

WOODBURY HISTORY SOCIETY

2019 NEWSLETTER



Nigel Tucker cutting the cake at the Society's Silver Jubilee Tea Party

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SILVER JUBILEE TEA PARTY

On Wednesday 28th August the Society celebrated its 25th anniversary with a tea party in the DuBuisson Room of the village hall.



The room was simply decorated and the tables laid with pretty cloths and a centre decoration. Tea and coffee was served with a variety of sandwiches and scones. We toasted the Society with glasses of Prosecco and slices of a beautifully decorated cake made by Nita Goffron, the first cut being made by Nigel Tucker, one of our

founder members and the first Chairman. There were photographs of the early and deceased members of the Society on display as well as a record of every meeting and outing which took place over the last 25 years. It was so nice to see early and founder members including David and Audrey Elphick, Mary Wheaton and Carol McFadzean.



Thanks must be given to Sandra Huish, Sue Burgess, Vera Stokes and Shirley Purves who prepared and served the food; also to Marian Mead, Chris Bowers and Judy Green who contributed with serving tea and generally helping; thanks also to the men who helped with the setting up and taking down of the tables.

Gillian Selley

The History of Nutwell Court, Woodbury

The Medieval to Tudor period

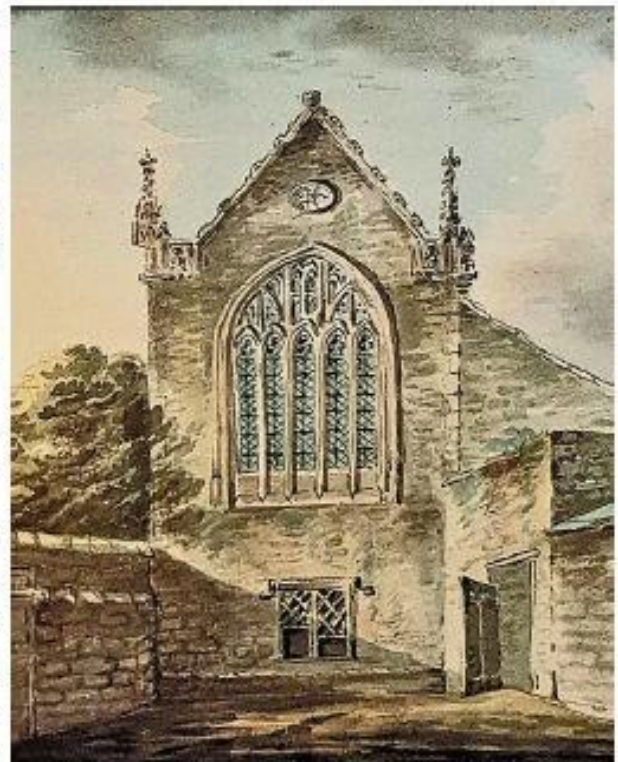
Lying in a secluded position on the banks of the River Exe estuary, within less than a mile of the village of Lypstone but within the parish of Woodbury, is the Georgian neo-classical mansion, Nutwell Court. It has for many years been hidden from public view and this continues to be the case, although within the estate there are two large veterinary practices operating amongst the farm buildings.

I first became interested in Nutwell Court after reading about it in the Reverend John Swete's journal of his travels in South East Devon and seeing some of his watercolours of the house. (Members will recall, I hope, my article about the Rev John Swete in the 2018 Newsletter). I thought the history of Nutwell would make an interesting item for the Newsletter. It had been my intention to cover the full history of the house and its owners in one article but I soon realised that I would have to divide the story into two or more parts, therefore in this article I will confine it to the period up to the end of the first dynasty, that of the Dynham family from Dinan in Brittany.

Nutwell in the Domesday Book

Nutwell Court's history goes back to the time of the Domesday Book of 1086 when the manor, then known as *Noteswille*, was listed as being held in chief by one of William II's thanes named *Donne*. He also held the manor of Newton St Cyres for the King.

At various times in the early period Nutwell has also been known as *Nutville*; *Notewella* and *Nutewella*. Initially Nutwell Court was said to be a *strong* or *fortified house*, similar to that at Powderham which is almost opposite on the west bank of the Exe estuary. The medieval house had a chapel, licensed in 1371, and part of the chapel is all that remains of that house. The merlons of the



battlements of the surviving chapel *Nutwell Chapel* by Rev John Swete display weathered sculpted reliefs of the Dynham arms. It is not really possible to be certain about the form of the medieval house but, as the Dynhams were an important local family, it is very likely that it would have had the martial symbolism that pronounced their status, i.e. having a castle like appearance. In this part of Devon, where pirate raids did occur these defences are likely to have been more than just sham.

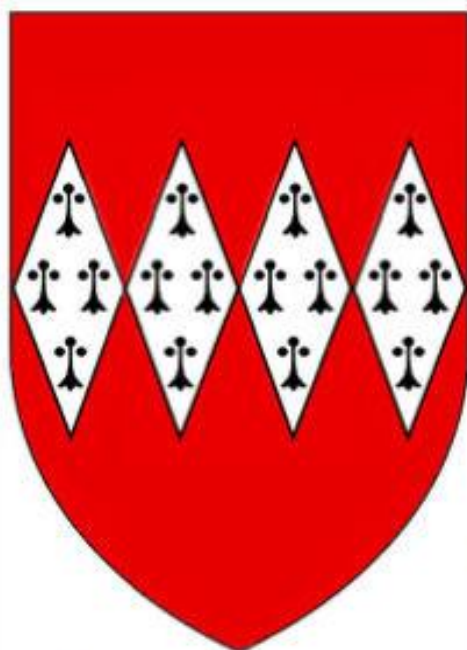
The Dinan/Dynham/Dinham dynasty

During the reign of King Henry I (1100–1135) the manors of Nutwell, and

Harpford were granted to:

Geoffrey I, Sire de Dinan, Lord of Dinan (1065-1123) - In 1122 Geoffrey granted Nutwell and Harpford to the Abbey of Marmoutier at Tours for the benefit of the dependent priory of St Malo at Dinan. The grant was jointly made with his sons, including his eldest son Oliver de Dinan (died 1150) and was confirmed by his wife Orieldis. At sometime within the following 46 years both manors were returned to the Dinan family.

