

# Tamar

Journal of the Friends of the Tamar Valley
Number 42 - 2020

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**Number 42 – 2020**

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Cover photo: Inlet at Salter Mill, near Cargreen, with Tamar and Weir Quay Boatyard in the distance, November, 11th 2020
*Clive Charlton*

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## EDITORIAL

We hope this 42nd edition of *Tamar* finds readers as well as possible at the close of this decidedly strange year. For some, life will doubtless have been challenging, although perhaps for many there has been extra stimulus and opportunities to explore further the landscapes surrounding our namesake river.

As always, **many thanks to our authors**, without whose enthusiasm and research work the journal would of course be impossible. I hope their efforts are reflected as faithfully as possible in the pages that follow. My apologies for any editorial glitches, and also in the case of some contributions, for the long delay between submission and the emergence of *Tama*r 2020 (no blame can be attached to the pandemic for this!). As should be obvious, the binding of Tamar 2020 departs from previous practice, following the recommendation of our helpful printers, The Printing Press. Besides permitting additional pages, the binding used should allow for a neater finish.

Our opening article, on Dartmoor sheep, comes from Friends member, Malcolm Thompson, based on his extensive knowledge and personal experience of this important aspect of our local farming heritage. Although the principal focus is Dartmoor, the breeds and breeders he describes have also played a part in the farming scene in the Tamar Valley - as depicted in the delightful opening photo of Malcolm's own flock at Latchley. A much more detailed account of the history of Dartmoor sheep can be found in Malcolm's book on the topic, as described as an addendum to his article.

We are very pleased to include an article by Sue Andrew who - as many readers will know - is the busy Chair of the Devonshire Association[1]. Sue delves into the story of her great grandfather, an agricultural worker who lived in the ancient West Devon hamlet of Bradstone, set in the tranquil country not far from Greystone Bridge. Besides giving a

[1] The Devonshire Association website https://devonassoc.org.uk/ is well worth exploring. It includes online access to a range of publications on Devon, especially part articles and even whole editions of the DA's 'Transactions'.

evocative and interesting insight into a vanished rural world, the article features an area that has been under-represented in past editions of *Tamar*.

Local family roots also underpin the following article - by Keith Loze, whose forbears lived at Drakewalls. Keith deploys his considerable expertise and enthusiasm concerning the area's mining history in an account of the career of the mine engineer and manager, Ernest Terrell. He sets this within the wider context of the evolution of wolfram mining and the processing of tungsten from the ore. The article covers the important mines at Drakewalls and Gunnislake Clitters, before moving on to feature Terrell's role in the development of mining at Hemerdon on the fringes of Dartmoor. Keith had an important input into the recent book 'Plymouth: Bronze Age to Today' by Chris Robinson, which includes detailed coverage of Hemerdon.

Recent years have seen a rapid rise in awareness of the dark legacy of the transatlantic slave trade of the 17th and 18th centuries. Anthony Tibbles explores the involvement of Plymouth and the Tamar Valley in this notorious part of our history. For the Tamar Valley, the particular connection was perhaps indirect. From the early 17th century, copper was being mined in the area. Much of the output went to Bristol, where it was used to produce copper trade items that were exchanged for slaves on the coast of West Africa. However, our area also played a role in the campaign to abolish the slave trade, notably through the work of Plymouth Quaker and MP, William Elford.

Our focus then switches to a very current concern; Valerie Darwall of the Tamar Valley Invasives Group describes the ongoing endeavours to eliminate 'Britain's most dangerous plant' - the Giant Hogweed. The plant is notorious for its serious toxic effect on skin, as well as its tendency to shade out less-dominant species. In its aim to combat the plant in the Tamar Valley area, the Giant Hogweed Eradication Project has produced very encouraging results. The enterprise is a partnership between the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Tamar Valley AONB.

The AONB reached its 'silver anniversary' in 2020. Charlotte Dancer outlines some of the ways the occasion has been celebrated, including

the launch of commemorative local beer and liqueurs, as well as the launch of the new Tamar Valley AONB logo. Charlotte's article also includes an interesting photo of the AONB's headquarters at Drakewalls that was taken from above using a drone.

The final article this year is provided by the editor. I am fascinated by the events and background associated with the accidental death of the antiquarian artist, Charles Stothard in St.Andrew's church, Bere Ferrers in May 1821. The approach of the 200th anniversary seemed to justify an outline of this melancholy event. Stothard was a highly-talented artist, who had become well known nationally as an illustrator of church monuments. He was still relatively young when he died. An extra dimension to the tale is that his widow, Anna Eliza, remarried - to become the well-known, prolific author 'Mrs Bray', wife of the Rev. Bray of Tavistock.

I have included an edited extract from the 16th century antiquary and traveller, John Leland, who visited the Tamar Valley area during his 'itinerary' through the West of England in 1542. If nothing else, it provides reassurance for those whose spelling skills are suspect!

Thanks are due once again to Helen Wilson for providing her summaries of Friends meetings held in 2019. Sadly, there will be fewer such meetings to describe in 2021, given the disruptions in 2020.

Finally, I would be delighted to hear from any reader who is willing to write an article for next year's Tamar. The range of possible topics is wide, although the following would be especially welcome: aspects of the Cornwall bank of the 'lower' Tamar Valley (e.g. Botus Fleming, Landulph), the 'upper' Tamar Valley (north of Greystone Bridge), the Lynher and its tributaries, water mills on the Tamar system and local road transport in the first half of the 20th century.

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# Dartmoor Sheep

***Malcolm Thompson***



Fig.1 *The author's flock grazing at Latchley, overlooking the Tamar Valley towards Devon.*

## Origins

During the latter part of the 19th century the West Country breeds of sheep that we know today were being established. To the north of the Tamar Valley, the West Country Mountain sheep had evolved into the ***Exmoor Horn***. On lowland pastures, Exmoor Notts were crossed with Bampton Notts and the 'new Leicesters' to produce a sheep with long but soft wool. This type, the ***Devon Closewool,*** was officially recognised as a breed society in 1923.

By 1900 and into the 20th century, two Devon longwool breeds were established: the smaller Devons to the North of Devon and into Cornwall, and the South Devons in the South Hams. When in 1977 there were only

30 flocks of the former left, the breeds amalgamated and formed the current ***Devon and Cornwall Longwool Flock Book***.

On Dartmoor and its immediate vicinity, a divergence in the Dartmoor sheep was developing between the sheep that grazed the moor all the year and those that spent the winters on the lower 'in-bye' land. The moorland type continued to be bred by the moorland farmers, but it was not until 1951 that a breed society was formed and the ***Whiteface Dartmoor*** or Widdecombe was officially recognised. Meanwhile the sheep overwintering off the moor were called the ***Improved Dartmoors***, which over the years have become known as the ***Greyface Dartmoor***. These overwintering sheep were initially bred on the land to the west of the moor from Okehampton down to Tavistock and beyond in the Tamar Valley.

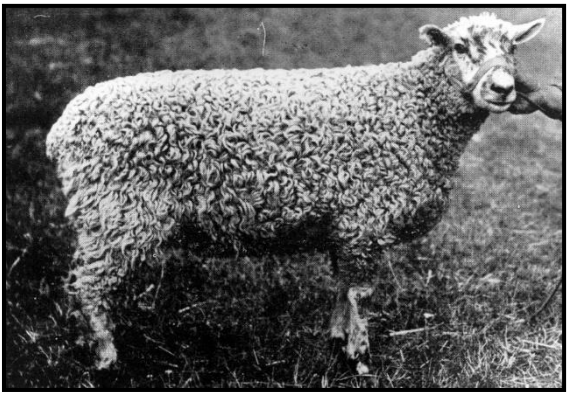

Fig. 2 *Dartmoor ewe – early 1900s.*

In the years either side of the turn of the century many sheep breeders in this area spoke of the need for an association to supervise the breeding of these Improved Dartmoors. However, it was not until 1909 at a meeting at the Bedford Hotel, Tavistock, that 'The Dartmoor Sheepbreeders and Flock Book Association' was formed, with its headquarters at Tavistock.

**Early Days**

Once the Association was established, the main duty of the Council was the appointment of Judges/Inspectors to carry out the work of evaluating flocks and to pass those suitable into the Flock Book. To this end, early in 1910 a tour of inspection throughout Devon and Cornwall was carried out.

Between 5000 and 6000 sheep passed the test for entry to the Flock book. The sheep were tattooed or given ear studs by the Secretary who also acted as recorder – quite a job! The inspection of rams continues to this day. One early flock was that listed under H.R.H. The Prince of Wales who had two flocks: No.61, at Home Farm, Stoke Climsland and No.62, at Bellever, Postbridge. In 1926 he was given life membership of the Association and was still listed as such when King in 1936.

**Links to today**

Forty-seven members are listed in the first flock book and 37 of these founding members were from the West of Dartmoor in an area bounded by Okehampton and Tavistock. Two were over the Tamar in Cornwall. The others were from South Brent and Cornwood. Some of these original flock owners have direct links to the flocks of today. Mrs P. McNicol, daughter of W. Hawkins of Crease Farm, Tavistock and grand-daughter of J. Ball, Flock No.3, is a current member of the Association. R. R. Dawe of Ford Barton, Sydenham, Flock No.8, is the grandfather of Read Dawe who had the Southcombe Flock No.15 until 2000. R. R. Dawe was also grandfather of Mary Dawe, wife of Pearce Dawe Flock No.236 which is now run by her son, William Dawe at Langford Farm in Lamerton.



Fig 3. *Dockwell No 15 Champion, at Tavistock in 1922.*

Another local connection is through P. Luce of Lamerton, whose Dockwell No.15 was Champion at the 1922 Tavistock show and sale. This ram was used to start Mr. A. Alford's flock, No.135 Cardwell.

Ninety-four years later his great, great, grand-daughter showed the champion ram at Exeter which sold for 1775 guineas (£1837.50) - a breed association record (Fig.4).



Fig.4 *Georgie Rogers with the record breaking 'Cardwell' ram, Exeter, 2016.*

**Showing**

Showing was clearly important, as members wished to publicise the newly established breed type. The Royal Society of England agreed to put on classes for improved Dartmoor Sheep at their Show in Gloucester in 1909 and their show in Liverpool in 1910. This was quite a way to travel for Devon breeders in those days. The first local show providing Dartmoor classes was Cornwood, also in 1910; the show is still going today, it is run by the present secretary of the DSBA, Mrs Ann Willcox.

The sheep being shown in 1911 were different from those seen today. They had a finer conformation. Their faces showed smudges of grey,

rather than black spots and their coat appears to have consisted of tightly curled lustre wool.

In 1911 the Association held a Special Show for registered Dartmoor sheep. This became a regular event and became linked to the annual St.Johns Fair in Tavistock which continued until the 1990s. Fig.5 shows the Cundy family from Lamerton walking their sheep to St John's Fair in Tavistock in 1959. The boy in the picture still sells through Tavistock market but does not now go on foot!



Fig.5 *The Cundy family walking sheep from Lamerton to Tavistock, 1959.*

**Breed expansion**

In 1921 breeders were looking to export sheep abroad. Fifty sheep were exported to Canada by Mr. Kingwell, while others were exported to the USA and South Africa. A representative of the Ministry of Agriculture in Japan, who was himself a flock master, visited Dartmoor flocks and indicated the breed would do well in Japan. In the aftermath of the war the government had formed a 'Relief of the Allies Committee' whose task it was to buy livestock for resettlement onto farms in devastated areas in

France and Belgium. In 1921 two Dartmoor rams and 90 ewes were purchased by the committee for export to Europe.

Towards the end of the 1920s and early 1930s, agriculture in the UK was suffering a general depression. Nevertheless, the number of ewes registered was still around 2000–2500 a year.

**Breed Peak**

After the Second World War, the numbers increased year on year as the country recovered. Not even the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 1947 stopped the rise, and the number of ewes registered reached a peak of over 7000 in 1959.

To meet the demand for the breed, more official sales were held – at Tavistock, Okehampton, South Brent, Ashburton and Kingsbridge (Fig.6). In 1953, 162 Dartmoor rams from 34 different vendors were entered at South Brent. A day later at Tavistock a further 36 rams were forwarded. These were great days for the breed association, which celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1959 with a dinner in Plymouth attended by many of the farming community from the South West and beyond. A life membership was given to Mr J Wootton, from Cornwood, Flock No. 44, who had been present at the inaugural meeting at the Bedford Hotel in Tavistock.

