

WOODBURY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Dating of Hedgerows

Its fun, its fascinating, and combines fresh air and exercise with historical research, whose source is literally within reach of anyone who enjoys walking our lanes and footpaths. I refer to the hedgerows and their trees, and the invaluable information they hold within their origins that await recording.

Hedgerows have been an integral part of land-use from the earliest times, and have evolved with agriculture as forests started to be cleared for farming and field creation 6000 years ago. Over the centuries changes in social structures and farming practice has seen them removed and restored by turn. Through this turbulence their historical significance has emerged more clearly, and hedgerow dating has become an accepted method of learning more of the past, its land organisation and ownership, and of the Society influenced by these factors.

The written evidence of the Anglo-Saxon charters, through which lands and estates were granted and their boundaries defined, can assist dating. It was through the use of these charters that Professor Max Hooper found that the oldest hedges had the most species, and accordingly devised a simple formula for dating: **'There is one new species in a hedge every hundred years measured over a 30 metre length'**.

Dating by this method requires pacing out 30 metres and counting the number of different species within this stretch, both trees and shrubs, and repeating the process along the whole length of the hedge. But for those less inclined towards this work, the principle upon which it is based heightens awareness of hedges in the landscape and the variety of species they contain. In turn, each species has its own story and offers a wealth of additional detailed interest to the whole.

Anyone wishing to know more on the subject please contact Sally Elliott.

An Old Lady's Will

In 1831, Mary Howard, a widow formerly from Heavitree, died in Woodbury. It is not known

what brought her to Woodbury, but there she lodged in a house owned and inhabited by Richard Kenwood and his wife. Her Will, proved in 1832, showed that she left very few possessions. What is interesting about this Will is how informal it is, almost chatty — but what had the Kenwoods done to her? Firstly she requests her executor that she be decently laid in the earth **'as plain as possible'**, and to dispose of **'the little I possess'** and pay all her debts. As for her clothing apparel, **'which is much worn'** to either keep or give away. She says that her son has all that she had in her lifetime. **'I should like my coffin painted black with handles and breastplate black and for me to be buried in my night-clothes. As to the Kenwoods, with whom I now live, not to have a tittle of my property after my decease, but if there should be enough left, that S Pippin will accept of my sofa to place in his sitting parlour to recline on, as I do most days — it is quite a comfort to me, though Ann, my daughter-in-law considered it too shabby for her house, so am well convinced will not have it. As to my little goods, to be sold as soon as possible to pay the expenditure of my funeral. I wish to be taken to the grave by six of the poorest men of this parish, not to have meat but to have 5s each as a little drink, before being taken from the house, but not to return.'**

The History of the Parish Allotments The Allotments Act of 1887 was passed to facilitate the provision of allotments for the labouring classes. The first allotment in Woodbury village was opposite Parsonage House and is mentioned in a coroner's court record of 1894 when Robert Gooding, a farm labourer, was in his allotment when he came out into the road to stop a runaway cow. Sadly he was knocked down by it and gored and later died in hospital from tetanus. In 1895 the Rolle Estate offered the Parish Council an eight-acre field near the Globe Inn for the village allotments at a yearly rent of 50s per acre. An

alternative field at Hams was inspected by councillors and considered to be suitable for allotments. The 1905 OS map, though, shows neither of these sites but allotment fields between Bridge Pit Farm and the Gilbrook, south of Broadway, as well as the field opposite Parsonage. In 1942 the allotment holders sent a petition to Woodbury Parish Council asking for the Council's help in procuring a fresh allotment field as the present one had become 'potato sick'. This must have been the field opposite Parsonage as the Bridge Pit one had already been abandoned. A field was offered on the corner of Globe Hill and Rydon Lane, behind the sand quarry, stretching down towards Foxhayes. This allotment is shown on the 1955 OS map and was in use until the early 1970s. The present allotments were established in the early 1990s on a corner of the old Bonfire Close, which land was then farmed by the Glanvill family but had formerly belonged to Webbers Farm.

In the 1890s Exton parishioners were offered a field of 5 ³/₄ acres, which was fanned by Mr Alford of Exton Farm at the rent of 35s, but the applicants refused it. The 1905 OS map shows the allotments to be on the east side of the Exeter Road and these were still in existence in the 1920s. The rent book for that time shows that some of the holders were commercial growers. There is no evidence or memory of allotments there since the war.

The only record of allotments in Woodbury Salterton is an oral one, from Mr Dagworthy of Browns Farm. He remembers his grandfather talking of the allotments in the two 2-acre fields at Higher Road Hill (land that originally belonging to Holwells Farm) and were called Little Two Acres and Higher Two Acres. These did not survive after the 1920's.

Since Exton had commercial nurseries and Woodbury Salterton had several smallholdings from the 1930s it is possible that there was not the demand in those villages for allotments. In Woodbury, with a much greater population, the inhabitants may have used their allotments not only for their own use but also as an addition to their lowly incomes by selling the fruit and vegetables, grown on their plots, from their own dwellings.

The Gas Pipeline Through Woodbury A trunk gas pipeline has been installed running from Ottery St Mary to Kenn, southwest of Exeter, passing through a tunnel under the Exe Estuary. This is due for completion in spring 2008, and runs close beside an existing pipeline laid in a trench across the river. Constructed of thick steel 600-mm steel tubing, the pipe is

being laid to supply a new power station at Langage, outside Plymouth.

Main contractor Laing O'Rourke commenced work in January 2007 with fencing, soil-stripping and excavation to form a trench 6 feet deep. Roads and streams were crossed by small tunnels, with the pipes pulled through by machine.

The pipeline route was carefully planned to avoid houses and other sensitive areas, and it passed south of Woodbury Salterton, winding its way between farms on the north side of Woodbury. Near Woodbury Salterton a large works depot was established to house and maintain all the many trucks, bulldozers and sidebooms needed for placing the pipeline. The pipe was delivered to various points along the route in 40-foot lengths, and was welded into longer sections. Then it was laid in the trench, welded together, covered with soil, the site cleaned up and reinstated to agriculture. River crossing

The existing pipeline was laid in a trench in the river bed, but the new one was to be laid in a tunnel. Exploratory drilling of three possible routes was undertaken in 1991; the route chosen ran westward from south of the Royal Marine Camp (within Woodbury parish).

The tunnel was constructed by sub-contractors Byzak Limited, starting with a shaft 100 feet deep close to the Exmouth railway. Drilling then began under the estuary with a specialised boring machine. The tunnel is 8 feet in diameter, and is lined with concrete segments. Ultimately it will reach another shaft, already dug one and a half miles away, on land near Powderham.

Programme for 2008/9

- 6 Mar 'Up Hill and Down Dale with the Gas Pipeline' an illustrated talk by Deryck Laming
 - 1 May 'Unravelling the Landscape' an illustrated talk by Philippe Plane!
Jun/Jul visit or meeting to be arranged
 - 4 Sep 'The Restoration of Haydons Cottage' an illustrated talk by Philip Bellamy
 - 6 Nov 'The Summerfields, Makers and Menders — a history of a family of builders' an illustrated talk by Anna Eyres
 - 5 Feb AGM and party
- On Thursday, 24th April, Henrietta Quinell, the eminent Devon archaeologist, will lead a walk on the historic areas of Woodbury Common. This walk is being organised by Philippe Plane! and will be limited in numbers — it is open to anyone in East Devon as well as to the Woodbury History Society. Booking details will be available at a later date.