Rolland de Dinan, Lord of Bécherel Castle, Brittany. In 1168 Nutwell and Hartland were described as "lands of Rolland de Dinan". Rolland was the grandson of Geoffrey I. He and his brother, Oliver, had been involved in a rebellion against King Henry II during 1167, when the King was trying to bring Brittany under his control. This resulted in Hartland, Nutwell and Harpford,



The arms of Dynham

plus his castle and lands at Bécherel, being taken into possession by the King, ostensibly to raise money for the royal exchequer. Nutwell produced revenue of 14s, accounted for by the Sherriff of Devon. As Rolland's actions were considered an isolated incident he was pardoned and some of his lands returned to him after six months. Although not specified which lands were restored it was probably Nutwell and Harpford but not Hartland.

In 1169 Hartland Manor was granted to Rolland's uncle, Oliver but he died before the end of the year. His eldest son, Geoffrey, then founded Hartland Abbey that same year. By 1173 both Nutwell and Harpford had apparently come into the possession of Oliver, the younger brother of Geoffrey, as in that year Oliver confirmed the grant of Nutwell and Harpford back to the Abbey of Marmoutier. In 1177 Oliver retired to the priory of St Malo and two years later his brother, Geoffrey of Hartland, died. Meanwhile Nutwell and Harpford remained in the care of Marmoutier.

Oliver de Dynham, 1st Baron Dynham (c 1234-1299) It was a hundred years later, in 1272/73 when Oliver de Dynham, bought back the manors of Nutwell and Harpford from the Abbey. The title of Baron Dynham (aka; Dinham, Dinaunt and Dinan) has appeared twice in the English peerage of which Oliver was the first. He was also the feudal baron of Cardinham in Cornwall, inherited for an unknown reason from Isolda de Cardinham. He was summoned by the writs of Edward I to attend parliaments from June 1295 to August 1296, the writs being addressed to *Olivero de Dynham* (or *Dynaunt*), by which he was held to become Baron Dynham. Following his death in 1299, five generations of the Dynham family occupied Nutwell Court. However, the barony, not being hereditary, and there having been no writ of summons issued to any of his descendants, meant that none of them held the title of baron.

Joce de Dynham (1273–1301). The son and heir of Oliver, his inquisition post mortem (an English medieval record of the death, estate and heir of one of the king's tenants-in-chief made for royal fiscal purposes) held in 1301, found that he had held the Devon manors of Nutwell, Hartland, Harpford, Cardinham in Cornwall and the Somerset manor of Buckland, for the service of one knight's fee (a unit measure of land deemed sufficient to support a knight).

John Dynham (1295–1332) He was born at Nutwell and died at the age of 37 but I have been unable to find any other information about him.

Sir John Dynham (1318–1383) He married Muriel Courtenay, the elder daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas Courtenay, whose father was Hugh de Courtenay, 9th Earl of Devon. Muriel's mother was a member and co-heiress of the de Moels family of North Cadbury in Somerset and a considerable landowner in her own right. In 1371 Sir John obtained a licence from the Bishop of Exeter for a chapel to be built at Nutwell. His life came to an abrupt end as he was murdered by robbers on 7th January 1383.

Sir John Dynham (Dinham) (1359-1428). It could perhaps be said that he was the most notorious of the Nutwell Dynhams. His principal seats were listed as Hartland, Kingskerswell, Nutwell, Buckland Dinham (Somerset) and Cardinham, Cornwall. He also inherited six further manors from his mother. Whether he spent much time at Nutwell is a matter of conjecture, in view of all the other manors he held and the havoc he caused in some of those places.



Effigy of Sir John Dynham at St Mary's Church, Kingskerswell

Sir John had a reputation for violence. When the two thieves, Robert Tuwyng and John Broun, who had murdered his father, were convicted of robbery and murder and imprisoned in Ilchester prison, John Brown escaped and fled for sanctuary to Exeter Cathedral. He was tracked down by John Dynham and on 18th February 1383 he broke down the door and killed John Brown after a fierce struggle, to avenge his father's murder. On 16th March 1383 Sir John received the King's pardon (Richard II at that time) for his action, but was ordered by Bishop Brantingham to perform penance for having violated the right of sanctuary. The penance mandated by the bishop on 21 March 1383 was: *"That on a Sunday before this Pentecost he should stand at the small altar, between the choir and the high altar on the south side, with head uncovered with a lit candle of 2 lbs weight in his hand from the start of the high mass, that is to say the Confession, until the end of the same mass and then, if he should so wish, to make gift at the offertory of the same candle into the hand of the celebrant at the high mass"*.