**Breed decline**

After the U.K. joined the European Community, Dartmoor breed numbers fell. The market demand was for early maturing lamb and fine wool which the Dartmoor could not provide. Serge was out of fashion and carpet wool, which the Dartmoor fleece did provide, was needed less and less because artificial fibres such as rayon and polypropylene were preferred, as they produced cheap, hard wearing carpets.

The 1980s was the low point for the sale of Dartmoors; as a headline in the Western Morning News of September 1984 stated:

**'GREY DAYS for GREY- FACE'**



Fig.6 *Ram sale in the Show field at South Brent in the 1960s.*

However, in 1987 the breed was given support by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. As a result, the sheep were taken up in small flocks nationwide. Since then, the number of breeding ewes has increased and have hovered around 1500. However, the numbers of flocks breeding Dartmoors in Devon has continued to decline, as have the other four local native breeds.



Fig.7 *Dartmoor ram shown at the RBST Show at Stoneleigh in 1988.*



Fig.8 *The new hassocks at Buckland Abbey, Devon.*

**The breed today**

With just over 150 flocks kept throughout the country the breed is not now in danger of becoming extinct. Most of the flocks are small and kept by enthusiasts as a hobby and for showing. A slow-growing breed, it traditionally provided mutton – a dish that is once again increasing in popularity.

Wool is also being used in a variety of ways by local craft producers. For example, a one-off use for the wool was for the hassocks provided for the chapel at Buckland Abbey (Fig.8). These were designed by Jane Schofield and made from the wool of her Dartmoor sheep. They depict the coats of arms of families involved with Buckland over the centuries.

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**Editor's note**

Malcolm Thompson's article is distilled from his book **'The Greyface Dartmoor Sheep: a Century of Improvement'**, published by the Dartmoor Sheep Breeders Association in 2018. It is a wonderfully detailed account of the evolution of the Dartmoor Sheep breed from the early 20th century to the present. Besides the changing fortunes of the breed itself, the book covers the development of the Association, the tremendous efforts made to popularise the Dartmoor sheep, and its presentation and successes in agricultural shows. There is a rich array of fascinating photographs of splendid sheep and the characters in the farming community who have nurtured them with such pride over the years. Malcolm's book will be of great interest for anybody intrigued by sheep, and likewise for those with a passion for Dartmoor and neighbouring territory, including the Tamar Valley. For those who love both sheep and Dartmoor, the book is a must!

The **Dartmoor Sheep Breeders Association website** is at https://greyface-dartmoor.org.uk/

# Earth to Earth: the story of an agricultural labourer in Bradstone in the nineteenth century

***Sue Andrew***

There are places we are drawn to time and time again. One such place, for me, is Bradstone, a small parish of 1257 acres, set high above the wooded Tamar Valley eight miles north west of Tavistock. With its rolling fields and hedgebanks, its ancient church dedicated to St Nonna, its manor farm, and pinnacled seventeenth-century gatehouse – surely one of the most beautiful buildings in Devon – the settlement seems undisturbed by the vagaries of modern life.



Fig.1 *Bradstone parish church in autumn*.

The churchyard on a bright crisp autumn day is a haven of peace and tranquility (Fig.1). I first visited many years ago with my mother looking for the gravestone of her great grandfather, Robert Payne. We did not find a stone for there was none to be found – it was beyond the family's means – yet the search initiated a fascinating voyage of discovery that brought home to me how hard life could be in nineteenth-century rural Devon.

The story is fragmentary, being pieced together from various official records and contemporary accounts of local life. It is not a tale of heroic deeds which so often feature in historical biographies, but a story of one man's steady toil as an agricultural labourer, rising from a deeply disadvantaged background to provide stability for his own family in a tied cottage in Bradstone (Fig. 2).



Fig.2 *The tied cottage wherein lived the Payne family. It lies across a field to the south of Bradstone Manor farm.*

Robert, the 'base born son' of Elizabeth Payne (Pain), was baptized in Lamerton in May 1807. He had at least one older brother, and probably two more, all of whom were born out of wedlock. Elizabeth and her sons appear to have had a particularly hard life. In the Lamerton Overseers of the Poor Account Book 1798–1812 the family was frequently recorded as being in receipt of payments[2]:

[2] Lamerton Overseers of the Poor Account Book 1798–1812, PWDRO 889/23.

*May 1808: Bastardy. E. Pain's 2 children 12s. Pair of shoes for d[itt]o 4s.*

*September 1809: Eliz. Pain – a pair of shoes. Her boy a jacket and trousers.*

*July and August 1810: Eliz. Pain in distress.*

*March 1811: Eliz. Pain to pay for a blanket 5 [shillings]*

*April 1812: That Eliz. Pain be allowed sixpence per week in addition to her pay and a pair of shoes for her child.*

In July 1814, at the age of 7, Robert was apprenticed to James Palk, yeoman, of Cumbepark, for a period of twenty-one years.[3] Little of his life is known for the next nineteen years, until, in 1833, he married Maria, the widow of James Youlden, a labourer at Eastacott, Dunterton. Neither groom nor bride could write as their names in the register are accompanied by 'his mark' and 'her mark'.

Maria already had a daughter, and six more children were born at Eastacott between 1833 and 1848 – four sons and two daughters. Tragically two of the children died, presumably of disease, in October 1842 – a daughter Eliza, aged 5, and a few days later, a son, James, aged 3. The children are recorded as being buried eight days apart in Dunterton churchyard.

Sometime between 1848 and 1851 Robert and his family moved the short distance from Dunterton to Bradstone, where he was employed to work at Bradstone Barton (known now as Bradstone Manor farm). The manor belonged to the Clobery family from *c.*1370 until 1740, during which time the exquisite gatehouse was built (Fig.3).

[3] Lamerton Parish Apprentices Book, PWDRO 889/26.



Fig.3 *Seventeenth-century gatehouse to Bradstone Manor.*

While the manor changed hands on several occasions after the mid-eighteenth century, it was invariably let as a tenanted farm. In the mid-nineteenth century, possibly around the time the Payne family moved to Bradstone, many of the older farm buildings shown on the tithe map of 1839 were demolished, and new agricultural buildings constructed, including a cattle shed, large bank barn and horse engine house which can still be seen today.

When Robert and Maria Payne came to Bradstone, three children were still at home, and two more, a daughter and a son would be born in the cottage there. Although there is little direct evidence relating to their lives, other than the bald facts stated in the census and birth records, an excellent description of the parish, including its agriculture and the work of its

labourers, was recorded by the Rector, Thomas Johnes, in 1840.[4] Johnes noted that there were eight 'good and substantial' farmhouses in the parish, but that the cottages for the workers were 'indifferent and much too small'. The parish had around 2000 sheep, 48 horses nearly all of which were employed 'in husbandry', and 180 cattle. The soil was 'favourable for rearing poultry, and most of the cottagers have bees'. The fields were managed thus:

> *A lay or old field was velled with the plough i.e. a thin layer of earth together with the grass was turned over; or it was spaded by hand and left some time to rot; it was then collected into heaps, burned and the ashes… thrown abroad; the field was then dressed with the usual quantity of lime [the nearest points of supply for which were Morwellham, Newquay and Gawton], ploughed and sown with wheat. About Christmas the following year, the wheat Eddish, was ploughed for a winter's fallow [and sown] with barley the ensuing spring; then again winter fallowed, and the third year sown with oats and clover and hever seeds to make the lay; the following year the clover was out and the field then left to recover by the lapse of time, in order to enable it to undergo the same barbarous course.*

Johnes records that the 'price of agricultural labour is nine shillings per week for a man, four shillings for a woman. The women pick stones in the spring corn fields, weed turnips and assist in the harvest', which, he notes, could vary by up to two months depending on the weather.

Amid the constant toil of the agricultural year, bringing home the harvest was an undoubted highlight. A delightful account of Bradstone's harvest festival celebrations of 1863, which the Payne family must have attended, reveals the parish community at its best:

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[4] Tavistock Statistical Society Account of the Parish of Bradstone, by Thomas Johnes, 1840, transcript copy, 1929, Westcountry Studies Library, sB/BRA 3/1840/JOH.

*At Bradstone, Devon…the church tower, the church green, the farmers' corn ricks, and the Rector's grounds, were bright on St Michel's Eve, with flags and streamers. The bells of the church were pealed merrily at intervals from early morning till late at night. The sun shone clear and warm from morn till eve…At 3pm the Rector, with a large body of adult parishioners, as well as the children and many of his friends, walked to the church from the Rectory in procession, led by a band…Then commenced Evensong…all the farmers of the parish [were present], with their families and many other persons, so that after the church was crowded to the fullest there was a large crowd in the churchyard. After Evensong followed the tea, about 300 sitting down…Most of the famers, and not a few labourers, contributed liberally in every way they could…Tea being over, a concert of songs carefully selected as being thanksgivings to God for the fruits of the earth… were remarkably well sung…At the same time there were innocent games, free from immodest romping and other coarsenesses, provided for persons of more active temperament in a field sufficiently distant. Then followed…a display of fireworks – rockets, Roman candles, blue-fire, red-fire, fire balloons etc…Thus ended a bright and happy day, perhaps the brightest and happiest and most hopeful day that had visited Bradstone parish for the last century.*[5]

The account records that offerings from the harvest celebrations were to be directed towards the restoration of the church. Sadly, during restoration in the later nineteenth century, much of the surviving medieval woodwork in the church was cleared away and the interior is now quite plain, save some eighteenth-century roof bosses and interesting twentieth-century Pinwill carving in the chancel. Yet a watercolour reveals how the church would have looked to the Payne family – with carved oak bench ends and oak chancel screen from the pre-Reformation period, and an unusual font

[5] *John Bull,* October 10th, 1863, p.5

cover, Royal Arms, box pews, and a tall pulpit and sounding board from later periods (Fig.4).[6]

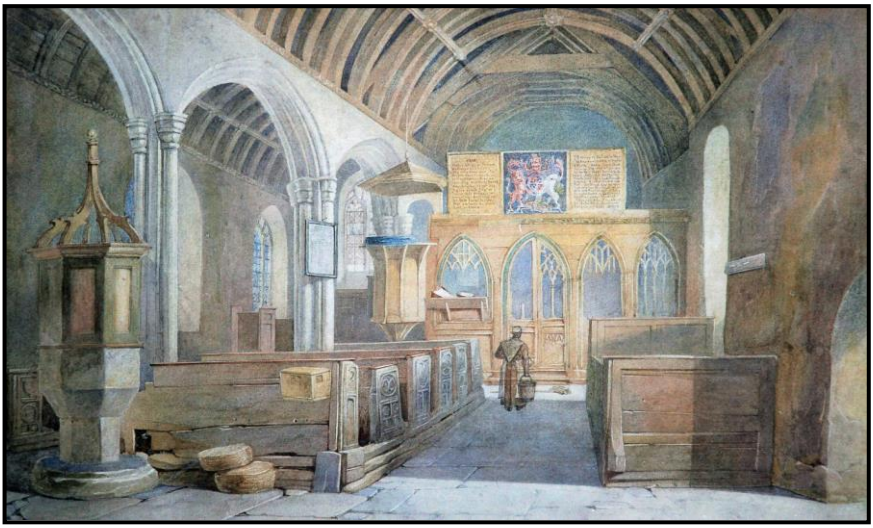

Fig.4 *Nineteenth-century watercolour, possibly by Thomas Johnes, of interior of St Nonna's church, Bradstone, prior to its restoration.*

Medieval roof bosses survive in the church porch, including a fine profiled head with foliage streaming from its mouth. The foliate head may originally have referred to casting out of sin and the sacrament of penance but has since become the subject of much modern myth-making following its twentieth-century appellation as the 'Green Man'.

