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sid vale association
sva
past • present • future



The Association promotes conservation and heritage, the museum, and
facilities for recreational and cultural activities in the Sid Valley
www.sidvaleassociation.org.uk





A word from the Chair...

As I sit here gazing through my study window in late September, Muttons Moor opposite is shrouded in mist and rain and it is clear that Autumn is now upon us.

Sheep will have been brought as usual to Peaslands Knapp to graze. They did a great job last year and we probably had our best show of wildflowers yet, including a new flower that we haven't seen before – an unusual orchid that we are still trying to identify. The butterflies have done pretty well and this year we've had painted ladies, marbled whites, red admirals, small blue, holly blue and small copper. The

volunteers have been out through the year cutting back the brambles and saplings and the sheep will help us keep on top of it, ready for another show of wildflowers next year.

We are still in the process of purchasing the EDDC land (the Knapp) adjacent to Peaslands Knapp, and we hope to have acquired it by the time that you read this. Ash dieback is very common now and we have found evidence of it in the Knapp, and in the Byes. This is a huge problem for the country.

We opened the "Sid Valley Ring" at the Walking Festival in September. This is a new signed route around the Sid Valley using existing footpaths; a short note about it is in this magazine.

We plan to renew the central heating in the Museum over the winter months. The museum has to be kept at about 18deg C throughout the year and the humidity has to be controlled. As a consequence, the costs of heating are very high, (about £7,000 per year) and we must reduce this. We plan to place insulation where we can to minimise heat losses, and install a system that is more efficient, all of which will reduce our heating bills.

We have also applied for Planning Permission to create a small extension in the car park of Hope Cottage, which will enable the present very unsatisfactory kitchen and toilet facilities to be much improved, and a new disabled access to be provided.

The Museum will also install two original fireplaces and Dutch Ravestyn tiles from the Knowle; these will be the last extant objects from a building once a beautiful and unique house, but debased over the years and now in the process of demolition to build a retirement homes complex.

You will have heard that unfortunately at a recent Public Inquiry, the Inspector approved Fords application to build the Sidford Employment site. We tried very hard over a number of years to stop this unnecessary development, but unfortunately in the end we failed.

So, we are still working very hard on your behalf to better maintain what we have and improve all SVA facilities. We are always looking for volunteers and if you have any inclinations to "give a hand" in any activities, you would be most welcome.

Meanwhile a happy and joyful Christmas and a good New Year to you all and see you all at the Museum for a special members pre season event on Thursday 19th March, 5-8pm.

Richard Thurlow

Editor's Note

The SVA mission statement declares that we look after the past, present and future. In this magazine, you can see the past is well represented with all the work at the museum in articles about the art collection, the archives (will Maureen ever escape from the attic?) and Jane Austen's Sanditon. The present is covered with looking after our land and encouraging walkers to enjoy the delights of the valley walking the new Sid Valley ring. But what of the future? We give out grants through the Keith Owen Fund to secure the future of many clubs and societies for recreational and cultural activities for example to Sea Fest and the cricket club. As an organisation, we can do more to improve the future. For example, the article about the onslaught of ash die back shows the need to plant replacement trees plus many more to help the planet. Pollution in the sewage has caused major problems and put Sidmouth on the map for the wrong reasons. We all need to be careful about disposal of waste and aim to recycle and avoid single use plastic even if it is for the removal of dog poo! We need to look at our own carbon footprint in all the activities that we undertake. As an organisation, we would like to lead the way on environmental issues so we really do look after the future.



Val Huntington – news@sidvaleassociation.org.uk

Volunteering with the SVA

There are many opportunities to volunteer with the SVA. We encompass many activities in our role to promote the conservation, museum and facilities for recreation in the Sid Vale. We are always looking for help in the museum either stewarding or behind the scenes with the archives, research etc. The woodlands and estates team would welcome more help. Looking to the future, it is becoming apparent we will need to also take a major role in environmental issues such as plastic pollution, recycling. As the largest organisation in Sidmouth, we would like to lead the way forward in whatever way we can. We need your help to do this. If you have any ideas, skills or would like to be involved in any way, we would like to hear from you.

info@sidvaleassociation.org.uk

Cover Photo – part of the Yardley collection preview from members day (which will be on display in the museum next season)

**Do we have your email address?
Send it to info@sidvaleassociation.org.uk**

Museum News

Over the winter there will be significant building works taking place, including alterations and improvements to the reception and shop areas. Due to these structural changes, Christmas Late Night Opening will not be possible.