There had also been a long history of quarrelling between the abbots of Hartland Abbey and the Dynham family. It mainly concerned patronage and occupation of the abbey during a vacancy. In 1397 Abbot Philip Tone claimed for himself (as abbot) the lordship of the manor of Stoke St Nectan, Hartland, and then claimed frankpledge (a compulsory sharing of responsibility among persons connected in tithings) from the residents of that manor. In August that year John Dynham was accused by the Abbot of Hartland of *"breaking into his houses assaulting him and chasing him to his chamber and ill-treating his servants"*. John Dynham with his armed supporters appeared at the abbey, *"and so ill-used him that his life was despaired of, took timber and goods to the value of £20, killed 22 sheep, carried off 2 cows, depastured corn and grass, imprisoned his servant, assaulted and ill-used his men, servants and bondsmen"*.

His actions prevented the abbot from cultivating his land for a long period and frightened away his tenants and the lucrative flow of visitors who came, either



An 18th century print of Hartland Abbey

to pray at the holy sites or to buy the tithes. On 27 February 1398 Sir John Dynham was bound over to keep the peace for 1,000 marks, levied on his lands and chattels in England. Sir John de la Pomeroy, Sir John Prideaux, Giles Aysse and John Stantorre, each stood as surety for him at £200.

Sir John Dynham was later found guilty of committing assaults on others in January 1402, then in September that year he was amongst those accused by the Abbot of Torre Abbey of digging up a road at Kingskerswell and assaulting the abbot's men. He also committed acts of violence at Nutwell and at Littleham.

Sir John married three times. His first marriage, some time before 3 February 1380, was to a lady named Eleanor or Ellen who died in 1387. Although there is no direct evidence it is more than likely to have been Eleanor de Montagu, daughter of John de Montacute, 1st Baron. John Dynham and Eleanor (spelt Elianora) were also granted, by Bishop Brantingham on 3 January 1384, a licence to celebrate divine mass in their chapel within their manor of Kingskerswell. Eleanor and Sir John had just one daughter named Muriel. Sir John's second marriage, before 26 November 1396, was to Maud Mautravers (died c. 1402), a daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Mautravers of Hooke Dorset and widow of Piers/Peter de la Mare (b 1368) of Offley, Hertfordshire.

His third wife was Philippa Lovel (died 15 May 1465), daughter of Sir John Lovell of Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire by his wife Alianore (Eleanor) la Zouche, daughter of Sir William la Zouche of Harringworth, Northamptonshire. Philippa survived her husband and some time before 24 March 1429 remarried to Nicholas Broughton. By Philippa Lovel, Sir John Dynham had a son and heir, Sir John Dynham (Dinham) born in 1406.

Sir John Dynham died on 25 December 1428 at the age of about 69. His chest tomb with his effigy and the effigies of two of his wives survive in St Mary's Church, Kingskerswell, which is adjacent to the ruins of the Dynham manor house and seat. The effigy of Sir John himself retains one front of its chest-tomb base, decorated with angels holding heraldic escutcheons. The Dynham arms are still visible sculpted in low-relief on the chest of his surcoat.

Sir John Dynham (Dinham) (1406–1458) He was knighted at some time before 1 May 1430, at the age of 24. In 1431 he was in France with King Henry VI then in 1444 he is recorded as having been accused by the Abbot of Hartland Abbey of having broken into the Abbot's close and houses at Stoke St Nectan and stealing his horses, sheep and cattle, a similar accusation



to that made against his father in 1397.

Sir John Dynham's landholdings in several counties, were much the same as his father's and likewise it is difficult to know how much time he actually spent at Nutwell. No doubt he visited whenever he could, just to make sure everything was being looked after to his liking!

The remains of the Manor of Kingskerswell (which are near to St Mary's Church)

In 1434 when aged about 28 Sir John married Joan Arches, daughter of Sir Richard Arches, who had been MP for Buckinghamshire in 1402. The children of Sir John and Joan Arches included:

Sir John Dynham KG – 1st Baron Dynham (1433-1501)

Phillipa Dynham, wife of Sir Thomas Beaumont (1401–1450) of Shirwell.

Joan Dynham, wife of John la Zouche, 7th Baron..

Margery Dynham, married Sir Edmund Carew.

Katherine Dynham, married Sir Thomas Arundell.

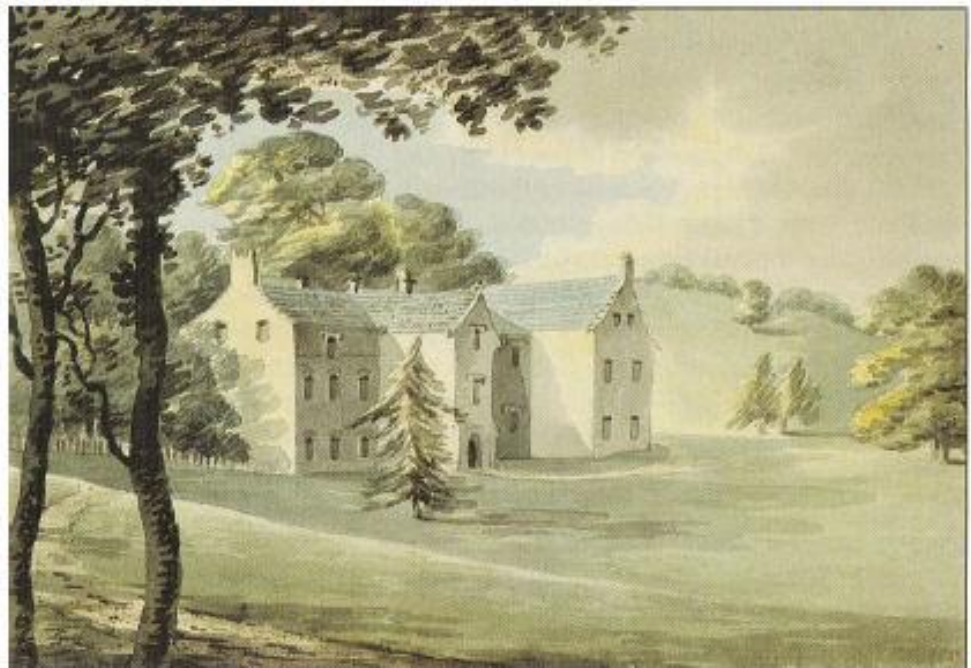
Edith Dynham, Married Thomas Fowler.

