

Tamar

Journal of the Friends of the Tamar Valley
Number 43 - 2021



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Cover: The fishing lugger *Our Boys* moored off Hole's Hole on the
Tamar, with South Hooe in the distance (editor's photo)

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EDITORIAL

My very grateful thanks to the contributors to the 2021 edition of 'Tamar', especially given the difficult times we have been going through in the past year.

Maggie Watkinson has provided a very thoroughly researched portrait of some of her Tamar Valley forbears, the Moyes family, who were bargemen during the great age of river trade on the Tamar. Maggie has also contributed another piece focused on the ferry that crossed from the Moyes' 'home port' at Cargreen to the Bere Peninsula. Landulph parish receives further attention in 'Tamar 2021, deservedly, in Andrew Barrett's exploration of place names in the parish, with their roots in the 'Dark Ages'.

This journal tends to emphasise the rich history of the Tamar Valley, so it is excellent that environmental specialist Peter Nicholson has helped us diversify with his article on the quiet but fascinating revival of the rare Triangular Club-rush on the river. Another dimension of the changing Tamar environment is celebrated in Jane Kiely and Pete Thompson's account of the brand-new Calstock Wetlands Project, including the spectacular new bridge on the riverside walkway.

Our cover shows the wonderful fishing lugger *Our Boys* on its home mooring off Hole's Hole. Its colourful and inspiring story is told in this edition by its current owners and enthusiastic operators, Phil Cogdell and Liz Smith.

As editor, I have contributed two pieces. One relates the excursions into the Tamar and Tavy valleys by King George III and Queen Charlotte during their tour of the West Country in 1789. The other is a shorter item about a remarkable military hero, Major John Palmer, who lived for a time in Bere Ferrers after the First World War - and died in the village pub.

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The Moyes Mariners of the Tamar Valley
Maggie Watkinson
Thomas Moyes (1774-1851)

The first known member of the Moyes¹ family who sailed in the Tamar Valley was Thomas, born in 1774 in the parish of Bere Ferrers and baptised in St Andrew's church on 3rd April.



Fig.1 St.Andrew's church, Bere Ferrers

Thomas was the second son of John Moyes (from Landulph) and Thomasin Lang (from Bere Ferrers), John and Humphrey being his older and younger brothers respectively. Thomas was apprenticed to Richard Hatch of "Shutcomb" (now Shutecombe Farm) on 16th April 1781 at the tender age of 7. As Shutecombe is very close to the River Tavy, Thomas would undoubtedly have seen barges and boats passing and may even have been allowed some time to play in and on the river. There is no

¹ The name Moyes has been spelt in a variety of ways in the records, for example, Moysé, Moise and Moas. For consistency, the spelling adopted by the family in later years has been used.

information available about how Thomas's life progressed or what he learned whilst at Shutecombe, but it was probably related to agricultural activities and his apprenticeship was likely to have finished when he was aged around 14. His father died in 1794 in Bere Ferrers, and the family may have moved to Landulph around this time.



Fig.2 Landulph Church in the early 1800s

Thomas married Honour Barrett on the 15th October 1802 in Landulph; the couple lived in Cargreen in Landulph parish for the rest of their lives and had eight children, all but one living into adulthood. The first indication of Thomas's occupation was the parish register record of the christening of his sixth child, Mary, in August 1815; he was noted as a bargeman, when he was aged 40. The next child, Nicholas Lang Moyes, was christened in September 1818 and Thomas was also documented as a bargeman on this parish record.

The period from 1815 to 1819, following the battle of Waterloo and the end of the Napoleonic wars, with the subsequent regression as well as the poor summer of 1816, was a hard one for agricultural workers

throughout the country. At some point during those years Thomas and his brother Humphrey were both unemployed. There is a record of a Landulph parish vestry (a parish business meeting) having been held in 1818, during which some of the better off inhabitants of the parish agreed to employ them, with other labourers in the same situation, until Christmas 1819. It is possible that Thomas undertook agricultural work as well as being a bargeman; however, the person who employed him was Benjamin Snell of Wayton, a farm and hamlet also in Landulph. Benjamin Snell profited from the Napoleonic wars, was a merchant and dealer from Plymouth Dock and moved to Wayton in around 1803. He seems to have been an entrepreneur, taking control of the lime kiln, corn cellar and quay at Cargreen and was involved in the lime burning business there (Donne, 2010). He also owned at least one barge prior to his death in 1831.

Thomas undoubtedly would have been a crew member of one of the numerous Tamar barges which plied up and down the river, at the time when the only practicable method of transportation for commodities and people to and from the valley was via water borne vessels.

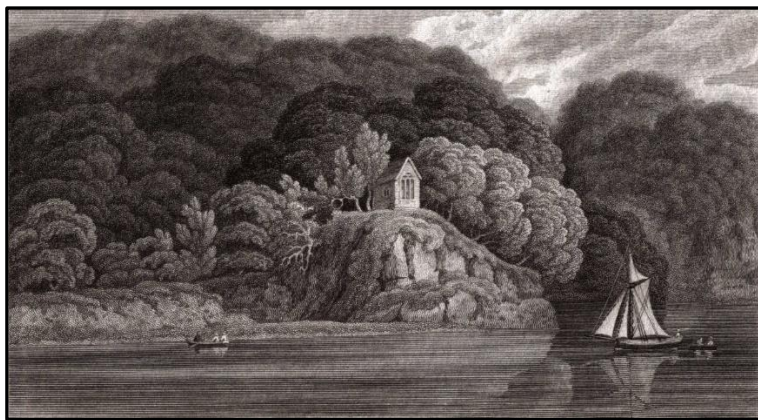


Fig.3 A Tamar barge sailing by Cotehele Chapel. Engraving by J Stewart from a drawing by Thompson from a sketch by Samuel Prout. (1810)

Merry (1980) describes the early (up to the 1840s) barges used for transporting people as open, heavily built vessels with no deck, bluff bows and a high stern and a single sail and mast; they were known as market boats. Some of these were superseded by the advent of the paddle steamer market boats in the 1820s (Patrick, 2004), which, of course, were not as reliant on the vagaries of wind and tide. Larger and even heavier vessels, which still had only one mast and one sail, also existed, and were used for carrying sand and other bulky cargoes. When the wind was not conducive to sailing the barges were poled along, or towed (one of the crew would climb into the small boat, or ‘punt’, which every barge had, and manfully row to provide steerage way), or even propelled by the means of 15-foot sweeps. At this time the barges would probably have carried between 15 and 20 tons of cargo and the crew would have consisted of one or two people (Merry, 1980). It is probable that Thomas and his crewmate transhipped various goods delivered by sea-going schooners and ketches to the storehouses at Cargreen, Bere Ferrers and other distribution points along the river, and delivered them to the numerous quays in the Tamar Valley situated on shallower creeks (known as lakes in the area) and tributaries. Those close to Cargreen, for instance, include the farm quays at Colloggett and Moditonham (called ‘Pineapple Quay’) on Kingsmill Lake.



Fig.4 View from Moditonham Quay on a rainy day (author's photo)

The early barges evolved slowly; decks were added and the rigging became more complicated, for instance. Some became seaworthy and took longer voyages outside of the Tamar estuary and hence were called ‘outside’ barges (Merry, 1980) as opposed to the ‘inside’ ones which generally stayed within the boundaries of the upper Tamar and its estuary and did not go beyond Plymouth Breakwater. However, most of this evolution probably occurred after the 1840s and it is unlikely that Thomas sailed on one of the more developed vessels.

In the early 1800s the tasks undertaken by barges included collecting limestone from the quarries in Stonehouse and Plymouth to bring to the valley, which had none of its own, to be burned in the numerous lime kilns situated on the shores of the rivers and lakes, and then applied to the fields. Kilns were built at virtually every quay and hard on the Tamar between 1770 and 1830 (Booker, 1967), including at least one at Cargreen.



Fig.5 *Lime kilns at Halton Quay (author's photo).*

Booker (1967) describes the lime trade as probably the oldest in the Tamar Valley. The soil in the region is acidic, and limestone, once burnt,

neutralises acidity (or ‘sweetens the soil’ in the language of the time) and thereby improves fertility and hence productivity. In addition to using lime, farmers used sea sand or river estuary mud for the same purpose, and it is highly probable Thomas was involved in the transport of these commodities, too, as the change to lime occurred around the end of the eighteenth century (Booker, 1967). Whatever soil conditioning was used, the physical labour required to load the barges, distribute the cargoes evenly to avoid shifting during the passages and then offload the goods at the other end of the journey would have been very strenuous.

Another cargo Thomas may have been involved with was ‘Town’ or ‘Dock dung’; gardeners know that well-rotted animal manure is good for gardens and so, too, did the farmers of the Tamar Valley. There are newspaper advertisements offering dung for sale from the 1820s, but the trade was at its peak later in the century. Cargoes of dung, which consisted mainly of horse droppings but included offal, street sweepings and ash from house fires (Johnson (1997) in the three towns of Dock (Devonport), East Stonehouse and Plymouth were collected and brought up the river from Devonport, from where much of the river traffic started and finished, and from the Dung Quay on what is now Sutton Wharf, for use as agricultural fertiliser. It must have been a particularly unpleasant cargo!

Thomas is likely to have been involved in carrying the agricultural produce of Landulph, Botus Fleming and other parishes engaged in market gardening to the markets at Saltash or North Corner in Plymouth Dock (Devonport) on one of the market boats.

Although copper was an important export from the Tamar Valley in the nineteenth century it was generally carried by vessels larger than barges. However, coal and culm imported for the firing of lime kilns, and later for use in steam engines, was often carried upriver and into the lakes by smaller barges, having been transhipped at the distribution areas (Patrick,

2007). Other exports carried by barges included tiles, bricks, granite and slate as the century progressed.

At the time of the 1841 census in June of that year Thomas was living in Cargreen and was a 67-year-old boatman. The ferry that crossed the River Tamar between Cargreen and Thorn Point on the Bere peninsula had been there since at least medieval times (Kittridge, 2003) and Thomas would almost certainly have been one of the rowers plying to and fro across the river to ferry people and produce to Bere Ferrers parish. He may even have rowed further up and down the river; the fare from the Barbican in Plymouth to Cargreen was three shillings around the time of the 1840s to 1850s, for instance, and was presumably the same to go the other way (Cornwall Record Office).

By 1851 Thomas had stopped working; the census of March 30th describes him as a retired waterman. To bring an income into the household his wife Honour was the parish postwoman at this time - at the age of 71 - and must have walked miles to deliver post to the far-flung hamlets. Thomas died on 18th December 1851 at the venerable age of 77 years, and is buried in the churchyard at Landulph, as is Honour.

Thomas Moyes (1810? -1887)

The next Thomas Moyes in this family of Tamar Valley mariners was the eldest son of the Thomas discussed above; to avoid potential confusion the former is referred to as Tom. Tom's birth is somewhat of a mystery; he was either not christened or has been missed from the registers but was probably born in 1809 or 1810. Like his father before him the records of his early life are somewhat sparse. However, it is known that in 1820 Tom was apprenticed to John Roberts of Landulph, reputedly at the age of 10 years.