We are hopeful that the planned new wheelchair entrance and single storey extension will be largely completed before the new season starts. In November two fireplaces from the Knowle will be installed, one on the ground floor and the other on the first floor. One is made from very fine marble and dates from the Richard Napoleon Thornton era (1867-82) with his initials prominently shown. The other contains rare Ravesteyn tiles from Utrecht and dates from the period when the building was a hotel.

There will be extra display space on the ground floor and new displays on the first floor. These will include Sidmouth in WW2 – to commemorate 75 years since the end of WW2, Law and Order, Royal Connections and the Yardley collection of perfumery and related items. We would be very pleased to hear from anyone that has memories, items or photos of WW2 in Sidmouth that they could loan to the Museum for next season's display. Please contact Ann Tanner on 07501005084.

You are invited to the members preview evening on Thursday 19th March 5-8pm, before the museum opens on Friday 20th March 2020.

SVA publications can be bought on line from the SVA web page or Paragon Books in Sidmouth hold a large selection.

Ann Tanner



Young Visitor Day at Sidmouth Museum

What a wonderful time I had at the Museum on Wednesday August 21st when I volunteered to help out for a couple of hours with children's activities. Nearly 300 people, including 150 children, visited Sidmouth Museum during the day. It is almost impossible to guess how much time went into planning the event and making sure that there were enough volunteers in place to keep everything running. Anyone who has children knows how busy they are and attention is only given when they are truly absorbed in what they are doing. There was certainly a lot to keep them entertained.

Children were able to dress up as Victorians, build a paper construction of Alma Bridge, take part in a Cluedo-inspired mystery around the whole museum, get locked in the stocks or play 'Splat the rat', a particularly popular activity! Other activities included quilt signing, sorting rubbish into what was and wasn't recyclable and a tactile game for younger children to guess 'What's



in the bag?' I was hugely impressed with how much primary age children understood about what can and cannot be recycled.

A Victorian seaside 'peep-o-board' was



created for the event by retired carpenter Dave Kensale, which was painted with a Sidmouth backdrop by artist Margaret Adams. Many young visitors enjoyed having their photograph taken in this novelty context. The board was the idea of young visitor leaders



Marian Gadden and Dorothy Slack who organised the activities and the volunteers.

I thoroughly enjoyed the event and the enthusiasm of volunteers and children alike. The organisers have many ideas for future events to attract young families and Trustees will certainly continue to support their innovative approaches.

Di Fuller



Archaeology Room at the Museum



I am Bill Hayes and I am very fortunate to be the 'Curator' of the Archaeology collection at the Museum. I started the role in March this year and am thoroughly enjoying the experience of being part of the Museum team. All of the team, whether curators or stewards, are volunteers who give their time to maintaining this important part of Sidmouth heritage.

The Wikipedia definition of what being a curator entails is "Traditionally, a curator or keeper of a cultural heritage institution (e.g., gallery, museum, library, or archive) is a content specialist charged with an institution's collections and involved with the interpretation of heritage material". A daunting job description for any of the group of volunteer enthusiasts who, like myself, look after the various collections we have in the Museum.

I don't for a minute consider myself to be a specialist in any field, but I do have a long-standing interest in both Archaeology and History. History was one of the subjects I most enjoyed, and did well in, at school and, like many people I've talked to, Archaeology was cemented in my list of interests when Tony Robinson and the rest of the gang brought 'Time Team' into the world in 1994. I had watched earlier Archaeology on tv, with the likes of Chronicle and the occasional outside broadcasts on the BBC, but Time Team took it all to another level of interest for me. So "How did I come to be involved in Archaeology at the Museum?" you may well ask.

There have been previous articles by some of my Museum colleagues on how they became involved with the Museum, "Why I work as a Museum Volunteer Steward" from Marian Gadian, "How I became a volunteer" from Ann Jones and "Volunteering for Museum Geo-things" by Roger Trend. Everyone has their own route into volunteering.

My own involvement started on attending a History Group meeting in March 2019. I had seen the History Group listed on the SVA website and emailed the Chair to ask if it was an open meeting that I could attend. I was assured that it is indeed open to all, so I took myself along to the next meeting at Fore St HQ. On doing my piece in the round the table introductions, I noticed a gentleman's ears perk up when I mentioned my interest in Archaeology. A quick chat with the gentleman after the meeting, who was I discovered the Museum Curator Nigel Hyman, led me to agreeing whole-heartedly in helping with the curatorship of the Archaeology collection and the new Archaeology Room.