Elizabeth Dynham (died 1516), who married three times, first to Fulk Bouchier, (10th Baron Fitzwarin); secondly Sir John Sapcotes, and thirdly Sir Thomas Brandon KG.

Sir John Dynham KG – 1st Baron Dynham (1433-1501) In 1458 Nutwell was inherited by the last of the line, Sir John Dynham KG. I think it can be said about him, that if his grandfather was the *bad guy* of the family then he was certainly the *good guy*. He was one of the few men to have served as councillor to three Kings, namely Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII and he was trusted by all of them. In the Wars of the Roses he took the side of the Yorkists, when his service to the future Edward IV commenced following his defeat at the Battle of Ludford Bridge on 12th October 1459. Edward IV (at that time still heir to the Duke of York) together with the Earl of Warwick (Richard Neville) and his father the Earl of Salisbury, were guided by Sir John to Nutwell and hidden by his mother (Joan Arches), until he had found and bought a ship to convey them from Exmouth to safety at Calais.

He was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland during 1460, when Henry VI was still on the throne, so clearly he did not fall from favour for the assistance given to Edward and his Neville cousins to escape, that is assuming the King knew of his part in it.

When Edward IV succeeded to the throne on 4th March 1461, John Dynham became a



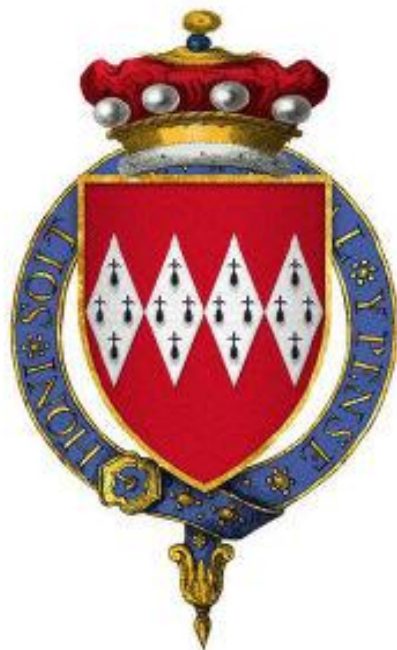
Privy Councillor and *The old Nutwell Court by Rev John Swete in the late 18th century before it was rebuilt in the Georgian style of Devon.* In 1467 he was summoned by writ of King Edward IV to attend parliaments from 28th February 1467, addressed to "*Johanni Dynham de Care Dynham*" (i.e. of Cardinham), by which he is held to have become Baron Dynham. The Feudal barony of Cardinham was one of the three feudal baronies in Cornwall which existed during the mediaeval era and initially passed to his 4th great grandfather Oliver de Dynham, 1st Baron Dynham.

He remained wholly loyal to Edward during the six month period in 1461/62 when Edward IV was temporarily deposed. It was when Edward returned to the throne that Sir John became one of the foremost members of the Government. During the short Anglo-French war in 1475 Baron Dynham was Commander in Chief of naval forces.

During the reign of Richard III from June 1483 to August 1485 he continued to flourish. He was appointed Lieutenant of Calais and recaptured Hammes Castle which had defected to Henry Tudor (later Henry VII). His sister, Joan, was

married to Baron John la Zouche, one of Richard III's staunchest supporters. He was captured at the Battle of Bosworth and deprived of all his lands by Henry VII.

When Henry VII became King, Sir John Dynham remained at Calais until it was clear that Henry bore him no ill will. It is suggested that Henry was keen to acquire the services of a man with such a record of service and loyalty, and as a result, in 1486 he was appointed Lord Treasurer which position he held until his death. The following year, 1487 he was made a Knight of the Garter. He took his duties at the Exchequer very seriously and spent most of his time at



*Coat of Arms of Sir
John Dynham KG*

Lambeth for convenience. He received several grants, sat on numerous commissions and was one of the judges who tried the rebels after the Cornish Rebellion of 1497. He was summoned by the writ of Henry VII to attend Parliament from 16 January 1497, thus confirming his barony. He was also given an allowance to support his impoverished sister, Lady Joan la Zouche.

Sir John was married twice, first to Elizabeth Fitzwalter, the 8th Baroness Fitzwalter, which title she held in her own right. She was the daughter of Walter Fitzwalter 7th Baron of Dunmow, Essex and the widow of Sir John Radcliffe 7th Baron of Attleborough, Norfolk. When she died in 1485 Sir John married Elizabeth, the daughter of the 1st Baron Willoughby

Sir John died at his home in Lambeth on 28 January 1501 at the age of 68 and was buried in the Greyfriars, London. He had no surviving legitimate children although he did have an illegitimate son, Thomas Dynham, who died in 1519. Having no living male siblings the title therefore died with him. At the time of his death, as well as Nutwell, he still possessed Kingskerswell, and Hartland plus Souldern in Oxfordshire (inherited from the Arches family).

