



Promoting awareness of the archaeology  
and history of North Devon

## Newsletter, Spring 2022

### Chairman's Report

Chris Preece

Following on from my email which detailed your responses regarding the coming winter talks, I'm pleased to say we have arranged a mix of formats which hopefully satisfies most members. Four of the talks will be 'live' at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple and for three of those we will try to ensure a Zoom link for those who can't make it. In addition we are planning a social evening following the AGM rather than the usual talk (we still have the full complement of 6 talks but the other two are by Zoom and will be on different dates to the AGM - see below). Further details regarding the format of the social activities following the AGM will be announced nearer the time.

Hopefully, also, we will be able to resume the annual Christmas Dinner in December if Covid variants don't dictate otherwise.

We have also arranged a number of field trips, two of which have already taken place (St Anne's/Spreacombe and Postbridge/Spinsters' Rock). The next outing will be with Dave Edgecombe of the AONB on 14<sup>th</sup> July. This will take in many of the World War II remains on Braunton Burrows which were part of the D Day preparations. There's a surprising amount to see there apart from just the landing craft with which many may be familiar.

We are also looking at the possibility of some trial trenches to test the features which have been revealed by Phase 4 of the Clovelly Dykes Project. At present we are working on funding and permissions and will keep you informed. This is likely to take place late summer/early autumn all being well.

So finally some semblance of normality and plenty of opportunities to get involved and socialise. I hope to see many of you soon.

### Way of the Wharves

*Many of you will be aware that during the last six months the area known as Brunswick Wharf at the East-the-Water end of Bideford's medieval bridge has been cleared of its historic buildings in preparation for redevelopment. This move has not been free of controversy. Below, Michael Teare, Chairman of 'Way of the Wharves', sketches some of the area's history.*

The Torridge Estuary and Bideford have a long and fascinating maritime history with boat building documented back to Elizabethan times. On the east bank of the Torridge, opposite Bideford town, East-the-Water was an industrial and transport hub connecting the medieval bridge, port and railway. From the mid 1800s the deep-water channel started migrating west across the river, leading to the slow decline of the port on the east bank. In addition to the important transport links East-the-Water

was a centre for ship and boat building, clay export and potteries, coal mining, lime burning, timber, agricultural suppliers, energy distribution and even a first world war munitions factory.

If Covid helped the Way of the Wharves Project at all, it was in giving time to pull together the research of the last years and write a book: *A History of East-the-Water, Bideford*. Published in December 2021, with line drawings by Lou Boulter, it includes chapters on timber, shipbuilding, mining, transport and pottery as well as the origins and traditions of East-the-Water, known locally as Shamwickshire. You can order a copy on the Way of the Wharves website:

<http://thewharves.org/product/a-history-of-east-the-water-bideford/>



*The Old School, Torrington Street.*

Lou Boulter

One of the stories uncovered is that of local hero George Parkin. He started building boats on the site of the East-the-Water School, in Torrington Street, in about 1847. He operated from here until 1858, when he moved to Appledore. His boats were carvel built, with hull planks, fastened to a robust frame, laid edge to edge to form a smooth surface. By 1852, his pilot boat *True Blue* had won many accolades competing in local regattas, both under canvas and oars and this helped his business develop. But Parkin also has a much more precious claim to fame. In July 1852, when he saw a seven-year-old local boy in danger of being swept away by the tide, he leapt from the rear wall of his house and rescued him. Everywhere he went there seemed to be people in need of rescuing. In

1871, after his twenty-ninth rescue, he was recognised by the Royal Humane Society. So, if you've local links and your family tree includes the surnames Reed, Rudd, Isaac, Cawell, Stanbury, Johns, Jenkins, Berry, Dannell, Fisher, Dunn, Colwill, or Lewis, then Parkin may just possibly have played his part in keeping that branch of your family alive.