Tom is recorded as having first gone to sea in 1832, when he was aged around 20. He almost undoubtedly would have worked with his father on inside Tamar barges before then and may even have worked on those

‘outside’ barges which undertook coastal journeys around the southwest coast.

Tom cannot be found on the 1841 census so presumably was at sea at the time. The next record found for him is that of his marriage in 1842 to Susan Ann Guswell, the daughter of Nicholas Burt Guswell, a master mariner, at St.Andrew’s church in Plymouth. Tom was recorded as a mariner, resident in the *Mary*, a small schooner. The master at the time was Joseph Guswell, one of Susan’s uncles. Sadly, there appear to be no existing crew lists for the *Mary* for this period, to ascertain how long Tom had been sailing in her. There are indications that Tom sailed on a vessel called *Lavinia* between December 1843 and June 1844 (TNA BT112); the most likely candidate for this ship is a schooner part owned by another member of the Guswell family. Tom received his seaman’s ticket on 14th December 1844 (TNA BT113) when he was purportedly aged 30. He was living at 35 New Street in Plymouth’s Barbican and was 5 ft 6½ inches tall, with brown hair, a fair complexion, and grey eyes. Tom gave his birth date as 29th March 1814 and stated he could not write.

From the time of his marriage Tom is not recorded as living in Cargreen, but throughout his life he maintained close connections with the Tamar and its valley. Tom and Susan had four children, all born at Susan’s parents’ home at 44 New Street at approximately 2-year intervals. Just over a year after the birth of the last child, in March 1849, Susan died at the age of only 31 years from tuberculosis. Tom’s life must have been extremely difficult after this; he had four very young children and had to earn a living. His youngest daughter went to live with one of his sisters in Landulph and he and the rest of the children lived with another sister in Fore Street in East Stonehouse. The 1851 census taken in March of that year shows that Tom was working as a bargeman. It seems he had stopped working on sea-going vessels and had reverted to more local voyages on inside barges. At the time of the census, he was reportedly aged 39 years, which gives a birth year of 1812.

In 1853 Tom married for the second time, to Jane Giles, originally from Botus Fleming (still apparently aged 39). At the time he was resident on the *Ranger* and was recorded as a mariner. It has not yet been possible to determine which of the several vessels called *Ranger* it was, but it was evident Tom had returned to a sea-going life.

Tom could not write very easily. Most of the crew lists found show that he made his mark; where there is a signature it is somewhat wobbly and hesitant. This is perhaps not surprising as there was no school in Landulph until 1843 and his parents could not afford private tuition. He also appears to have been innumerate - the ages he states on the crew lists of the vessels he sailed on give him possible birth dates from between 1801 and 1819. An alternative explanation for these wildly differing dates is that he attributed no importance to the accuracy of his birthdate.

By 1858 Tom's fortunes seemed to be looking up. On the 13th August of that year he bought 32 shares in a vessel called *Leon* from the Plymouth Great Western Dock Company; his brother Nicholas, a dairyman living in East Stonehouse, bought the other 32 shares (Hicks, 2007). The vessel was a barge built in Flushing in Holland; she carried 26 tons and was evidently used as a mud barge, delivering estuary mud to farmers in the Tamar Valley. Unfortunately, she sank on 6th November in the following year 'on the bridge' (this was almost certainly the new railway bridge built by Brunel and opened in 1859). The *Leon* was raised about a month later and towed to Barn Pool (Hicks, 2007), close to Mount Edgcumbe, but her register was then closed.

Tom's next known vessel was the *Emma*. She was built in 1863 in Plymouth and was carvel built with one deck, one mast and a square stern, and carried 39 ⁶³/₁₀₀ tons, making her a larger than average barge. Tom owned 16 of the shares when the vessel was first registered and Richard Soper, a carpenter of Plymouth, the other 48.

Tom was the master of this vessel from 1864 until 1871 and he sold his 16 shares to Richard Soper on 3rd October of that year (Hicks, 2007). Tom's voyages were predominantly around the coasts of Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, but included some trips to Wales. However, in most of these years Tom worked 'in the harbour' for significant periods, meaning all his journeys were within the confines of Plymouth Breakwater, so he would have certainly travelled up and down the Tamar. Possibly his most adventurous journey was that taken to London in 1866. Tom and his mate, Thomas Wilkins, set off from Sutton Harbour in Plymouth on 28th July and took nearly a month to sail around the south coast, reaching London on 24th August. They stayed there for six days, perhaps seeing the sights, and left on the 30th, arriving back in Plymouth only six days later. One wonders why it took so long to get to London given the prevailing south-westerly winds. However, considering the rest of his journeys were all around the south and west coasts of Britain, it is highly possible that Tom was unacquainted with the coast further east than Hampshire, and progressed slowly, hugging the shore and staying in sight of land. It is also possible this voyage was somewhat unique. John Leather (1984) mentions one case of a Plymouth barge reputedly sailing to London; it is conceivable that *Emma* was the barge concerned.

In 1872 Tom became the master of a smack called the *Plym*; she was owned at the time by William Hole Shilston, who built the *Plym* in 1864, of the China House yard in Sutton Pool. The burthen of the *Plym* was 18 tons (Hicks, 2007). Mr Shilston sold all 64 shares to Tom on 16th August 1873. The majority of the *Plym*'s work was within the harbour, although in later years Tom also traded between Plymouth and Salcombe and Kingsbridge; the cargoes mentioned in the records of these trips, which are typical for small coastal vessels of the period, included stone, grain, timber and patent manure. Patent manure is that which has had sulphuric acid added to reduce the smell; it is then sold as a fertiliser. This must have been a far more pleasant cargo to carry than the stinking dock dung. Tom sold the *Plym* to Walter Gibbs Ellis, a bargeman of Tideford, Cornwall, on 4th March 1885.

Tom's last vessel was the *Union*, a 44-ton sloop built in Looe in 1827 and registered in Fowey at the time Tom bought her, which was probably early in 1880. Tom used this larger vessel to make voyages far further afield than previously; there were journeys to Portsmouth, Southampton and Lymington, for instance, and more journeys to London. Details of cargoes are scant, but limestone and timber are mentioned.

In 1881 Tom was involved in a court case. He was sheltering from a destructive gale in Portland Roads in October 1881; the *Union*, laden with a cargo of granite pitchers, drifted from her moorings and when approaching the breakwater the crew were taken off by some Portland men to safety. Later in the afternoon a steam tug managed to put two men aboard and took the *Union* to Weymouth. Tom was charged a £75 salvage claim. In court he denied the vessel had been abandoned, stated the Portland men had helped secure her, and that he and his crew were merely ashore for a couple of hours to refresh themselves and get dry clothes. The result of the court case was that he had to pay £35 for salvage and 30 shillings to the Portland men. The reports in the various newspapers of the time indicate that Tom was somewhat peeved.

The *Union* came to a rather sad end, having been totally wrecked in Lyme Regis as the result of a force 10 gale on 2nd September 1883. This appears to have been the end of Tom's sailing days, which were certainly very eventful.

Tom died in November 1887 at 27 King Street in Plymouth, his daughter's house, purportedly at the age of 74 years, although he was more probably aged 77. It appears that even his family were uncertain about his age!

Thomas Guswell Moyes (1849 – 1908)



Fig.6 *Thomas Guswell Moyes* (photo courtesy of Ken Moyes).

Thomas Guswell Moyes (henceforth referred to as TG) was the fourth child and only son of his parents; he was born in March 1849 in New Street in Plymouth and although raised in Plymouth maintained close ties to his family members who still lived in the Tamar Valley in his earlier years. In 1861, at the age of 12, TG was a visitor in his paternal great-aunt Rebecca's home, a cottage next to the Wesleyan Chapel in Cotts, a

small settlement in the parish of Bere Ferrers, Devon. The rest of the family was at home in Briton Side (now Bretonside), Plymouth. As Cotts is very close to Weir Quay on the River Tamar, he would have spent time in or on the Tamar and was probably already very familiar with it as his grandparents and some of his wider family lived in Cargreen.

TG's first official voyage was as a boy in his father's barge *Emma*, in 1864, at the age of 14. It may not have been a coincidence that Tom bought the *Emma* at around the time his son began his career. TG spent at least eighteen months working with his father learning the coastwise trade and, although he went on to work in the 'foreign' trade ships and later developed a liking for yachting, he continued to work with his father, on the *Emma* and the *Union*. TG was the master of the *Emma*, reportedly engaged in the coasting trade, in 1873/4, 1875/6 and again in 1877/78, after his father had sold her and moved on to the *Plym*. TG was

also the mate on the *Union* in 1875/6 before Tom bought her and may have recommended her as a vessel for purchase.

TG died in 1908 as the result of an accident on the *Grianaig*, the 2nd Duke of Westminster's yacht. He was wrapped around the windlass whilst raising a steam pinnace and died of his injuries. He, like his father, is buried in Ford Park Cemetery in Plymouth. He was the last of the Moyes family to be a merchant mariner.

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The National Archives. BT112/48

The National Archives. BT113/27



The splendid survivor! The Tamar barge 'Lynher' in Barn Pool at the mouth of the Tamar, September 2021 (photo: Diana Mitchell).

For full details, see the **'Tamar Barge' website** at <https://tamarbarge.org.uk/> including the fascinating history of the vessel and its miraculous restoration <https://tamarbarge.org.uk/boat-history/>

Triangular Club-rush and conservation in the Tamar Estuary

Peter Nicholson

A boat trip down the Tamar Estuary from Gunnislake Weir to the Tamar Bridge in the south, below which it forms the Hamoaze, will convey you a distance of some 14.5 miles. This meandering journey takes you through a complex mixture of landscapes. Steep wooded slopes sculpted from underlying Devonian and Carboniferous slates, exposed in places as precipitous cliffs and dotted with the relics of past mining activity flank the narrow channel of the upper estuary. Wider flat open areas punctuate the slopes seemingly alternating from bank to bank, Devon to Cornwall as you drift by. These wash lands, where naturally spring tides and fluvial floods would spread high water from the main channel to cover the whole valley floor, were historically protected, mostly in the early 1800's, from regular inundation by the building of artificial flood banks. These earth banks restricted waters to the main channel enabling more intensive agricultural or mining activities to replace these former ephemeral wetland habitats.

Below Cotehele Quay the valley sides become less steep and the landscape generally more open. Dense stands of common reed line the increasingly wider channel and these reed bed margins slowly trend towards saltmarsh as the marine influence increases as you move towards the Sound. Below the Tavy confluence the width of the estuary at high water, almost a straight line taken from the head of Kingsmill Lake to the top of Tamerton Foliot Creek, displays approximately three miles of open water and at low tide this changes into some 2.2 miles of intertidal mudflat. Such a varied landscape with its numerous microhabitats supports a diverse wildlife with some notable rarities which have helped earn the estuary a plethora of European and National designations.

