth, home of Lady Byron and her daughter Ada, after whom the computer programming language ADA was named.

Photos: Hazel Harland

EXETER BRANCH

This year our New Year Gathering (January 2023) was held for the first time at Cowick Barton, one of Exeter's oldest pubs whose site can be traced back to the twelfth century. A 'Country Man's' buffet was preceded by a 60-minute talk entitled *The River's Voice* by well-known West Country artist Ray Balkwill SWAc.



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Born in Exeter, he graduated from Exeter College of Art, and now resides in Exmouth. After a period as an advertising art director, he became a full-time professional artist using oils, watercolours, gouache (a method of painting using opaque pigments) and mixed media. He is a strong advocate of painting *en plein air* and specialises in capturing the moods of sea, sky and estuaries – particularly the Exe about which he is passionate. During his talk he revealed his favourite painting spots, both at the water's edge and on both sides of the Exe valley and gave participants the chance to study his techniques on film. He explained why he is so drawn to the Exe and showed how its multitudinous aspects change with the seasons. He also recounted stories about the local Exmouth boat builders at Camperdown Creek (also known by locals as Shelly Gut), many of whom became firm friends over the years. Like many of us, he laments the decline in the industry which is fast disappearing.

2.

Over the years, Ray has been involved in numerous exhibitions and he regularly contributes to magazines. He has also published seven books, one of which ideally complements his talk.[1] A much sought after teacher, he was recently filmed helping Michael Portillo to create a small picture shown in an episode of the *Great British Railway Journeys* television series.

In February, Stephen Rippon, Professor of Landscape Archaeology at the University of Exeter, gave a splendid Zoom presentation on the subject of *Exeter: A Place in Time – Roman and Medieval Exeter in its Hinterland* (the EAPIT project). As the title implies, this strongly inter-disciplinary project was designed to explore the evolution of Exeter from Roman through to medieval times, and its topographical, social and economic relationship with the wider Southwest (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset). Funding was granted by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and involved the universities of Exeter and Reading, RAMM, Exeter City Council, Cotswold Archaeology and Historic England.

1. The artist at work
   Image © Ray Balkwill
2. Watercolour – evening sky, Topsham
   Image © Ray Balkwill

Exeter also has a long history of archaeological investigation but many of the results remain unpublished. Nevertheless, RAMM curated a vast collection of artefacts derived from these excavations, although several decades have elapsed since many of them were subject to detailed analysis. A number of them were selectively re-examined using the latest scientific techniques (focussing on animal bone, pottery and Roman tile) and four key archaeological excavations – Trickhay Street, 196 High Street, Goldsmith Street and Rack Street – were seen through to full publication. (Trickhay Street, for example, was the site of Roman barracks and a legionary workshop, now beneath the Guildhall Shopping Centre.) As expected, much of Exeter's later success depended on its key nodal point in the landscape with respect to the ancient road network, its position at the lowest bridging point over the River Exe, and its hinterland assets such as sheep (wool) and tin. By the late tenth century the city was the fifth most productive mint in England and its importance grew thereafter as an episcopal and royal centre and as an international port.

For those who would like to learn more, the project team has recently published two books on the subject, both of which can be purchased or downloaded free-of-charge as pdfs: the first[2] presents the overall results of the project; the second[3] contains a series of specialist papers, including summaries of all archaeological investigations from 1931 to 2019.

Our April event was held at the Mint Methodist Centre and concerned the *Starcross to Plymouth section of the SW Coast Path*. This light-hearted talk was given by Dave Westcott, a retired teacher who has completed the entire 1,014 km route not once but three times! To prepare for such a gargantuan task, he advocated the walkers' 'bible' by the SW Coast Path Association[4] that subdivides the trail into 70 manageable chunks for each of which he has written an individual guide.

He started with the urbanized section between Starcross and Teignmouth and the route once taken by Brunel's atmospheric railway: he even brought along a home-made model which actually worked and, to the delight of the audience, the piston carriage moved so fast that it almost became airborne! He also recalled one Captain George Peacock, a naval officer and inventor, who retired to Starcross. Peacock commissioned a ten-seater sailing boat designed as a white swan that could serve as a floating restaurant, as well as four cygnet-shaped tenders!

Reaching Hole Head, near Dawlish, he told the cautionary tale of how the prominent sea stacks became known as the Parson and Clerk, and Mr James Powell's battle with the authorities to drop the level of the footpath to be built alongside Brunel's railway which ran just a few metres in front of his house, Sea Lawn. Powell won the day, and the footpath was duly lowered to stop inquisitive passers-by from looking in. Unbelievably, this lengthy stretch, which was below the high-water mark, has only just been filled after the 2014 storms left the present railway lines dangling in mid-air.

Another tale was that of John 'Babbacombe' Lee – 'the man they could not hang'. Having been charged with the murder of a certain Miss Emma Keyes, he was sentenced to be hanged at Exeter Prison on 23 February 1885. The hangman's trap however failed to open three times, whereupon his sentence was commuted to penal servitude.

After a host of such stories about historical events, places and personalities – too many to be mentioned here – he concluded by encouraging walkers to always use ferries to save lengthy detours around marine inlets and estuaries. Negotiating the indented coastline of drowned valleys (rias) between Kingsbridge and Newton Ferrers is particularly challenging and one is well advised to check the ferry timetables beforehand! Nevertheless, this far less developed stretch of the south Devon coast is well worth the effort because of its astonishing beauty, even if there are still some lurking memories at Slapton Sands of WW2 preparations.

References

1. Balkwill, R. 2004. *Ray Balkwill's Exe Estuary*. Halsgrove 144pp.
2. Rippon, S. and Holbrook, N. (Eds). 2021. *Roman and Medieval Exeter and their Hinterlands: From Isca to Excester* (Exeter: A Place in Time 1), Oxford: Oxbow Books, 416pp.
3. Rippon, S. and Holbrook N. (Eds). 2021. *Studies in the Roman and Medieval Archaeology of Exeter* (Exeter: A Place in Time 2), Oxford: Oxbow Books, 656pp.
4. *The Complete Guide to the South West Coast Path: 2023 – 2024*. SW Coast Path Association, 212pp.

Antony T Buller

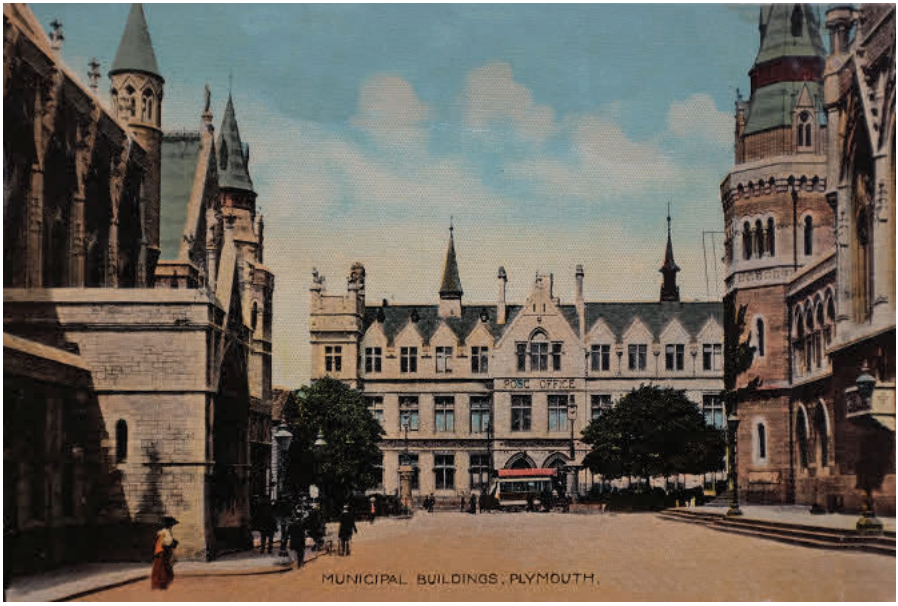
A cross-section of scenes epitomising the South Devon Coast between Starcross and Dartmouth.

1. The well-preserved shell of Brunel's Engine House at Starcross
2. Down-line train emerging from the south portal of Coryton Tunnel; Shell Cove with its breakwater extends to the two Horse Rock sea stacks, with Coryton's Cove and Dawlish in the background.
3. The Cary Arms, Babbacombe Beach
4. Paignton Harbour
5. Paignton-Kingswear heritage steam train passing Goodrington Sands
6. Kingswear to Dartmouth ferry with Kingswear in the background

All images © Antony T Buller

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT BRANCH

For our February presentation titled *Education, enlightenment and entertainment: Plymouth Mechanics' Institute 1825–99*, Owen Ryles (CEO of the Plymouth Athenaeum) outlined the Mechanics' Institute movement that was established in all major towns and cities in the country as part of a drive to spread education to the skilled and working classes. Lectures included the physical sciences, engineering and, later, humanities such as moral philosophy and literature. Focusing on the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute formed in 1825, due consideration was given to its foundation, glory days and eventual absorption by 1899 into the Plymouth Athenaeum (formerly known as the Plymouth Institution) one of the early 'Phil & Lit' societies and long-established regular home of our DA Plymouth Branch meetings. The first home of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute was the town Guildhall where attendances grew quickly so that premises for members' use were needed. A new building in Princess Square designed by John Foulston was opened in 1827. This too would become outgrown by membership expansion, so it was demolished and replaced on the same site in 1851 by a larger building capable of seating 1,200 people in the main hall, with an 8,000 volume library and spacious classrooms.