During the 1480's Sir John made a major alteration to the original Nutwell house transforming it "*from a castle into a fair and stately home*". However, during most of the decade he was absent in the service of the Crown. During this period his mother Joan Arches was resident and supervised the estate until her death in 1497.

Nutwell was inherited by Sir John's sister, Lady Joan la Zouche and was eventually sold to John Prideaux, thus ending the association of the Dynham family with Nutwell. This in effect concludes the first part of my history of Nutwell Court. I hope to continue it in the 2020 Newsletter.

Malcolm Randle

HOOPER and STOKES - BELLHANGERS OF WOODBURY

Round about 1870 Harry Stokes, my great grandfather, joined a partnership with a person called Thomas Hooper, and for a few years they ran a carpentry and bell hanging business together under the name of Hooper and Stokes, providing new oak frames on which to hang the bells, and also did servicing work on the various fittings involved.



Evidence of their individual and joint partnership work can still be seen in the local area on both sides of the River Exe and much further afield. Hooper's first frame was installed at Otterton in 1865, and his last at Kenton in 1893. Both are still operational after 154 years at Otterton, and 127 at Kenton. The partnership installed the bell frame at Powderham in 1879, which is also still operational.

By 1881 they had parted company and Harry Stokes was trading on his own account.

In 1882 his team did work and installed an Ellacombe chiming apparatus in York Minster. In 1891 they manufactured and installed a two tier oak frame at St Peters Church in Guernsey. This was a very small tower, hence they had to go one above the other to get the four bells in. In 1902 the bells at Lympstone were installed in



a new iron frame which represented the first of such constructions in Devonshire by a local bellhanger, and the press said, "*supplied substantial proof of a determination not to let the county to be behind in the matter of home provision of the most*

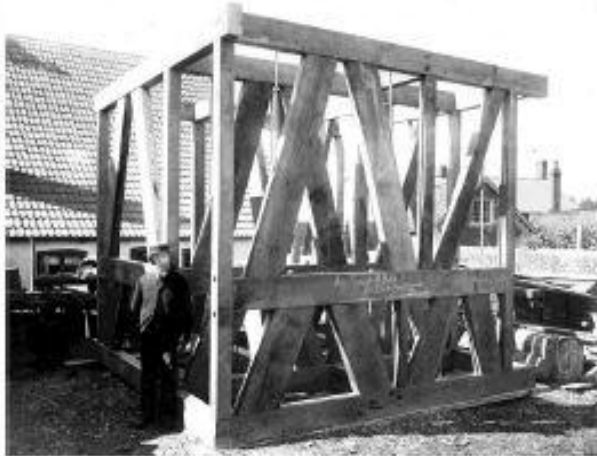
modern and scientific methods of bell-hanging. The contractor has been Mr. Harry Stokes, of Woodbury, and the neatness of the frame and the "go" of the bells evoked the highest expressions of approval, while the excellent matching of the new bell, and the increased beauty of the peal, excited general admiration". By 1918 the firm had attended more than 300 churches, mainly in the South West of England, but on several occasions they travelled to distant parts of the UK to fit new frames or refurbish the existing. There are still several more of their original oak frames in situ in towers in Devon, which are over 100 years old and still



going strong.

My great grandfather Harry Stokes, was later joined in the business by his son, also called Harry. The bell hanging business was operated from a small building and yard in the main street of the village. It was still there until about ten years ago, but was eventually demolished to make way for new housing.

From this small premises, large objects were



formed, as you can see in this picture. This is an oak bell frame built for St Michaels in East Teignmouth in 1897. These frames were constructed after a previous visit, where Harry would go and measure up the inside of the tower, so that the frames could be constructed to rigid measurements.

After the oak frames were sawn and machined, drilled etc, they were always erected in the yard outside the workshop to make sure that everything fitted where it

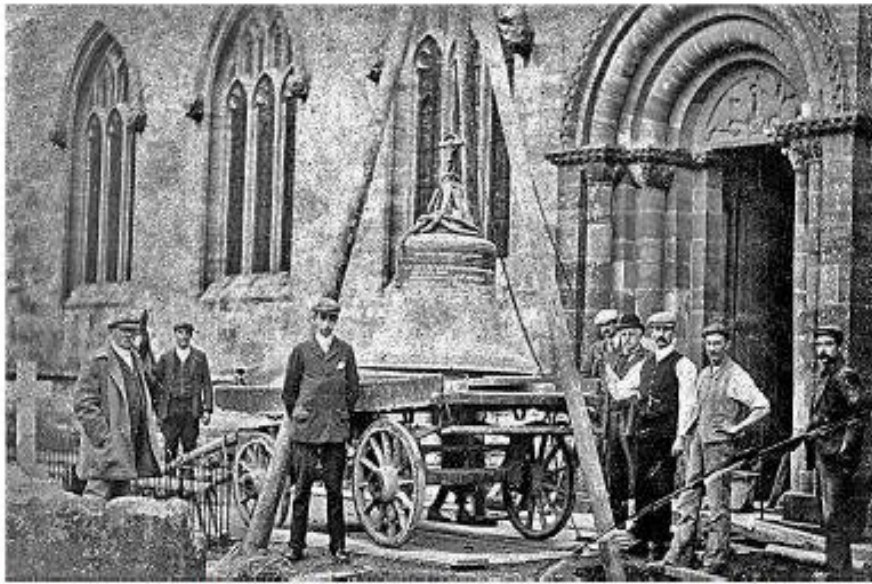
was supposed to, and most importantly that the outside measurements were spot on to the notes in his pocket book. After dismantling it all again it would be loaded on a wagon and taken to Woodbury Road station, where it would be loaded on a train to go wherever.