The Tamar estuary complex provides a home, nursery and staging post for a wide range of animal and plant life. Most of us are familiar with the conspicuous bird life on the Tamar. Wading birds and wildfowl both resident, passage or winter visitors are attracted by the abundant prey

living within the intertidal areas. Herons and egrets, both little and cattle, stand or hunt quietly within the creeks, avocet and shelduck sift the glutinous mud for invertebrate prey while curlew and godwit probe its depths and small waders such as redshank and dunlin scurry around probing the surface layers. Ospreys are now becoming a regular sight on their spring and autumn passages, feeding on the mullet that abound in the channel and creeks.

Fish show a similar if less conspicuous seasonality of dependence on the Tamar. Fish populations although now depleted from their historic levels remain impressive. The estuary supports an important nursery area for a wide variety of fish species. Bass and flounder are two of the more important commercial species. The Environment Agency (EA) monitors the passage of salmon and sea trout (salmonids) leaving the estuary to enter the non-tidal river Tamar at the Gunnislake weir. In 2017 they estimated that slightly fewer than 16,000 adult salmonids moved from the estuary through their fish counter to spawn. Large numbers indeed but still estimated as 90% lower than the salmonid population fifty years ago.

High levels of suspended sediment in the upper estuary that give its characteristic milk chocolate colour and frustrate attempts to see below the surface hide many a fascinating species. Rarities like the allis shad, a small herring-like fish has its only known spawning site in the UK on the tidal estuary below Gunnislake weir and within the river from the tidal weir up to Horsebridge. More obscure rarities such as the shrimp *Palaemon longirostris* (it has no common name) lives its life around the Calstock area and is known only from two other estuaries in the UK.

Such unusual wildlife species are not just restricted to animal forms; plants also add a uniqueness to the ecology of the Tamar Estuary. One of these plants has been a point of interest to me for a number of years. The plant triangular club-rush *Schoenoplectus triqueter* is part of the *Cyperaceae* family containing 110 genera and over 4300 species. The *Schoenoplectus* genus worldwide contains about 20 species, mostly

aquatic perennials. There are four native species within Britain and Ireland: the common club-rush *Schoenoplectus lacustris*, grey club-rush *S.tabernaemontani*, the rare *S. pungens* sharp club-rush and the even rarer triangular club-rush *Schoenoplectus triqueter*.

Triangular club-rush is a grass like plant in structure with unpretentious brown florets - and easily overlooked except for its bright green triangular stems and tall stature. The rush is very rare in Britain, being restricted to a narrow margin around the mean high water tide level on the upper estuary often close to a stream discharge. It was first noted in the UK on the River Thames in 1650 and later found on the River Medway in Kent and the Arun in West Sussex and first recorded on the Tamar in 1857.



Fig.1 Flowering Triangular Club-rush (foreground)

Owing to its nature conservation significance the EA and Natural England (NE) supported or directly undertook surveys of the known historic

estuary sites for triangular club-rush and its hybrids on the Arun, Medway, Tamar and Thames together with surveys on the Shannon estuary and tributaries in Ireland. These field observations together with subsequent genetic studies undertaken at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, concluded that the plant was restricted in the UK to a patch of rush occupying an area the size of a front doormat located on the Devon side of the upper Tamar estuary, but with a larger stable population on the Shannon.

The Tamar hybrid form of the rush, also of conservation significance owing to its extreme rarity, was determined to be a fertile cross between grey club-rush and triangular club-rush, known as *S. x kuekenthalianus* (it has no common name) - the same form that was present on both the Arun and Medway but absent from the Thames and Shannon.

Following from the research work, it was concluded that the UK population was critically endangered making the plants a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and a plant fully protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Having confirmed its nature conservation significance and the extreme vulnerability of the plants at their only remaining historic site in the UK; NE and the EA instigated a programme to safeguard and increase the triangular club-rush population to a sustainable level on the Upper Tamar Estuary. The objective of the project was to achieve a density of triangular club-rush capable of sustaining natural losses from erosion and habitat change by natural recruitment through vegetative growth, seed dispersal or fragment transfer.

This was to be achieved by planting the rush at former historic locations on the Tamar. Introduced plants came from cuttings propagated at Wakehurst Botanical Gardens in Sussex, derived from a plant originally collected from the Tamar and grown and safeguarded there as part of their national and international plant conservation programme. Staff at

Wakehurst, a site managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, propagated these plants and the Environment Agency undertook planting out of the rush at a number of selected main channel sites upstream of Calstock.

In 2009 an appraisal of *Schoenoplectus* status on the Tamar was again jointly financed by Natural England (NE) and the Environment Agency (EA) and contracted out to Panscape Environmental Consultancy. The aim of the appraisal was to assess the success of the recovery programme actions over the preceding decade in securing a favourable conservation status of triangular club-rush and its hybrids on the Tamar. It was also requisite to make recommendations, based on the findings, to refine the approach taken to monitoring; stocking frequency and location selection; increase genetic diversity of reintroductions and in addition assess the conservation importance of the hybrid form *Schoenoplectus x kuekenthalianus*.

The work undertaken by Panscape in 2009 established the population level of triangular club-rush at c.3.6 m² and in urgent need of supporting re-introductions of further plants if the species was not to become extinct at its last UK site. The need was identified for a regular late spring survey to establish how the plants had overwintered, allowing for planning and implementing any early summer management; a regular mid-summer re-introduction programme if required, plus a late summer survey to determine post-growing season status - all to be recorded in an annual report submitted to NE.

This reassessment was also important in establishing clear thresholds for when active involvement was to be set in motion for restocking or positive habitat management when the populations fell below an intervention level. For triangular club-rush this was determined as a minimum area of 50 square metres (where emergent shoot density exceeded 10 stems/square metre) at five distinct stands at separate geographical locations. For *S. x*

kuekenthalianus the minimum population size was set at least 100 square metres with again a minimum of five distinct stands.

In 2010 a programme of further plant re-introduction at various habitats on the Tamar from Cotehele up to Whimble close to the tidal limit commenced and was accompanied by a yearly comprehensive monitoring and reporting programme.



Fig.2 Flowering Triangular Club-rush established at a new tidal wetland site

By 2015 field trials were showing that off-channel habitats within the historic floodplain were more favourable for the successful long-term establishment, plant vigour and floret production of triangular club-rush. Extensive trials within the main channel estuarine banks had found that bank shear was the main cause of establishment failure and that

precipitated silts on the developing florets in the high turbidity conditions in the main tidal channel prevented successful seed formation.

In 2017 seed production for triangular club-rush was confirmed from inland sites on the Tamar, the first time that seed production for this species had been recorded on the Tamar. This allowed progress on another of the recommendations from the 2009 appraisal, to increase the genetic diversity of further plant re-introductions.

In 2018 Wakehurst Botanical Gardens successfully germinated and grew on triangular club-rush plants from seed collected at a newly created freshwater site at Higher Ferry Farm. The plants were destined for use in stocking further wetland sites on the Tamar and at other suitable historic localities where the plants had become extinct owing to habitat destruction.

This success in establishment and seed production from plants reintroduced on the Tamar in the off-channel sites led to liaison with the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust and consideration was given to the Barnes Wetland site beside the Thames before finally selecting their site at Arundel Wetland Centre beside the Arun Estuary. A trial introduction at this site was established in mid-summer 2018 and autumn monitoring recorded both successful establishment and seed production in its first year.

By the end of 2018 the triangular rush population on the Tamar had attained an area of 115 square metres - equivalent to about 340 front doormats!

In late 2018 Natural England sponsored Panscape to assess the feasibility of further introductions at other historic sites on the Thames and Medway. The recommendations of this study encouraged Wakehurst to germinate further seed, again provided from plants on the Tamar. These plants were to be grown on for later introduction back on the Tamar and at freshwater sites within Kew Botanic Gardens, adjoining one of the historic tidal

locations on the Thames near Richmond. This enabled the return of triangular club-rush to the Thames catchment - a task finally achieved in 2021.

Although a successful recovery programme for one rare plant facing UK extinction is exciting in itself, its real ecological importance is with its link to the restoration of tidal wetlands on the upper reaches of the Tamar Estuary promoted by the EA and NE. With the collaboration of local people and landowners' works at Haymarsh, Higher Ferry Farm, Whimble, Cotehele and Calstock (with South Hooe soon to follow), opportunities have been provided for additional off-channel sites where triangular club-rush may be established and the natural habitat restored.

This ongoing restoration of the floodplain tidal wetlands of old will bring back a more robust and varied ecological system that will be better able to deal with rising sea levels. This in turn will have major benefits not only for triangular club-rush but all the estuaries wildlife both rare and common place.

The fishing lugger *Our Boys*
Phil Cogdell and Liz Smith



Fig 1. *Our Boys* under sail

Now resident on the Tamar, the fishing lugger *Our Boys* was built in Looe during 1903 and launched in January 1904 as an engine-less, two-masted lug-rigged fishing boat. *Our Boys* had a very long fishing career, as she didn't retire from fishing until the mid-1970s. She was originally owned and manned by the Pengelly family and named after their sons. Later, the family also owned a sister boat called *Our Girls* after the daughters in the family, and in the 1920s, the *Our Daddy* was built and named after the patriarch himself. *Our Boys* was one of a sizeable Cornish fishing fleet - only a handful of which are now still afloat.

Dick Pearce was the highly respected, Looe-based local builder commissioned by George Woodrow Pengelly to build her according to the lines which characterised Looe luggers and which distinguished them

from other fishing fleets along the Cornish coast such as those at Polperro, Mevagissey and Mounts Bay.



Fig.2 *'Our Daddy' Pengelly and 'Our Boys'*

There was no standard 'plan' for a Looe lugger. The prospective owner would discuss his requirements with the boat builder, who would make a scale model which would guide any final adjustments to the hull shape required by the owner. The model would then be sectioned to give the shapes of the frames around which to construct the boat.

The shape of *Our Boys'* hull underwater reflects the skill of her builder and original owner in building a boat that still has a surprising turn of speed given her tonnage. She can still show a clean pair of heels (or a disappearing transom) to a number of today's modern yachts even in very light airs. A fishing boat needed to be able to deliver the catch to the market as quickly as possible to keep it fresh but to secure a good price.

Her hull planks were originally pine and the frames and structural timbers were oak. She is a carvel-built boat (each plank butted to the

next, edge to edge) with the planking nailed to the frames. The Looe boat-builders were highly skilled and no caulking (sealant) was required between the hull planking to make the boats watertight.

To preserve the hull the old boats were traditionally painted with tar. There was an old tar works to the north of the present bridge over the Looe River. A coating of tar combined with a ready supply of fish oil and later, old engine oil which would percolate down into the bilges, together with constant submersion in salt water helped to keep the timbers rot-free. The majority of *Our Boys'* hull, planks and frames below the waterline are still the original timbers, although the topsides have inevitably suffered the most from exposure to rainwater over the years.