Although the tenant farmers at Bradstone Barton came and went during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Robert Payne continued in his employ there. Around 1870, he was joined in his work by James, his youngest son, and my great-grandfather. James was born in Bradstone in 1853 and named after his elder brother who had died at Eastacott, Dunterton, just over ten years earlier. James had the benefit of some

[6] The watercolour, possibly by Thomas Johnes, hangs on the south wall of Bradstone church near its west end.

formal education – he is recorded as a scholar in the census of 1861 – and so, unlike his father and mother, he learned to read and write. While in the census of 1871 he is recorded as an agricultural labourer, letters composed four years later show that James was about to embark on a different path.[7]

The first letter, dated March 29th, 1875, was written by George Armitage, a farmer of 280 acres resident at Bradstone Hall – the barton – where he employed three men. Armitage wrote:

> Sir, I have known James Payne for 7 years, 3 of which he was employed on Bradstone Barton and was an obliging, steady, industrious, trustworthy servant and capable of adapting himself to fulfil an important situation.

What was this 'important situation'? Another letter, written at Kelly Rectory by Reverend Henry John Morshead, J.P. for Devon and Cornwall, reveals all:

> I have known James Payne from the cradle, he comes of a good stock and bears an excellent character. My opinion of him is that he will do well in the Police Force.

James Payne did indeed leave his life on the land at Bradstone, becoming a police constable in Alphington, near Exeter, and later moving to Aylesbeare and Plymstock. He married and raised his own family of six sons and one daughter.

Robert Payne was still recorded living in Bradstone and working as an agricultural labourer at the age of 74 in the census of 1881. He died in December of that year, and his wife Maria moved to Devonport to live with one of her sons. She died in 1884 and was taken back to Bradstone for burial with Robert.

[7] The letters of reference for James Payne are privately owned.

Walking the ancient path from Bradstone church down to the River Tamar at Greystone Bridge, or along the lanes around the old barton, I walk in the footsteps of my ancestors. Comparatively little has changed in the landscape in a hundred and seventy years – wild flowers grow in profusion in the hedges in spring, the swallows build their nests in the church porch in summer, autumn brings fruits and mists, and in winter the bare land rests. And as the seasons turn, Robert and Maria Payne, in their resting place in the churchyard, have become one with the land they served so well.

## The Tamar Valley as the cradle of tungsten processing – and how Ernest Terrell acquired and transferred mining skills to Hemerdon Mine

*Keith Loze*

My interest in mines and minerals was stimulated by my grandfather Gilbert Loze, who originally lived opposite Delaware School on the edge of Drakewalls Mine. He had worked at the Duchy Mine on Kit Hill during WW1 in the quest to obtain tungsten and tin for the war effort. He was however not the first member of the Loze family to be involved in mining; there had been three generations in Tamar Valley copper mining before him. That lifetime interest led me to be a researcher for Chris Robinson's 'Plymouth: Bronze Age to Today'[8], which includes an in-depth study of the tungsten deposit at Hemerdon Mine, near Plympton.

The mines of the Tamar Valley were in the forefront of tungsten developments from the very start, not only with respect to mining but also in developing processing methods. Pioneering work, especially at Drakewalls Mine, Gunnislake, became an important underpinning for later development at Hemerdon, notably through the influence of local mine engineer and manager Ernest Terrell.

### The evolution of tungsten

Tungsten is not found as a native element; it is processed by the reduction of tungsten minerals, which are:

Tungstite $WO_3.H_2O$
Wolframite (Fe Mn)$Wo_4$
Hübnerite $MnWO_4$
Ferberite $FeWO_4$
Scheelite $CaWO_4$

[8] Chris Robinson, *Plymouth – Bronze Age to Today. How Dartmoor Tin put Britain's Ocean City on the Map*, Pen & Ink Publishing, Plymouth, 2019.

In both Devon and Cornwall, wolfram occurs in association with tin (cassiterite). However, for many years, tungsten had little or no commercial value, particularly during the West Country mining boom of the early 1800s, when wolfram was considered as a source of contamination. In fact, when tin was concentrated it would lose value per ton if it was found to contain even low percentages of wolfram. Such ore was very difficult to process using traditional methods, as both tin and wolfram have similar high specific gravity (average 7.0 and 7.3 respectively). Therefore, if wolfram was found during mining, the 'old men' would typically leave it underground or discard it onto the burrows during processing.

The use and processing of tungsten was well summed up by the Tungsten Institute in 1955[9]: "It is indispensable in war, important in peace and extremely difficult to wrest from nature. It is a rare element…Even when it is laboriously concentrated by complicated processes from reluctant ores, this trioxide must be further refined for commercial use in alloys or as a pure metal… Tungsten carbide is second only to diamond, the hardest metallic substance".

Once uses for tungsten were discovered, the Gunnislake area of the Tamar Valley arguably became the cradle of tungsten production, when not just one but three processes were developed at local mines. The first was the Oxland Process, then the introduction of shaking tables at the Drakewalls Mine, followed by a newer process at Gunnislake Clitters Mine, just a few miles away, where the local Terrell family of mining engineers worked with new technology prior to the First World War[10]. Subsequently, one of

[9] Mildred Gwyn Andrews, *Tungsten: the Story of an Indispensable Metal*, The Tungsten Institute, Washington D.C., 1955.

[10] Further details of the important contribution of Ernest Terrell to the development of mining technology in the Tamar Valley can be found in Helen Wilson's article 'Ernest Terrell: A Tamar Valley Mine Engineer', in *Tamar,* Vol.37, 2015.

the Terrell brothers was to become responsible for the tungsten mine at Hemerdon. Even during the Second World War, another member of the family was a manager at the Prince of Wales Mine, Harrowbarrow, which processed tin and tungsten brought in from surrounding mines, the processed ore then being sent to Hemerdon Mine.

The first mention of tungsten in the official mineral statistics was in 1858, when tungsten acid and tungstate of soda were sold at Drakewalls Mine and Kit Hill. The following year 26½ tons of tungsten was sold from Kit Hill United for £293.

Further records for the Tamar Valley area include:

| DATE | WORTH £ | MINE | TONS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1855-60 | 312 | Kit Hill | 46 |
| 1861-70 | 653 | Kit Hill | 51 |
| 1871-80 | 164 | Kit Hill | 15 |
| 1881-90 | 30 | Holmbush | 3 |
| 1891-1900 | 528 | East Kit Hill Mine | 11 |
| 1891-1900 | 39 | Bedford United | 1 |
| 1901-1910 | 12,617 | Hingston Down | 118 |
| 1901-1910 | 240 | Redmoor | 2 |

As more uses for tungsten were developed, production had to increase, as did the average price per ton:

1855-1900 £21 per ton
1901-1910 £85 per ton
1911-1912 £90 per ton

**Developments at Drakewalls**

The ancient mine of Drakewalls, which was to become well-known for its technical innovations, was also once the richest tin mine in the area,

having its own smelter. The nearby settlement of Albaston arose in conjunction with this mine, with the construction of shops, a chapel, brewery, the Queens Head Hotel and many cottages.

In 1847, Drakewalls became the first mine in Cornwall to use gravity separation shaking tables to process ore, introduced by the celebrated mine manager and metallurgist Percival Norton Johnson, who had become a director of the Drake Walls Mining Company (sic) by 1845[11]. Crushed ore and water were fed onto the tables as a slurry, the shaking movement separating the different ores and waste material by their different densities[12]. Johnson had visited Saxony between 1826 and 1830, where he acquainted himself with ore processing, especially the use of 'bumping tables' (i.e. shaking tables). He was later to introduce these devices to both Drakewalls Mine and South Hooe – they were said to be the first to be installed in Devon and Cornwall mines. Remarkably, similar tables were used at Hemerdon Mine by Wolf Minerals in 2018.

**The Oxland Process**

The year 1854 saw another process introduced at Drakewalls, developed by the chemist and metallurgist, Robert Oxland, who lived at 8 Portland Square, Plymouth[13]. Oxland had patented his manufacturing process for extracting sodium tungstate, tungstic acid, and the metal tungsten itself in 1847. A decade later, this time with inestimable consequences, he

[11] McDonald, D., 1951. *Percival Norton Johnson. The Biography of a Pioneer Metallurgist*. Johnson, Matthey & Co. Ltd, London. Johnson was the founder of the international mining company, Johnson, Matthey.

[12] Interestingly enough, this type of processing is still used around the world today. Tables are manufactured by Holman Wilfley in Redruth; they recently supplied tables to Wolf Minerals at Hemerdon for the processing of tin and tungsten at their Drakelands Mine, Hemerdon.

[13] Portland Square at that time comprised of rather grand houses; they are sadly no more, as their site is now part of the University of Plymouth campus.

followed up with a further new process for producing a very hard alloy of tungsten steel.

His process was described by Collings in the Mining Journal of 1915[14]. It included the 'burnt whits'[15] being buddled or tabled (on a shaking table) to get rid of silica or other light waste, then mixed with soda ash in the proportion of about 50% of wolfram present, then heated to a considerable temperature in a reverberatory furnace for several hours, and stirred during the process, thus converting the wolfram into tungstate of soda. The mass is then thrown into lixiviating vats, to separate into soluble and insoluble components through percolation. The solution is drawn off into evaporating pans, where the tungsten is crystallised out. Dr.Oxland's process is also recorded in detail in the catalogue of the 'Industry of All Nations' The Great Exhibition of 1851[16]. He exhibited a case containing illustrations of tin ore containing wolfram and also with it having been removed. Frank Booker, in 'Industrial Archaeology of the Tamar Valley'[17] recorded that the machinery for this process was erected at Drakewalls at Dr.Oxland's own expense, and as he was positive his process was going to work, he also provided the necessary soda free of charge.

[14] J.H.Collins, Tin and tungsten in the West of England, *Mining Magazine*, October 1915.

[15] The concentrate from the mill destined for burning in a calciner was termed 'witts' (or 'whits').

[16] *Official descriptive and illustrated catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations,* 1851, via: https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001511517

[17] Frank Booker, *The Industrial Archaeology of the Tamar Valley*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1967.

Pepper's 'Playbook of Metals'[18] in 1866 refers to Oxland thus: 'it [tungsten] has lately been applied with success by Dr.Oxland of Plymouth in the manufacture of the hardest steel, which it is said will bore through and file ordinary steel. Pepper also noted that 'Oxland should be consulted on armour for ships', which underlines how this was an historic landmark moment for the birth of tungsten steel. He also hinted: '…since Oxland has discovered a mode for separating the tin from wolfram it is now likely that the price of wolfram should take a respectable position in the metal market'… prophetic words. More patents were to follow, this time for improvements in calcining of ores, with John Hocking of Redruth helping (registered in 1875).

The Germans, however, were ahead of the game when it came to mining technology and especially processing. Around 1900, wolfram / tungsten processing was to be even more improved by the use of magnetic separation. About that time, they also had their own wolfram mine, the only mine outside Devon and Cornwall to produce the mineral, which was paradoxically not in Germany – it was the Carrock mine in Cumbria. This mine was a sole-producer (i.e. only wolfram) that was first worked in 1854, and was known as 'Carrock Mines Ltd' in 1902, but fell idle in 1905. It was then re-opened by two Germans, William Boss and Frederick Boehm, trading as Cumbrian Mining Co. Ltd. However, they also ceased trading in 1911, when British relations with Germany were deteriorating, although production recommenced as the Carrock Mining Syndicate under a group of steel manufacturers, until operations ceased again in 1917.

**The Terrell family**

The Terrell family of mining engineers were to play an important part in the ongoing development of tungsten in the Tamar Valley and beyond, and were well known in the Gunnislake and Calstock area for over 150

[18] John Henry Pepper, *The Playbook of Metals,* London, Routledge, London. 1866. https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008899537

years. The first mention of the family was in 1794, when Samuel Terrell, the captain of Drakewalls Mine, was mentioned in an advert in the Sherborne and Yeovil Mercury of March 3rd 1794: "To be let, all that well-known tine and copper mine commonly called known by the name of Drakewalls. The said mine hath been let for the time past at 8/6 in the pound, clear to proprietors. For further particulars apply to Captain Samuel Terrell at the said mine".

But the Terrell we are particularly interested in here is Ernest Terrell, a descendant of Steven Terrell, born 1821 in Redruth, a copper miner who moved to Calstock. Here, with Emily (nee Bray) from Bodmin, he produced nine children, all born in Calstock. Ernest was born in 1879 in Gunnislake to Stephen and Emma, Stephen being listed as 'captain tin dresser', living in the Wheal Arthur account house near Albaston (1881 census).