This is a picture of both my Great Grandfather, and Grandfather, sitting in the front, and their team of carpenters, smiths and bell hangers taken in 1906. Members of this team would be sent to follow the train to the other end, and subsequently erect the frame in the appropriate tower, and hang the bells. This could be to places all over the country, but the



largest proportion of his work was in the Westcountry. In total over the period, Hooper and Stokes did over 300 jobs for churches in the UK.

One hundred years ago, the whole job could be done for £127.3s.6d! That included lowering down the bells, removing the old frame, providing a new oak frame, and re-hanging the bells with new fittings.



Another picture shows the 'performance' of getting a bell to and from a church. Firstly they needed a good wagon on which the bell could ride, to and from the nearest station. As some of these bells could be upwards of a ton, it needed to be strong as well. The bell had to be loaded and unloaded by chain and tackle, using a

timber tripod, and plenty of hands were needed to make sure all went well. Once offloaded, the bell then had to be moved into the base of the tower, and then hoisted perhaps 50 or 60 feet up into the bell chamber, and fixed accordingly to the frame. This must have been an extremely delicate operation, and disaster could have struck at any time.

Harry Stokes senior was also a ringer, and a founder member of the Devon Guild of Ringers, being member number 31 in 1874. This is something he maintained throughout his lifetime.

During the time of both Hooper and Stokes, they filled in their time between bell jobs with local carpentry work and building. Hooper was a qualified wheelwright way back in the 1860's, so he could probably turn his hand to anything. The two Harry Stokes's were equally qualified, and records exist of many of the other local jobs that they did. They were quality carpenters, wheelwrights, blacksmiths and undertakers. They could make virtually anything, and indeed re-fitted the whole of the seating in Woodbury church in 1913 for £245. 16s.

After Harry Stokes 1st died in 1912, son Harry carried on alone with the business until 1918, when he had a sale of most of his business equipment. This is because he was "called to the colours". Being a skilled craftsman, he was seconded to the Royal Air

Force, and commuted to Wormwood Scrubs Naval Airship Station in London for a period, where he was employed making wooden frames for certain types of airship. At some stage he returned to Woodbury, and continued the bell business, by mainly doing servicing work in towers rather than installing new frames. He was probably

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Rev. J. L. L. Hulford
Woodbury Church

Jan 9 th 1914	Received from the Rev. J. L. L. Hulford the sum of - - - - - on account - for work done in re-seating the Parish Church of Woodbury	£ 0 0 100 0
April 25. 1914	Received from the Rev. J. L. L. Hulford a cheque value £145-16-0 being the balance of £245-16-0 due for work done in connection with re-seating the Parish Church of Woodbury	145 16 0
		£ 245 16 0

operating a bit more single handed during this period. His son, my father, also Harry, had no interest in the bell business, and had a great desire to be a farmer. Webbers Farm, a Rolle Estate farm in the village, came up for tender in 1932, and he became the tenant until 1984. The year after he took the tenancy, my grandfather must have decided that he had had enough of the bell business, and finally sold up all his remaining equipment, and joined his son in partnership on the farm. This was the end of a unique era in Woodbury history!

Roger Stokes

The Militia, Volunteer Forces and Yeomanry Woodbury

The first record of Woodbury men involved in the military occurs in the Church Wardens' Accounts for the year 1546 when an entry shows that the parish received 19s for 19 soldiers' coats for the war. In the same year 2s 4d was paid for 12 men who mustered at Newton Poppleford before Sir Thomas Denys (the muster master). At the same time 4d was spent on wine for Sir Richard Grenville [grandfather of the famous seafarer Sir Richard Grenville] when he chose men to fight. It seems that one Woodbury man was chosen to serve by Grenville as the parish paid the following amounts for his uniform and weapons:

3s 7d for 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ yards of white kersey (a coarse woollen cloth) for a soldier's coat; six were made with green, red and yellow ribbons; three yards of white fustian (heavy cotton cloth) for a doublet, and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ yards of dowlas (a coarse linen cloth). 3s 4d was paid for a sword and dagger for the same man, 14s for a harness for him, and 16d for a bill.

NB: In this context a *harness* is a set of straps which fit under a person's arms and fasten round their body in order to keep a piece of equipment in.

There is no record of whether this man fought in the conflicts of the time.

It is possible that local men were involved in the famous 'Prayer-book Rebellion' in which many of the rebels were defeated in the battle at Clyst St Mary in 1549, but the only name which is recorded is that of the gunner Hamon who did valiant deeds defending the bridge before he was slain. He was described as a stranger from Woodbury. This word 'stranger' could imply that he was a foreigner, there were evidently many Bretons living in Devon at this period, or a newcomer to the parish.

In 1567 a strong Spanish force in the Netherlands constituted a real threat to England culminating in the Spanish Armada in 1588. To meet this threat in 1569 Queen Elizabeth and her Privy Council ordered all counties to hold a Muster of all men over 16 with a list of their equipment. Fortunately this Muster Roll for Devon has survived and is given in 'The Muster Roll for Devon 1569'. The Lord Lieutenant of Devon the Earl of Bedford, ordered all parish constables of the 450 parishes to prepare this Roll. It consisted of two parts, the providers of the

armour and weapons and the men who would use them.