View of the pre-war Plymouth Guildhall (left) original home of the Plymouth Mechanics' Institute, which included windows by Fouracre. From a postcard by W.B.P.
Reproduced by kind permission of Helen Wilson.

Following winding up and selling their property in 1899 the funds were handed over to the Plymouth Institution. Owen has submitted a paper on the subject for publication in the *Transactions* (volume 155, 2024).

In his March lecture, local historian Graham Naylor provided a fascinating insight into the prolific and beautiful work of *Fouracre & Son, stained glass makers of Stonehouse, Plymouth*. Founded by John Thomas Fouracre in 1866, the workshop of this premier company in Chapel Street, Stonehouse could rival most of the stained glass manufacturing firms of the UK. Initially painters and plumbers, father and son became interested in the artistic side of glass making, acquiring commissions for stained glass windows in local churches and new civic buildings such as the Plymouth Guildhall, opened in 1874. The company's most prosperous years were from 1875 to 1900, during which it entered various exhibitions and won awards (e.g. Paris 1878, Melbourne 1881 and Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society 1882).

It is hard to piece together the history of the company because almost all its records were destroyed during the Blitz. Sadly too, much of their Plymouth based work was destroyed in air raids on the two main city churches, of St Andrew and Charles as well as several of their subsidiary churches; also the Guildhall windows designed/created by Fouracre were destroyed in World War II. Nonetheless, examples of Fouracre's work are still to be found in several Plymouth churches including Emmanuel, the former Sherwell Church, Mutley Baptist, St Mary's Plympton, St Luke's (now part of The Box), St Matthias, and Plymstock. Further afield, examples of Fouracre's windows and other church work cited include Revelstoke (Noss Mayo), Newton Ferrers, Wembury, Shaugh Prior, Meavy, Tavistock (St Eustachius), Ermington and Totnes (St Mary's).

Graham is the author of *Fouracre & Son stained glass manufacturers of Plymouth: a celebration of their work*, published by the Old Plymouth Society in 2018.

Fouracre stained glass windows
Detail of north chancel window,
St Eustachius church, Tavistock

Detail of south chancel window,
St Eustachius church, Tavistock

Detail of north chancel window,
St Eustachius church, Tavistock
Photos: Sue Andrew

Our April talk by history researcher Barbie Thompson revealed a wealth of detail about *Plymouth's Mill Prison: a century of captives and captors*. From 1695 there had been a purpose-built prison (at Millbay) to ease prisoner of war overcrowding in derelict warship hulks moored in the Hamoaze. Every enemy warship or merchantman captured meant a fresh influx of prisoners. It is recorded that in 1779 there were 392 French and 298 Americans at Mill Prison and in total over 1,500 American sailors passed through the prison during the American War of Independence (1777–83). Extended at various times, and practically rebuilt in 1799, accounts show that conditions were miserable; even the fresh water supply was a problem. There were frequent attempts to escape as in 1799 when 150 tunnelled out, but soon all but sixteen were recaptured.

Among Barbie's illustrations was a plan depicting the prison gatehouse, courtyard and walls enclosing about an acre. A hospital within the walls was under the direction of the eminent Dr (later Sir) George Magrath who had previously served as a surgeon under Lord Nelson on HMS Victory. Subsequent to 1814 he transferred as medical officer to Dartmoor Prison.

Some of the American captives kept journals and wrote memoirs. Among those mentioned were Charles Herbert and Joshua Barney. Charles Herbert (1757–1808) spent two years in 'Old Mill Prison' where he kept his daily journal hidden from the guards. He was released in 1779, in an exchange of prisoners organised by Benjamin Franklin. Joshua Barney (1759–1818), an American Navy officer (who also served as a captain in the French Navy), was taken prisoner and exchanged several times. In 1779 he was again taken prisoner and imprisoned in 'Old Mill Prison' until his escape in 1781. He wrote an account of this in T*he memoirs of Commodore Barney* published in 1832.

Mill Prison was especially important for holding American and French PoWs before the completion of Dartmoor prison in 1809. After that date it was used only as a depot and was still operating in 1820, but later it had become a barracks serving throughout the Crimean War. Since 1911 the site has been Millbay Park, a public open space.

Colin Kilvington

Photo: Colin Kilvington

SOUTH DEVON BRANCH

Our February talk was given by Rebecca Ireland who cast light into the dark corners of our parish churches – a grazing light that illuminates ancient graffiti. Varying from a simple scratched "X", two crossed "V"s, daisy wheels and five pointed stars to more elaborate illustrations such as ships and birds, we know that much of the graffiti was apotropaic – intended to ward off evil – but the exact meaning of many of the marks remains unknown to us and their interpretation is an ongoing field of research. She also told us of some of the discoveries of graffiti made recently in Torquay's Kents Cavern.

In March, the well-known naturalist John Walters gave us a talk on Devon's wildlife. It was packed with astonishing photos, videos, sounds and tales of the extraordinary creatures that lurk in places that we frequent and that we too could enjoy, if we would only look more carefully.

April saw our President, Professor John Mather, talking on *Collecting Devon Ceramics*. In his fascinating lecture he told us of the origin of Devon's main clay deposits, the different types of ceramic that can be made from them and the potteries that grew up to make use of the clays. He illustrated his talk with many examples of local potters' works.

The recce that some of our committee took in April for our planned day in Princetown in May reminded us how awful the weather can be on Dartmoor, but on the actual day the conditions were perfect. Local expert Pip Barker guided us around the village, explaining both the old and the new. Highlights included the gin distillery building, the parish church, the prison museum

Searching for graffiti in Kents Cavern
Photo: Rebecca Ireland

Pip Barker (centre) and the group emerging from Dartmoor Prison. Photo: Louise Snow

and, especially, the walk around the prison wall to see the American and French war prisoners' cemeteries that are on prison land and can only be visited with an authorised guide.

Andrew Cooper at Haccombe Church Photo: John Maltby

In July we visited St Blaise church at Haccombe – hidden, as it has been since it was first built, out of view of raiding Vikings, among rolling hills. Andrew Cooper, who lives nearby, met us at the church and after summarising its long and unusual history, he supported our examination of its many unique features, answering a wide variety of questions. Several of us had lunch beforehand at the nearby Coombe Cellars Inn, which was a great opportunity to meet some like-minded people.

Our last excursion of the year is on 21 September: a visit to Stover Park to learn from a Park Ranger about its pollution-reducing reed-beds, and to investigate some of its interesting insect life with Dave Smallshire, one of the Recorders for the Entomology Section. The event will be rounded off by a light lunch in Old Liverton.

Lunar Hornet Moths © John Walters

In November, our first talk of the autumn season will be given by the noted artist and art historian Jenny Pery who will by then be President of the DA. We're looking forward to Rosemary Griggs's themed talk on a Tudor Christmas in December, and after our January AGM we very much hope to hear Professor Malcolm Hart's twice-postponed talk on Jurassic Calamari. February will see a talk by Dr Mike Haywood on the true facts of the 1620 voyage of the Mayflower, and in March Bill Thomson will tell us about the noted naval scientist William Froude. To complete the season, in April Dr Frances Billinge will talk about the Hole family of Parke, Bovey Tracey. Details are in the Diary section, with more information on the website.

John Maltby

TAVISTOCK AND WEST DEVON BRANCH

In February we resumed our winter series with a talk by Dr Stuart Windsor entitled *They sailed away*. This dealt mainly with the Huxtable family and their connections who travelled to the United States and Canada and was made particularly interesting by the use of extracts from letters sent home and other contemporary records such as census returns from both sides of the Atlantic. James Huxtable, for example, who is recorded lodging in Plymouth en route to America in the 1851 census, sent a letter from his farm near the Illinois River, while Richard Huxtable was present during the American civil war at the Siege of Vicksburg and wrote describing its surrender in 1863.

Unfortunately, the next scheduled talk, by Stuart Clarke, the founder of the *Moorlander*, had to be cancelled at very short notice and we apologise to the unnamed member who travelled all the way from Cornwood on a very wet and windy evening. Our final winter talk was about Papillon Gin. Based in Moretonhampstead, the distillery has now been going for five years and part of the purchase price of each bottle goes towards wildlife conservation. The initial gin was in support of marsh and other endangered fritillary butterflies but over Covid the distillery developed Carabus gin to help conserve the blue ground beetle, a nocturnal beetle 3 cm long found mainly on Dartmoor.

In May we were fortunate to have a good day for a walk around Burrator Reservoir led by Professor John Mather and Dr Jenny Bennett. Starting from the quarry car park above the dam, John showed us the edge of the granite, seeping into the cracks in the surrounding rocks. Moving on to the main dam itself he talked about its construction in 1893–98 to provide a water supply for Plymouth and its raising in 1923–28. Some time was spent examining inclusions in the granite making up the parapet and from there we walked to the second, earth, dam near Sheepstor.

The group in the quarry above Burrator. Photo: Wyn Cudlip

The bridges at Postbridge. Photo: Sue Andrew

Unfortunately, the original surveyors here failed to pick up that good granite was interspersed with areas of decay which meant that it leaked and needed extensive remedial work. Not far away we were shown a wall of decayed granite which looked just like brown earth. After lunch the walk ended with a look around the tin workings at Norsworthy bridge.