Her sail plan would originally have included a dipping lug sail on the foremast and a standing lug sail on the mizzen mast. A lug sail is a loose footed sail suspended from a yard which is hoisted up the mast. There is no boom. A dipping lug sail needs to be lowered and re-hoisted every time the boat tacks or gybes. Then, as now, a mizzen staysail and foresail could also be set. Until the arrival of engines, propulsion in Looe to enter and leave the harbour was by long sweeping oars until the sails would fill. Today, she is rigged with standing lug sails on both masts which do not need lowering, thereby making her much easier to sail short-handed. Indeed, we normally only sail as a couple and a dog, including when we race!

The layout below decks has remained much the same throughout her life as a fishing boat. In the middle of the boat, covered by a tarpaulin, was the fish hold, storage space for nets and, later, the paraphernalia associated with keeping the engines fuelled, oiled and working.



Fig.3 Looe luggers being rowed out of Looe

At the back of the boat was a small ‘cabin’ where the men would retreat to eat and (rarely) nap. Visitors to *Our Boys* in recent years who remember sailing on her in their much younger days still remember the suffocating aroma within these meagre quarters generated by a small paraffin stove, exhaust fumes from an engine, the heady ‘perfume’ of the crew, tobacco smoke and the overwhelming smell of fish.

Around the time of the end of the First World War, engines became adapted for use at sea and single cylinder petrol- or paraffin-powered engines were used to assist with propulsion, although sails remained the main driving force. One early adopter of mechanisation is credited with a side-line in towing those members of the fishing fleet who would part with 6d (2.5p) out of the harbour with six boats being towed at once with a 7 hp engine! These early engines were high maintenance and basic, smelly and leaky with no gears, just forward and stop (“cut off the fuel supply”). Despite this, they were highly valued by fishermen who

previously had to deal with the fickle wind or sweeps (oars) as their only driving force.

The power and sophistication of engines gradually improved. As a consequence, the sailing rig was reduced as engines became more powerful to form the main propulsive force leaving just the mizzen sail to steady the boat whilst the crew worked nets or lines. As well as the main 30hp driving force, which was located in an engine room in the bow, *Our Boys* would have had one or possibly two smaller engines of 10 to 15hp, one in the aft cabin and perhaps one in the bow with the main engine. These replaced the brute force required of the crew in working the boats back to the nets. For the long-lining season, motor-powered line haulers (known as a 'jinny') became available from the 1920s, enabling the crew to haul in a much greater catch than manpower alone could have achieved. Various combinations of these engines persisted on the fishing luggers until after the Second World War, when the development of diesel engines led to the replacement of the old motors. Because nets were laid on the starboard side of the boat the propellers for all of the engines (sometimes three) emerged from the port side to avoid getting the nets tangled in them. As a result, fishermen of the day reported that their boats could turn to starboard on a sixpence but it took the whole of Looe Bay to turn to port. Manoeuvring in the tight and very tidal confines of Looe River at the beginning and end of the day must have been an interesting challenge!

With the redundancy of a sailing rig including the mainsail, wheelhouses could be located on the deck forward of the mizzen mast where the helmsman could shelter in rough weather. Though *Our Boys* has now had her sailing rig restored there are many images of her during the mid to late 20th Century with a wheelhouse and mizzen.



Fig. 4 Our Boys bashing her way out of Looe into a stiff Easterly breeze. Note the wheelhouse and lack of fore mast

Life had become a little less hard, but there were nevertheless periods of great economic hardship. One unexpected bonus of the two World Wars was the abundance of fish available after the resting of the fishing grounds during the Wars. The impact of the post WW1 1920s depression was however felt by the fishing community, as it was felt across the country and through the decades fishing communities have endured periods of great hardship as stocks have waned, with crews laid off and boats sold on.

Whatever the economic climate or level of mechanical support available to the skipper and crews of the luggers, the methods used to bring in the catch have remained much the same over the century, labelled

retrogressive by some during periods of change but essentially sustainable and environmentally sound.

Skippers, some of whom went to sea as crew on the family lugger as little more than children, had years of experience of the sea, weather, fishing grounds and seasonality of their catch. It was this experience that largely dictated the safety of each boat. Luxuries such as weather forecasts, VHF radio, radar, GPS and chart plotters were all developed over the decades that *Our Boys* has fished and sailed, but it was the expertise of the individual that was of paramount importance both in maintaining the safety of the crew and bringing the catch home, especially in her early days when the only navigational charts were contained in the heads of the skippers.

There were two main methods of fishing depending upon the season and hence the fish available, long-lining for ray, turbot, conger, ling and pollock and drift-netting for pilchards, herring and mackerel. Once in her fishing grounds, her crew would lower the nets or long lines over the starboard side with just the mizzen sail hoisted to keep the boat head to wind. They would then drift back, paying out the nets or lines as they drifted. The nets would be hundreds of yards long, corked along the top and weighted at the bottom, and made of fine mesh to trap the fish by the gills. To haul the nets or lines in would initially have involved manpower alone assisted by the roll of the boat (as the side they were pulling over rolled up they would hang on and as it rolled down they would haul in). The far end of the nets would be buoyed and if they were fishing at night, a paraffin light would locate the end of their 'long haul'. The fish were then shaken out into the fish hold for processing back in Looe and the operation would begin again until they had a full catch.



Fig.5 Unloading the catch at Looe

The end of the second World War saw increases in the numbers of large fishing trawlers, achieving a greater profit but arguably at greater cost to the sustainability of fish stocks, and posing a considerable threat to the long-liners and drift netting in terms of both damage to lines and decimation of fish populations. This together with changes in consumer tastes for saltwater fish saw a gradual decline in the fishing fleets of Cornwall and Looe until, in the 1960s, only five of the original fleet, including *Our Boys* remained. Later in the 1970s there was a resurgence of the Cornish fishing industry with the winter mackerel catch supplying the UK and Europe and new catches and methods being tried out, but by this time, *Our Boys* was semi-retired.

Her owner during this period, who now had a modern trawler based in Looe, kept her on the River Lynher and fished out of the River Tamar briefly. She then had a life characteristic of many of the remaining fleet of old Looe luggers. After an undocumented period, she was found in the late 1980s on the Isle of Wight in a poor state of repair by George and Sue Dart, who completed a thorough restoration which included the removal of the wheelhouse and the reinstatement of her original lug rig, a main mast, mizzen mast, bowsprit and bumpkin (the pole sticking out the back). She was once more a sailing lugger, albeit with modern engines. Later in the 1990s she returned to Looe, owned by Paul and Maggie Greenwood and in 2005 she left her home port once again for Cowes where she was chartered to guests for a few years. Then from 2009, she spent four years as a live-aboard vessel, sometimes chartered for shark fishing excursions out of Brixham by Andy McCloud, before she was sold to her current owners Phil Cogdell and Liz Smith in 2013.

Her recent owners have continued the ongoing maintenance essential to keep a wooden boat afloat: she has had a new deck laid, the fish hold is now the main saloon with galley and living space, the old engine room in the bow is part sail locker and part forward berths, while the ‘not too fragrant’ aft cabin where the crew’s quarters used to be now holds two roomy bunks. She has two large diesel engines (a propeller on each side!), much new planking and new bowsprit and bumpkin. It would be interesting to re-introduce George Woodrow Pengelly and Bill Pengelly to their old boat. They would be delighted with modern GPS navigation and the power of her current engines. She is now 117 years old and is registered on the National Historic Vessels Register as a member of the National Historic Vessels Fleet (‘boats of ‘pre-eminent and national significance’). Her only catch these days is mackerel but more importantly, she is still sailing - with regular trips in her old stamping grounds along the Cornish Coast, to the Scilly Isles and to Brittany, where she has always received a warm welcome from the French.

So why is she yellow? The widely held view among the fishing community in Looe is that this stems from Bill Pengelly's political affinity with the Liberal Party, a loyalty which was common throughout Cornwall throughout the 20th century. Undoubtedly, she would originally have been coated with black tar or but at some time in the mid-20th century, her colour was changed to a 'Liberal' yellow. Old black and white photographs dating from the mid-20th century show her with a pale, undoubtedly yellow hull. Later owners preferred, in order, dark green, blue and grey with the black bulwarks and gold stripe remaining a feature throughout. A tale frequently told, possibly apocryphal, relates how one owner during the 'green era' was ceremoniously presented with a pot of yellow paint and paint brush at the biennial Looe lugger regatta by the disproving race committee! Although the current owners have no intention of changing her hull colour, there is usually some lively debate during visits to Looe as to whether she is the 'right shade of yellow'! One must agree that she does look lovely at her current home at Holes Hole on the Bere Peninsula, particularly with the sun shining on her bright yellow hull.

Acknowledgements

As the current custodians of Our Boys, we have gathered information, photographs and stories about her from a range of sources. An authority on the history of the Looe fishing fleet has been Paul Greenwood, whose books '*Once Aboard a Cornish Lugger*' and '*More Tales from a Cornish Lugger*' provide detailed information about his life as a fisherman on these boats out of Looe - and are highly recommended to those wishing to find out more about the boats and the lives of the men who fished on them.

We have collected countless old photographs from sources including the internet, Facebook sites and kind sailors who have passed us by and forwarded their photos of *Our Boys* under sail. Thanks to all sources and apologies if we have failed to provide individual acknowledgements.

The Ferry from Cargreen in Landulph to Thorn Point in Bere Ferrers

Maggie Watkinson

From the time people started living in the Tamar Valley they must have gone to and fro across the river, even if there are no historical records to substantiate this. One such crossing point was between the village of Cargreen, which is in the parish of Landulph on the Cornish side, and Thorn Point in the parish of Bere Ferrers in Devon. The remains of the hard at Thorn Point have been assessed as having been built between the post medieval period (1540) and 1900, and the hard is shown on the first edition of the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of c. 1880¹. Thorn Point



Fig. 1. The end of the hard at Thorn Point can just be seen above the blue sail on the boat.

is approximately a mile from the village of Bere Ferrers, necessitating a walk through fields to get to it. The ferry also dates from medieval times². The ferry left Cargreen from the steps just below one of the village pubs; originally called The Sambles when it was built in 1590 and then the Royal Oak, it is now known as the Crooked Spaniard. The pub, sadly closed in 2010, is situated next to the river, with the quay forming the edge of the car park and has spectacular views up and down

the river. If one wanted to call the ferry from the Bere Ferrers side a red flag was raised on a flagpole.

The ferry itself was a rowing boat and the ferryman in its latter years was the innkeeper and lessee of the Royal Oak. One of the last of the Cargreen ferrymen was Thomas Oscar Moyes Spry, inevitably called Tom (look at his initials). He was the licenced victualler for the pub from before 1901 until retirement in about 1927. Tom was a waterman, like his father before him, prior to becoming the landlord of the pub, and had lived in the cottage next door to it for most of his previous life.