*Extract from the 1886 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map: blue lines indicate location of evaluation trenches.*

The Way of the Wharves charity (WOTW) was established in 2020 to advance information and education about the industrial and maritime heritage of the wharves at East-the-Water and the Torridge Estuary. The project commenced four years earlier, when a group of volunteers started to research and promote the history of the wharves on Barnstaple Street.

This had not previously been researched in any detail and the imminent planning application for re-development of the site generated great local interest. Torridge District Council have now granted planning approval for Red Earth to start work on a £20million development of commercial and residential units. The sea wall will be raised against flood risk and land that has always been an industrial site will in future have public access. A pathway through the bridge gardens will lead onto a riverside walkway along the wharf's seawall and an open square, conserving the view between Bideford and the Grade 1 listed Royal Hotel.

Demolition, clearance and archaeological surveys started on the Barnstaple Street wharves site in November 2021.

Archaeological work is being carried out by AC Archaeology, Exeter. They have uncovered walls and the edge of a dock on Brunswick Wharf. Work on another trench on Clarence Wharf car park will be undertaken later. We hope to be able to make another visit when this is underway. At the time of writing, we have not heard that any important artefacts have

been discovered. The main contractors are expected to start work in summer 2022 with completion anticipated in spring 2025. Another time of rapid change for East-the-Water.

If you'd like more information, check out the website [www.thewharves.org](http://www.thewharves.org). You can follow and like our Facebook page @Brunswick Wharf. Sign up for our email newsletter updates by mailing [wotw.wharves@gmail.com](mailto:wotw.wharves@gmail.com). We look forward to working with NDAS in future.

## **Appledore Civil War Fort – an update**

Derry Bryant

I am delighted to say that the Civil War fort on Staddon Hill, Appledore (mentioned in the NDAS Autumn 2021 newsletter) has been designated by Historic England as a Scheduled Monument, No. 1476886. This should protect the fort site itself from any development. The current landowners, however, are not in agreement and do not wish to upkeep the site, which is falling into disrepair. They have also stated their continued wish to build on the surrounding field.

This stunning, historic hilltop location with far reaching views out to sea and across the estuary is not earmarked for development on the Local Plan; hopefully the scheduling of the fort site will help to protect the location from encroachment by developers. Grateful thanks to Nick Arnold, local historian for his tireless research and reports on this project, with support from Devon County HER, Torridge District Council, Northam Town Council, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (Devon), The Battlefields Trust Fortress Study Group and many local residents.



## **Making Sense of Cobbles (Part 1)**

Chris Preece

The term 'cobbles' is loosely used in general to mean any stones set together as a surface (road, path, courtyard etc.). Strictly speaking 'cobbles' are water-worn (and therefore rounded) stones. A 'pitched surface' is where stones with a flat narrow edge are set upright. These surfaces are probably the most common in North Devon although they are often mixed with rounder edged stones. A third surface often referred to as 'cobbles' (e.g. Coronation Street; the infamous Paris-Roubaix bike race etc.) are 'sets'. These are quarried, flattish stones, now often used to give a heritage look (Plymouth quays) or as traffic calming devices (Bideford, Westward Ho!). The advantage of all three types of surface is that they are hard-wearing. The disadvantages are that they are very labour intensive to set and these days regularly fall foul of Health and Safety considerations, particularly when wet (at Dunster in Somerset, for example, in 2015, the cobbles were stripped out and replaced with bland paving; South Molton lost the cobbles in its square back in 1913 when it was covered with asphalt.) For the purposes of this article, undressed stones will be referred to as cobbles and will therefore include both water-worn and pitched surfaces. Traditionally, cobbles were laid into subsoil and in Devon that usually meant clay, which was ideal for holding them securely. They were packed closely together with the interstices also filled with clay. In North Devon in particular, there are many examples still extant, the best known of these being the cobbled streets of Clovelly. Few villages have been this well preserved of course, but there are still hints of what did exist in other locations.