A month later, in association with the History Section, a very successful day of talks was held at Postbridge. This was on the subject of *Devon's Bridges: Trackways through Time* and is written up elsewhere. The programme allowed a fairly lengthy midday break and one alternative to viewing the bridges down the road was to visit the church of St Gabriel next door. This small Victorian church is hardly visible as you drive through the village but is well worth a look. Built by Fulford as a chapel-cum-schoolroom in 1868, the interior was completely refurbished by architect Reginald F. Wheatly and carver Violet Pinwill, one of the remarkable Pinwill sisters, after the church was rededicated in 1934.

The woodwork is really amazing. The bench ends are beautifully carved but the *tour de force* is the pulpit featuring a base with seaweed and fish and above it such creatures as rabbits, squirrels, koalas and penguins and one animal with its young that neither myself nor other members from the Bridges Day were able to identify.

The pulpit at the church of St Gabriel, Postbridge with carvings of seaweed and fish by Violet Pinwill. Photo: Helen Wilson

We now have a break before starting our series of winter talks on 15th September with *Did Julius Caesar cross my lawn?* coupled with our AGM.

Elizabeth Rutledge

Presidential Symposium

13th May 2023

1.

Professor John Mather attracted a capacity audience to the Petroc College Campus at Tiverton for his Presidential Symposium on *Devon's Ceramic Heritage*. It was a day of sustained delight, culturally stimulating and visually enjoyable in equal measure.

An accomplished potter himself, John modestly described himself only as 'an enthusiast' in introducing the day with his lecture on *The Fiery Journey from Devon Clay to Ceramic Art*.

With exemplary clarity, he explained both the geological basis of the potting clays of Devon and the different pottery techniques employed in the distinctive ceramic traditions of the county.

With his distinguished professional geological career lightly worn, he was able to demonstrate the understandably close relationship between the occurrence of potting clays across the county and the distribution of the historic potteries as well as the basic processes by which the potter transforms the clay into pots.

The scene was thus set for the rest of the day's fiery drama in the specialist contributions which filled out this story in the most engaging way. First, Sadie Green's lecture on *North Devon Sgraffito Ware* took us to the eastern seaboard of America because of the trade between the North American colonies and the potteries of North Devon during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Sgraffito is a technique in which layers of different colours, or slips as they are known, are applied and then the top layer 'scratched' through to reveal the layer beneath. North Devon sgraffito ware gained Devon's potters an international reputation, though, as Sadie demonstrated, it only formed part of the huge trade in other

Speakers at the symposium. On the table are books on raku written by Tim Andrews, together with examples of his work. Photo: Peter Cox

functional and decorative ware. The leading centres were Bideford and Barnstaple, with Great Torrington also a considerable player.

Then Alison Mills took us back to North Devon with her lecture on *The Art Potters of Barnstaple*. She defined her subject as 'pottery with artistic intentions' and told the story of the development and evolution of this tradition in Barnstaple from the middle of the nineteenth century. The founding figure was Alexander Lauder, a distinguished local architect (W.R. Lethaby, a celebrated Arts and Crafts architect, was one of his pupils). Lauder introduced strong patterns and colours into his pots which soon won him recognition in the world of decorative ware. The later fruit of this tradition was the huge output of the most famous North Devon pottery firm, *C.H. Brannam Ltd* from their premises in Litchdon Street. William Barron was another leading figure who worked with Brannam's but later branched out on his own. Brannam's lasted until the late 1970s, and their former showroom can still be seen in Litchdon Street, instantly recognisable by its front which is richly embellished with ceramic tiles.

Fred Nichols brought the morning session to a close with a delightful presentation on *Puzzle Jugs; The Story in Devon*. Puzzle jugs are a world-wide tradition, in which a jug or jar is seemingly impossible to pour or drink from without spilling its contents because of various designed-in apertures. Fred had brought a selection of jugs from his own extensive collection, and explained how the tradition was taken up by both the art potters of Barnstaple and the South Devon potteries as part of their response to the growing visitor trade – they were part of what became known as 'tourist ware'.

After lunch, Sally Ayres gave us a beautifully illustrated account of the important role Devon potters have played in the development of the internationally

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recognised Studio Pottery Movement. She reminded us of the pivotal influence of Bernard Leach, working with Shoji Hamada at St Ives from the 1920s, but at Dartington from 1932 – 41. The Leach 'dynasty' has been a continuing force for good ever since, with both David and Michael Leach working in Devon – at Bovey Tracey and Fremington respectively. Clive Bowen and the late John Maltby's work developed this lively tradition into the later twentieth and our own century, while Laurel Keeley, Harry Juniper, and Tim Andrews continue to inspire us.

And it was Tim Andrews, Honorary President of the West Country Potters Association, who brought the first-hand experience of the potter's art to us in his presentation on *45 Years in Clay*. He explained his work in the raku tradition, where pots are removed from the kiln while still hot and dried rapidly in the open air, from his studio at Woodbury, and his liking for 'resist' or 'naked' raku.

The day was brought to a suitable close with Rupert Johnstone's overview of historic and contemporary trends, which included a prospect of a bright future for the pottery tradition of Devon.

Peter Beacham

1. Earthenware charger, 50 cm in diameter, made by RAMP Ceramics (Alice Hartford and Rupert Johnstone) at Silverton, near Exeter.
2. Examples of the colourful earthenware pottery made at Dartington from 1982 to 2005.
3. Stoneware jugs and vase made by David Leach (1911–2005) at Lowerdown Pottery, near Bovey Tracey.
4. Vases made from Fremington Clay, by C. H. Brannam of Barnstaple: the taller vase is dated 1907 and the shorter 1902.
5. Two stoneware vases with wood-ash glazes made by the DA's President, John Mather.

Photos 1– 5: John Mather

Photo: Music Scorhill Circle1 SusieHW&CC

New Section for Old: Music and Folklore join forces

At an extraordinary general meeting on April 24th 2023 The Devonshire Association's Music Section (DAMS) quietly abolished itself, and a new Music and Folklore Section (DAMFS) was created with acclaim.

This is good news. Despite its consistently excellent programme, the Music Section has had problems with both recruitment and attendance, and Devon folklore, revitalised now in the DA by Mark Norman, has needed a home. There are obvious links between folklore and music in the Devon context, and bringing them together is a sensible solution.

However, we see one possible problem. Ever since its creation in 2011 the Music Section has widely and quite erroneously been thought of as being concerned only with folk music, and adding Folklore to the section's name may tend to reinforce this misconception. More on this later.

Devon folklore has been a major interest of the DA throughout its history, from Sir John Bowring's article *Devonian Folk Lore Illustrated* in the 1867 *Transactions* onwards. A Folklore Committee was formed in 1875, and a succession of recorders, R. Pearse Chope, Charles Laycock and others, have contributed to the *Transactions* year by year ever since, so that the

Chris Caldwell and Susie Hodder-Williams at the Music Section launch, Great Torrington, 2011.

Learning bell ringing, Laira, 2019.

All photos: Robin Wootton

complete run of TDA is a huge and crucial source of information in the field – probably the most important anywhere to be found. A Folklore Section was founded in 1959 led by Theo Brown, a splendid, scholarly lady whom a few of us still remember with affection and admiration and who was Recorder for 40 years. Theo died in 1993. The section continued for another decade but closed in 2003, although recording has been maintained, thanks particularly to John Smith who sadly died in June of this year.

Mark Norman's joining the DA is already making a big difference. A council member of the national Folklore Society, he is now the leading authority on Devon folklore. He has authored several books, most recently a major work *The Folklore of Devon* for the University of Exeter Press, drawing extensively *inter alia* on past *Transactions* and on Theo Brown's extensive archive in the University's Special Collections. He has compiled, and looks after the Devonshire Folklore Collection, which is housed in Crediton Library and is part of the national Folklore Library and Archive. He also runs a much-visited Folklore Podcast. He is of course on the committee of the new Section and will be enthusiastically leading its folklore component, as well as acting as Recorder.

And now back to the much-misunderstood Music Section. From the beginning its stated aim was to *"promote and recognise music that is indigenous to or inspired by the County of Devon, through performance and study of all styles of music and musicians that demonstrate a passion for the county and its unique qualities"*, and it has faithfully done so for nearly twelve years, while from time to time extending its coverage to music from elsewhere performed by Devon-based musicians. The Section's long-standing Chair, Paul Wilson, has compiled a full list of past Music Section events. It is too long to reproduce in entirety, but here is a selection, in no particular order.

- *Exeter Cathedral Choirmaster Stephen Tanner* on his work in sacred music.
- *Violin making* with Jonathan and Rebecca Springall of Devon Strings, where the audience was able to view and handle the materials and tools for violin making.

- *Jazz composer Mike Westbrook* presenting and illustrating his music inspired by the Devon landscape.
- *Steve Knightley* of 'Show Of Hands' on his career and the background to his songs.
- *Devon jazz pianist Craig Milverton* in performance and discussion.
- *The Postman Poet.* The verse of Bideford postman Edward Capern set to music by Nick Wyke and Becki Driscoll.
- *West Gallery Choirs* performing and exploring the music of Devon parish churches and chapels before organs became widespread.
- *Uncle Tom Cobley and All* with Tavistock Branch. Speaker Todd Gray, musical illustrations from Paul Wilson, Jim Causley and Keith Stevens.
- *Kil And Gilli Radi* Romani culture and songs, with the Orchards, a Devon gipsy family.
- *The art of Devon call change ringing* jointly with the Devon Association of Ringers including a demonstration peal, a talk on Devon Ringing, bellringing songs and audience participation.
- A visit to the remarkable *Mechanical music museum* in Chudleigh.
- *Harp music of Devon and beyond* with Elizabeth-Jane Baldry performing and talking about Teignmouth-born 19th-century harpist Elias Parish-Alvars, admired by Mendelssohn, Berlioz and others.
- *A Musical Duologue* with two members of the Divertimento string quartet presenting works by Bach, Mozart, Martinu, Brydern and explaining the role of the duet in chamber music.
- The *Living Tradition Concerts* presented annually in different parts of Devon.
- *New Music in Devon Today* with contemporary Devon composers explaining and performing their work.