Ernest was educated in Gunnislake. On leaving school he commenced work at the crushing and concentrating plant of Drakewalls Mine, where he remained for about two years. In 1897, he won a county mining scholarship to the Camborne School of Mines, tenable for three years. By 1901 he was living in Chapel Street in Gunnislake, next to Fernleigh Villa. He had married a Calstock girl, Mabel Annie, the previous year in Tavistock. It is also recorded that in 1903, he had joined the Freemasons.

**Terrell at Gunnislake Clitters**

Having completed his mining course, he obtained the appointment of assistant manager at Clitters United Mines, Gunnislake. Always willing to impart knowledge, he was also appointed as a lecturer and demonstrator at the county mining science classes at Gunnislake, both of which appointments he held until 1907.

Clitters Mine was then a very modern operation, having been formed in 1900. Here, Ernest gained valuable experience working with both tin and wolfram concentration. The mine's particular focus was on re-processing

local dumps containing material that had been discarded earlier as being contaminated with tungsten. During the First World War period (1916-1921) tin and wolfram from Kit Hill was sent to Clitters via a newly constructed aerial ropeway supported by tall pylons with buckets for ore.

The large new mill at Clitters had been built by the German company of Luhrig Coal and Ore Dressing Appliances Ltd, taking full advantage of the hillside slope and use of gravity in processing.

Various mining reports illustrate the development of this mine and the quest to extract tungsten during processing. For example, at the first annual meeting of Clitters United Mines Ltd, it was reported in reported in Mining World January 2 1904 that: "Initial difficulties overcome, a satisfactory method of treating tin – wolfram ores [was identified]. We commenced negotiations with the view of purchasing a Wetherill electro-magnetic separator[19]. At the time we commenced negotiations, the price asked was prohibitive – but a new separator was brought out which was of a much more satisfactory character and after inspection by our consulting engineer and our Co. Director, Mr. A. Schiff, we were able to obtain a separator which left us a satisfactory profit in treating our mixed concentrates. Solving the treatment of these complex ores has been solved. We have been pioneers in the matter. We have now a plant which is practically second-to-none in the world and is the finest of its sort in Cornwall." Prior to the introduction of the Wetherill separator the mill had two separate circuits - a smaller one for tin ore rich in wolfram and a larger circuit for tin ore low in wolfram. Once installed, the separator allowed the combining of the two circuits into one.

[19] On October 19th 1905, a paper was read to the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy at the Geological Society, which in particular records the use at Clitters of the magnetic separator known by the makers as the cross-belt type. "A wooden frame carrying two pairs of electro-magnets are beneath the main conveying belt and two above, arranged so that the N. pole of one magnet is opposite to the S. pole of the other".

All three Terrell brothers were working at Gunnislake Clitters during this period. Ernest had been joined by Fred between 1899 and 1907, while Stephen worked at the mine until 1905.

In 1906, Ernest was still at Clitters; his work there was acknowledged in the Mining Journal of that year: "The services of staff – There is one thing I must mention and that is that we are indebted to our manager, Mr. Josiah Paul and our assistants Messrs. Murton and Terrell and the rest of the staff for their good work during the past year"[20]. However, the operation at Clitters ceased in 1909, after producing 443 tons of wolfram and 547 tons of tin.

Then, at the age of 28, Terrell was appointed as mine manager of Stormsdown Mine, near Ashburton, where extensive use of electric power was used as well as electro-magnetic separation (using a Wetherill-type magnetic separator by the Humboldt Co; this example had an improved iron frame). In the same year, Terrell also became responsible for bringing Devon Wheal Friendship at Mary Tavy back into production[21].

In 1910, Terrell became a council member of the Camborne Association of Engineers. His daughter Merina had been born in Calstock in 1907 and son Kenneth was born in Ashburton in 1910. The following year, 1911, the family were living at Bryn Tavy at Mary Tavy where his youngest brother, Stephen Llewellyn Terrell and wife Mabel were also resident. The house survives to this day and retains its original name; it is also stated to have been the home of John Taylor, engineer.

**Terrell at Hemerdon**

With the approach and outbreak of war in 1914, there was a great demand for tungsten. The Germans were ahead in the arms race, in that they could

[20] Report on the 3rd general meeting of Clitters United Mine, *Mining Journal*, June 6, 1906

[21] Both Stormsdown Mine and Devon Wheal Friendship were under the joint ownership of Mr. Herbert Bayldon.

produce more equipment because their cutting tools contained tungsten. Accordingly, the British Ministry of Munitions encouraged production from known sources and stimulated prospecting for new deposits. Hemerdon was well placed to become the main focus of production. 1917 saw Terrell appointed to the Tin and Tungsten Research Committee. He also served as the West of England representative in the Ministry of Munitions and suggested that the Hemerdon tungsten deposit should be exploited by Government contracts.

Trenches and pits were excavated to obtain samples, although he was only to exploit the Hemerdon granite. Another Tamar Valley mining engineer, Barclay, made many visits during this phase of development making detailed notes on each visit. One such record (April 1917) details that the bulk samples being collected were to be sent to Wheal Jewel at Mary Tavy. The concentrate had to be further dressed and finally passed through a Wetherill-type magnetic separator.

The results from prospecting and the cost of exploiting the deposit were deemed satisfactory and Terrell was instructed to prepare plans for a new treatment mill. However, the Government were aware of the serious shortage of tungsten and almost immediately the plans were revised and enlarged to treat not just 100 tons of ore a day but 400. By the end of February 1919, the buildings, power and mill plant were all but completed with just a few more items to arrive. One reporter described the mill and other buildings as a "very fine pile, so compact that the whole of work is compressed into the smallest possible area making closer supervision easy and avoiding conveyance of material from one point to another, all completed for £80,000."

However, throughout the period of construction and when processing ore, there had been extreme shortages of skilled and semi-skilled labour. It was impossible to obtain sufficient men capable of running the new plant. General labourers were requisitioned for services in the engine room and

stamp mill and girls proved the only class of labour available for the concentrating plant.

Production results were poor, the granite containing much clay, and the wolfram ore had a highly magnetic residue of iron and magnesium. Terrell also questioned the exact composition of the wolfram ore. With full equipment nearing completion without any indication of an improvement of labour supplies, the directors felt unjustified in continuing to expose such a costly plant to the constant risk of serious accident.

This awkward situation was really solved by the Ministry of Munitions, as in March 1919 it was intimated that no wolfram parcels would be accepted by the Government after April 1919. To Terrell, this must have been very disappointing in view of the encouragement that the ministry had bestowed on the enterprise and the promise given of maintenance of the wartime price (£170-£220 per ton, according to the grade of the concentrate) for a post-war period of two years. The situation was made even worse when the Government also discovered that China had huge deposits of wolfram which could be produced cheaply.

However, after the war Terrell was not to be easily defeated at Hemerdon[22]; an adit level was driven through the deposit and had advanced over 350 feet and at the face was 50 feet from the surface. In September 1921 he took the Plymouth Rotarians on a tour of the mine, the processing machinery even being started up. He was recorded as saying that, in his opinion, the use of tungsten was only in its infancy.

Nevertheless, the directors decided that because of the low value of tungsten, resumption of operations would not be justified. They estimated that the project had made a loss which exceeded £100,000.

[22] Terrell had moved to 8 Lockyer Road, Plymouth by this time, probably to be closer to his operation at Hemerdon.

June 20th, 1923 saw Ernest Terrell celebrate his 44th birthday; yet three days later he was to collapse and die. He had recently recovered from pneumonia and had also suffered from asthma for a long period. Following his death, his funeral service was held at St. Gabriel's church in Peverell, Plymouth and he was buried at Efford Cemetery[23].

But the saga of Hemerdon Mine was to continue. In November 1923 two youths were fined for damaging one of the engines at the mine. Mr Wolferston for the prosecution said that the mine was in the state of "suspended animation" but it was hoped at some time to restart it, and therefore it was essential that it should be kept in good order.

During 1925, a feasibility study was made by Gilbert McPherson of Selection Trust, which suggested that the mine could be "restarted profitably". But unfortunately, the mine could not continue under the financial restrictions and in August 1927 it was announced in the Plymouth & Exeter Gazette that Hemerdon Mine Ltd was in liquidation. In March 1928, all plant and equipment were put up for sale. This was the end of Hemerdon Mine for the time being, and the end of Ernest Terrell's dream. However, with such an extensive ore body there would always be interest. Various mining companies have attempted to understand the geology of the deposit and exploit it, although as yet no company has returned a profit from the site.

At the time of writing, the company 'Tungsten West' are operating the Drakelands Hemerdon Mine, carrying out a feasibility study on how the ore can best be extracted and processed. Research has shown that the ore is in fact ferberite rather than wolfram. A higher iron content presents processing challenges. However, it is estimated that re-opening Hemerdon Mine would cost in the region of £30-40 million. We wait in anticipation.

[23] A large number of people attended, including the Mayor of Plymouth, Mr. S. Stephens, members of the Plymouth Cricket Club and members of various mining companies.

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## The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Tamar Valley

*Anthony Tibbles*

For many of us the Tamar Valley is a quiet rural haven, so it is perhaps surprising that the area has a number of connections with the transatlantic slave trade, an activity nowadays regarded with abhorrence. In fact, the earliest English slave voyages were made from Plymouth, organised by Sir John Hawkins. In the eighteenth-century the local copper mining industry was mainly financed by merchants from Bristol who used the metal to make objects to trade for enslaved Africans on the West African coast. On the other side of the coin, Plymouth also had one of the earliest groups lobbying for the abolition of the trade and a broadsheet featuring one of the key and most reproduced images of the campaign, the plan of the Liverpool slave ship *Brooks*, was first published there.

### Elizabethan slaving voyages from Plymouth

The earliest ever slaving voyages made by British seafarers were from Plymouth in the mid-sixteenth century. John Hawkins (1532-1595), later Admiral and Treasurer of the Navy, and often regarded as a naval hero, had begun his career with his brother, William, in the family shipping business. Amongst other activities, he made a number of voyages to the Canary Islands in the late 1550s and there became aware of the opportunities of becoming involved in the slave trade. He made his first voyage to Africa with three ships in 1562 with the backing of a number of London merchants involved in the Guinea Gold trade. He captured about 300 Africans along the Sierra Leone coast and carried them across the Atlantic and sold them on Hispaniola. The Spanish authorities were not pleased with his activities and seized some of the goods he later sent to Seville to sell.

However, he had made a considerable profit and in October 1564, he set out again on another voyage. This time he took four ships, included *Jesus of Lubeck*, owned by Elizabeth I, and the whole enterprise had unofficial support from her principal minister William Cecil. In addition to the

queen, the investors included courtiers such as her favourite, Robert Dudley, and Lord Clinton. Hawkins again seized over 300 Africans on the coast of Sierra Leone and probably landed the survivors at Rio de la Hacha, on the north Colombian coast. The queen was delighted and rewarded Hawkins with the grant of a coat of arms (featuring Black Africans) and it was reckoned that the voyage had made a profit of 60%.

Hawkins' final slaving voyage began in late 1567, when he left Plymouth with eight ships, including the queen's *Jesus of Lubeck* and *Minion*. He was accompanied by his cousin, Francis Drake, who captained the *Judith*. The arrangements were again overseen by William Cecil in what was almost certainly intended as a provocation to the Spanish authorities who were becoming increasingly hostile to Elizabeth and her government. Whilst Hawkins again took perhaps 500 Africans from Sierra Leone coast, he found an unfriendly welcome from the Spanish authorities at Rio de la Hacha. The Africans were only sold after Drake and Hawkins bombarded the town. The ships were involved in further armed conflict with the Spanish off the Mexican coast during their return journey, losing a number of ships and many men. The financial rewards were outweighed by the losses and the dangers involved.

These early voyages were largely opportunistic and as the final voyages showed, relied on the cooperation, or at least acquiescence, of the Spanish authorities. As relations between England and Spain deteriorated further, slaving became unsustainable and privateering against the Spanish treasure ships became a more lucrative and patriotic activity.