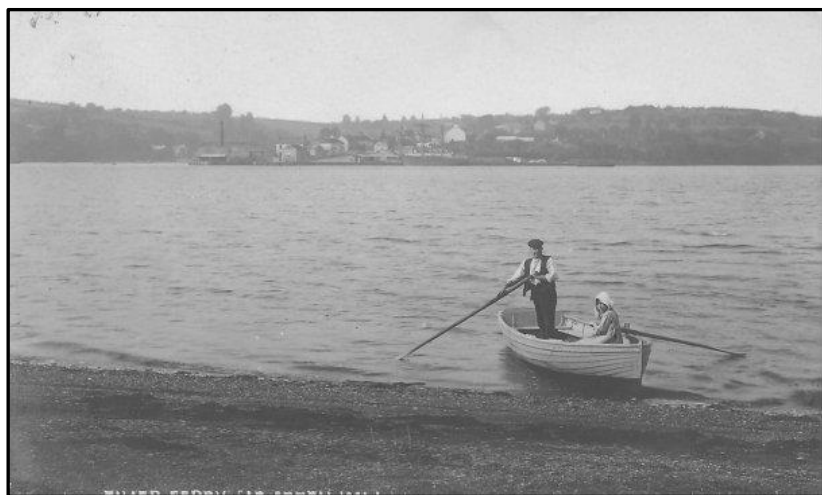


Fig. 2 Tom Spry landing a passenger on the Bere Ferrers side of the river. Cargreen can be seen in the background.

Landulph in the ‘Dark Ages’ and its place names

Andrew Barrett

From pre-Roman times Cornwall, Devon and part of Somerset formed the Celtic Kingdom of Dumnonia, the home of the Dumnonii tribe of which the Cornish Cornovii were a sub-group. Evidence of the Celts can be found in the foundation of Landulph Church and in some place names still in use in the parish today.

The parish of Landulph is situated two miles above Saltash on the Cornish bank of the Tamar, opposite the parish of Bere Ferrers. Landulph church stands close to the edge of Kingsmill Lake on an ancient ‘Lan’ site. These were the sacred enclosures of the Celtic Christian saints, who were very active around the 5th and 6th centuries AD. Often travelling by water, the ‘Saints’ established their ‘Lan’ close to where they landed; the churchyard boundary at Landulph is thought to follow the boundaries of the original Celtic Lan.

It is from this ‘Lan’ site that the parish takes its name - Landulph - meaning ‘the Holy site of St Dilph’. However, the saint’s name ‘Dilph’ has been corrupted over many centuries and was possibly ‘St Dilic’, a female Welsh Christian missionary from the 5th Century.

Other place names in Landulph parish of Cornish language origin include ‘Carrecron’, the original form of Cargreen - meaning ‘Seal’s Rock’. These rocks extended out into the Tamar and were built on in the 19th Century when the quays at Cargreen were constructed.

Penyoke is to the south of Cargreen and contains the common Cornish word ‘Pen’ meaning headland. The placenames Tinnel and Collogett are also thought to be of Cornish origin, although their meanings are not clear, and they would not have been isolated farms, but small communities in a landscape containing thick belts of woodland.

The Anglo Saxons had been trying to infiltrate the east of Dumnonia from around the 7th century but this was a very slow process involving many battles as they moved westwards, culminating in the defeat of a Cornish-Viking alliance at Hingston Down near Callington in 838 AD. The Saxons gradually acquired land holdings in East Cornwall and divided their lands into manors, which became centres of local government. Landulph consisted of three manors: Landelech - Landulph, Tinneltun - Tinnel and Thelbricce - Ellbridge. The Anglo-Saxons also introduced their language (Old English).

In 997 the Vikings were back in the Tamar, but this time plundering and pillaging; they are known to have attacked Tavistock Abbey and Lydford.

A charter of 1018 from King Cnut to Burhwold, Bishop of St Germans, confirmed a grant made by King Edmund of lands in the manor of Tinneltun in exchange for Throwleigh in Devon. The boundaries of the manor are given in the charter and include:

Cynges Mylne - Old English, meaning 'Royal Mill' or Kingsmill as it is now known; it is located in the southwest of Landulph parish at the bottom of Ziggerson Hill. The name Kingsmill reminds us that the mill and manor once belonged to Anglo-Saxon kings. A corn mill here operated for over 1,000 years, until the late 19th century.

Thelbricce - was in the area of the parish which is now known as Ellbridge with an Old English meaning of 'Bridge of Planks'.

Nantnewiou, the old Cornish name for the valley between Ellbridge and Ramsicombe in Botus Fleming parish.

Other place names in Landulph parish that tell us they were originally Saxon settlements include Clifton (a settlement on or near a cliff), Stockadon (a settlement made of and defended by logs) and Wayton,

which is a hamlet on the long-established routeway (or ‘way’) leading to Landulph. Wayton is so named by adding ‘way’ to the Old English word ‘tun’ - thus ‘settlement on the way’. ‘The Way’ presumably followed a route similar to that taken by the road in the parish which passes through the hamlet of

Our ancient place names reveal a past of two very different peoples who fought and toiled over our lands with blood and sweat. Both left a lasting legacy in our landscape, heritage and culture.



Kingsmill Lake from near Colloggett (editor's photos)



Clifton in the north of Landulph parish, from the Bere Peninsula.

River Tamar Walkway and Wetlands Project

Jane Kiely and Pete Thompson, Trustees, Tamar Community Trust

Some four years ago Tamar Community Trust (TCT), amongst other organisations, was approached by the Environment Agency (EA) regarding a project to help protect Calstock from flooding by creating an intertidal habitat as part of a flood bank realignment scheme. A bund had been created about 30 years ago but was deemed not fit for purpose and needing too much costly maintenance. One of the main problems was the river path, which is a permissive path, and which also forms part of the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail. However, Cornwall Council would not accept it as a Public Right of Way. After a lot of deliberation, TCT decided to work with the EA, who wanted it to be a community project. A partnership was formed with trustees from TCT, representatives from Cornwall Council, Calstock Parish Council, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and other interested parties from the community to see if it would be possible to make the scheme work, with some money coming from the EA and other monies to be raised by TCT.

There were many ups and downs along the way, even without Covid coming along! In October 2019, the very large machinery of the specialist civil engineering firm Land & Water² arrived in Calstock, causing a great deal of interest, with cars having to be shifted for it to get through. Everything was on site, a few scrapes were made in the fields and all was going smoothly – until the rain started the following week, and never seemed to stop! Two weeks after the machinery arrived, the fields were under water and the machinery went back out of the village. It returned in May 2020, when the fields were dry and all the scrapes

² See: www.land-water.co.uk

were made – with great excitement from the community who watched all the diggers doing their best, one lady walking it daily and making a video of the progress. Finally, the men and machinery left, and the area was allowed to settle, and everyone was able to watch the water levels rise and fall with the various rains, the bird life appearing, and the display of wildflowers.

Calstock Wetlands Bird Watchers Facebook page was set up in October 2020 and now has over 350 members from the local community and further afield, spotting some 40 snipe over the winter, green sandpipers, teal, stonechats, mallards etc, all looked at keenly with wonderful descriptions to match amazing photographs.

In September 2021, the contractors completed putting down the piles for the foundations of the walkway. Many people were surprised how quiet the operation was. A one ton weight on a cable was used, dropping it down the pile tube, so it landed with a low whump at the bottom, pushing the pointed end into the mud. Each pile was driven down 10 metres and filled with concrete. Next phase was the construction of the pile caps, a series of concrete platforms that tie each set of piles together.



This went according to plan and there was a short interval while the concrete cured.

Fig.1
Pile-driving machinery at work on the walkway

Meanwhile the bridge construction company was pre-cutting and assembling the component timbers at their yard in Shropshire. Beaver Bridges³ arrived mid-October, and the construction of the walkway was soon to begin in earnest. But unfortunately, the walkway was then closed around the construction site for safety reasons, so it was hard to see what was going on.

By the end of October, both wings of the walkway were completed, leaving a gap in the centre to enable the breach to be excavated, to be done during neap tides over a period of a few days. Initially the (relatively low) high tide would only fill the channels and ponds. When the bottom of the bund was reached the centre span was put in place to complete the span of the walkway, with the remaining finishing touches of the walkway to be done, i.e. the handrails, decking etc. Over the following two weeks up to the next spring tide, the wetlands became ever more inundated by the tide but, much to the annoyance of the community, all the high tides came when it was dark!

In November 2021 the walkway was completed but with some things still to finish, together with a final risk assessment by the EA before the river path could be re-opened for public use. An official opening is planned for beginning of 2022.

Once the walkway is completed and open to the public, TCT will have completed its obligation to the Environment Agency, Cornwall Council and Calstock Parish Council, in ensuring that the riverside walk can continue to be used by the community and wider public as was requested by the community at various open meetings, together with providing facilities for the annual Calstock Bike Festival. Discussions are now ongoing to determine how this will be managed for the benefit of the environment and the community. There will obviously be a cost to

³ See <https://beaverbridges.co.uk/>

doing all this, and while TCT will be chasing various grants, they will also be looking at raising money locally, particularly through the use of Town Farm Field. TCT is obliged to comply with the terms of lease presented by the landowners (EA) and is required to put forward a basic management plan for each area, to be approved by the EA, before the leases are granted.



Fig.2 The completed bridge, Calstock Wetlands.

The management of the wetlands is intending to be ‘light touch’ and Cornwall Birds Preservation Society and Cornwall Wildlife Trust will be looking after it.

Volunteers will be needed to help with the future maintenance of the river walk organised by the TCT. It was unfortunate that the plan to use volunteers in aspects of the bridge construction became impractical with issues of Covid and safety. More information can be found on the TCT web page at: <https://tamarcommunitytrust.wordpress.com/>



Fig.3 The bridge viewed from the walkway.



Fig.4 The new bridge viewed from the Tamar. The scale of the bridge is very evident (all photos: Pete Thompson)

The project has been long, twisting but interesting and should serve the Calstock community for many years to come with a good deal of interest

along the river walk, in fact one of the few parts of the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail which is actually by the River Tamar. We have a feeling that this project has in fact only just started!

Further background on the Calstock Wetlands Project from Dan Cooke, Tamar Valley AONB Manager

“This inspiring project is part of a larger scheme in the Tamar Valley, with Cotehele and Calstock now finished and South Hooe likely to be the next area of intertidal habitat to be created.

The project is part of the wider UK Government and Environment Agency’s ‘Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy’. This has enabled the funding of major projects (via the EA) which will help to reduce climate change risks and create new habitats for increased biodiversity, including Calstock.

The River Tamar Walkway & Wetland Project is part of the EA’s programme of flood bank realignment up and down the River Tamar, as part of their important climate change mitigation measures. As sea levels rise, flood bank realignment schemes reduce the risks arising from 'coastal squeeze' (the loss of natural habitats or the deterioration of their quality caused by manmade structures, such as flood embankments, seawalls, etc) – primarily loss of vital habitats, but also flooding risk.