.....and so on.

We do not in general organise straight concerts or recitals – other organisations do those. Typically, our events are informal, entertaining and educational illustrated talks, combining music with narrative, conversation and explanation.

So, five points need making:

1. The Music Section has **never** limited its interests and programme to folk music, and nor will DAMFS, though folk has properly been, and will continue to be an enjoyable component.
2. Section membership at the moment stands at only 99 – by far the smallest in the DA – and I cannot believe that only 99 members of this cultured, intelligent Association are interested in some aspects of music and/or folklore.
3. There is now **no limit** on the number of sections that any DA member can join. The old recommendation to join only two sections in the first instance was only ever a recommendation, aimed at limiting unnecessary mailing costs. Email makes it now irrelevant.
4. Although the events of all Branches and Sections are posted on the website, DAMS and now DAMFS members get reminders and extra information on each event by email, so are much less likely to overlook things they might enjoy.
5. A quick email to the Registrar is all that is needed to join DAMFS forthwith.

Do consider it.

A lively, varied programme is being planned for the rest of 2023 and for 2024. Join us and enjoy some excellent events.

Robin Wootton

Camilla Hampshire and the Power of Seeing

Bridget Gillard

1.

Camilla Hampshire, the woman who led the transformation of the loved but rather faded Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter into an award-winning and highly successful visitor attraction, knew from an early age she wanted to be a curator. Her belief in the importance of curating the past and engaging with the public in equal measure has underpinned a highly successful career in collections throughout the country from the Aberdeen Art Gallery to the decorative art collection at Plymouth and guided her through a number of transformative projects from the development of the Millennium Galleries in Sheffield to the £24 million capital redevelopment project at RAMM.

2.

‘in order to engage the mind, you first have to engage the eye’....

CELEBRATE

Camilla's life in museums began when, as a schoolgirl, she volunteered at the Cliffe Castle Museum in Keighley, West Yorks where she got the museums' bug. She was fascinated by the way visitors interacted with the collections; now a cornerstone of good museum practice, but in the late 70s and early 80s this approach was ahead of the curve. After winning a place at New Hall College, Cambridge she was able, through the tripos system to study archaeology and anthropology in her first year before majoring in the history of art – gaining an advantageous grounding for a life in the multi-disciplinary world of museums.

3.

It was during her time in Sheffield that Camilla worked with John Ruskin's unique Guild of St George Collection – an eclectic assemblage of minerals, manuscription, watercolours and natural objects given to the working people of Sheffield as an educational resource. Camilla describes her time curating this collection as a 'powerful and formative experience', relating wholeheartedly to Ruskin's belief in 'the power of seeing' which she believes applies particularly to museums: 'which are all about seeing'. She explained the importance of collections in the development of a curator: 'professionally your specialism develops alongside your collections and so it's not necessarily the period you studied as an undergraduate. You grow as a curator alongside the collection for which you have responsibility'. In her own case this has resulted in eighteenth and nineteenth century expertise which proved the perfect grounding for her later role at RAMM.

In addition to its magnificent collections of fine and decorative art and international artefacts RAMM also has significant natural history collections. Camilla describes how as someone with an arts background, she can be a bridge between science expertise and the general public, while noting how skilled all her specialists are at presenting information to different audiences. She relishes her involvement in hitherto unfamiliar disciplines: 'I am very curious about the world. I love discovery and I love learning, so science is just new territory to explore'. Camilla is also passionate about

4.

interdisciplinarity: 'because some of the most fertile areas to explore are the intersection between areas such as fine and decorative art, historic collections and contemporary practice or between art and science'. Camilla explains exhibitions of this nature are amongst the most popular at RAMM as they have a broader appeal and invite the public to think about things differently. She quotes the broadcaster Eleanor Oldroyd who suggested 'museums are playgrounds of the mind', concurring that none of us should ever be too old to play.

Talking to Camilla it becomes increasingly apparent that a successful museum such as RAMM is an impressively collaborative enterprise. She likens her role to that of an orchestral conductor encouraging her team as they pursue their own individual specialisms: 'Curators are critical to shaping a museum through their in-depth knowledge which they share with the public. Their creative fingerprints are all over what we produce as our public programme'. She explains museums are a 'complex ecology' of different and necessary skills, embracing those involved in meeting people on the door, engagement activities, marketing, digital output, and technical work.

Having begun as a volunteer herself, she is committed to creating volunteer opportunities, not just for people contemplating a career in museums, but for anyone who wants to get involved. She observes: 'At RAMM we wouldn't be half the organisation we are without our wonderful volunteers. In 2022 there were 268 people either volunteering, on work experience or doing work placements who contributed 10,690 hours which is a fantastic donation and really adds value to what we are able to offer as a service'.

For the outstanding redevelopment of RAMM described by the Art Fund which awarded RAMM the Museum of the Year prize in 2012, as 'some of the most intelligently considered displays on view in any museum in the UK', Camilla and her team commissioned the international design firm Ralph Appelbaum Associates. Mindful that people respond to different stimuli, they wanted to include both immersive and contemplative areas. Camilla explains: 'We try to offer a very rich experience: some love the immersive, experiential and others the more contemplative and this can shift depending on life stage, mood or who you are with on the day'. For Camilla the setting of objects is key. Referencing her inspiration John Ruskin, she observes 'in order to engage the mind, you first have to engage the eye'.

The creation of RAMM in the 1860s was a public initiative, through numerous small subscriptions and donations, and Camilla believes this has resulted in a special sense of local ownership which has continued throughout the subsequent 155 years, making the institution very much part of the local community. She values welcoming generations of families and wants everyone who lives, works, studies or visits Exeter to experience what RAMM has to offer: 'Although we sometimes push the boundaries of what it is to be a museum, everything we do will tie back in some way either to the place or the collections and that's what creates the coherence to what we do'. She explains how RAMM, along with the Cathedral, has become a flagship for the cultural life of the city. In addition to helping support business by encouraging people to spend time in the city centre, it provides an important civic space where people can meet: Camilla notes 'this is one of the few places in the city where people

can share a common cultural experience regardless of age, background or economic circumstances'.

Engaging with the public remains fundamental to Camilla's work. In addition to traditional means of gaining feedback, such as visitor response cards and emails, the team at RAMM carry out longitudinal surveys to look at trends and demographics and spot surveys: 'So if someone approaches you with an iPad please do participate because it helps us with our work'. A community panel has just been recruited whose members will work with the museum staff to test ideas for projects and help develop concepts. On the day of our interview Camilla had just learnt the museum has been successful in its bid for a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for a project to reflect Exeter people's histories and experiences in the museum's catalogue and online content. She observed: 'Because of the richness of the collection and because there is so much to explore – we want to have multivocal and multi-perspective understanding of our collections and this project will be a step change in how we can support this approach and share the results with a wider audience'.

The success of the NLHF bid is illustrative of Camilla and her team's commitment to maintaining the rich and varied output at RAMM and is illustrative of the fact the radical revamp of the museum did not end when it re-opened in 2012. As an Exeter City Council service, the core running costs of the museum are met, but projects need to be financed through other means. RAMM receives additional government funding though the Arts Council England because it is one of their National Portfolio Organisations. The museum has just secured another three years of funding, enabling it to continue with the important and ambitious work the public have come to expect from RAMM. Other important areas of support come from the Friends of RAMM, donations, the RAMM Development Trust and from project work, trusts and foundations.

Camilla is aware of the importance of keeping the museum vibrant and relevant but that wholeheartedly embracing new trends can have its pitfalls: 'Interactives can add extra levels of interpretation, offer a new perspective or alternative interpretation, but have to be used in a considered way – a good interactive will add depth to a visitor's experience, but a bad one can diminish it'. People randomly pressing buttons before accelerating through galleries is anathema to her. Again, referencing Ruskin, Camilla notes 'When you are seeing, you are giving attention to an object, perhaps connecting it to previous knowledges that you have, to create meaning. In an age of instant gratification, we want to encourage people to slow up and really look at things properly'. The front of house staff have observed a number of people visiting regularly and Camilla recommends this approach: 'Try not to cram too much into your visit. Slow up a bit and let your brain 'freewheel' and you will discover more'.

RAMM has an incredibly impressive online catalogue allowing access to the collections to people from around the world. However, Camilla believes actually seeing an object in real life is a special experience – 'nothing can replicate the power and magic of the real thing. I often see this when I observe small children looking at the big animals. Even though they can see them online or at the cinema, their scale, texture and exotic presence really inspire them'. In the case of adults, she cites the current exhibition *Gatekeepers to Heaven* which includes six

Artifacts from the RAMM COLLECTION

1. RAMM's 150th birthday cake
   April 2018
2. From Seaton Down Hoard- *nummus of Licinius* I
   Alexandria mint AD 317-324
3. Cranbrook beaker
   Early Bronze Age
4. Steffen Dam, 2017
   Specimens from An Imaginary Voyage

All photographs © Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council.

ramm
▸ Home to a million thoughts

exceptional medieval manuscripts on loan from the Bodleian Library: 'some of those manuscripts have been digitised but these copies do not carry the same significance as objects on display, seeing them for yourself, and the fact they are such an important evidence of Exeter's literary heritage, with their first trip back to the city in 420 years'. She describes the delight during handling sessions of putting an artefact in someone's hands and seeing their response: 'curators never lose the sense of magic you witness at such moments'. She is passionate about the inspirational merits of real experience but also the importance of physical evidence for our identity as a community and, in an age of misinformation, as a source of primary evidence.