Fig 1: *Berry Farm cobbled paths integrated into new garden design (photo courtesy of the Big House Co.)*

1936 for the laying of electricity cables and again in 1953 for mains water. Jonathan Rhind architects (who have worked with South West Archaeology in the past) have an interesting article on laying/repairing cobbles on their website: <https://www.jonathan-rhind.co.uk/blog/laying-and-repairing-cobble-footpaths/> A fine example of how cobbled paths can be preserved when archaeologists, architects and developers work together can be seen at Berry Farm, Hartland (Fig. 1) where South West Archaeology worked in 2006 and 2007.

To return to dating however, in the late Georgian and Victorian eras, cobble setters kindly helped archaeologists of the future by replicating a fashion they had presumably seen at a few sites in Devon, one of these being Bayard's Cove, Dartmouth. Here, different coloured cobbles are used to delineate the date 1665, presumably denoting the embankment of the quay (Fig. 2). This is followed by further dates (1750, a partial resurfacing?) and modern examples in 1957 and 1973 keeping true to the spirit of the tradition. Another documented earlier example was at Tiverton where the founder of Blundell's school was commemorated in white cobbles outside the school gate with '16PB04' (1604 Peter Blundell). Sadly these cobbles are no longer there.

The 'drangs' (or alleyways) of the older parts of Appledore, as well as the remains of cobbled drains and paths here and in Hartland, are evidence of former cobbled glory. Wherever the impact of modern development is slight is a good place to look. In particular, as we shall see, this means churchyards.

Dating cobbles has always been problematic. Unless a diagnostic artefact is found beneath the cobbles in the bedding, there is little to go on in terms of archaeology alone. Cobbles can also be repaired or reset. At Clovelly for instance, they were taken up in the High Street in



Fig. 2: *Bayard's Cove cobbles showing date 1665*



Fig. 3: *St. Michael's church, Great Torrington showing date 1813*

Perhaps it was this example which inspired Victorian churchwardens to commemorate themselves in white cobbles in the path of the churchyard at Tiverton with their initials and the date 1874! Two graves also have the initials of the deceased set in white stones in the path next to them.

There are a few examples of dates set in the cobbles of churchyards in North Devon too. At St. Michaels, Great Torrington, '1813 WBC' is set in the path (Fig. 3). This refers to local builder W.B. Cock who erected the church tower in 1813.



Another date, '1818' is set into the end of the cobbled path where it meets the entrance to St. Michael and All Angels church, Meeth (Fig. 4). The path is said to be the work of Napoleonic prisoners of war (although the war had finished by then).

Dates in cobbles can also be found set in private paths. One example of this is at Rock House, Avonwick (South Devon) where the date '1845' is picked out in black stones.

In Part 2 we will look at earlier examples of cobbles, other settings, alternative ways of dating them and how they can be adapted rather than totally replaced.

(I am grateful to Keith Hughes for pointing out the Torrington cobbles. Despite the fact I lived there for 9 years I had either neglected to note them or had forgotten they existed!)