The vision is to create and manage a fantastic new intertidal habitat for the benefit of the local community and visitors, building on the opportunity of the EA’s technical flood bank realignment project and maintaining the permissive footpath which is one of the most popular sections of the Tamar Discovery Trail. Town Farm Field will be sensitively managed alongside this for environmental and community benefit.

A quality new intertidal habitat is now being created which will bring lots of new birds and wildlife. This, and the improved river path, will in

turn become an asset for the local community and schools, and will attract visitors who will spend time (and money) in the village.

There is growing scientific evidence of the role wetlands play in storing carbon, particularly if they are tidal, which is an added benefit to the scheme."



Part of the future Calstock Wetlands site, taken in 2007. The view down the Tamar from near Butspill on the Bere Peninsula , with Calstock in the distance. (Editor's photo),

**Royal visitors to the Tamar and Tavy:
the excursions of George III and Queen Charlotte in 1789**
Clive Charlton

In late August 1789, Plymouth and its rural surroundings were granted the fleeting glamour of a highly organised royal visit. In the previous year, King George III had suffered the first bout of the serious illness that was eventually to overwhelm him (rather cruelly popularised as the ‘madness of King George’). However, the king soon seemed to be making a full recovery. Thus, in the summer of 1789, a lengthy visit to the West Country was organised, both to celebrate the restoration of royal health and to further George’s well-being by indulging his undoubted enthusiasm for the world beyond the stifling atmosphere of court.



Fig.1 *King George III and Queen Charlotte*, Benjamin West (source Wikimedia Commons)

King George and Queen Charlotte travelled west in a convoy of grand carriages, accompanied by the princesses Charlotte, Augusta and Elizabeth and a large entourage. They lingered for some time at Weymouth before heading further west. On August 15, 1789, the royal visitors arrived for a two-week stay at Saltram House, which was then

the smartest, most modern classical mansion in the vicinity of Plymouth, having been extensively rebuilt by the Parker family, with the aid of the architect Robert Adam.

From this base, the king and queen enjoyed a busy programme of visits and events, including an elaborate Royal Navy review and mock battle (followed enthusiastically by the King on board HMS *Southampton*,) and trips to the Dockyard. However, they were also drawn to the romantic attractions of ‘picturesque’ and ‘sublime’ landscapes, which had become so fashionable among elites by the later 18th century. The royal party combined such indulgence in rustic pleasures with recognition of local political power by visiting a number of mansions within the reach of a day excursion from Saltram. Besides visits to Mount Edgcumbe and Kitley House, their majesties’ itinerary included four excursions into the Tamar and Tavy valleys. The royal progress was reported in the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’⁴ and other news outlets, as well as in Queen Charlotte’s personal diary⁵, and that of her ‘mistress of the robes’, the celebrated novelist Fanny Burney⁶.

The first trip to the north was to Maristow House at the head of the Tavy estuary, on Saturday August 22. In 1789 the house was the home of

⁴ I have not cited each individual reference to the Gentleman’s Magazine of 1789. The account of George and Charlotte’s visit to the West Country appeared in instalments in different editions.

⁵ The only surviving part of Queen Charlotte’s recording of her stay at Saltram starts from August 23 1789; the earlier entries are lost. The diary is kept in the Royal Archives, but is available via:
https://gpp.rct.uk/GetMultimedia.ashx?db=Catalog&type=default&fname=GEO_ADD_43_1.pdf

⁶ Fanny Burney’s diary was published under her later married name as ‘Diary and Letters of Madame d’Arblay’ and is available online from the Hathi Trust via <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000323685>

James Modyford Heywood and his family, who had made their money as plantation owners in Jamaica (underpinned, inevitably, by slavery⁷).



Fig.2 *Maristow House* (author's photo).

A great attraction at Maristow was the extensive area of woodland on the estate, including what is now Blaxton Wood opposite Bere Ferrers. The woods were described in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as running "...for near two miles down the river, in the most striking and romantic situations; and in many places dreadful precipices, tremendously sublime; several new roads were cut through these woods, for the accommodation of the Royal visitors, who were near two hours in exploring their beauties". These newly-cleared routes can still be traced in Blaxton Wood today.

⁷ See for example the entry in Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, University College, London <http://www.depts-live.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146649387>



Fig. 3 *Blaxton Wood viewed across the Tavy estuary from the Bere Ferrers shore* (author's photo). At least one of the 'newly-cleared routes' still runs parallel to the river, about halfway up the wood.

The royal party were sufficiently impressed by their rural excursion that they returned two days later. Having "breakfasted early" on August 24, they "all repaired to the woods... and there found amusement till four in the afternoon". Queen Charlotte noted that besides the Heywood family, they were met by Lord and Lady Howe⁸ and "Monsieur Delcampo the Spanish Ambassador". She commented that "the woods are shady and very romantic, the hills covered with fine beech hanging down to the banks of the River Tavy which when full adds greatly to the beauty of the place, but as this depends upon the Tide & that not serving today, we did not see the place quite in perfection". In other words, she was somewhat less enthralled by the mud banks that are still such a part of the estuary scene at low tide.

Queen Charlotte's diary reveals her as an acute and interested observer of both place and people. She wrote of the Heywood family's hospitality

⁸ Heywood was married to Catherine (Hartopp), whose sister was Mary, Countess Howe, the wife of the powerful Admiral Lord Howe, who had been First Lord of the Admiralty and a powerful and much-admired figure. Presumably, this family connection much encouraged the royal visit to Maristow.

and house:

“When we returned from the walk we found a very elegant breakfast and after having taken some refreshment we went into the Drawing room and heard Miss Heywood play upon the harpsichord. Lady Charlotte and Mr Curzon were also at the House. Mrs Heywood on account of the rheumatism did not walk with us.

The House is chiefly old, one wing new built by Mr. Heywood, which consists of a Drawing Room, Dining Room & Library & over it 3 Bed Chambers with one Dressing Room. The intention was to have built the whole but since his son's death⁹ Mr. Heywood has given up that idea & wishes to sell it in his life time for the sake of his 4 Daughters, of which 3 are married, the eldest to a Mr. Musters, the 2nd to Captain Bertie natural son of Lord Albemarle Bertie, the 3rd to a Mr Montolieu of Surry (sic) & the youngest lives with them unmarried. There is a very pretty chapel in the House which was also built by Mr. Heywood.”

The following day the king, queen and their entourage took a river trip on the Tamar. The coverage of this event in the Gentleman's Magazine is sparse; it is unclear how far up the Tamar the royal party travelled, or what they saw:

“This morning their Majesties and the Princesses went in their carriages to Saltash ferry, where their barges were in readiness to convey them up the river, on which they found amusement sufficient to detain them till four in the afternoon, when they returned with reluctance to dinner at Saltram.”

A more ambitious trip followed the next day, August 26, with an impressively early start: “Though the morning had an unfavourable appearance, their Majesties and the Princesses set out at seven o'clock, in their carriages, to Saltash Ferry, where they embarked in their barges, to

⁹ His son James died in 1785, aged 28.

make an excursion up the Tamar.” En route, Queen Charlotte noted: “The beauties of the Banks of this river are diversified with Rocks and Hills covered with Beach, Oaks and Siccamore, & a variety of Gentlemens Seats. We saw at a distance Marystow, rowed under Pentylyl Castle a place belonging to Mrs Tilly a Widow lady”.

We can only imagine how the news of the royal progress spread along the shores of the Tamar and what impact it had. Unlike the king and attendant elites, their stories were not recorded. However, people living around the Tamar estuary would doubtless have already heard the distant boom of the gun salutes from the south that were part of the pageantry of such royal visits. How many got wind of the royal itinerary in time to get a distant glimpse of the passing celebrities? Did some even dare to go out in boats? Evidence that they were well-prepared for the regal excursion appears in the account in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*: “The romantic scenery which the banks of this river exhibit, is beyond description beautiful...and being occupied and enlivened on both sides by the multitudes of natives of Devon, and their Cornish neighbours, who flocked in crowds to see their Sovereign, the effect was equally novel and picturesque”.

Clearly, many people did make their way to the riverside to see the passage of the royal barges. It is easy to imagine how the word spread and the excitement and chatter that followed. Would all the onlookers have cheered patriotically? Or might there have been some quiet rueful comments on the contrast between the glamour on the river and the watchers’ less elegant lifestyles?

The record of the royal river trip continues in florid style: “After a very propitious voyage, the Royal Party landed at Cotehele, an ancient seat of the Edgecumbe family. The noble owner of this venerable mansion received his Royal Guests at the shore, with true Castilian dignity. The ramparts of his castle were occupied by his vassals, and he himself was attended by a chosen band of faithful adherents, who ever and anon, shouted "God save the King. Triumphal cars, each with four wheels and

two ponies, were provided to conduct the Royal Visitants to the Castle” (i.e. Cotehele House). On their Majesties arrival at the outer gate, twenty-one pateraroes¹⁰ were fired.”



Fig.4. *Cotehele House, late 19th century. Would the scene have been virtually the same 100 years previously?*

George Edgcumbe and his wife Emma appear to have been especially eager to impress their royal visitors. Perhaps they were somewhat envious that Saltram had been chosen the royal base in the west, so were all the more determined to put on an impressive show. However, they were also probably aware of George’s imminent elevation as the 1st Earl of Mount Edgcumbe¹¹. The Gentleman’s Magazine recorded that on August 7, when the royal party was still at Weymouth: “Lord Edgcumbe arrived, for the purpose of inviting their Majesties to his beautiful seat near Plymouth. His stay was short, his pretence being necessary at Mount Edgcumbe to make preparations, their Majesties having assured his Lordship of their intention to comply with his request.”

¹⁰ ‘Pateraroes’ were small swivel guns, often carried on smaller boats.

¹¹ George was ‘promoted’ from Viscount to Earl at the end of August 1789. His wife Emma was thereby also further ennobled as Countess of Mount Edgcumbe.

George and Charlotte accordingly paid that visit to Mount Edgcumbe on August 21 1789, where they were received with elaborate ceremony and hospitality¹². However, the Edgcumbes were also determined to show off the old family home at Cotehele, which by the late 18th century was regarded as an antique showpiece.

The eagerness of the Earl and Countess Mount Edgcumbe to impress their royal guests can be sensed in Fanny Burney's diary. While the king and queen were taking their first Tamar river trip, Fanny made a pre-arranged visit to Mount Edgcumbe. Arriving after a rather adventurous journey from Saltram, she found the Edgcumbes on the verge of departure for Cotehele to ensure that all would be in order to receive the royals the following day. She noted: "We drove through a sweet park to the house, at the gate of which stood Lord and Lady Mount-Edgcumbe, who told us that they had just heard an intention of their majesties to sail the next day up the River Tamer, and therefore they thought it their duty to hasten off to a seat they have near its banks, Coteil, with refreshments and accommodations, in case they should be honoured with a visit to see the place, which was very ancient and curious. They ...expressed much civil regret in the circumstance: but the distance was too great to admit of the journey, over bad roads, if they deferred it till after dinner."