When asked to characterise the personality of the museum today Camilla explains:

'Fundamentally the museum is about bringing objects, people and ideas together'. To this end the museum was redesigned to make peoples' experience flow, allowing them to go on a journey that is not too prescriptive. She was keen to preserve some of the museum's quirkiness – on entering through the main doors one is confronted by a bright pink wall and throughout the collection the inclusion of the unexpected is used to stimulate thought. For example, within the Sladen Collection, where the starfish and sea urchins are displayed in their original Victorian cases as part of the terms of their bequest, there is a glass sculpture by the contemporary artist Steffen Dam. All this is skillfully achieved whilst still maintaining the necessary gravitas of the collections.

After twenty-two years of exceptional vision and leadership Camilla will step down from her post at the end of the year. The vibrant and happy atmosphere at RAMM is testament to her and her team's energy, enthusiasm, and belief in the ability of museums to drive positive change for individuals and communities. It's that close relationship with the community it serves that will ensure RAMM continues to flourish at the heart of the city and region's cultural life.

Bridget Gillard

https://www.rammuseum.org.uk/
https://rammcollections.org.uk/
Connect newsletter https://rammuseum.org.uk/account/
Support RAMM - RAMM (rammuseum.org.uk)

Your Legacy
Our Future

The Devonshire Association has been in existence for over 160 years and is dedicated to the study and exchange of information and ideas on all matters concerning the county of Devon – in particular the cultural identity of the county and its distinctiveness – through research, recording and publication. It is the only such Association in the country and has amassed an available archive of records across a wide range of fields which is of unequalled importance.

Members continue to support our aims through gifts in their wills and we have recently received a very generous legacy from one of our members. Such legacies leave us with two emotions –sorrow on learning of the death of one of our members and immense gratitude for such a gift. Once you have taken care of your loved ones, please consider including a bequest to The Devonshire Association in your will. Any gift, however large or small, will help us continue to arrange all the events and publications you have enjoyed during your membership and to fulfil our aims into the future.

One member has written:

> *I joined the DA some sixty or more years ago and it has kept me in touch with a wide range of disciplines which is why I enjoy the great variety of meetings, both local and further afield, and look forward to reading the Transactions each year. I really believe that the DA widens the horizons in members' minds across a whole spectrum that is reflected in Devon. When I was in 'exile' for nearly 30 years before returning home I was kept in touch. I firmly wish for the DA to be able to grow in financial strength and to invest in its vision for the future. This is why I have included The Devonshire Association in my Will.*

There is a link with some guidance on legacies on the website, at **https://devonassoc.org.uk/support-us/** but if you would like to have this posted to you, or would like to speak to someone about giving, please contact the Registrar (details on the back page).

Stella Beavan

Two Major Natural History Awards for Stella Beavan

At the AGM of the British Entomological and Natural History Society on 25 February 2023, the President, Ray Barnett, announced that there were two recipients of the BENHS Commemorative Gold Medal this year, one of whom being our own Stella Beavan, currently a member of the Executive Committee and Hon. Secretary of our Entomology Section.

The Gold Medal is awarded to those who have contributed significantly to the stated Objects of the BENHS in the field of natural history, especially in entomology.

This Award is in the gift of the President. He said that it is in recognition of the huge contribution Stella has made to entomology and especially in the study of the Microlepidoptera (the so-called smaller moths), as well as her role in creating the current Lepidoptera checklist of the British Isles.

The formal presentation was made at the Society's meeting at Oxford on 25 March.

Two months later, Stella was also appointed as a Scientific Associate at the Natural History Museum, London.

Such appointments are rarely made unless one has previously worked at the Museum, and are a great accolade. Stella had been invited by Dr David Lees, Curator there of the worldwide Microlepidoptera, to submit an application to become a Scientific Associate, but with no guarantee that any application would be successful. A fair amount of work was involved in the application. This was then approved by David, and then seconded before being approved by the Head of Department.

Stella will work with David mainly in providing reared material for genome research.

Both the Award and appointment as a Scientific Associate are thoroughly deserved, and I heartily congratulate Stella.

Bob Heckford

Photo by: ray-hennessy on Unsplash

1.

People of the DA

Surgeon, soldier, civic dignitary and scholar. Colonel Ransom Pickard CB, CMG, MD, FRCS, LRCP. (President 1943).

Commemorations have limitations. To five decades of Exeter University students and staff 'Ransom Pickard' has meant a building, a student residence on the edge of the campus. Almost none will have any knowledge of the remarkable man for whom it was named.

In his day, Colonel Ransom Pickard was one of the most well-known, versatile and interesting men in Exeter, perhaps in the county. He was born in London in 1867, son of a cabinet maker. He gained first class honours at St Bartholomew's Hospital in both forensic medicine and surgery and honours in obstetrics, before moving to Exeter in 1892. After a few years in general practice he specialised in ophthalmology, becoming Surgeon and in due course President at the West of England Eye Infirmary, and the leading ophthalmologist in South West England.

His record in the Great War was distinguished. He created and commanded the 1st Wessex Field Ambulance in France, gained the rank of Colonel, was assistant director of Medical Services with the 48th Division in Italy, was awarded the Croce di Guerra, and created Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1916 and Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1919. These are military honours. The award of CB is limited to officers of the rank of major or above who have been mentioned in dispatches – Pickard was mentioned five times.

He had already made his mark in Exeter. The two photographs show him as Sheriff in 1906-7 (Exeter had sheriffs until 1972) and as Mayor in 1926-7. The Devon and Exeter Institution has a splendidly bound tribute in manuscript that was presented to him at a dinner to celebrate his mayoralty. It refers to his standing in ophthalmology, his war record and his support of the University College of the South West: he was already a friend and substantial benefactor to the college, and later served as vice-president for thirteen years from 1940 until his death – hence Ransom Pickard House.

Beside contributing significantly to ophthalmic research Pickard had a scholarly amateur interest in a remarkable range of fields. He joined the DA in 1929 and contributed sixteen papers to the *Transactions*: on early medical men in Exeter, on Huguenots in Exeter, on geology and archaeology and on ancient trackways, many reflecting his passion for Devon and Dartmoor and particularly for country walking. His obituary in TDA volume 85 refers to a small,

spare figure who would tire companions many years his junior. In earlier years he had been a keen mountaineer, belonging to both the Swiss and the British Alpine Clubs. A dedicated pedestrian, he never owned a car.

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His published presidential address, given at the DA's wartime meeting in 1943, is a formidably detailed 27-page account of glaciation on Dartmoor, with maps and 28 plates. No less impressive though very different is a carefully-researched 83-page book, privately published in 1947, on the population and epidemics of Exeter before the census began. He was an active and respected member of the archaeological community; a long-standing member and a President of the Devon Archaeological Exploration Society – the precursor of the DAS – and a member of its Exeter Excavation Committee. He represented the DA on the Committee for the Excavation of War-damaged Exeter until his death, at his home in Streatham Drive in 1953 at the age of 85.

Pickard was a lifelong, though undemonstrative Methodist. He was teetotal and a non-smoker – probably unusually for a soldier of his time. He married in 1912, but they had no children. Just a university building to carry on his name.

Robin Wootton

1. Ransom Pickard as Sheriff, 1906
2. Ransom Pickard as Mayor 1927

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INSECTS OF DEVON
Narrow-headed ant

2023 marks 95 years since the first recording of the rare Narrow-headed ant *Formica exsecta* on Chudleigh Knighton Heath, south Devon by G.M. Spooner, a national expert on Hymenoptera, and past president of The Devonshire Association.

The ant is still there today amongst the gorse, purple moor-grass and cattle. This isolated Devon site represents the only population in England. There are a very few populations in the Scottish Highlands but none in Wales or Ireland.

Devon is special, indeed crucial, for this Red Data Book species, Devon Special Species and national conservation priority-listed 'species of principal importance'. Gaining these statuses is not really a cause for celebration: the ant has suffered extinction at every other site in England from which it was known, disappearing over the last century from the heathlands of Dorset, New Forest, Isle of Wight, and edges of Dartmoor, the most recent loss being from the nearby Bovey Heath in 2004.

The Narrow-headed ant is a small relative of wood ants but is very different. Nests are smaller, perhaps 25–35cm across, covered with a characteristic thatch of nibbled grass, and some 5,000–7,000 workers, which typically keep to within 10m or so of home.

Nests critically depend on both open conditions – for sun and warmth to develop the ant larvae – and scrub, to provide aphid honeydew and a reliable continuous supply of prey items. Optimal locations are constantly changing and, in response, so are the nests.

INVESTIGATE

Colonies may move regularly through the season, and/or subsidiary transient satellite nests may bud off from main nests, acting as staging posts to take advantage of a valuable, but temporary, resource. Nests can relocate, or new ones be created rapidly within the space of a week.

Nest politics can be complicated. Colonies may be monodomous (living in one nest) or polydomous (in several) and across these, there may be one queen (monogynous), or many (polygynous). Genetic studies suggest that, when new queens embark on their nuptial flight, around 40% will mate with several males, and about 70% may stay in their natal nest. A queen mates only on this one occasion of the nuptial flight and in a monogynous nest, she may live an average 27 years, and over 10 years in a polygynous nest.