There were 10 men of substance in the parish who were to provide the armour and weapons:

Thomas Haydon with an income from land of £40 provided 1 corselet, 1 pike, 1 harquebus, 1 morion (a military helmet), 1 bow, 1 sheaf of arrows and 1 steel cap (protective head wear), John Westcott, John Williams, Richard Yeate, Richard



Spanish Armada Fireships

Jones and William Jarman – all with goods to the value of £40 each provided 1 almain rivet (flexible plate armour), 2 bows, 1 sheaf of arrows, 2 steel caps and 1 bill. Four other men with goods to the value of £20 provided 1 bow, 1 sheaf of arrows, 2 steel caps and 1 bill.

In 1560 the Devon contingent comprised 3508 horsemen, 3715 archers, 3559 pikemen, and 4191 bill-men - a total force of 17, 778 able men, in readiness for a Spanish attack.

England had no regular army since companies of soldiers were raised for specific campaigns. In Tudor England musters were periodic assessments of the availability of local militia to act as a defence force, and counties were obliged to conscript a certain number of recruits for a particular campaign. To some extent, the system was an outdated remnant of the feudal system where local lords had their own armies, which they provided for the King as required.

The Churchwardens' Accounts give details from the late 1590s of the various musters in East Devon which involved Woodbury. A family of blacksmiths and gunners who lived in the parish were named Mable alias Hammett who were employed by the parish to look after and mend the military equipment. Each parish was obliged to produce a variety of types of equipment, the wealthier men providing the more expensive weapons. It would seem that the militia often had to provide their own weapons as the parish armour was not sufficient for the numbers of men called to the musters. The musters were held in different places in East Devon including Ottery St Mary, Budleigh, Exeter, Honiton, Exmouth, Clyst St George, and Woodbury Castle.

There are constant references to the blacksmith carrying the parish 'furniture' (armour) to and from the musters. He was also paid regularly for cleaning and mending the armour, including parts for muskets, head pieces, pikes, making buckles for girdles, rivets, and corselets (light defensive armour). He also cleaned the musket and the worm (a corkscrew-like device used to remove unspent charges

from the barrel of a musket). Two scabbards were made for swords and one for a dagger, and new heads were made for pikes.

In 1620 there was an inventory of the parish armour which showed there to be three corselets performed with rests, musket, powder and match. It appears to have been stored in the tower of St Swithuns. In 1637 a register of the Parish Arms for the Common chest showed that Henry Hann held one corselet performed, Richard Mable another performed, William and Humphrey Smith held another, and Clement Reade held a musket performed. The parish paid regularly for powder, match and shot, as well as buying linen bags to hold the powder. 3d was paid for a quantity of lead and making the bullets in 1625.

During the period of the English Civil War there is no record of military activities, though several parish men fought for both sides. These men were not militia but joined the armies raised



English Militia Corps

by the Royalist gentry and Cromwellian supporters.

By 1661 the accounts show that the musters had resumed and that repairs to the parish armour continued. There was recorded a chest for holding the powder which needed a key to secure it, and later to mend a leak in the chest. In 1670 the record shows payment for powder and bullets to be carried to the muster to Ottery St Mary. The expense of the parish armour is not recorded in the accounts after this date.

There seems to be a gap in parish records of militia in the parish during the 18th century, possibly because the cost was no longer borne by the churchwardens, but entries appear in various archives to show glimpses of what was going on.

In 1799 Robert Pepperell, a shoemaker and a former Infantry soldier, but now a member of the Woodbury Volunteer Force, was discharged 'with every mark of disgrace for flagrant misconduct' by his commanding officer, Colonel Thomas Huckell Lee of Mount Ebford. Sadly 12 years later he was knocked over and killed by a cart running over him. In May of that year, to commemorate the King's birthday, the Woodbury troop of Horse with eight Volunteer companies of East Devon met at Woodbury Castle. There the Standard of the Hundred of East Budleigh was raised followed by military manoeuvres. The following month General Simcoe reviewed troops on Woodbury Common. Amongst the 5000 troops was Captain Cutler's troop of Woodbury Light Dragoon Yeomanry.

In 1801 the Woodbury Volunteers met at Woodbury (almost certainly the Common), by direction of Captain Lee, their commanding officer, to commemorate

the turn of the century. They fired a triple *feu de joie* in different places and then returned to the village to take part in an entertainment. Several loyal toasts were drunk and songs sung with great displays of loyalty to the King.

In 1858/9 Volunteer Forces were raised throughout the County, and in August 1859 Woodbury, with Topsham, became the first place in Devon to form a Volunteer Artillery Corps. The 1st Company, numbering 50 men in all, was led by Captain Robert Brent (Woodbury's doctor) with the two Holman brothers from Topsham as his subalterns. The Government provided guns in the form of two eighteen pounders and an ammunition wagon under the charge of a sergeant, corporal and



Return of the 1st Field Battery of the Devon Artillery Volunteers to their Headquarters, Woodbury, 7th Dec 1860

Commissioned Officers

Non-Commissioned Officers

two gunners, and uniform and accoutrements for the volunteers were provided from a subscription raised in the surrounding areas (including the equipment of 12 men by Sir Trayton Drake, of Nutwell Court, who was an old Peninsular War officer). Dr Brent paid for the erection of barracks on Broadway, which comprised a large gun shed which could hold two eighteen pounder siege or field guns and ammunition wagons, and which could be used by the men for drill when the weather was bad. There was a storeroom for ammunition, a harness room and a room for carbines (to be used as a reading room in the winter months). All this was enclosed and under the superintendence of a drill instructor who lived in the adjoining cottage (known as Artillery Cottage). Each man was also provided with a drill instruction book and a prayer book. The men were drilled in the evenings and on Sundays would meet at their HQ in Woodbury for church parade at one of the churches in the neighbourhood, marching to attend Divine Service as part of the drill practice.