Fig.4: Meeth church showing date 1818

## Field Walk at Penhill: Pipe Dreams and Musings!

Tim Crane

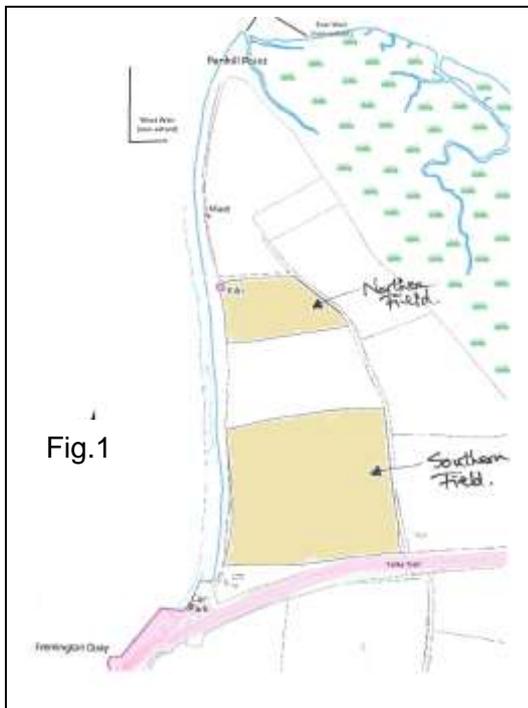


Fig.1

In the Autumn 2021 Newsletter, Chris Preece wrote a teaser article entitled, 'More Clay Pipes' relating to an NDAS field walk on Penhill Ridge to the northeast of Fremington Quay. His article provides the background and rationale for this field walk, whilst this article is an account of the day itself and its results.

On a glorious autumn day a party of nine of us forgathered at Fremington Quay to monitor a number of archaeological features along the estuary shoreline northwards to Penhill Point and then, the primary focus of the day's activities, to field walk a couple of fields on Penhill Ridge. (Figure 1) (Grid ref: SS518336)

Along the estuary shoreline we were able to identify timbers relating to old quayside structures, the fish weir to the west of Penhill Point, but not the fish weir to the east that had been sanded out (surveyed originally by NDAS members in August 2001 and in years subsequently - see NDAS newsletter no 4, Autumn 2002 or [www.ndas.org.uk/page12.html](http://www.ndas.org.uk/page12.html)) and the C19 lime kiln. (Figure 2)

The central aim of the field walk on Penhill Ridge was to assess the likelihood of a clay pipe kiln having been situated in the area by looking for remains of kiln furniture such as muffles, sheets, saggars and the like, along with concreted stems and other discards of the manufacturing process.



Fig.2: Remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century lime kiln south of Penhill Point.

As a location for a clay pipe kiln, the site had a lot to commend it. Over the years, potteries and clay workings in the area have been well documented, originally utilising the exposed Ipswichian clays along the estuary shoreline along Fremington Pill and to the west of Penhill Ridge, but from the post-medieval period, and on increasingly industrial scale, at Muddlebridge and the Claypit Coverts at Combrew. This reddish brown fictile clay, although well suited to heavy sanitary ware such as drains is, however, unsuitable for pipes for smoking; the clay imparts a 'flavour' to the tobacco. The presence of these sanitary ware potteries though, would have meant that there would have

been many with expertise of kiln management in the vicinity. Fine white Tertiary clays suitable for pipe making are found in Wear Gifford and reference is made by Polwhele writing in 1797 to the clay being used for this purpose, whilst the River Torridge would have provided a relatively easy means of transporting the ball clay to a site at Penhill. Later on, similar clays extracted at Peters Marland would have provided the clays used; Vince and Peacey's research provides many examples of large quantities of clay being exported for this purpose. A site such as at Penhill would have enabled easy accessibility to the quays for importing not only the ball clay, but also fuel and then, after manufacture, for export. The site itself is a well drained pebbly drift and is relatively flat.

The northern field (Figures 1 & 3) was the first to be walked and yielded 99 stems and a few bowl fragments. Although conditions were ideal for field walking, the lack of rain since the field had been ploughed meant that pipes were hard to see, being covered in soil, rather than showing white against the earth. In the southern field, several times larger than the northern field, we found 282 stems and more bowls. Fragments that could be dated were mainly early C17 and C18.



Fig.3: Walking the northern field.

Several of the bowls could be identified.

One was by Tamsin Garland, a Barnstaple pipe-maker who died in 1636 and another had the BARUM mark on the spur indicating a date

between 1660 and 1740. Others had enigmatic, as yet unidentified marks on the spurs similar to marks on the original collection donated to the North Devon Museum. (Figure 4) As for a clay pipe kiln being located on the site, no evidence of kiln furniture was found. Some of the pipe fragments exhibited burnt stems or firing flaws suggestive of being discards from a kiln nearby, but a good number had clearly been smoked also.