New colonies usually establish through either a satellite nest becoming autonomous, or sometimes by social parasitism whereby a newly mated *F. exsecta* queen may infiltrate the nest of another ant species, *Formica fusca* or *F. lemani*, depose the host queen, and exploit the workers to raise her eggs and brood instead. Over time, the mixed *F. exsecta – fusca* nest becomes solely *F. exsecta*.

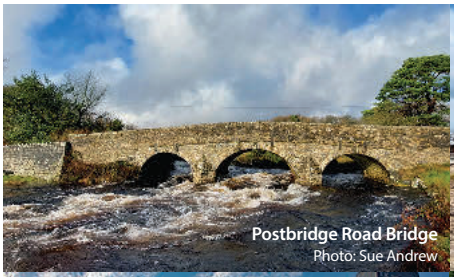
Dangers arise if the habitat scrubs over sufficiently to smother nests, or colonisation by the larger and supernumerous Southern wood ant F. rufa occurs when F. exsecta will be competitively excluded. This fate befell other Devon colonies and remains a threat at Chudleigh Knighton Heath. Meanwhile, this site of the Narrow-headed ant's last stand is isolated by roads, floodplain and vast clay pits hence, with limited dispersal distances of c.60m, the species is trapped with nowhere else to go.

More recently, Devon Wildlife Trust and Buglife charities have responded to research into methods for translocating and artificially generating nest colonies for re-introduction to former and new sites elsewhere in the Bovey Basin, with some tentative success in the current very early stages of these projects.

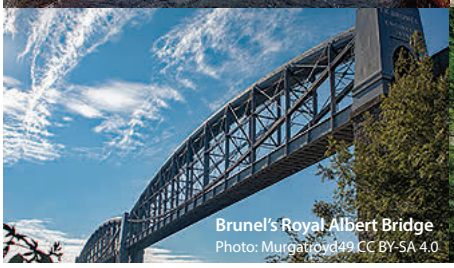
Lastly, why 'Narrow-headed'? The common name is a misdescription and refers to the distinctive notch at the back of the ant's head – clearly seen in the photo.

Stephen Carroll

Photo from **Back from the Brink** open source / flikr by Alex Hyde
https://www.flickr.com/photos/160919311@N04/46167271002/


Postbridge Road Bridge
Photo: Sue Andrew

Bideford Bridge
Photo: Sue Andrew


Brunel's Royal Albert Bridge
Photo: Murgatroyd49 CC BY-SA 4.0

Holne Bridge
Photo: Sue Andrew

DEVON'S BRIDGES: TRACKWAYS THROUGH TIME

Last June, over fifty DA members and friends gathered in Postbridge Village Hall, Dartmoor, for a day-long event exploring Devon's Bridges. Four eminent speakers took us from ancient stone bridges through to the building of modern concrete and steel bridges and the challenges of repairing and maintaining old and new.

Archaeologist Andy Crabb drew our attention to the history of bridging Dartmoor's streams and rivers. Its clapper bridges are probably medieval and later, with frequent repairs necessary as slabs were washed away through flooding. Their picturesque aspect has ensured that they feature in eighteenth-century and later artworks, and nineteenth-century photographs, giving us an indication of how they have changed over time.

Dr Dave Gent's main specialism is in historic railway bridges, and he enthralled us with his discussion of innovative Victorian designers, such as I.K. Brunel who used wrought iron tubular arches on the Royal Albert Bridge – considered a groundbreaking engineering technique at the time. Dave also stressed the importance of appropriate repair, using old techniques and traditional materials to repair historic bridges.

Kevin Dentith, recently retired Chief Engineer, Bridges and Structures, Devon County Council, told us of the inspection programme for the 3,215 bridges for which DCC is responsible, and the expense and difficulties of conducting repairs in an often-hostile environment. His personal stories of everything from bridge collapses to suicide prevention gave us a unique insight into a challenging, yet immensely rewarding, career.

Peter F. Mason, historian and author, has written a book: *Clam Bridges of Dartmoor* (The Lustleigh Society, 2019) and he shared with us his knowledge, maps and historic images of these simple narrow timber bridges, often little more than tree trunks laid across a stream with a handrail to one side. Their significance in terms of Dartmoor's cultural life is considerable and is now being realised.

With an opportunity to explore the river crossings at Postbridge and also its DNPA Visitor Centre at lunchtime, an excellent and highly enjoyable day was had by all.

Sue Andrew

Devon Word Watching from the DEVONSHIRE DIALECT DICTIONARY

Bacon-aiters = cockroaches

Galavins = palpitations

Neash = delicate, tender

Taken from the **Devonshire Dialect Dictionary**
https://devonassoc.org.uk/ddd-intro/

Magging: short news items

Magging is a Devonshire dialect word for talking, chattering

Renaissance Son-et-Lumière at Exeter Cathedral

For many years Exeter Cathedral has hosted secular events (concerts, receptions, banquets) to increase the use of its premises, attract new devotees, and generate much needed income. In all of these instances, the internal architecture provides a magnificent passive backdrop, capable of elevating even the most modest arrangement into something rather special.

More recently, however, large exhibitions and art installations at the Cathedral have been attracting large audiences: for example, Jacquie Parkinson's *Threads Through Creation* in 2022, which consisted of twelve enormous silk panels retelling the story of the Creation as described in Genesis (DA News 2023 (1)); and Luke Jerram's giant replicas of the Moon in 2022 (DA News 2002 (2)) and the Earth *(Gaia)* in February 2023. Both of Jerram's minutely and scientifically precise replicas were suspended in the Nave where blue light illuminated the surrounding gothic vaulting to marvellous effect and bespoke surround-sound music complemented the artworks' almost spiritual presence.

Sound and light, of course, are the two defining elements of Son-et-Lumière pageants. The idea behind them is credited to Paul Robert-Houdin, who was the curator of the Château de Chambord in France: the world's first event was held there in 1952. This and subsequent attractions were usually put on at night. Special lighting effects were projected onto the external architectural features of famous buildings or ruins, with music and synchronised commentaries dramatizing their history.

During the last seventy or so years, the technology behind Son-et-Lumière spectacles has advanced immensely and may now include lasers and drones, as seen at the Royal Coronation Concert for King Charles III held at Windsor on 7 May (2023). In front of 22,000 guests, a drone display created stunning 3D images of creatures as a tribute to the King's love of nature.

Recent events at Exeter Cathedral include *Space* (2020), *Life* (2022) and *Renaissance* (2023). For each of them, the internal architectural features were illuminated by ever-changing kaleidoscopes of immersive images transforming and enveloping them. At times, it almost appeared that the architecture became an active integral component of the spectacles, rather than simply serving as a passive backdrop.

All three events were the brainchild of Luxmuralis (www. luxmuralis.com), a celebrated artistic collaboration supported by a team of specialist technicians and professional artists. The visual artwork was created by the internationally renowned artist and sculptor Peter Walker FRSA,

Photo courtesy of Exeter Cathedral and © Luxmuralis

MRSS (www.peterwalkersculptor.com). The original soundscapes were composed by David Harper (www.davidharpermusic.com) who has written and produced music for various television programmes, theatre and film productions.

As its name implies, the *Renaissance* pageant conveys in light and sound the physical and emotional stories of humankind's most significant artistic, political, economic, scientific and technological achievements during the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Famous artworks and scientific achievements were particularly featured. Images were mainly beamed onto the north and south transepts, the Lady Chapel, the Great West Window and much of the Nave's tierceron vaulting.

The photograph shown here is impressive. But nothing compares with the experience of being there in person; in taking sufficient time to assimilate the images as they unfold before your eyes; and absorbing the wonderful sounds as they reverberate in your ears.

Antony T. Buller

Fundraising Success for Delphine

In the Spring edition of *DA News* our graphic designer, Delphine Jones wrote an article about the country house Delamore and its annual art exhibition, which is held throughout May raising money for local artists and charities. This year over £14,000 was raised for charity and of this total £7,500 came from the auction and raffle. A limited edition hand printed screen print was donated by Delphine for the raffle and raised over £850. The organisers wrote: *'The amount raised will go a long way towards enabling us to continue giving financial support for those affected by cancer, along with the funding for two Cancer Nurse Specialist training posts at Derriford Hospital, and we want to sincerely thank you for your support in making this happen'.*

Wembury Coastal Path
5 colour limited edition screen print.

Request for old copies of *Transactions*

If anyone in or near Devon has copies of any DA *Transactions* from 1921 to 1951 that they would be prepared to donate to us to help complete our electronic library of all the volumes, please contact John Maltby on web.admin@devonassoc.org.uk. We could collect, but sadly they would not be returnable.

Diary

Entries include the activities of the Association that were confirmed at the time of going to press. However not all the details of every event are available and there may, of course, be later changes. Please check the website at https://devonassoc.org.uk/events/ for updates, or the listed contact can advise.

Members are welcome to attend meetings or join visits and excursions arranged by a Branch or Section to which they do not belong, unless the event has limited numbers. They must, however, get in touch with the contact to confirm details and to be sure that there is space. There is sometimes room for **non-members** of the Association who should also get in touch with the contact beforehand.

For online **Zoom events**, attendees must ask the contact for a link before the event. In most cases, participants will be invited to make a small financial contribution through our website to offset costs.