In September of the following year the people of Woodbury turned out to watch

“the two great guns of the locality which were about to be brought into operation, (both rattlers) the one that kills and the other that cures, the eighteen pounder and Captain Brent, and both went off exceedingly well”. The celebration was for the arrival of a set of harness that had been given by the War Authorities. *“The gun was drawn by six horses with six drivers, the ammunition wagon by four horses and drivers; the front and sergeant’s guard were formed in columns, the remainder forming the main body. The whole marched from the barracks to a large field belonging to Captain Brent where the advance guard took up their position to the left, and the rear guard to the right of the gun, unlimbered, and proceeded to load and fire immediately on the supposed enemy; the advanced and rear guard sending up volleys or file firing, sometimes with the gun, and at intervals without, as the commanding officer considered necessary. After a certain number of rounds had been expended, the troop formed on foot parade, and went through various infantry movements, re-formed and marched back to barracks. In the evening*



Colonel Brent

the men and officers assembled in the large room of Barrett’s Globe Inn and partook of the excellent potations of that well-known hostelry”.

In June 1863 Captain Brent was obliged to dismiss four Woodbury men from the Volunteer Force for gross insubordination and ‘*unsoldier-like*’ conduct towards the drill instructor. Three years later Brent was promoted to Lt Colonel. In July 1870 there was a large encampment on Woodbury Common of nearly 2000 men of the Royal Artillery and Rifle Volunteers from Devon and Dorset. After a day of manoeuvres the troops marched back to their camp, where a large camp fire was lit. The massed bands play a selection of music and a company of amateur Negro minstrels (members of the Woodbury Battery) gave an entertainment. Dr Robert Brent continued to lead his Royal Artillery Volunteer Force until his early death from epilepsy in 1872. This was said to have been caused by an injury when a few years earlier one of the guns exploded whilst on manoeuvres on Woodbury Common. The newspapers regularly reported the activities of the Woodbury Artillery Volunteers, both military and social.

Gillian Selley

Lord John Rolle and the Trefusis Family

John Rolle was the son of Denys Rolle of Stevenstone and Bicton, part of a family, which by judicious marriages over the years had married their wealth to gentry



Denys Rolle

Judith died in 1819. Still keen to extend the Rolle family dominance in 1822 he married the Hon Louisa Trefusis, daughter of the 17th Baron Clinton and a distant relative – he was 72 and she was 26. The following was a popular rhyme at the time of the marriage in the locality.

*How comes it, Rolle, at seventy two
Hale Rolle, Louisa to the altar led?
The thing is neither strange nor new
Louisa took the Rolle for want of
bread.*

In 1834 when the emancipation of the slaves was brought into law Lord Rolle, according to the local newspapers, received from the British people £4,333. 6s. 9d. as compensation for giving freedom to his slaves – it was stated, too, that his weekly income was £2000. The name Rolle was said to be the commonest surname name on the island!

status. John was born in 1750, and as a minor married the 17 year old Judith Maria Walrond, the daughter of an ancient and prominent Devon family. On the death of his father in 1797 John inherited the family estates of about 55,000 acres, making him the largest landowner in Devon. His wealth was enormous, much of it coming from the plantations in the Bahamas, which his father Denys Rolle had acquired. He was elected Member of Parliament for North Devon in support of William Pitt the Younger, and in 1796 he was ennobled as Baron Rolle, of Stevenstone, becoming an active member of the House of Lords. He was also colonel of the South Devon Militia and was instrumental in forming the Royal 1st Devon Yeomanry and the North Devon Yeomanry.

There were no children of his marriage, and



Lord John Rolle



Lady Louisa Rolle

always resolute to have her own way in everything."

On her death the whole of the Rolle Estate, according to Lord John's will, passed to Louisa's nephew, the Hon Mark Trefusis, the youngest brother of Charles Trefusis, 20th Baron Clinton, on condition that he changed his name to Rolle. The inheritance could only be inherited through the male line and sadly Mark Rolle had only daughters, as a result of which on his death in 1907 the whole inheritance passed to Charles Robert Trefusis, the 21st Baron and nephew of Mark – the former Rolle Estate acquired a new title and is now known as the Clinton-Devon Estates.

In modern values this would amount to £249,000 in compensation for the slaves, and £115,000 for his weekly income. It was reported in the House of Lords that Lord Rolle complained about the operation of the slavery law – his Negroes had refused to work and he was obliged to feed them having been presented with a bill for £1000.

This second marriage produced no children and Louisa was left a widow in 1842. Lady Rolle was a very keen gardener and created the landscaped gardens at Bicton. On her death in December 1885, the New York Times obituary reported that "*Lady Rolle was a very clever woman, wonderful to the last in her capacity for business, and for her strong, shrewd common sense and*



The Hon Mark Rolle

Gillian Selley

Woodbury History Society Programme 2019

February 6 th	Annual General meeting and Society Party
March 5 th	“The Bakers at War” a film by Julian Ware
May 7 th	“History of Tiverton” by Mike Sampson
June/July	Annual summer outing to Tiverton
September 3 rd	“Origins of the parish of Woodbury and its parishes” by Gillian Selley
November 5 th	“The Blackshirts of Devon” by Todd Gray



Woodbury Common and castle where musters of the militia were held in the past