Fig.4: A selection of pipe bowls found.

Photo Chris Preece

The large number of fragments might seem unusual but Hall, writing as far back as 1890, comments on the large number being found in various locations around Barnstaple including over 200 fragments from his own garden in Pilton. I live in a Victorian house in the centre of Ilfracombe and a bare patch of earth only a couple of metres square behind the house has yielded scores of pipe fragments (along with broken china and glass) so perhaps the quantities of pipe being found in these fields should not be considered surprising, given the large number of people that would have been employed in connection with the adjacent quays and nearby industry.



Inevitably, whilst looking for pipes and kiln furniture, a number of other bits of archaeology were found. This included nine Mesolithic flints which have been identified and catalogued by Derry Bryant.

A number of sources have been used in this article and those are listed below. In addition, Heather Coleman (referred to in Chris' teaser) has a website page at <http://www.dawnmist.org/pipdex.htm> which is very informative and highly recommended. We were very fortunate with the weather for this field walk and quite apart from the archaeological research, it was a great day out with stunning

estuary views. Many will know Fremington Quay but it really is worth taking the time to walk northwards along the shoreline for the archaeology (of course!) but also for the geology, flora and fauna, or simply to enjoy the scenery.

#### Sources:

Edmonds E et al. Geology of the country around Ilfracombe and Barnstaple, British Geological Survey (1985) ISBN 0 11 884364 8

Hall T. On Barum tobacco pipes and North Devon clays. Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association vol. 22 (1890) pp. 317-323.

<https://archive.org/details/reportandtransa04artgoog/page/n344/mode/2up?view=theater>

Heritage Gateway managed by Historic England

[https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/Results\\_Single.aspx?uid=MDV904&resourceID=104](https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MDV904&resourceID=104)

Fremington Quay Conservation Area Character Appraisal

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/51360480/appraisal-of-fremington-quay-conservation-area-north-devon->

Vince A and Peacey A. Pipemakers and their Workshops

[https://beckassets.blob.core.windows.net/product/readingsample/359126/9780387342184\\_excerpt\\_001.pdf](https://beckassets.blob.core.windows.net/product/readingsample/359126/9780387342184_excerpt_001.pdf)

Polwhele R. The History of Devonshire. (1797) ISBN 0 90 396704 9 (Ref at p59)

[https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Rm9bAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Rm9bAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

## NDAS Visit to Chapel Wood, Spreacombe and St Anne's Chapel, Saunton

Paul Madgett



Thirteen NDAS members assembled at the entrance to Chapel Wood on a pleasant spring morning, walked the short distance across the pasture field to the entrance, where our leader, Chris Preece, gave us a brief history of the site (as far as it is known), followed by discussion of its possible origin and history, comparing other sites around the area and further afield.

*Remains of the chapel within Chapel Wood.*

Sited just inside the wood, by a sparkling spring bubbling from the ground, are the remains of a 3-roomed building. Low stone walls of local stone, showing obvious signs of restoration in places, are all that remains of the chapel. These current remains may not, of course, represent the original "chapel".

Arthur Barker (d.1950) of nearby Spreacombe Manor (whose memorial, along with that of his wife, Frieda, Lady Arthur Cecil, is within the chapel remains) had some excavations done in 1924 which discovered a fireplace. Some of the finds are in Ilfracombe Museum. Arthur later donated Chapel Wood (including the chapel remains) to the National Trust (who apparently declined) but alternatively to the RSPB, in memory of his wife.

Why is it here? Chantry Chapel? Hermitage? The Spreacombe Gardens website suggests an origin around 1270 as a secular chantry, dedicated to St John the Baptist, the two small rooms being living quarters for the priest, the larger room for the congregation. The Historic England website states it was licensed for worship in 1385.