Queen Charlotte's characteristically observant diary confirms how Cotehele was nurtured by the Edgcumbes as a testament to the family's

¹² For example, as per the Gentleman's Magazine: "the band of the South Devon Militia, placed in the skirt of a grove, played with a charming effect. Sixteen females, dressed in white, preceded with baskets of flowers, strewing the path with roses, carnations, jessamine, and myrtle, and joining in chorus to "God save the King!" and "To the King's table was brought two silver tureens with different soups; and a bill of fare was laid before the King, who marked the dishes he wished to have, which were immediately set on the table; and being removed, a most sumptuous dessert of every exotic and domestic fruit, was brought up in gold and silver services of richly embossed plate. There were three courses, every one of which were served up in the same elegant and lofty stile. Golden goblets were laid out for their Majesties and the Princesses use."

roots: “We went in their coach up to this Old Family seat of thiers (sic) his Ancestors lived at least 200 years before they had Mount Edgcumbe. It did originally consist of 3 Courts, of which there is now but one existing & consists of a large Hall full of old Armor & Swords & old carved Chairs of the Times, a Drawing Room hung with old Tapestry, the skirting board of which is straw. The Chairs Seats made of the Priests Vestments. A Chapel which is still in good repair, the Window painted glass but damaged & defaced. A small Bedchamber, 2 Closets & a Dressing room all hung with old Tapestry. Above stairs there is a Drawing room the Chairs Black Ebony carved & a Cabinet of the same. 4 Bedchambers all hung the same.

At breakfast we ate off the family Pewter, used the silver Knives, Forks & Spoons which have time immemorial in the Family & have always been kept at this place. The Decanters are of the year 1646. The name of the Wines burnt in the Earthenware for at that time Wines were sold at the Apothecaries Shop & in sending such a Decanter it was filled with the Wine Above the label off. The Dessert Plates are Old Delph of a very large size but make no part of the Old Family Furniture.”

It is fascinating how by the later 18th century, Cotehele had already acquired the strong air of romantic antiquity that makes it such an alluring place to visit in the 21st century. Presumably the Edgcumbes would have only been mildly disappointed that the royal party’s stay at Cotehele was rather brief, although sufficient to eat a late ‘breakfast’ and to take a speedy look around. “Their Majesties, after viewing the antique curiosities of the Castle, among which are some very singular pieces of ancient armour, partook of some refreshment, and soon after re-embarked in their barges. It was their intention to have sailed up the river as far as the Salmon Weir, which for picturesque beauty, is the most striking of all the bold and magnificent scenes which the Tamar affords; but it was found the tide would not serve to conduct them farther, and they returned to Saltram about two o'clock, highly gratified with the novelty of their excursion”.

As with the revelation of mudbanks on the Tavy near Maristow, tidal realities dented the perfection of the royal encounter with the Tamar Valley! As in the present day, local residents would have been very familiar with the diurnal flux of the tides and the significance for navigation, wildlife and the appearance of the landscape. Perhaps some of them were down by the riverside to see the well-fed visitors glide back down the Tamar on an ebbing tide. Then the royals were gone, and everyday life went on. However, many changes were on the way. The Tamar Valley mining industry was stirring¹³; the first steam pumping engine on the Bere Peninsula had just been installed on a lead mine above Weir Quay (would it have been glimpsed by the royal party?). The Tamar Valley communities would also soon feel the impacts of the looming wars with France, given the proximity of Plymouth, its Dockyard and the Royal Navy. So how long did memories of the royal visits linger before they faded into the archives – which are now available, so fortunately, via the internet?

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Queen Charlotte's Diary August 23-September 18, 1789, Royal

¹³ The 'George and Charlotte' copper mine (now a key feature of the Morwellham site) had probably received its name as far back as the 1760s as per Robert Waterhouse, 'Tavy and Tamar Valleys (Devon side) - Lodes 6-10' http://www.tvia.org.uk/pages/mining_lodes6_10.shtml . However, the unhelpful tide in 1789 meant that the royal party were unable to see their namesake mine, as they were forced to travel back down the Tamar from Cotehele.

Collection Trust

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Pentillie Castle and Quay – but over 130 years after the passage upriver of George and Charlotte (image courtesy of Maggie Watkinson).

Major John Palmer – a valiant but mysterious Bere Ferrers resident

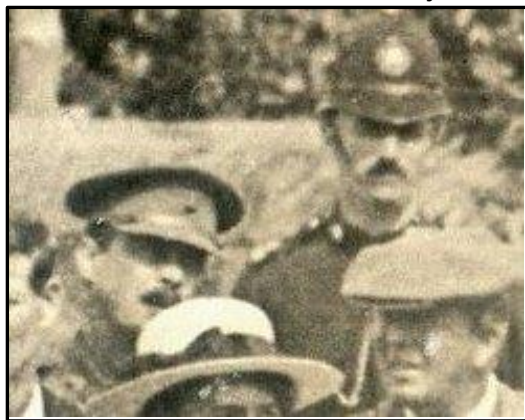
Clive Charlton

July 2021 marked the centenary of the unveiling of the war memorial in Bere Ferrers village (a ceremony doubtless echoed in many other villages). The focus is normally, of course, on the names of those who lost their lives during the two world wars. However, this short article recalls a Bere Ferrers resident who managed to survive his highly adventurous First World War, only to die a few years later in the village pub. He was possibly the most highly decorated member of the military to have lived on the Bere peninsula, yet he seems little known now.



Fig.1 (above) depicts the unveiling of the War Memorial at Bere Ferrers on July 7, 1921 by Sir Henry Lopes (of Maristow House). The new monument was dedicated by the Rector, the Reverend James Sharpe, accompanied by the Rev.J.G. Cording, minister of the Congregational Chapel in Bere Alston and John Sherrell, J.P., Chairman of the Parish Council. A large crowd, most of them sporting summer hats, looks on. Within the throng is a contingent of Royal Navy personnel, who must

have come by train from Devonport, and some representatives of the Army. One of these men in military uniform can be seen peering intently from the back of the crowd, towards the left and next to a tall policeman. He wears a flat-topped officer's cap and bears a moustache (Fig.2, *below*). He is Captain John Maurice Palmer and his story is remarkable and colourful, but also somewhat mysterious.



John Palmer was born at Barton-under-Needwood, Staffordshire, in 1885. He enrolled in the Royal Marines Light Infantry (RMLI) in 1902 and after training at Greenwich, was commissioned as a lieutenant. He spent time based in Plymouth before embarking on a varied

military career. By 1911, he was on board the Devonport-built cruiser HMS *Astraea*. He then went out to Hong Kong, where he was served on the stationary 'store ship', HMS *Tamar*. This tour of duty included a venture up the Yangtse River in China.

By December 1916, Palmer had been promoted to Captain in the RMLI. That month he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for leading an attack in Athens against some hostile Greek troops (a little-known action in the First World War?). This venture also earned him the prestigious French award, the *Légion d'honneur*.¹⁴ However, Palmer's 'finest hour' came in April 1918, when he took part in the daring and courageous (but only partially successful) raid on Zeebrugge in Belgium. This port had been a base for German U-boats, which had become a very serious threat to allied shipping. Capt. Palmer arrived on the elderly

¹⁴ The Great War (1914-1918) Forum, 'Zeebrugge Riad, 1918', 21 August, 2012 (online)

cruiser, HMS *Vindictive*, which was driven alongside the ‘mole’ (a massive breakwater) at the entrance to the port. The aim was to act to divert the defenders’ attention from the three old concrete-filled R.N. ships that were to be sunk at the entrance to the U-boat depot in order to block it.

Captain Palmer landed on the mole as second in command of ‘Plymouth C Company’. They encountered fierce resistance and many perished. Having created the intended diversion, most of the surviving troops reboarded HMS *Vindictive*, which managed to leave the mole under heavy fire. However, Capt. Palmer and several of his fellow marines were unable to re-join their ship and thus became prisoners of war. A somewhat unkind report featured in a recent online forum suggested that Palmer’s undoubted bravery in ‘staying to the last’ was encouraged by strong liquor.

Shortly after his capture, Palmer was paraded before the Kaiser himself. However, he refused the offer of a handshake with the enemy leader and stayed rigidly to attention. However, the Germans were evidently impressed by the daring of the British raid and the prisoners were said to have been treated relatively well until they were released at the end of the war in December 1918.

In 1919, Palmer was awarded a ‘bar’ to his DSC for his part in the Zeebrugge raid. The Edinburgh Gazette reported how he “was on the Mole when the order to retire was given. By his great gallantry and total disregard of his own safety he was of the greatest assistance during the retirement in helping men to return to the ship. He refused to leave the Mole while any of his men were left there and was taken prisoner in consequence”¹⁵.

Palmer had been promoted to the rank of major by the time he retired in 1921 and was living in Bere Ferrers – hence his presence at the unveiling

¹⁵ Edinburgh Gazette, May 27, 1919.

of the War Memorial. However, the circumstances of his move to the village remains a mystery. What is certain, sadly, is that John Palmer died in the Plough Inn at Bere Ferrers on August 24, 1925. He was still only 40. It is purely speculation to suggest that he may have suffered from the lasting stresses of his wartime experiences, with the accompanying risk of alcoholism. He appears to have owed several debts when he died, sufficient for creditors to be invited, in October 1925, to make claims to the executor of his will.

John Maurice Palmer was buried in St. Andrew's churchyard on 26 August 1925¹⁶. The report of the funeral in the Western Morning News describes how "by reason of his fine personality he soon became extremely popular [in Bere Ferrers, as was evident by the large gathering of residents at the service conducted in the picturesque old church". Was Major Palmer ultimately a delayed victim of the First World War?

¹⁶ 'Zeebrugge raid recalled: funeral of Major J.M.Palmer', Western Morning News, 27 August, 1925.

Friends of the Tamar Valley monthly meetings and outings 2020-2021 – otherwise entitled hit and miss!

Jane Kiely, with input from Ross Hanley and Clive Charlton

With the sudden onset of the pandemic in March 2020 and the closure of life as we knew it, the writing up of our monthly meetings was completely forgotten – until December 2021, when Clive realised that he hadn't received any reports for Tamar 2021. But with a last-minute effort, here is a summary of our meetings and trips in 2020 and 2021. Please bear with us if we have forgotten anything!

January 2020

We welcomed a representative of the Cornwall Air Ambulance who gave us a presentation on the history of this organisation together with a look at the future with a new helicopter expected during 2020. We had a collection for CAA of about £100.00 and really enjoyed the talk – everyone hoping we would never need to use CAA but you never know!