I have done various courses on Archaeology and at the time this article goes to print I will have been on two digs in the southwest, both Romano-British sites at Calstock and Ipplepen. Practical Archaeology is great fun, whatever the weather you are faced with. I was lucky enough to find a few items, pottery and animal bones at Calstock, and look forward to what I might find at Ipplepen. It is of course fantastic to be part of the overall team on a dig, but



carefully scraping away the soil to reveal an artefact that may not have seen the light of day for 2000 years is an awesome experience.

Apart from the task of cataloguing the existing collection, making sure the various sub-collections are kept up to date and planning for future exhibitions, there is also the task of looking at new items that are brought to our notice as potential additions to the collection. During my short time on the team we've had a cannon-ball, a stone axe-head, a pair of oil-lamps and some flints for evaluation and cataloguing. Each artefact has a tale to tell of where and when it was produced and for what purpose. A lot of researching may need to be done to get at these details though as items can come to our attention without any background information at all.

We have many beautiful examples of Lithic tools and weapons at the Museum which I feel privileged to look after. We also have some fine artefacts from the Romano-British villa complex at Holcombe. In the proximity of the Sid Valley we have Archaeology in abundance, from Stone Age sites to Bronze Age barrows to Iron Age hillforts. There have been Roman finds too. A lot of what we have or know has come down to us from our very own 19th century antiquarian in Peter Orlando Hutchinson, whose diaries can be viewed in the Museum or online at <http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/our-work/culture-and-heritage/poh>. There is a fascinating story of Sidmouth and East Devon heritage on our doorstep and I look forward to being part of the team that makes it accessible to all going forward.

Bill Hayes

Arcot Park Residents Garden Project

With the help of an award from the Keith Owen Fund, members of the Arcot Park Residents Association Garden Project have enjoyed a productive summer "greening up" the communal areas around their neighbourhood. This has made the communal areas more pleasant, created the opportunity for residents to reap the therapeutic benefits of gardening, enabled neighbours to meet and through working together, further build the community and lastly helped encourage a love of the environment/gardening in the youngsters who live in the area. The garden project has something for everyone to get involved with and enjoy. In front of the flats, a number of planters have been purchased or constructed – and these have created both a peaceful seating area and a colourful display of bedding plants throughout the summer months. Elsewhere, four vegetable trugs have been installed – which have produced fresh supplies of cabbages, carrots, radish, tomatoes and herbs throughout the season. Finally a poly-greenhouse is being used to germinate and nurture baby seedlings and tender plants. As well as getting the community garden ready for the 2020 season, plans for the future include building and installing additional planters (being made from donated palettes). These will be used to provide yet more colour to the front lawn and useful screening to less picturesque areas (such as the communal bin area).

The Arcot Park residents are rightly proud of what they have achieved through their





enthusiasm for gardening, working together and the communal focus that the project is giving them. The Keith Owen Fund is equally pleased and proud to have been able to support this worthwhile community initiative. *Nancy Craven (left) presenting the Keith Owen Fund grant cheque to Arcot Park Residents Garden Project organisers*

Alan Clarke

The KOF grant to the ball-stop netting project at Sidmouth CT&CC, May 2019

Sidmouth Cricket, Tennis and Croquet Club has many reasons to be very grateful to the Keith Owen Fund. Ten years ago, the KOF made a major contribution to kick-start the project to replace the pavilion thatch, in the interim two further grants were made, and this year £10,000 was donated to help enable the Club to erect ball-stop netting on the Esplanade side of the cricket ground.

Over time, increasing numbers of cricket balls had been hit well beyond the boundary, increasing the likelihood of spectators, croquet and tennis players on the Fortfield and members of the general public in the vicinity of the club being hit. Heavier bats, better pitches, stronger batsman and more six-hitting Twenty-Twenty cricket had resulted in greater health and safety problems than ever before.

Representation had been made in the past for planning permission to erect barriers on the south side of the ground, but East Devon District Council and, latterly, English Heritage had objected primarily on aesthetic grounds to barriers involving many sets of stanchions and nets being erected in a Conservation Area.

In 2018, Ground Trustee, Graham Bess, proposed a scheme, similar to one he had seen in operation at South Wilts Cricket Club in Salisbury, involving only two sets of stanchions and nets – one with a netting run of 35 metres and the other a run of 55 metres which could easily be raised and lowered manually. In January 2019, planning permission was granted by EDDC for seven metre high ball-stop fencing, Nick Hill from Ottery St Mary was engaged to undertake the metalwork and the system was put in place at the start of May.

The new barrier has been highly effective



protecting the public from the dangers of flying cricket balls throughout the summer; by general consensus it is unobtrusive, blends into the background particularly well, and addresses health and safety issues very effectively.