2023
October

11 **Annual Lunch** (Exeter & East Devon Branches)
At 11:30, Exeter Branch AGM. Followed by a talk by DA President Jenny Pery and lunch. Members of the East Devon Branch are invited to attend the talk and lunch. Advance booking for the lunch is essential by 27 September.
Venue: Exeter Golf & Country Club, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 7AE
Contact: Rachel Armstrong, exeter@devonassoc.org.uk or **07773 110542**

11 **Beatrix Potter and the Tale of the Westcountry** (Literature & Art Section)
At 19:00, an online Zoom talk by Emma Laws, Exeter Cathedral Librarian. Visits to the Westcountry gave Beatrix the idea for *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson*; she published the tale in 1930 but drew inspiration from her memories of an early visit to Ilfracombe in 1883.
Contact: Robin Wootton, litart@devonassoc.org.uk or **01392 275332**

11 **The age of improvement: the Duke of Bedford's Estate in the nineteenth century** (Plymouth & District Branch)
At 19:30, a talk by Andrew Thompson. *Free*.
Venue: The Plymouth Athenaeum, Derry's Cross, Plymouth, PL1 2SW
Contact: Colin Kilvington, cckilvington@btinternet.com or **01752 564972**

13 **Conservation in Action – Sustainable Breeding at the National Marine Aquarium** Plymouth (East Devon Branch)
At 14:30, a talk by Freyja Thomson-Alberts. The NMA is the UK's largest aquarium and is home to the Ocean Conservation Trust. Freyja will highlight some notable success stories at Plymouth with elasmobranchs, especially sharks and rays. This is a joint event organised by the DA and Sidmouth Science Festival. Admission £3 *(by card preferred)* or cash, at the door.
Venue: Manor Pavilion Theatre, Manor Road, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8RP
Contact: Colin Trussell, colin.trussell07@gmail.com or **07976 351324**

13 **Archaeology off the Devon coast** (Tavistock & West Devon Branch)
At 19:30, a talk by Ron Howell. DA members £2, non-members £3.
Venue: Tavistock Parish Centre, 5a Plymouth Road, Tavistock, PL19 8AU
Contact: Sheila Phillips, danehurst@tiscali.co.uk or **01752 775195**

14 **Myths, Monsters and Mazon Creek. Some eccentric experiences of an Illinois lagerstätte** (Geology Section)
At 10:30, a talk by Dr Robin Wootton. DA members £3, non-members £4.
Venue: Newton's Place, 43 Wolborough St, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1JQ
Contact: Greg Callaghan, dageolhonsec@devonassoc.org.uk or **01395 265502**

14 **The Bees and Wasps of Lower Sharpham Barton Farm – Year 1** (Entomology Section)
At 14:30, a talk by Kim Leaver.
Venue: Boniface Centre, East of the Parish Church, Crediton, Devon, EX17 2AH
Contact: Kim Leaver, k.leaver57@gmail.com or **07889 978223**

17 **Rescuing Ruins – the work of The Landmark Trust** (DA Monthly Lecture Series)
At 19:00, an online Zoom talk by Alastair Dick-Cleland – Project Development Manager for the Landmark Trust. He will give us an overview of the work of the Landmark Trust, one of the UK's largest building preservation trusts, founded back in 1965. He will tell us about restoration projects in the southwest, and in particular the restoration of Winsford Cottage Hospital, a delightful building designed by the celebrated Arts & Crafts architect C. F. A. Voysey. DA members no charge, non-members £2.50. Donations welcome via the event page on the website. Please book by a day before the event.
Contact: Hon. Secretary, DA, hon.sec@devonassoc.org.uk

18 **Visit to Salcombe Museum and guided walk (History Section)**
At 13:30, an afternoon visit to Salcombe Museum and a guided walk including a visit to the Lifeboat Museum. Our guide will be Roger Barrett who was the recipient of the Devon History Society's prestigious W. G. Hoskins Prize in 2018 for his book *Salcombe: Schooner Port*. Numbers limited (DA members only). £6. Booking essential before 13 October. If emailing please type "DA History visit" in the Subject line.
Contact: Chris Reader, info@crhr.uk or **07769 335 506** *(leave a message)*

20 **Exmoor National Park** (Bideford & North Devon Branch)
At 14:00, a talk by Alex Farris about Exmoor National Park where he is Conservation Manager. This will be a presentation of what Alex believes is the role that Exmoor

can play in restoring thriving nature to the UK and how by working together with the Exmoor landowners and farmers this can be achieved. Cost: DA members £3, non-members £5.
Venue: Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2QQ
Contact: Jane Whittaker, bideford@devonassoc.org.uk

22 **A Musical Duologue – Classical Music with Haldon Duo**
(Music and Folklore Section)
At 15:00, Lindsay Braga and Andrew Gillett of the string quartet Haldon Quartet will present duets by Bach, Mozart, Martinu, Brydern and others to show how the duet forms the basis of dialogue and interaction in chamber music. Refreshments available. Adults £12, students/children £8. Booking will be via TicketSource.
Venue: Crediton Congregational Church, 98 High St, Crediton, Devon, EX17 3LB
Contact: Pam Wallinder, damfs@devonassoc.org.uk

25 **DA Forum**
At 11:00, six-monthly meeting for Branch and Section representatives.
Venue: Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon, The Square, Barnstaple, EX32 8LN
Contact: DA Registrar, registrar@devonassoc.org.uk or **07742 148865**

28 **AGM in Okehampton** (Buildings Section)
At 09:45, a day learning about the buildings of Okehampton town and Throwleigh village. In the morning, local archaeologist and historian Andrew Thompson will give a presentation on Okehampton, followed by the AGM. In the afternoon Alan Endacott will be our speaker and guide to the buildings of Throwleigh. No charge for the AGM, otherwise £15 to include food and drinks. Booking is essential.
Venue: All Saints Church Hall, Market Street, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1HN
Contact: Lydia Burge, lydiaburge101@gmail.com

November

4 **The photographic art thief** (Literature & Art Section)
At 14:30, an illustrated talk by Anna Grayson. Anna, a member of the Section, is well-known for her lively pastiche photographs of famous paintings. She has exhibited several times at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and had a solo exhibition at the RAMM.
Venue: Boniface Centre, East of the Parish Church, Crediton, Devon, EX17 2AH.
DA members £3, non-members £5.
Contact: Prue Nichols, pruen@talktalk.net or **01392 860695**

8 **Reverend Bray's bardic boulders – sermons in stone** (Plymouth Branch)
At 19:30, a talk by John Hudswell. *Free*
Venue: The Plymouth Athenaeum, Dory's Cross, Plymouth, PL1 2SW
Colin Kilvington, cckilvington@btinternet.com or **01752 564972**

10 **The Art of the Devon Garden** (East Devon Branch)
At 14:30, a talk by Dr Todd Gray MBE who will examine the history of designed

landscapes in East Devon through surviving paintings, drawings and maps.
DA members £3, non-members £4, by card (preferred) or cash at the door.
Venue: Manor Pavilion Theatre, Manor Road, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8RP
Contact: eastdevon@devonassoc.org.uk

16 **A talk by Jenny Pery** (South Devon Branch)
At 14:15, an illustrated talk by artist, art historian and DA President Jenny Pery.
DA members £2, non-members £4.
Venue: Newton's Place, 43 Wolborough St, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1JQ
Contact: Annie Maltby, southdevon@devonassoc.org.uk or **07771 277761**

17 **Pirates, Merchants, Smugglers and Spies. North Devonians and the Spanish Inquisition** (Bideford & North Devon Branch)
At 14:00, a talk by Teresa Tinsley. Based on research for her PhD Teresa's talk will be concerned with the experiences of English people at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition during the 16th century. The talk will present findings from five inquisition trials of men from North Devon. DA members £3, non-members £5.
Venue: Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2QQ
Contact: Jane Whittaker, bideford@devonassoc.org.uk

17 **Degradation of marine environment** (Tavistock & West Devon Branch)
At 19:30, a talk by Dr Keith Hiscock from Plymouth MBA, DA members £2, non-members £3.
Venue: Tavistock Parish Centre, 5a Plymouth Road, Tavistock, PL19 8AU
Contact: Sheila Phillips, danehurst@tiscali.co.uk or **01752 775195**

18 **Trinity House: the lighthouse and pilotage authority for England, Wales and Gibraltar** (Industrial Archaeology Section)
At 11:00, a talk by Captain David Parsons, a member of the Younger Brethren of Trinity House. In the Corinthian Room of the Royal Torbay Yacht Club. The Club's bar, serving food, will be available afterwards. There is no charge for the talk.
Venue: Royal Torbay Yacht Club, 12 Beacon Terrace, Torquay, Devon, TQ1 2BH
Contact: Industrial Archaeology Section, iasda@devonassoc.org.uk

21 **Manuscript Maps of Devon** (DA Monthly Lecture Series)
At 19:00, an online Zoom talk by Todd Gray MBE – historian and author.
Recent discoveries of previously unknown maps of Barnstaple and Exeter remind us of the extraordinary number we have of Devon. In this lecture Todd Gray will explore some of the notable examples and introduce others of places across the county.
DA members no charge, non-members £2.50. Donations welcome via the event page on the website. Please book by a day before the event.
Contact: Hon. Secretary, DA, hon.sec@devonassoc.org.uk

26 **A Westcountry Christmas – Folklore event with Mark Norman** (Music and Folklore Section)
At 14:30, forget about the modern commercialism and come and spend some time experiencing the joy of a traditional Devon Christmas. Enjoy local carols, Christmas

stories and Devon Yule Traditions in an informal setting, with some light refreshments available. £10. Booking essential.
Venue: Crediton Library, Belle Parade, Crediton, Devon, EX17 2AA
Contact: Mark Norman, folklore@devonassoc.org.uk