February 2020

Clive Charlton gave a presentation on shipping, trade and shipbuilding on the Tamar estuary system. Although evidence for the more distant past is very limited, it seems certain that the rivers were already important for transport, perhaps as far back as the time of the Roman fort at Calstock. In medieval times, the river was used for local transport – including to and from Morwellham, which became the port for Tavistock Abbey. However, the heyday of river traffic and trade was from the later 18th century to the early 20 century. The Tamar was especially busy during the mining boom of the 19th century. Sea-going sailing vessels exported metal ores and brought back coal, timber and other materials for the mines and local communities. A large fleet of sailing barges carried all manner of local cargoes to and from the many quays on the Tamar system. Even when the Tamar Valley was busy with industry, many people came to admire the local scenery, travelling up from

Plymouth and Devonport in stately steam-powered paddle steamers. There were also several ship-building yards, notably the renowned Goss yard opposite Calstock.

March 2020

Paul Rendell showed some amazing slides of winter on Dartmoor, most likely winters of a few years ago as we don't seem to get that much snow now, even on Dartmoor, but it was so good to see the pictures of how it used to be!! Little did we know then on 6th March that Paul's talk would be the last time we met in the Tamar Valley Centre for 18 months, within 2 weeks the centre was locked up, the country had almost closed down and Covid-19 was everywhere.

August 2020: Cornwall at War

Having cancelled all the planned talks and events from then on, we managed just one summer outing - in August 2020, when 15 of us visited Cornwall at War Museum on Bodmin Moor. It was greatly enjoyed by everyone and so good to be with people once again. Thanks to Ross Hanley for the following write up:

“On Saturday 15 August, fifteen of us went to the Cornwall at War Museum at Davidstow (right next to the cheese factory). The trip was organised by Jane Kiely. We started with an introductory talk by Steve Perry, the owner of the museum. His talk covered the history of the airfield from when the US Air Force used it for three months in 1942, through its use by the RAF from then until 1954. Between 1952 and 1956, the runways were used for motor racing, including three Formula 1 races.

Whilst the runways are still used by the Davidstow Flying Club, many of the buildings used by the RAF and the 2500 personnel were removed. Those that remained were in poor repair, having housed livestock for 50+ years. Steve brought some of the buildings back to life on a small section of the original site. He salvaged a Nissan hut from the garden of a nearby house and re-erected it on the museum site. The museum has

refurbished the water tower, the blast bunkers and an air raid shelter. Over the last eight years several new purpose-built hangars have also been erected to house exhibits.

The collection of war-related items on view is 'eclectic': uniforms and period dresses, guns, military vehicles, Airfix models, framed reminiscences, photos, radio equipment, missiles, three aeroplanes, underwater submersible etc. The general collections start around the time of the First World War and continue through to at least the Falklands War. There is even a collection of canons pulled from the seabed by local trawlers. There is detailed information and items related to the history of the RAF presence at the airfield.

To walk around the museum, not spending too much time in any one area, took 2.5 hours. With the use of mannequins, there are lots of representations of life throughout the timespan of the airfield, making the museum suitable for all ages. Because of Covid-19 distancing regulations, the tours around runways have been suspended. This did not detract from a splendid outing.



Fig.1 Display at the Cornwall at War Museum, Davidstow



Fig.2 *Display at the Cornwall at War Museum, Davidstow*

More details can be found from the museum website:

<http://cornwallatwarmuseum.co.uk/index.html> “

September 2020

By September it was suggested by Tim Dart, AONB manager, that he could set up Microsoft Teams to enable on-line talks, by which time many of us had got used to using our iPads and computers in this way. For our first foray into this new ‘techy world, Les Deering talked to us about the bridges over the Tamar with particular focus on New Bridge, Gunnislake, during what should have been the celebratory year of 500 years from it being built and operating as one of the major crossings over the Tamar.

October 2020

Clive Charlton gave a talk entitled '1620 and All That: not just Mayflower, nor Plymouth, nor Pilgrims!'. Besides covering the remarkable story of the Pilgrims, their origins, voyage and fates, the talk also focused on some of the earlier voyages of ‘discovery’ and trade to what was to become ‘New England’.

November 2020

In November, we asked Chrissie Le Marchant to talk to us, knowing that she would be happy with this 'techy stuff'. She told us about Lady Astor, Plymouth and Sutton MP and the first lady MP. Last year celebrated 100 years of women in Parliament and of course a statue was erected outside her home on Plymouth Hoe, which we had intended to visit this year on our tour of Plymouth with Clive, after our visit to the Synagogue but of course we all know what happened as a result of the pandemic. In February 1920 Nancy Astor delivered her maiden speech. We all knew Lady Astor is an interesting lady, but Chrissie had so much more to tell us.

December 2020

Simon Dell gave a talk on Skomer, an uninhabited island off the Pembrokeshire coast that is a wonderful nature reserve - especially renowned for its bird life. Simon leads walks on the island, so has wonderful first-hand knowledge. As you will know from previous talks Simon always has an interesting story to tell in his usual inimitable fashion.

January 2021

By January, Tim could no longer help us with Teams for various reasons, so Clive took over and by this time we were on Zoom. He had a very steep learning curve but mastered it pretty quickly and we were up and running and he even gave us a talk on 'Flying to the End of the Runway: a glimpse of Plymouth's varied aviation history' as well as organising the Zooming!

February 2021

Jo Loosemore, curator at The Box, Plymouth gave a talk on 'Mayflower 400: Legend and Legacy - an epic journey of survival, imagination and 400 years of America'. With objects, images and ideas coming from museums, libraries and archives across the UK, USA and The Netherlands, we learned how The Box commemorated the 400th

anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower. Jo revealed the changing perceptions of the ship, its passengers and an Atlantic journey made 400 years ago.

March 2021

Our talk in March which was ‘interesting’ in the techy sense was a film of the Looe Valley, Kilminorth Woods and Looe Island filmed by Peter McCurdie, a BBC cameraman, over some ten years. For this we had to click on to YouTube (I felt we had almost come of age and into the current century!).

April 2021

In April we had more excitement when John Connor and Tricia Moore, who are the Plymouth-based folk duo ‘Silvinton’, joined us with songs from their CD entitled ‘A Song in Every Window’, about the history portrayed in the windows in Plymouth Guildhall. Trish did us proud and managed to mix Zoom, YouTube and slides into the show, and sell some of her CDs as well! That was an interesting and entertaining evening.

May 2021

Our last Zoom meeting was in May; we asked Peter Thompson, a Trustee of the Tamar Community Trust, to show us his pictures of beavers and otters. Many of the photos were taken on the Tamar near Calstock, which was a revelation to many of us. We also watched a film on the making of the Wetlands, made by Jenny Bolders of Calstock. It was composed of stills stitched together showing the three months of making the new wetlands (now finished, along with breach and bridge, see in this edition of Tamar). Jenny also wrote the accompanying music and put it all together.

June 2021

We managed all three planned events during the summer months – a minor miracle! On 29th June about 12 Friends met Clive in Bere Ferrers for a guided walk around the village and church, finishing with tea on the platform at Chris Groves’ ‘Tamar Belle’ by Bere Ferrers station -

always an interesting experience! Everyone enjoyed being out and about again and life felt almost normal at last.

July 2021

Mid July saw about 16 of us at Lerryn, firstly having coffee on the wonderful waterway front beside the Lerryn; the tide was in at this stage, so no walking over the steps of the causeway over the river! We then had a short walk with Jane to see the Pleasure Park of Frank Parkyn, now almost a ruin as nature has taken over, but such an interesting wander with lovely views. After a picnic lunch we visited Waye Cottage to see the small but beautifully formed cottage garden, crammed full of every plant, shrub etc you could think of, and we finished up with a lovely tea on the terrace overlooking the opposite side of the Lerryn. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed a typical Cornish day out and the weather was perfect!

August 2021



The Friends' August 2021 walk at Okel Tor

Our last visit for 2021 was in August, when Pete Thompson was to give a guided walk along the Tamar in Calstock, via the wetlands and soon to

be built bridge, and up into Okel Tor. Unfortunately. Pete had to self-isolate because of a Covid connection, so Jane took over the walk with about 12 people enjoying another lovely sunny day, most of us then finishing up with lunch in the Tamar Inn.

October 2021

We had a great talk by Simon Dell - as always. He ventured beyond the poetry trail on the Tavistock Canal to the history and background of it, which we all enjoyed. Friends were able to give Simon £100.00 towards a frame to house a huge embroidery featuring Tavistock Guildhall and history in connection with the Cornwall and West Devon World Heritage Site status. Friends were delighted to be asked to help with this project.

November 2021

Roy Roseveare gave a most interesting talk about Wacker Quay, especially the curious, but short-lived military railway that was built to link the quay to Scraesdon Fort above; it featured an inclined plane as well as steam locomotives at top and bottom of the line. Tamar Community Trust maintain the trail from Wacker Quay up to Antony village; it is well worth visiting the Rame Peninsula to have a look at the quay and wander up the trail for lunch at the pub in Antony village.

December 2021

Clive Charlton ended the year's programme with a talk on the links between Plymouth and New Zealand, especially the foundation and development of New Plymouth on the North Island.

We even managed to hold a Zoom AGM in April 2021, having missed the 2020 AGM.. We feel we have made the most of both meetings and outings when possible and those who have joined Zoom and events have been happy to do so and enjoyed being out with Friends once again.

Jane Kiely December 2021

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Friends of the Tamar Valley Committee 2021 / 2022

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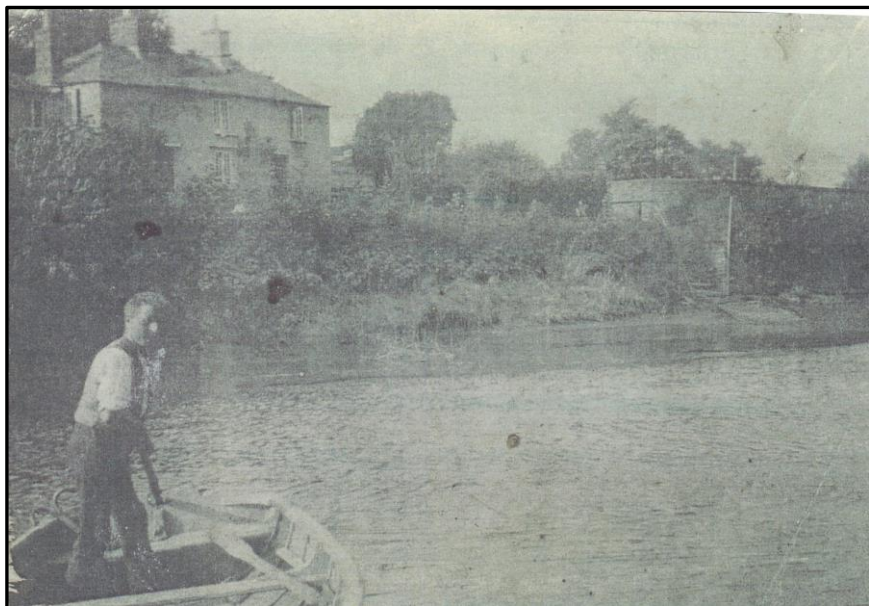
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A rather fuzzy photographic tailpiece from the Bere Local History Group archive, entitled 'Albie Teague, the last Gunnislake ferryman 1918-1949. Further information welcome!