Protective netting barriers are in place in all areas of the ground and it is now planned to raise all netting to the seven metres height of the new ball-stop system. The generosity of the Keith Owen Fund has once again been of enormous benefit to the Club, and enhances the safety of its members and the general public.

Very many thanks.



The invisible netting in place

Neil Gamble cricket club chair

Trainee Countryside Ranger

Hello. My name is Jake Causley, and I was fortunate enough to be offered the 'Trainee Countryside Ranger' role back in January, run in combination between the SVA and National Trust East Devon team.

I am incredibly grateful and proud to have obtained the Trainee position! I graduated from Swansea University in August 2018 with a 1st Class Honours degree in Zoology, which was fantastic, and I couldn't wait to come back to my home in Devon to apply all I had learnt and use my huge enthusiasm in a job in wildlife conservation. Unfortunately...my degree didn't go as far as my University made-out it would in terms of securing employment in the conservation sector. I realised volunteering more was going to be the only way to achieve my aim of working for nature, and despite taking part in regular weekly volunteer parties in the area, I couldn't help wishing for something more structured and rewarding...

...enter the Trainee Countryside Ranger role. The position looked perfect – and I can confirm 8 months later, it has indeed been perfect!

Understudying the National Trust team 3 days per week has been fun-filled and extremely educational. The close-knit team have given me personalised, in-house



training in machinery use, wildlife identification, and countryside management, which has opened my eyes in terms of the scope of the conservation sector, whilst also enhancing my skill set greatly. Over the past 8 months, I have learnt all about, and been involved in grassland management, hill fort restoration, signpost and step repair and installation, as well as wildflower, hedgerow, and bird surveys to name only a few things! How could this scheme get any better?

However, it HAS been bettered – through working with the SVA Volunteers every Monday morning.

I walked into Margaret's Meadow in January, and was blown away by the friendliness, compassion, and (most importantly) hard work given off by this group of Volunteers. So much so, I have come to believe my week would feel very empty without my weekly visit to see everyone. I have learnt so much from everyone, from species identification, to time-saving – but effective – management techniques, and 'bodging' skills. It must also not go unsaid that I have a lot to thank the SVA for in other ways, given they have provided funding for everything from the shoes I wear, to the abilities I now possess! I have been able to attend courses ranging from First Aid training and Pesticide Application, to Brushcutter Use and Off-road Driving. The latter was certainly my favourite – an amazing experience. For all this, I am very thankful. I hope the strimming I have completed, and advice I have given in Margaret's Meadow has been effective and useful. Fortunately, I haven't had to use any first aid procedures in my time here...

Working with the National Trust for most of my weeks throughout 2019 has been an incredibly rewarding experience, but travelling over to Sidmouth and visiting the SVA Volunteers each week has truly been the highlight of my placement. I am very proud of the work we have all accomplished this year together, and feel privileged to have met and worked with such a lovely, talented group of people – eco-warriors at that.

I hope to use all I have been taught as a Trainee Countryside Ranger to open doors into the conservation sector, to work in conservation, sustainability, or environmental education, and ultimately for nature and the Planet.

Jake Causley

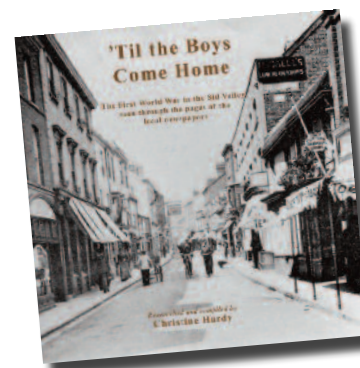
John Capel

John sadly passed away after a long illness. He was a regular volunteer with the woodlands and estates team from the early 2000s. He was involved with others in shed building, fencing and projects around Margaret's and Gilchrist Meadows. He was also a regular on our working party on Salcombe Regis and could often be seen walking his dog around Soldier's Hill.

His friendly and cheerful personality will be sadly missed.



John (right) enjoying a hard earned rest with the late Patrick Stubbs.



'Til the Boys Come Home – World War 1 in the Sid Valley

As a schoolgirl in south London I loved writing and continued during my career as a social worker, compiling reports describing the character and living conditions of families I worked with. Once retired and living in Devon, I was involved in a play writing course at the Northcott Theatre, resulting in several one act plays being performed there.

With encouragement from friends connected with the URC in Sidmouth, I wrote and produced a full-length play about Elizabeth Moulton-Barrett, the poet who married Robert Browning. She lived in Sidmouth from 1832-5 and had an intense relationship with the minister of Marsh Chapel, the predecessor of the URC.