Chris referred to a book by R M Clay "Hermits & Anchorites of England" in which there is a whole chapter on those dwelling in woods; many such chapels/hermitages exist in Devon and Cornwall. In the C12th a reaction to the excesses of large abbeys caused a return to the ideas of the "Desert Fathers" (think John the Baptist), forswearing material things. The presence of the spring, revered as a "Holy Well" in pre-Reformation times (and even pre-Christian?) is likely to be the reason for the specific site chosen. A few miles away is St Brannocks Well in Braunton. Could the original "chapel" have been for an "Anchorite"? (cf. Anchor Wood in Barnstaple – probably named after such a calling), sealing themselves away from the world, nothing to do with sea-faring.

*The spring issuing from below the chapel wall.*

After a picnic lunch by the chapel remains and spring, we speculated on foundations behind the fence near the RSPB notice-board. These were of concrete blocks – and a photo on the Historic England website shows an earlier wooden RSPB shed (confirming memories of some of the party) – mystery solved!

We then proceeded to the *much* more recent chapel of St. Anne's at Saunton. Unfortunately the prior arrangements made by Chris for the chapel to be unlocked had not worked – but Philip Milton came to the rescue, calling at the nearby Saunton Court, this producing a key.



*St Anne's chapel at Saunton*

Whilst waiting outside we noticed that the small porch at the west end partly obscured an arch built into the main west wall. We speculated this porch might have been added because of westerly gales! – but on reading wall plaques (and subsequently websites) found that while the chapel was built in 1895/6 as a chapel-of-ease, the intention was to enlarge to a full-sized church at a later date, hence the chancel arch to allow for a nave to be added.



*The beer stone font reputed to have come from the lost chapel of St Anne*

Construction is of the local “sand-rock” (naturally cemented Raised Beach sands) from the cliffs at Saunton, with an internal lining of Marland bricks and a simple timber roof. The land, building materials and windows were donated by W. Christie of Glyndebourne, the rest of the costs, including fittings, by Miss Mildred Mortlock-Brown, of Sanfield, Lobb.

Just inside the doorway is an old font, said to have come from the original St. Anne's Chapel, whose remains are lost under the dunes towards the south end of Braunton Burrows. The font may be of Beer Stone, a very uniform and easily carved variety of Chalk, as used in the West Front of Exeter Cathedral and many other locations.

This earlier St Anne's reputedly had a small village associated with it and was on the old road from Ilfracombe, down Hannaborough Lane (adjacent to the current chapel) and across the Burrows, linking with a ferry to Appledore, where there was probably an equivalent chapel (White, 2005, p.125). Possibly these chapels had lights to act as markers for the crossing?

St. Anne was the grandmother of Jesus and has been associated especially with seafarers. There are many dedications to her in SW England, and in Brittany she is associated with shipwrecks. The middle stained glass window (by Mary Lowndes) at the east end depicts St Anne, carrying a ship, standing on sand dunes with viper's bugloss flowers. Below her is a representation of the earlier chapel. The smaller windows either side depict St Agnes and St John.



A raised area immediately north of the chapel invoked speculation about its origin – though it may simply be spoil from a small quarry immediately to its north. An apparent “trench” to the south of the chapel may simply be the result of the “new” road to Croyde being created in Edwardian times..

References & Further Reading:

Spreacombe Chapel:

<https://www.spreacombe.com/spreacombe/history>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003853?section=official-list-entry>

[https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results\\_Single.aspx?uid=MDV244&resourceID=104&msckid=8bd8ce24b9a511ec889665c20003a48d](https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MDV244&resourceID=104&msckid=8bd8ce24b9a511ec889665c20003a48d)

“The Ancient Chapels of North Devon”, James Coulter (1993) pp.53-55

Transactions of the Devonshire Association, v.93 (1961) pp.16-18 (Brief summary of Barker’s excavations)

St. Anne’s Chapel

[https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results\\_Single.aspx?uid=MDV41805&resourceID=104&msckid=54d4ba2db97c11ec8771570e04ca742a](https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MDV41805&resourceID=104&msckid=54d4ba2db97c11ec8771570e04ca742a)

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1444584?section=official-list-entry>

[www.brauntonchurch.org/st-annes](http://www.brauntonchurch.org/st-annes)

North Devon Journal, 28-12-1928 “St. Anne’s Chapel, Saunton: A Tale of Blowing Sand” by Bruce Seymour.