**Eighteenth century slaving voyages from Plymouth**

British involvement in the slave trade did not resume until the 1640s and 1650s when Britain had begun establishing its own colonies on a number of islands in the Caribbean. The new British owners of sugar plantations needed a labour force to tend the crop and, copying their Spanish and Portuguese rivals, began transporting Africans to work as enslaved labourers. The rapid expansion of the sugar industry and the consequent

need for more labour meant that, until its abolition in 1807, British merchants were the major operators of the trade, responsible for transporting just over three million enslaved Africans to the Americas.

Although ships from Plymouth began slaving again in 1644, they only made four voyages before a monopoly on the trade was granted to the Royal African Company. When the monopoly was lifted in 1698, a few ships from Plymouth attempted to re-enter the trade. However, by this time, it was no longer the ad hoc activity it had been in earlier times but was a highly sophisticated trade requiring large capital investment, intimate knowledge of, and access to, the goods required for trade and crucially good contacts on the African coast. The merchants of Plymouth were at a disadvantage in comparison with their competitors in Liverpool, Bristol and London and during the whole of the eighteenth century they undertook less than a dozen voyages. Few details of these voyages survive but they were generally made by small vessels of 100 tons or less and between them carried about 3,000 Africans into enslavement.

**Copper mining in the Tamar Valley**

The other major connection between the transatlantic slave trade and the Tamar Valley was the production of copper, one of the major items exchanged for enslaved Africans on the African coast. Indeed, the mining of copper in the Tamar Valley in the early eighteenth century was largely financed by merchants from Bristol. When the Royal African Company's monopoly was rescinded in 1698, Bristol merchants were amongst the first to take advantage of the new trading situation. This led to a demand for goods for the trade and locally produced copper goods were increasingly sought. In order to meet this demand, new sources of copper ore were required, and interest centred on Cornwall.

This activity was led by John Coster (1647-1718) and his three sons, Thomas (1684-1739), John junior (1688-1731) and Robert (1696-1736) who were major shareholders in the Bristol Copper Company and several local smelting works. Initially, Coster senior purchased ore from a number

of Cornish mines but increasingly he began investing in and expanding the mining process itself. After his death in 1718, Thomas took charge of the smelting and production side at the works in and around Bristol whilst John junior and Robert were principally concerned with the mining of the ore at various sites across Cornwall, including the Tamar Valley. According to Henrik Kalmeter, a visiting mining engineer from Sweden, they re-opened the Marquis mine, near Collingswood on the Devon side of the river in 1723, where working had been discontinued only a few years after its discovery in 1707. They installed an engine for drawing out water from deep mines, which John junior had developed with his father in 1714. They also had mines at Hocklake on the Bere peninsula and at Impham in Hatch Wood near Walreddon and, along with Dr Lane of Bristol and Sir William Courtney, were shareholders in the William and Mary Mine, two miles from Marquis, and the nearby George and Charlotte mine.

All these mines continued to supply ore for the Bristol smelting companies which produced large quantities of copper goods for the slave trade. Copper goods were particularly important to the local slaving merchants because much of their trading was done along the coast of the Bight of Biafra where there was a high demand for copper products. Domestic items such as pots and pans had obvious practical uses, but jewellery made from copper, especially in the form of rods wound into bracelets and arm bands, was particularly valued in Biafran societies. Bristol's role in the slave trade declined in the second half of the eighteenth century as Liverpool's dominance grew and the copper was increasingly used in making goods for other trades.

**The Abolition Campaign**

The earliest campaigners against the slave trade were the Quakers, but because they were regarded as radicals, they made little progress. However, in the early 1780s, details of the conditions on board slave ships became more widely known. One of reasons was a court case involving

the owners of the Liverpool ship *Zong* whose captain had thrown 131 Africans overboard when he thought he was running short of water. The *Zong*'s owners claimed compensation from the insurers for the 'abandoned cargo' of Africans and the subsequent court actions revealed the brutality of the trade. When the Society for the Effecting of the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed in May 1787, it attracted subscribers and support from across the country. In Plymouth a number of meetings were held in 1787 and 1788 and a committee established. Amongst the leading supporters were a number of prominent Quakers, clergymen and other influential townspeople. The Chairman of the group was William Elford, a banker and later MP and Recorder for the town.

Whilst the activities of the Plymouth committee were similar to dozens of other groups across the country, it did make one crucial contribution to the wider campaign. In December 1788 the group published 1,500 publicity sheets which featured a plan of the deck of a slave ship with a description of the inhuman conditions on board. The plan was based on the Liverpool ship *Brooks*, one of the largest vessels of the time. Some of the sheets were sent to members of the London committee who immediately recognised the potential of the image and in April 1789 issued their own improved and expanded version. Although Elford himself initially disapproved of the amendments, the *Brooks* broadsheet went on to become the most iconic image of the abolition campaign, not only in Britain but in France and also in America. As Thomas Clarkson, one of the leading campaigners, commented, it 'contributed greatly to impress the public in favour of the cause.' Even today, it is the image most closely connected with abolition of the trade.

The abolition campaign took more than twenty years to come to a conclusion. For several years William Elford was MP for Plymouth, but he lost the election in 1806 because he had made political enemies on other issues. Ironically, his successor, Sir Charles Morice Pole, was a vehement opponent of abolition but a successful motion in favour of bringing the

trade to an end was finally carried by an overwhelming majority of 283 votes to 16 and entered the statute book on 25 March 1807.

Although Britain had outlawed participation in the trade, other nations continued to engage in slaving. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the British government put significant resources into forcing and persuading these nations to abandon the trade. It also established a naval squadron to patrol the West African coast and seize any ships involved in slaving. Many of these naval vessels were based in Plymouth. In nearly fifty years, although the squadron seized about 1,600 ships, the trade continued at an unabated level, mainly between Brazil and West Africa and it was not until the late 1860s, when political and economic pressures finally brought the trade to an end.

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## Giant Hogweed: Britain's Most Dangerous Plant

*Valerie Darwall, Tamar Valley Invasives Group*

Giant Hogweed *(Heracleum mantegazzianum*) has been described in the media as Britain's most dangerous plant, as it poses such a serious health risk to the public and livestock. Exposure to Giant Hogweed phototoxic sap can result in blisters, sunlight sensitivity, long-lasting scars and, if it comes in contact with eyes, may result in blindness. It is not a plant to mess around with.

Giant Hogweed also has negative impacts on native biodiversity. This species forms dense colonies which shade out native vegetation and, in a similar way to Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Giant Hogweed dies back in the winter leaving bare ground which is susceptible to erosion and increasing flood risks. In fact, non-native invasive species are one of the top threats to biodiversity globally.

Giant Hogweed looks like an enormous cow parsley and is an impressive sight when fully grown, reaching a towering height of up to 5m, with a spread of between 1m and 2m. It is easy to see why it is considered a 'giant'. It originates from the Caucasus mountains between Russia and Turkey and was among many foreign plants first introduced into Britain in the 19th century as an ornamental species, but it is now widespread throughout the British Isles. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 made it illegal to plant or cause Giant Hogweed to grow in the wild.

### The Giant Hogweed Eradication Project

A partnership between the Tamar Valley AONB office, the Environment Agency and Natural England, with support from Natural England's Water Environment Grant, is working tirelessly to control the spread of Giant Hogweed in the Tamar Valley.

The spread of invasive plants through a landscape along river corridors is well known, and so the Tamar Valley control programme has focused its efforts on the area known to have contained Giant Hogweed - along the River Tamar corridor from Calstock as far as the confluence with the River Lyd and along the Lyd as far as Greenlanes Bridge.

The programme to control the spread of Giant Hogweed is now approaching its 20th year. In that time, thanks to the support of local landowners, the number of plants in the treatment area has been reduced from thousands to approximately 100 in 2020. Some larger stands of small, immature plants (up to 30 plants) still exist, but for the most part only isolated individual plants have been found.

We are fortunate to work with a contractor who knows the Tamar Valley very well. Locating and destroying Giant Hogweed is a physical and time-consuming task, as it involves surveying over 50 miles of river corridor, including both Devon and Cornwall banks, mainly on foot, and then lifting the plants or treating them chemically.

Surveying and controlling Giant Hogweed on a landscape scale takes time and effort and must be undertaken with extreme care. The Tamar Valley Invasives Group is working hard to secure the funding needed to eradicate this harmful plant from the Tamar Valley.

**Giant Hogweed 2020 Control Update (October 2020)**

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, there continues to be generally encouraging news following the survey and treatment of Giant Hogweed in the Tamar Valley in 2020. The Tamar Valley Invasives Group is grateful that the majority of landowners who are involved in the project were able to continue supporting control efforts during the lockdown.

Giant Hogweed population numbers continue to show a decreasing trend in the survey area, down from a total of 174 in 2019 to 96 this year (Fig.1),

although it was not possible to survey one site during the lockdown. We hope to revisit all project sites in 2021 to continue our control efforts.

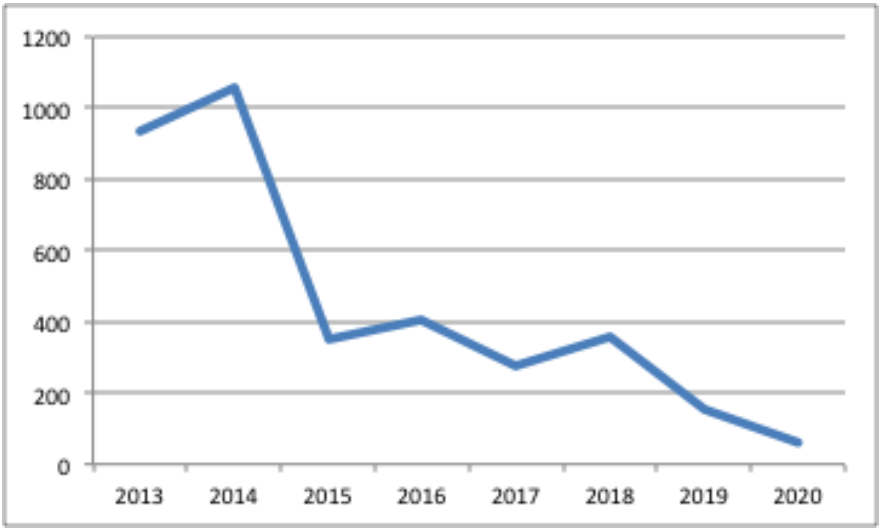


Fig.1 *Decrease in the number of Giant Hogweed plants located and controlled in the Tamar Valley since 2013.*

Despite the overall decrease in Giant Hogweed numbers in the catchment, the observed variation in the species' occurrence and distribution from one year to the next highlights the challenges faced in eradicating an invasive plant on a catchment scale.

While great progress has been made in removing this harmful plant from the valley, one cannot become complacent. A single flowering plant can produce tens of thousands of seeds, which remain viable in the soil for up to 15 years. One can only imagine what the Tamar Valley would have looked like had such effort not been made to control Giant Hogweed.



Fig.2 *Young Giant Hogweed on the Tamar riverbank, April 2020.*



Fig.3 *Photo highlighting the challenge of locating small Giant Hogweed plants as the density of other vegetation increases in late spring/early summer (2019).*



Fig.4 *Giant Hogweed*
*(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giant_Hogweed_001.jpg)*

If you do find Giant Hogweed you must take care, and before removing it you should seek specialist advice. If you do find Giant Hogweed in the in the Tamar Valley, then please notify the AONB office.

For more information about the Tamar Valley Invasives Group, please email enquiries@tamarvalley.org.uk and for information on Giant Hogweed please visit the Tamar Valley AONB website at www.tamarvalley.org.

## Silver Anniversary for the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

*Charlotte Dancer*

August 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the designation of the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. On 30th August 1995, the Tamar Valley was officially granted this national level of protection, to help conserve and enhance natural beauty. Along with National Parks, AONBs represent the finest examples of countryside in England and Wales. The Tamar Valley was recognised as being a landscape of high visual quality with a unique wildlife resource and remarkable heritage. Other 'special qualities' include its rare valley and water landscape with artistic and public appeal.

To mark the anniversary, two local businesses were busy earlier in the summer brewing and blending. Bere Brewery, in Bere Alston, produced a light, hoppy ale using 100% Tamar Valley hops. Named '***Ale of Outstanding Natural Beauty***', the first brew sold out within weeks. Meanwhile, Monarch Liqueurs, home of the Tamar Tipple, paired fruits from Tamar Valley hedgerows to create a blackberry and elderflower gin liqueur, '***Tamara***'[24].