30 **Rifting and Drifting: The pioneering work of Marie Tharp** (Geology Section)
At 19:30, an online Zoom talk by Bettie Higgs. Bettie's research included numerical modelling of plate tectonics and shallow sub-surface geophysical investigation. She continues to carry out research into the potential benefits of interdisciplinary field-based learning, as well as the role of women in the history of science. There is no charge for this talk, but donations welcome.
Contact: Greg Callaghan, dageolhonsec@devonassoc.org.uk or **01395 265502**

December

1 **Aerial archaeological survey and excavation; getting down to earth in East Devon** (East Devon Branch)
At 14:30, a talk by Bill Horner, Devon County Archaeologist. Over the past 70 years, many thousands of archaeological sites have been discovered in Devon through the increasing use of aerial survey. In his talk, Bill Horner will use a variety of examples of sites in East Devon, from prehistory to the modern age. DA members £3, non-members £4, by card (preferred) or cash at the door.
Venue: Manor Pavilion Theatre, Manor Road, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8RP
Contact: eastdevon@devonassoc.org.uk

2 **Pantomime – it's never what it used to be** (Literature & Art Section)
At 14:30, a talk by Professor Kate Newey, Professor of Theatre History at the University of Exeter. Kate will look at some of the conventions of English pantomime, and track their invention as instant traditions.
Venue: Boniface Centre, East of the Parish Church, Crediton, Devon, EX17 2AH.
DA members £3, non-members £5.
Contact: Prue Nichols, pruen@talktalk.net or **01392 860695**

13 **Rachel Evans of Tavistock (1812–1883): author, poet and teacher** (Plymouth & District Branch)
At 19:30, a talk by John Hudswell. *Free*
Venue: The Plymouth Athenaeum, Dory's Cross, Plymouth, PL1 2SW
Colin Kilvington, cckilvington@btinternet.com or **01752 564972**

14 **A Tudor Christmas with the Lady Katherine** (South Devon Branch)
At 14:15, appearing in full period costume Rosemary Griggs will bring the festivities, feasting and fun of a Tudor Christmas to life in a lively presentation. DA members £2, non-members £4.
Venue: Newton's Place, 43 Wolborough St, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1JQ
Contact: Annie Maltby, southdevon@devonassoc.org.uk or **07771 277761**

15 **First atlas of the British Isles** (Tavistock & West Devon Branch)
At 14:30, a talk by Tony Gale, a historical researcher with the Crediton History Group. DA members £2, non-members at £3. *Note that this talk takes place at 2.30pm in the afternoon.*
Venue: Tavistock Parish Centre, 5a Plymouth Road, Tavistock, PL19 8AU
Contact: Sheila Phillips, danehurst@tiscali.co.uk or **01752 775195**

2024
January

10 **Annual General Meeting and Members' presentations** (Plymouth & District Branch)
At 19:30. Members are invited to bring digital images, exhibits, mini-talks etc (offers to the Secretary in advance please). *Free.*
Venue: The Plymouth Athenaeum, Derry's Cross, Plymouth, PL1 2SW
Contact: Colin Kilvington, cckilvington@btinternet.com or **01752 564972**

12 **Churchill's Secret Army in East Devon** (East Devon Branch)
At 14:30, a talk by Andrew Chatterton. DA members £3, non-members, £4, by card (preferred) or cash at the door
Venue: Manor Pavilion Theatre, Manor Road, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8RP
Contact: eastdevon@devonassoc.org.uk

18 **AGM and Jurassic Calamari** (South Devon Branch)
At 14:15, AGM followed by a talk: *Jurassic calamari: new research on fossil squid-like cephalopods from the Wessex basin* by Malcolm Hart (Emeritus Professor, Plymouth University). Using quite stunning images Malcolm will explain life in the Jurassic seas.
Venue: Newton's Place, 43 Wolborough St, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1JQ
Contact: Annie Maltby, southdevon@devonassoc.org.uk or **07771 277761**

19 **Creating and running Honey Wood Orchard, a Traditional Cider Orchard** (Bideford & North Devon Branch)
At 14:00, a talk by Chris Tattersall. DA members £3, non-members £5.
Venue: Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2QQ
Contact: Jane Whittaker, bideford@devonassoc.org.uk

20 **AGM and talk** (Entomology Section)
At 14:30, Section AGM followed by a talk by Liam Olds: *Spoilt for choice: Invertebrates of Colliery Spoil Habitats.*
Venue: Boniface Centre, East of the Parish Church, Crediton, Devon, EX17 2AH
Contact: Kim Leaver, k.leaver57@gmail.com or **07889 978223**

23 **Sabine Baring-Gould: One hundred years on** (DA Monthly Lecture Series)
At 19:00, an online Zoom talk by Martin Graebe, a researcher and writer about traditional song and song collectors. Sabine Baring-Gould, Parson, Squire, Novelist, Travel writer, Antiquary, Folk song collector, and more, died on the 2nd of January 1924, a few days

short of his 90th birthday. In this presentation, Martin Graebe looks back at Baring-Gould's life and his deep connection to Devon, and to Dartmoor, and considers the value of the legacy that he has left us. DA members no charge, non-members £2.50. Donations welcome via the event page on the website. Please book by a day before the event.
Contact: Hon. Secretary, DA, hon.sec@devonassoc.org.uk

29 **AGM 2024** (Music and Folklore Section)
At 18:30, AGM, to be followed by a committee meeting.
Venue: The Isca Room, Exeter Community Centre, St David's Hill, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3RG
Contact: Pam Wallinder, damfs@devonassoc.org.uk

February

9 **AGM and a talk about Lundy** (East Devon Branch)
At 14:30, AGM followed by a talk *Lundy – a Landmark 50 years* by Simon Dell MBE.
DA members £3, non-members £4, by card (preferred) or cash at the door

Venue: Manor Pavilion Theatre, Manor Road, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8RP
Contact: eastdevon@devonassoc.org.uk

14 **Victorian Devonport** (Plymouth & District Branch)
At 19:30, a talk by Graham Naylor. *Free*.
Venue: The Plymouth Athenaeum, Derry's Cross, Plymouth, PL1 2SW
Contact: Colin Kilvington, cckilvington@btinternet.com or **01752 564972**

15 **The true facts of the Mayflower voyage of 1620** (South Devon Branch)
At 14:15, a talk by Dr Mike Haywood. DA members £2, non-members £4.
Venue: Newton's Place, 43 Wolborough St, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1JQ
Contact: Annie Maltby, southdevon@devonassoc.org.uk or **07771 277761**

16 **Riot, Rebellion and Religion in Appledore** (Bideford & North Devon Branch)
At 14:00, a talk by David Carter. A couple of newly researched documents have shed light on events in Appledore and Northam in the 1420s – local historian David comes up with a fascinating snapshot of people and their lives at this time. DA members £3, non-members £5.
Venue: Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2QQ
Contact: Jane Whittaker, bideford@devonassoc.org.uk

24 **Annual Members' Day 2024** (Botany Section)
At 11:00, the Section's Annual Members' Day will take place in Whiddon Down Village Hall. A day of talks and other activities celebrating Devon's flora and the activities of the Section over the last year. The hall will be open from 10:30. Contact the organiser for further information.
Venue: Whiddon Down Village Hall, SX691925, EX20 2QT
Contact: Tim Purches, botany@devonassoc.org.uk or **01752 795256**

March

9 **The Piano and me – Mike Westbrook** (Music and Folklore Section)
At 19:00 at the Bridge Inn, Topsham. Jazz composer Mike Westbrook improvises on themes from his musical history with references across the spectrum of genres – jazz classics, pop music and the Blues. Tickets £13, from https://thelittleboxoffice.com/thebridgeinn/
Venue: The Bridge Inn, Bridge Hill, Topsham, Devon, EX3 0QQ
Contact: Pam Wallinder, damfs@devonassoc.org.uk

13 **Not only Lorna. What else did R. D. Blackmore write?** (Literature & Art Section)
At 19:00, an online Zoom talk by Robin Wootton. Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825–1900) is today known almost exclusively for Lorna Doone, but he wrote at least twelve other novels, some of equal quality, beside several short stories and a number of poems. The talk will describe Blackmore's life and explore these other novels, especially the four with Devon settings. No charge but donations welcome.
Contact: litart@devonassoc.org.uk

13 **Commercial Wharf, Plymouth – revelations of Plymouth trade, fishing and victualling the navy in the 17th century** (Plymouth & District Branch)
At 19:30, a talk by Martin Read. *Free*.
Venue: The Plymouth Athenaeum, Derry's Cross, Plymouth, PL1 2SW
Contact: Colin Kilvington, cckilvington@btinternet.com or **01752 564972**

15 **Braunton Burrows and preparations for D Day** (Bideford & North Devon Branch)
At 14:00, a talk by Dave Edgcombe, former Project Officer within the North Devon Coast AONB. His talk will detail how Braunton Burrows, a nationally important area for biodiversity, was used for military training during WW2 and how its subsequent management is restoring its importance for nature. DA members £3, non-members £5.
Venue: Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2QQ
Contact: Jane Whittaker, bideford@devonassoc.org.uk

21 **A talk on William Froude** (South Devon Branch)
At 14:15, a talk by Bill Thomson on the noted Devon naval scientist William Froude (1810–1879). DA members £2, non-members £4.
Venue: Newton's Place, 43 Wolborough St, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1JQ
Contact: Annie Maltby, southdevon@devonassoc.org.uk or **07771 277761**

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