“The South-West Highway Atlas for 1675”, Paul White (2005) pp.124-125

## **Barnstaple Excavations Publication project**

Steve Pitcher

In the autumn newsletter we reported on this project, which aims to publish the backlog of excavations of various sites in Barnstaple town centre. The main aim is to sort, analyse and publish the material on pottery that is currently in store.

The project has made some progress since then, with the Advisory Board agreeing a methodology for the work and a dialogue established with SWARCH over the initial stages. The project is led by the Barnstaple and North Devon Museum Development Trust, in partnership with NDAS and North Devon and Devon County Councils. This is a complex project which will have several stages. It will also need substantial funding and we are intending to submit a bid for National Lottery heritage funding to support the work. Currently we are commissioning SWARCH to carry out the preparatory tasks, mainly around the written material in the archives, and to prepare a project plan to support the Lottery bid.

If successful, we hope to start the main project towards the end of this year or the beginning of next year. At that point we will be calling for volunteers to help sort the physical archive. Watch this space!

## Weare Gifford: History Walks 2022.

Keith Hughes

Back in 2000, when we, as a community wrote the history of Weare Gifford, we thought we were heading for a 200 page A5 book, only to finish with two books, both A4 and with around 500 pages of village history! In addition we continued as the Weare Gifford History Project for another 15 years, and during that time followed up on many of the subjects covered in the two books, but also undertook 29 oral recordings of villagers, plus a comprehensive survey of all burials – as seen in the churchyard and from the burial registers. This is now available on-line.



*The medieval hall at Weare Gifford*

Some 20 plus years on, new folk have arrived in the village and in nearby towns, and we have been asked for an update and indeed a practical walk based around our history, - and what a history! From Mesolithic and Neolithic flints, to the Iron Age Berry Castle, to a suspected late Saxon influence, and on through to the Normans (hence Giffard – a French knight), and on to more modern times as, strangely, an industrial village.

This spring we undertook three of the five walk and talks, two taking in history from the Church and Medieval Hall south to the boundary with Torrington; and the third at Berry Castle, this in conjunction with The Friends of Berry Castle. We still have two coming up – one covering the Annery Kiln area – full of relics of past industries, while the last, yet to be agreed, will be a tour of Weare Gifford Hall. If you are interested in joining either of these last two, please contact me on [keith\\_willows@talktalk.net](mailto:keith_willows@talktalk.net) or 01237 475168.

## More North Devon Pottery from Newfoundland

John Bradbeer

I have written before about Barnstaple and Bideford's long connection with Newfoundland and suggested that the small Newfoundland town of Ferryland, about 70 kilometres south of St John's on the Avalon peninsula was a home from home for North Devon ships. A great volume of pottery and clay pipes from North Devon have been recovered from one of the largest and longest running archaeological excavations in Canada. At about the same time that Sir George Calvert sought to establish a colony at Ferryland in the 1620s, Bristol interests sent John Guy to what is now called Cupids Cove, on the western side of Conception Bay and about 35 kilometres due west of St John's. This was the first attempt by Bristol merchant interests to follow up their initial interests in Newfoundland from the original Cabot voyages at the very end of the fifteenth century. This attempt at colonisation failed, like most of the other formal plantations in Newfoundland, but the site remained popular with fishermen and is now a very small town. In the light of recent happenings in Bristol, it is

notable that one of the original settlers of 1610 was William Colston, probably a brother-in-law of John Guy, and an ancestor of Edward Colston, the Bristol slave-trader and philanthropist, whose statue attracted world-wide attention when it was toppled.