The AONB team had hoped to host a 'Taste the Tamar' event in June to celebrate their silver anniversary, showcase the wealth of Tamar Valley produce, and launch the new drinks, but this unfortunately had to be postponed (date yet to be confirmed). However, a 25-day social media countdown to 30th August took place across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. During that time, every parish within the Tamar Valley was

[24] Tamara is available from Homeleigh Garden Centre (Launceston and Bude), Endsleigh Garden Centre (Ivybridge), Roots & Vines, Tavistock and online at www.monarchliqueurs.co.uk.

virtually ‘visited’, highlighting and remembering a variety of projects and milestones from the past 25 years.

As we couldn’t meet up physically, this was a great way to acknowledge and thank the many organisations and individuals who have given their time in supporting and helping the AONB team to conserve and enhance natural beauty over the years. We look forward to more exciting projects and even greater joint working to keep our treasured Tamar Valley a haven for wildlife and a living, working landscape.



*The Tamar Valley Centre, Drakewalls (Tobi O’Neill Photography)*

The countdown culminated in a new brand being revealed for the Tamar Valley AONB. Over the past few months, much work has been carried out behind the scenes with Cornwall-based Paul Eustice Design, to create a

new look for the AONB. The new 'bee' logo (below) represents a sense of living and working together, with a shared understanding and need to pull together to conserve everything we hold dear within the Valley. We are an industrious and fearless community – a hive of activity and energy.

TAMAR VALLEY
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

For further information about the Tamar Valley AONB, please visit www.tamarvalley.org.uk, follow @TVAONB on Facebook and Twitter, or tamar_valley_aonb on Instagram.







*Tamar Tipple liqueur and 'Ale of Outstanding Natural Beauty'*

## The death of Charles Stothard at Bere Ferrers in 1821 and some of its ramifications

*Clive Charlton*

St. Andrew's church at Bere Ferrers, beside the broad Tavy estuary, is encircled by its graveyard. Many of the tombstones bear legends that are engraved in hard-wearing slate, so are still easy to read, despite the encroachment of healthy lichen. They record the lives and passing of generations of local people, and in some cases the melancholy details of their fates. Yet the memorial to the most remarkable accident victim buried at Bere Ferrers is now virtually illegible.

Attached to the outside wall of the chancel, just below the east window, a pale stone stares blankly out to the ebb and flow of the estuary. It is now so worn as to be scarcely legible. When it was installed, its non-local sandstone or limestone material may have been regarded as superior amid all the dark slate, a fitting tribute to the man buried nearby.[25] Fortunately, the full inscription on the memorial was recorded at the time, as set out below.

> Sacred to the memory (dear to every friend who knew him) of CHARLES STOTHARD, Historical Draughtsman, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; eldest surviving son of Thomas Stothard, esq. R. A. While pursuing his professional researches in the adjoining church, he was unfortunately killed by a fall, on the 28th of May, in the year of our Lord 1821, in the 34th year of his age. As a laborious investigator of the Antient Sepulchral Monuments, and other Historical Vestiges of this Kingdom, which he illustrated by his faithful and elegant pencil, he was pre-eminent; as a man, though gifted with the most solid ability, he was humble, modest, unostentatious; an example of benevolence and simplicity of heart; a Christian by faith, as he proved by that essential demonstration his works. Thus awfully

[25] The inscription was relatively visible in the mid-1970s, which suggests that its erosion may have accelerated during the past 45 years.

bereft of such a partner, what words shall describe the deep, the bitter sorrow of his widow, who stood not by to pay him the last sad offices; but while he perished thus untimely, expected his return, and shortly to bless him with a first child.

She with her brother, Alfred John Kempe (his bosom friend), has erected this poor monument to his memory; a living one exists in their hearts; in the hearts of his and their aged parents, of his relatives and friends. Reader, profit by this sad, but doubtless, in the wisdom of God, salutary and merciful lesson; for it is better that the virtuous should be thus suddenly cut off than the wicked.





Figs. 1 and 2 *Charles Stothard's memorial below the east window of St.Andrew's church (pale stone in centre), and part of the stone as it appeared c.1978.*

The memorial was set up to mark the burial nearby of the eminent young artist and antiquary, Charles Alfred Stothard. He was killed by a fall in St. Andrew's church on May 28th, 1821, while carrying out a detailed drawing of the 14th century stained glass in the church's east window. To mark the

200th anniversary of Stothard's demise, this article explores this tragic event and its contexts and implications. There is a relatively detailed account here of Stothard's career and significance as an antiquarian artist, to reinforce what was lost by Stothard's premature death. This background is followed by an outline of his fatal encounter with Bere Ferrers and its aftermath. Of particular importance is the impact on the life and career of his widow Eliza, who remarried to become the well-known Tavistock resident and prolific author, Mrs Bray[26]. However, this long and rich part of her life is only referred to briefly in this article.



Fig.3 *Charles Stothard, from 'Memoirs of the Late Charles Stothard, 1823.*

Charles Stothard was born in London in 1786. His family background gave him a favourable underpinning for a career as an artist, for his father was Thomas Stothard, a member of the Royal Academy[27]. He was responsible for an immense output of paintings, engravings, designs for decorative silverware and other artwork. Thomas was especially renowned for his work as an illustrator of books; it is said that he produced over 5,000 such designs during his career. The market for

[26] 'Mrs. Bray' was initially Anna Eliza Kempe, before becoming Mrs. Stothard, and then Mrs Bray. She is normally referred to by her second Christian name, Eliza.

[27] See for example, A.C. Coxhead, *Thomas Stothard, R.A.: an illustrated monograph*, A.H.Bullen, London, 1906.

historical images was substantial by the turn of the 18th century, driven by widespread curiosity about the past, especially among those with the time and money to indulge their interests.

In 1802 Thomas Stothard undertook a commission to paint a set of large murals for the newly elevated Marquess of Exeter. Stothard's task was to decorate the walls of a grand staircase in the marquess's huge mansion, Burghley House near Stamford[28], and he took Charles with him. While his father was at work, Charles visited nearby churches to draw monuments. This opportunity was important in stimulating a fascination for medieval church fittings that was to become Charles' passion. In tandem with an emerging artistic talent, he became absorbed by historical themes over the next decade. After a period of painting historical scenes, he determined to devote himself to recording church monuments. What made Stothard both pioneering and eminent was his was commitment to accuracy and detail in his drawings. Such concern for authenticity led Stothard into often arduous and sometimes hazardous pursuit of his artistic subjects. There is a record of him slipping from a ladder when drawing an effigy in the undercroft of Canterbury Cathedral by candlelight.[29]

Stothard was not only highly regarded as an artist, but also as an antiquarian. He was outstanding for his concern to integrate meticulous image-making with authentic explanatory historical background – a guiding principle in his great work, the 'Monumental Effigies of Great

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[28] See for example: Rachel Rhine, *What lies before Hell: Stothard's Hell Staircase paintings and the Burghley House collection*, Home Subjects website, www.homesubjects.org/2017/09/04/what-lies-before-hell-stothards-hell-staircase-paintings-and-the-burghley-house-collection/. Also: https://virtualtour.burghley.co.uk/

[29] Richard Knowles, 'An enterprising antiquary: Charles Alfred Stothard (1786–1821)', Country Life, 5 January 1978, pp.42–43 and Mrs Charles Stothard (Anna Eliza Bray), '*Memoirs of the Late Charles Alfred Stothard*, F.S.A. , 1823, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, London.

Britain'[30]. He began this project in 1811 and produced nine complete sets before his death. A central intention of the work was 'to afford the historical painter a complete knowledge of the costume adopted in England, from an early period of history, to the reign of Henry VIII; to illustrate history and biography; and lastly, to assist the stage in selecting its costume with propriety, for the plays of our great dramatic Bard.'[31] Stothard's passion for authenticity coincided with a lucrative market for it among painters and in the theatre, where accurate period costumes (including armour) were becoming a priority.

Although there had been determined practitioners since at least the 16th century, 'antiquarianism' become very popular in the Georgian period, spearheaded by the Society of Antiquaries of London, which was formed in 1750 for 'the encouragement, advancement and furtherance of the study and knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other countries'.[32] Stothard was appointed 'historical draughtsman' to the Society in 1815. This honour was negotiated by Samuel Lysons, who employed Stothard to travel through the North of England to make drawings for the ambitious 'Magna Britannia' project he had begun with his brother Daniel.

The same year, Britain emerged victorious from the long wars with France. Very soon after Waterloo, the pent-up desire for exploration of the European Continent was unleashed. The Society of Antiquaries sent Stothard to Normandy to undertake a major project to record faithfully the whole of the Bayeux tapestry. However, he first travelled further south to the Loire Valley. Here he visited the abbey at Fontevraud (then used as a prison) and rediscovered there the effigies of Richard 1 ('Lionheart'),

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[30] Charles Alfred Stothard (completed by Alfred Kempe), *The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain*, John Murray, London 1832 (complete edition). Among academic publications on the work is Rachel Dressler, "Those effigies which belonged to the English nation": antiquarianism, nationalism and Charles Alfred Stothard's Monumental Effigies of Great Britain, *Studies in Medievalism*, XIV, 2005.

[31] Charles Stothard Esq. F.A.S. obituary *in The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1821, p.645.

[32] Wikipedia, 'Society of Antiquaries'.

Eleanor of Aquitaine and other members of the medieval Plantagenet dynasty. Although he failed in an attempt to get them transferred to England, he drew the monuments and probably saved them from destruction[33].

Stothard made three trips to draw the Bayeux Tapestry; the work was a formidable achievement, which included hand-colouring etchings that had been made from his original drawings. The finished product was published by the Society of Antiquaries between 1821 and 1823, allowing the wealthier public to see the tapestry in colour for the first time, and thereby entrenching '1066' as a crucial waymark in British history[34].

When Charles set off on his third and final trip to Normandy and Brittany, he was not alone. In February 1818, he had married Anna Eliza Kempe[35], the sister of Alfred Kempe, a close friend and fellow antiquarian. Although born in London, her family had roots in Cornwall. Foreshadowing a long life of enthusiastic historical research and writing, she became a devoted supporter of her husband's work, while also emerging as a prolific author in her own right. During the visit to France (her first), she wrote detailed letters to her mother, which were subsequently combined and published in 1820[36]. The resulting book,

[33] The effigies are now installed in the Abbey Church at Fontevraud, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fontevraud_Abbey). On his return Stothard's drawings there were published, with a dedication to the Prince Regent.

[34] Examples of Stothard's Bayeux Tapestry output can be seen at www.fulltable.com/vts/b/bayeux/bayeux.htm.

[35] She tended to use the name 'Eliza'.

[36] Anna Eliza Stothard (later 'Mrs. Bray) '*Letters written during a tour through Normandy, Brittany and other parts of France in 1818*', London, 1820 – published only four months after her husband's death.,



adorned with illustrations by Charles, is full of keen observation and energetic commentary. It opened her long, varied writing career.

Fig.4 *Anna Eliza Bray (Stothard), in Autobiography of Anna Eliza Bray*

In April 1821, Stothard was commissioned by Daniel Lysons to travel to Devon. He was tasked with making drawings of medieval monuments in certain churches in the county. These images would be included in the Devon volume of Magna Britannia, the ambitious project that had been started by his late brother Samuel[37]. He travelled alone, for by this time his wife was heavily pregnant. Eliza claimed, in her 'Memoirs of the late Charles Alfred Stothard',[38] how she felt a sense of foreboding before Charles left, and gave him 'Notes for the observance of my beloved husband during his journey', which included the warning: 'take care not to fall from high places'.

Charles left London on May 16, 1821. He posted his last letter to Eliza during his journey, giving details of his route. He first travelled to Lysons' home at Rodmarton, Gloucestershire, where he was 'most kindly

[37] Rev. Daniel Lysons and Samuel Lysons *Magna Britannia; being a concise topographical account of the Several Counties of Great Britain. Volume the Sixth Containing Devonshire*, published by Thomas Cadell, London, 1822. This volume proved to be the last of the series, which had been intended to follow an alphabetical sequence of counties.
[38] Mrs Charles Stothard (later Mrs Bray) *Memoirs, including Original Journals, Letters, Papers and Antiquarian Tracts of the Late Charles Alfred Stothard, F.S.A*., London, 1823.

received'. Lysons asked Charles to visit Bere Ferrers, to draw the stained glass images of William de Ferrers and his wife Matilda in the superb east window in St. Andrew's church. The next day he took the Bristol Mail as far as Bath. His route to the West then passed through Wells, Glastonbury and Bridgwater and on through western Somerset. Here he travelled mainly on foot, inspecting church fittings in villages he passed. His letter confirms his enthusiasm for costume detail: a '…knight with the bows to fasten his gorget behind.' Given he would have been carrying a pack containing his artist's materials as well as other belongings, there is only the briefest mention of what must have been challenging terrain as he went on via Porlock, Lynton, Combe Martin and Ilfracombe (Exmoor is dismissed rather curtly as 'melancholy scenery'). He entered Barnstaple '…extremely fatigued, having that day walked 30 miles and the day before 20'[39]. Turning south at last, Stothard aimed for Atherington, where he records '…one of the most elaborately carved rood lofts in the county', although the main pretext for the visit was to draw the medieval effigies in the church. What proved to be almost his final recorded comment concerned Dolton church. After so many glowing descriptions through his antiquarian career, this was an acerbic judgement**:** 'The font in the church of Dolton, from its style, I should take to be Saxon; but the barbarians had so boxed it up with pews, that of its four sides but one could be seen, and that buried in white-wash.'[40] The letter to Eliza was probably posted in Hatherleigh, for there Charles' travel account ends.

It is unclear if Stothard then walked the whole way from Hatherleigh to Bere Ferrers or travelled on horseback or with a carrier. He left on Saturday May 26th and was in Bere Ferrers on Sunday May 27th. The church and its setting would have looked different from the current village.

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[39] Op.cit. p.463.

[40] The rare Saxon font in St. Edmund's church at Dolton is now much better presented. The church also has some 15th century stained glass. See www.leshaigh.co.uk/notesstories/doltonpage.html.

Samuel Rowe describes an excursion up the Tavy estuary that same year[41]: '…its neat looking church and white-washed tower, rising among a groupe (sic) of picturesque trees on the margin'. In other respects, perhaps less has changed: 'The land adjoining is richly cultivated, and the different dwellings present the most pleasing appearance of comfort and independence.'

The significance of the 14th century stained glass in the east window in St.Andrew's church must already have been appreciated in antiquarian circles, hence Daniel Lysons' request to Stothard to portray it. How did Lysons become aware of the glass? Had other antiquaries visited and even drawn it previously?

The glass is considered to be the oldest such material in Devon, apart from some pieces in Exeter Cathedral. The window was commissioned by William de Ferrers II, probably to celebrate the establishment of an archpresbytery at Bere Ferrers (which William funded)[42]. This unusual foundation was approved by Bishop Grandisson of Exeter in 1334. From the early 14th century, Exeter Cathedral had invested in high-quality glass, much of it bought from Rouen in France. The glass in St. Andrew's has much in common with that installed at Exeter. Possibly, William de Ferrers used his relationship with Bishop Grandisson to acquire both the materials and the skilled labour for the window at Bere Ferrers. Could there have been some 'leftovers' once the Exeter contract had been completed?[43].

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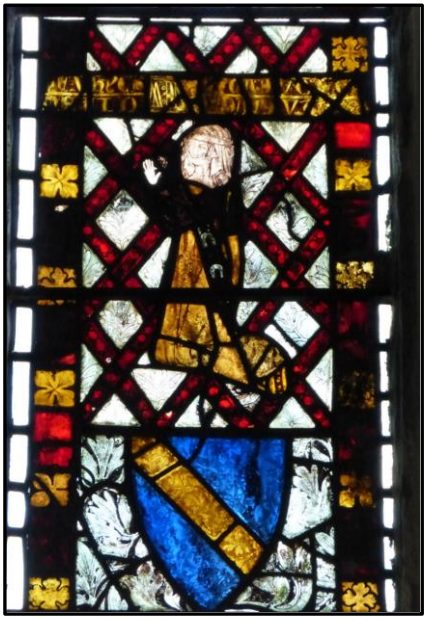
[41] Samuel Rowe, *The panorama of Plymouth, or Tourist's Guide to the Principal Objects of Interest in the Towns and Vicinity of Plymouth, Dock and Stonehouse*, Plymouth, 1821.

[42] The Archpresbytery was approved by Grandisson, in return for an annual payment of 20 shillings 'for the chorister boys of Exeter Cathedral'.

[43] Jennifer Barber 'A jigsaw in stained glass', *Western Morning News*, 18 October 1966.





Figs 5 and 6. *Two elements of the east window in St. Andrew's church, representing Matilda de Ferrers and Christ in Majesty. Both images have been partially reconstructed, using fragments, possibly in the later 19th century.*

The glass has survived removal and replacement at least three times (in the 17th, 19th and 20th centuries), albeit at the cost of significant damage[44]. The window was restored in 1871, including installation of the current graceful tracery, the glass having been 'carefully preserved (in a box) for the past 40 years in the church'.[45] The glass was again removed for safe-keeping during the Second World War. Thus the appearance of the window now differs from the version seen by Charles Stothard. Although many sections comprise imaginatively re-assembled fragments, some

[44] Rev. Arthur Beddows, *A History of Bere Ferrers Parish*, 6th edition revised by Ann Parsons, 2001.
[45] 'Reopening of Bere Ferrers Church', *Tavistock Gazette*, 8 September 1871.

principal elements are still distinct and impressive. Notable among these are William de Ferrers, his wife Matilda, Christ in Majesty, and a figure of a pilgrim – assumed to be St. James or possibly William himself, who is thought to have travelled to the shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain[46].

The crucial focus of this article is the tragic accident that befell Charles Stothard as he was tracing the main figures in the window. An account of the accident appears in a letter written by the Rev. Henry Hobart to Thomas Cadell, the London publisher and bookseller [47], postmarked May 30th, 1821. It was one of several that Hobart sent to London announcing the tragic death of Stothard immediately after the event, noting that 'having seen your signature to a letter on his [Stothard's] person I have thought it right to address a few lines to you'. Hobart describes how Stothard '…introduced himself on Sunday as coming from Mr. Lysons & requested permission to sketch a window in my church over the Communion Table. Being satisfied with the account he gave of himself as well as pleased with his manner I gave him an invitation to stay at my House as long as he inclined to stay[48]. He dined & slept here on Sunday, & after breakfast on Monday about 10 o'clock proceeded to execute his design. A Gentleman who was with me accompanied him to the church, left him there & called upon him again at Two by which time he had about

[46] It is thought that ships carrying pilgrims bound for Santiago may have departed from Landulph on the Cornwall side of the Tamar.

[47] This Thomas Cadell was the son of Thomas Cadell the elder, a well-known London publisher and bookseller in the later 18th century, publishing work by Burns, Samuel Johnson, Adam Smith and Tobias Smollett among many others. Thomas Cadell the younger published 'Magna Britannia, Volume 6, Devon' in 1822 – i.e. the publication for which Stothard was intending to produce illustrations during his ill-fated visit to Devon.

[48] In 1821, the Rev. Hobart was still living at the old Parsonage outside the village. Hobart later commissioned a large new Rectory, sited near the present Bere Ferrers railway station.

half finished the sketch. A medical gentleman[49] called on me about five whom I requested as he was going by the church to call in and tell Mr. Stothard I was waiting dinner – you may judge the nature of his feelings when he found him lying on the Pavement & expiring: indeed he was a corpse within three minutes after. Upon examination it was found that he had fractured his skull: a Coroner's inquest has just been held & of course returned a verdict of 'accidental death'. The accident is to be attributed to the breaking of one of the bars of the ladder on which he stood, the height of which was about ten feet.'

Eliza Stothard's 'Memoirs of Charles Alfred Stothard' adds further detail, including: 'Upon the next morning, Monday the 28th of May, the rector, accompanied by Mr. Servante (his amiable and kind-hearted curate) conducted my husband round his gardens. [Charles] mentioned his intention of going to Plymouth, and of returning through Totness (sic) to London. By his own desire, a ladder was procured and carried into the church. The owner of it was a gardener, a man much heavier than himself, who had this ladder in constant use. No suspicion, therefore, could be entertained of its being decayed.

At eleven o'clock my beloved Charles ascended the ladder, and both commenced and finished the tracing of the glass, representing the founder's lady[50]. Mr. Servante was repeatedly in the church during the morning. At half-past two, my husband removed the ladder to the north side of the altar. He then stood about ten feet from the ground, immediately above the tablets containing the creed and the commandments. The communion-table below was on the right-hand side to the left, a very narrow passage … came between the communion-table and the wall. Under a low Gothic arch, within a recess of the wall, elevated about three feet above the ground, reclined the monumental effigies of a knight and

[49] He is named in Eliza's *Memoires of Charles Stothard* as a 'Mr Honey, of Beer Alston… then going to Plymouth' (perhaps via the ferry across the Tavy to Blaxton?).

[50] Matilda de Ferrers.

his lady. The moulding of the stone slab upon which these figures rested, projected about two inches beyond the tomb'.

The melancholy exchange with London that produced these accounts confirms how communications with the Plymouth area were relatively speedy by 1821, reflecting the quality of the toll road network and stagecoach services. Stothard's wife and father received the terrible news by May 31st. Charles' father Thomas then set off for Devon, accompanied by a friend, Henry Brooke. The letter to Thomas Cadell also includes advice on the preferred way to reach Bere Ferrers: 'As I presume some friend of the deceased will come down the shortest & best road will be straight to Plymouth Dock & from there up the river *Tavey* to *Beer Church Town* – from which the Parsonage is a very short distance…'. It is unclear whether the travellers followed this suggestion., but they must have arrived in Bere Ferrers by June 3rd, for '…on the 4th of June, the venerable and sorrowing father followed to an untimely grave the remains of that son, who in life had been the pride, the ornament, the honour of his name'[51].

Eliza Stothard was shortly to suffer further tragedy. A month after Charles' death, she gave birth to a daughter, Blanch – the only child she bore. Sadly, the infant became ill early in 1822 and died on February 2nd. Yet despite the grief of double bereavement, as conveyed so pitifully in the 'Memoirs', Eliza soon displayed the vigour and determination that marked the rest of her long life. She rationalised this positive path: '…I should not perhaps have retained my reason unshaken, had I not been so plunged into incessant toil. The very pressure and variety of employment were salutary'. 'I endeavoured to live for those who loved me, and whom I loved'[52].

[51] Memoirs, op cit.
[52] John A. Kempe (ed.), *Autobiography of Anna Eliza Bray*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1884.

Aided by her brother Alfred Kempe, she poured herself into securing the legacy of her late husband. Responding to calls for Stothard's unfinished work to be continued. She oversaw further printing of his images, including plates of the Plantagenet monuments he had drawn in France. She also '…collected, arranged, classified, and copied in a regular manner every scrap of written paper of any value left by poor Charles', while also determining '…as a further tribute of respect to his memory, that I would write the Memoirs of his Life'[53]. A notable achievement was the completion of the 'Monumental Effigies' project, although the work was not published until 1832[54]. Its remaining sections were etched from Stothard's drawings by other artists, while most of the text was written by Alfred Kempe.[55]

What transpired in Bere Ferrers in the period shortly after Charles Stothard's funeral? The record is unfortunately thin, yet the connections with Stothard's family were certainly sustained. Alfred Kempe is likely to have visited; he wrote the inscription on the memorial stone to Charles Stothard outside the east window of the church, and presumably organised its installation. Charles' brother Robert Thomas appears also to have travelled to Devon, for he produced the images of the William and Matilda de Ferrers stained glass portraits in the Devon volume of Lysons' Magna Britannica', which his late brother had been tracing when he fell to his death. However, there is a frustrating silence surrounding Eliza's coming to West Devon[56] – yet her presence led to what was perhaps the most significant outcome of her husband's demise.

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[53] Op.cit.

[54] Basic details in the Royal Academy's record number 13/2328 www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/book/the-monumental-effigies-of-great-britain-selected-from-our-cathedrals-and

[55] Phillip Lindley, 'Stothard's Monumental Effigies', in *Ethics and Medievalism*, edited by Karl Fugelso, D.S.Brewer, Studies in Medievalism XXIII, Cambridge, 2014.