Given that Cupids Cove was a very early English settlement site, it is surprising that only in the last decade has systematic archaeological investigation been carried out. During 2018 several notable and interesting finds were made in pits dug adjacent to a probable seventeenth century storehouse. A large body fragment of a green glazed West Somerset ware cup was found and has been provisionally assessed by John Allan as coming from Nether Stowey. Also in the same context were two substantial pieces of a single large North Devon coarse ware tall pot, which presumably had come with the settlers and carried food supplies. It is known that John Guy and his party visited Minehead on their outward journey from Bristol, which would certainly explain the presence of West Somerset pottery in Newfoundland. Whether they also called at Barnstaple or Bideford is not known.

The excavations at Cupids Cove are continuing, and a little more North Devon ware was recovered in 2019, together with some clay pipe fragments which have not been identified as to place of production. Efforts proposed for the 2020 season were intended to focus on tracing the outline of the palisade known to have been erected in 1610/11 but the Newfoundland Provincial Archaeology Office's Annual Report for 2020 contains no mention of work at either Cupids Cove or Ferryland, perhaps reflecting the difficulties of working with restriction imposed by Covid-19.

#### **A reminder from our Treasurer and Membership Secretary:**

*If you haven't already renewed for the current year, may we remind you that annual subscriptions (£16 per individual adult member, joint membership (couples) £24, junior and student membership £8) became due on 1st April. Subscriptions should be sent to the NDAS Membership Secretary, Bob Shrigley, 20 Skern Way, Northam, Bideford, Devon. EX39 1HZ. You can save yourself the trouble of having to remember every year by completing a standing order, forms available from Bob.*

### **Talks for Winter 2022/3**

Apart from those designated 'by Zoom' all talks will be held in the Castle Centre at 7.30pm.

#### **18<sup>th</sup> October.** John Smith: *Roman Life*.

We welcome back John whose talk on the Roman Military several years ago had such a positive reaction. Those of you who experienced it will understand that it may not be possible to transmit this talk via Zoom (John does not use powerpoint but employs realia and demonstration to make his points).

#### **15<sup>th</sup> November.** Dave Edgecombe: *WW2 remains within the Coastal Heritage Project*.

We also welcome back Dave whose knowledge of the sites within the AONB is second to none. His particular interest is in World War II remains and this talk will complement the trip to Braunton Burrows in July as well as covering other sites in the AONB.

**17<sup>th</sup> January.** Jason Monaghan: *A Gallo-Roman Ship from Guernsey* (by Zoom).

A timely return to marine archaeology (personally speaking) with this talk on the nationally important C2 AD wreck. Jason is an author (5 archaeological thrillers) and archaeologist (Phd from the Institute of Archaeology). He was formerly head of Heritage Services in Guernsey.

**21<sup>st</sup> February.** Janet Daynes: *The Moistown Excavations*

Janet is the Site Director (ACE Archaeology) at Moistown, a medieval and post-medieval site near Winkleigh. The Moistown Project began back in 2008 and in recent years, interim reports have been regularly published of the excavations and a considerable corpus of information has been built up.

**7<sup>th</sup> March.** Chris Smart. *New Discoveries in the Taw Valley* (by Zoom).

Chris is a Research Associate at Exeter University. He currently manages the National Lottery Heritage Fund project 'Understanding Landscapes' which is engaging the public in research on Roman and medieval landscapes in Devon and Cornwall. Included in this talk will also be an exclusive reveal of the latest Lidar discoveries from the project.

**21<sup>st</sup> March** AGM + social evening and book sale (details nearer the time).

**18<sup>th</sup> April.** Nick Arnold. *The Appledore Civil War Fort*.

Nick is an author and historian. He has written the successful Horrible Science Series and also 'Awesome Archaeology'. He is well known in Appledore for his involvement with the Book Festival as well as for his research into the Northam battlefield site and the Civil War Fort and for leading resistance to housing development in those locations.

TG.