[56] An obituary written after Eliza's death in 1883 claims that 'Having numerous friends and relations in the two western-most counties, Mrs.

A proper sense of the excitement and turmoil in Eliza's life in the months following her husband's death must depend partly on our imagination. Her writings convey her loss, and her deep appreciation of Charles, as in the Memoirs: '…, I cannot recollect a single instance of unkindness, either in word or deed. But his conduct was not negative; it was generous, good, affectionate, and tender. He made me the constant companion of all his pursuits. He did nothing without consulting me; and far from assuming that superiority or command the title of husband confers upon its possessor, it was ever his wish that I should consult my own inclinations'. Yet by 1823, Eliza had married the charismatic vicar of Tavistock, Edward Atkyns Bray, who was 12 years her senior. Gerry Woodcock describes Bray as '…an impressive figure, physically and intellectually. Handsome and cultured, his style was lofty, his discourse learned, and his interests scholarly…'[57]

It is impossible to do any justice here to the remarkable lives of the Brays in Tavistock, nor to Eliza's exuberant and copious writing career over her long life[58]. They lived in the newly built vicarage in Plymouth Road, Tavistock. From this base, the Brays combined a vigorous, sometimes controversial, ministry in Tavistock with energetic, imaginative exploration and documentation, physical and mythological, of the local area - not least, Dartmoor. Edward Bray died in 1857, and soon afterwards his widow moved to London, where she maintained her curiosity and writing into very old age. She died in January 1883, aged 93.

Here, two commentaries separated by 128 years must suffice as summaries of Eliza's legacy. Her obituary in the Transactions of the

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Stothard made frequent visits to the West of England', Obituary Notices (Mrs. Bray), Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association, 1883.

[57] Gerry Woodcock, *Homage to St. Eustachius's: a History 0f Tavistock Parish Church*, Phillimore, Andover, 2012.

[58] For a short list, see Lexi Stuckey, *Anna Eliza Bray: a biography*, The Victorian Web, 2008, http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/bray/bio.html

Devonshire Association of 1883[59] concludes: '…she leaves behind her a name which will live long in the memory, by reason of her thorough acquaintance with every relic of a bygone age, be they preserved in monuments of stone, or in the warm hearts of the people, which can be found among the cleaves and tors of the borderland of Cornwall and Devon, and for the skill with which she imparted both her knowledge and enthusiasm'. Reflecting a continuing interest in Mrs. Bray, a PhD thesis presented in 2011 suggests: 'one of Bray's primary reasons for writing was to memorialise her life, her county and country. In her locality at least, her name is still remembered, not for her romances, but for *The Border of the Tamar and the Tavy*[60], a topographical work on Dartmoor which was compiled from her letters to Robert Southey. Her name has been kept alive, in Devon at least, because of her writings about the local area.

This unexpected re-orientation of Eliza Bray's career to the South West must be the most striking result of the frailty of a gardener's ladder on May 28th, 1821. In addition, the morbid fascination of the fate it inflicted on Charles Stothard has helped to sustain an interest in his achievements as an artist and antiquarian, and perhaps those of his father and brothers (they were also eminent artists). Finally, it is tempting to indulge in dubious 'what if' speculation. If Stothard had not died at Bere Ferrers, might he have become a truly illustrious figure in the world of 19th century art, surpassing his father, Thomas? Without the wrench of her widowhood, would a London-based Eliza have been able to develop as substantial a literary career as she achieved from Tavistock as 'Mrs. Bray'? Might she have instead formed a powerful antiquarian partnership with her husband? While such musings must remain mere conjecture, the premature death of Charles Stothard at Bere Ferrers led to some fascinating stories and connections, as well as poignant musings by the estuary of the Tavy..

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[59] Obituary Notices, 1883 Op.cit.

[60] Anna Eliza Bray, *A Description of the part of Devonshire bordering on the Tamar and Tavy*, John Murray, London, 1836.

## John Leland's encounter with the Tamar and its surroundings

John Leland is renowned as a pioneer antiquarian and historian. He made a series of journeys through England and Wales in the 16th century (his 'Itineraries'). Fortunately, his accounts survived to be published and became influential sources for many later historians and topographers. Leland's visit to the West Country was probably during 1542[61]. The following extract covers his journey as he left Cornwall, heading east via Plymouth, although he evidently did some exploration around the Tamar en route. This extract has been edited and reformatted, but the original text has been retained. The cheerful disregard for consistent spelling is fascinating; 'translating' the script is a rather entertaining challenge!

"The town of S.Germanes is but a poore fischar town. S.Germanes stondith about a 3 miles in Liner creke from the mayne strond of Tamar haven. The glory of it stoode by the priory. Beside the hye altare of the same priory on the right hand ys a tumbe in the walle with an image of a bishop; and over the tumbe xi. bishops paynted with their names and verses as token of so many bishoppes biried there, or that ther had beene so many bishoppes of Cornwalle that had theyr seete theer.

From Liner bridge to Asche[62] aboute a 4 miles by much like grounde. Asche is a praty quik market toun, and is set from the toppe of a rokky hille, as by west to the roote of the same, and very shore of Tamar haven by este. The tounes men use boothe marchandise and fischar. Thir is a chapel of ease in Asche. The paroch chirch is caullid St. Stephan's, about half a mile off by south, the personage wherof is impropriate to Windesore College.

In S. Stephan's paroch is the graunt and auncient castelle of Tremertoun, apon a rokky hille, wherof great peaces yet stond, and especially the dungeon. The ruines now serve for a prison. Great libertees long to this

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**61** *The Itinerary of John Leland's Itinerary, so far as relates to Cornwall*, which is included as Appendix VII of The Parochial History of Cornwall, Vol. IV, **by Davies Gilbert,** London 1838, accessed via Project Gutenberg EBook of The Parochial History of Cornwall, Volume 4, www.gutenberg.org/files/60558/60558-h/60558-h.htm

62 'Asche' is, of course, Saltash.

castelle. The Valetortes, men of great possession, wer owners, and, as far as I can gather, builders of this castel, and owners and lordes of the toun of Aische.

These crekes I notid on the west side of Tamar. Fyrst, I markid in sight above Aschetoun, a 2 miles or more, the principal arme of Tamar haven going up into the land about 10 miles from that place to Caulstoke bridge, witherto it almost ebbith and flowith. And shippes cum up within a mile of this bridg to a place caullid Morleham[63]. And this place is but a 3 miles from Tavestoke. Morwel, the Abbat of Tavestok house, about a mile from Morleham.

Betwixt the 2 miles from Asche to the mayne arme of Tamar in sight I markid, descending in the haven, 3 crekes breking out into the land, wherof the first lyith by north-west creking up into the land. The second lyith west-north-west. The 3 plaine west, and this crekid to the land scant half a mile. Scant a mile lower lyith Liner creke, goyng up onto S. Germanes.

The toune of Asch stondith bytween these 2 crekes. Then brekith a litle creke out caullid John's or Antony. And at the mouth, about S. Nicholas, brekith in a creek goyng up to Milbrok, 2 miles up in land from the mayn haven. This Milbrok is a riche fischar toun.

Also ii. myles fro Asshe northward ynto the land is a smaul village cawled Caregrin. Est of this is Bere Parke[64] and hous in Devonshire, dividid from Caregrin *tantum Tamara*.

Creekes from the mouth of Plym and Tamar upon the est side of the haven [are] The Mylle bay. The Stone-house creke. Kaine place creke[65], wher is a maner place of Mr.Wise's. The creeke having a mille at the

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63 This confirmation that Morwellham was receiving sea-going ships in the 16th century is interesting.

64 The southern end of the Bere Peninsula was still used as a deer park at this time.

65 Today's Keyham, which also appears as 'Keame' in some historical accounts. Perhaps both 'Keame' and 'Kaine' represented how the place name was pronounced!

hed, it is in lenght a 2 miles. A 4 mile upper, a creke going up to Mr. Budokes side, wher is his manor place, and S.Budok chirch. Ther dwellith by this creke also Copston of Warley[66], a man of xx C. markes of lande as it is saide. Then is the uppermost, wher Tave water cummith onto Tamar. And on the est side of this creeke is Bukland. And on the west side is Bere, wher the Lord Brokes house and park was. Bere is a mile from the creke mouthe. Bukland is a two miles from the creke mouthe. The towne of Plymmouth is about a 3 miles from the passage of Asche. The trajectus self at Asch half a mile.

By the ryver of Tamar from the hedde north-north-est yssuyng owt towarde the sowthe, the contery being hilly, ys fertile of corne and gresse, with sum tynne warkes wrougth by violens of water. Hengiston, beyng a hy hylle and nere Tamar, yn the est part, baryn of his self, yet is fertile by yelding of tynne both be water and dry warkes."



*Trematon Castle's 13th century gatehouse, which is thought to have survived relatively unchanged since Leland's account.*

[66] The Copleston family occupied Warleigh, near the mouth of the Tavy Estuary through the 16th century and into the 17th century.

## Friends of the Tamar Valley Events 2019

In January, we heard from Ed Buckingham, the first Cornishman to climb Everest and the first to complete the Seven Peak Challenge. This challenge involves climbing the highest peak on all seven continents. Although Mount Vinson is the highest on Antarctica at 4982 m, it is half the height of Everest, but the challenge is the environment – a vast expanse of wilderness, the coldest and driest.

In February, for the second time, we had to cancel a presentation by Terry Faull on The Forgotten Garden of Lew Trenchard, owing to inclement weather. It was rescheduled for September.

The presentation in March came from Rupert Kirkwood, with Part II of his adventures Kayaking around the South West Coast, including his report of a breaching humpback whale, which garnered widespread coverage in the local and national media.

Closer to home, we heard in March from Natalie Mitchell, the East Cornwall Reserves Officer for Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT). After introducing us to some of the other reserves in her area, she went on to describe the history and ecology of Penlee Battery near Rame Head, where we were to visit in June.

The presentation in March was from Friends member Jill Lane on The Remarkable Story of Tharsis, a house in Calstock. An article about the family that originally built and owned Tharsis and their mining activities in Spain was published in the 2019 volume of Tamar.

On a beautiful late June day members and friends visited Penlee Battery Nature Reserve, led by Natalie Mitchell, East Cornwall Reserves Officer for CWT. The Trust owns and manages this unusual site near Rame Head, formerly the location of a gun battery, constructed between 1889 and 1892,

The second summer event in July took us to Royal William Yard, with wonderful views over to Mount Edgcumbe, where member Ron Smith gave a guided tour. The victualling yard, built between 1826 and 1835, was designed by Sir John Rennie and was in use for naval purposes until 1992. It is now being regenerated into apartments, bars, cafes, offices, etc.

Our last summer outing in August was a guided walk around Calstock with Jill Lane to see the fruition of a seven year project to erect blue plaques in the village. Jill had some great photographs to show how the buildings had changed (or not) over the years.

We finally got to hear from Terry Faull in September, at the third attempt, on the Lost Garden of Lewtrenchard. The antiquarian, novelist, folk song collector and scholar Revd Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) created a woodland garden around a Holy Well for his wife. After her death, the garden and well fell into disuse, but both have been restored by a group of volunteers.

In October we heard from Bruce Hunt on Crossing the Tamar via Ferries and Bridges. He described how, for centuries, the river had been not only a route inland, but also a barrier. While numerous small boats enabled people to cross, there was an increasing demand for bridges, the first being at Gunnislake, as well as the development of so-called floating bridges at Saltash and Torpoint.

In November we welcomed Rick Stewart, local mining expert, author, and Manager of the George and Charlotte Mine at Morwellham, to talk about this important port. He related the history of Morwellham, which can be traced back to 1240, and the boom and bust of the mining industry in the Tamar Valley that determined its fortune. By the mid-1970s, the Friends of Morwellham had restored the Quay to an Open Air Museum.

The December meeting had a festive theme, as Dave Bouch, Head Gardener at Cotehele related the history of the Christmas garland and the complex process by which it is made. Construction takes about 10 days, using around 30,000 flowers, with up to eight people working each day.

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*Last but not least…*



*Photo supplied by Alison Carreck of her great grandfather, William Parken, with a strawberry punnet carrier at Ward Farm, Bere Peninsula.*