By the time I had listened to fisherman Stan Bagwell's life story for the book, *All I Ever Wanted* I had developed an empathy for the ordinary people of Sid Valley. Having had an interest in WW1 rekindled when I performed in the community play *Johnny Jack's War*, I had the opportunity to add the real life events to Ruth Lewis's play *A Painful Duty*, performed in November 2018, featuring local families during WW1, and became fascinated by the everyday minutiae of life in the Sid Valley of 1914-19.

I walk the narrow lanes behind Sidmouth High Street and fancy that I hear echoes of the lives lived there, and lost, during WW1. I know Cobbler's Cottage where a shoe-making Mortimer lived, the Channings' house, from whence four brothers went to war, Clode's bakery, where the women left behind kept the business going, and Arthur Ellis' photographic studio where so many innocent faces were captured on camera, all this a result of my research into local papers which has been compiled into my latest book *'Til the Boys Come Home*.

220 men from the valley left their Devon homes and jobs to fight in WW1 and did not return. Their names appear on memorials in Sidmouth, Sidford, Sidbury and Salcombe Regis and in the memory of local families. Many of their heart-rending photos are included on the pages of *'Til the Boys Come Home*, as the progress of the war wreaked its havoc and families lost their sons.

How did those left behind cope with the mass exodus of young men from towns and villages in Sid Vale? Families who were left without a bread winner, communities without essential members? The local newspapers revealed this and details of everyday tragedies and triumphs such as the elderly lady who left her house to collect her evening 'supper beer' from the Swan and, owing to



lighting restrictions, fell into the River Sid and drowned, or the six year-old hero who saved another child from an icy pond.

The book details each year from 1914-19 using articles from the Sidmouth Herald and Observer, including detailed and heart rending letters and postcards from servicemen at the front. Everyone in the area from boy scouts to town councillors did their bit. At one stage women could be seen walking along the streets knitting socks, scarves, gloves and hats for men who had been sent, so inadequately equipped, to fight in the trenches.

Huge amounts of money were raised to send gifts of food and clothing to the troops and their families, and women in particular found their lives changed with the opportunity to work for the first time. In the midst of this, two tremendous storms lashed the sea front, destroying large parts of the Esplanade, causing a shipwreck and flooding many homes in the town, resulting in another enormous effort to raise money for victims and to rebuild.

Many local families and businesses are featured in the book, with photos, advertisements and articles about the valiant efforts made to survive the war and get on with everyday life as best as possible. The book continues into 1919, as many of the troops did not return home until then and even later.

I have been moved in the process of writing *'Til the Boys Come Home* by a deep sense of community as I connected with the past. I hope readers will feel proud, as I do, to live in a community with such a determination to survive.

Christine Hardy



Sidmouth's Town Crier during WW1, Theophilus Carslake Mortimore, played by Russ Smith in 'A Painful Duty'

SVA Publications

Over the past six years the SVA has produced an amazing range of publications and it seems that there is a never-ending range of subjects of local interest. We are always open to new suggestions, but we also feel that our books could have a wider distribution, both to visitors to the town, but also, on a wider scale, by targetting special interest groups outside the area.

So, we're looking for a volunteer, or maybe two. We need someone who would be willing to call on hotels, camp sites etc in the area to persuade them to stock some of our books. They would then need to deliver them and visit to re-stock as necessary. The other person might have some specialist knowledge, or be willing to trawl the internet looking for opportunities and following them up. For example, *Sidmouth's Lace* might be of interest to lace makers throughout the country, so how do we tell them about it?

As well as *'Til the Boys Come Home* SVA publications include:

A Guide to the Blue Plaques – Life and Times in Sidmouth – The stories behind Sidmouth's 64 plaques – a treasure-trove of information on colourful residents, visiting royalty, rogues, innovations, pastimes, fashionable architecture and exotic gardens.

Where to find Sidmouth's Blue Plaques – A pocket-size booklet showing where to find the plaques.



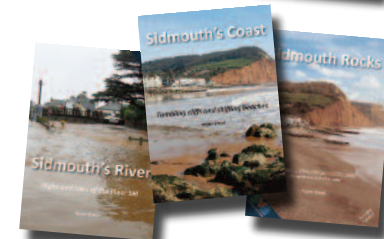
Stephen Reynolds – Author, Fisherman and Home Front Hero – The author of a highly acclaimed book, *A Poor Man's House*, whose radical ideas helped maintain the fisheries nationwide through WW1.

Richmond House to Sidholme – The story of one of Sidmouth's most interesting buildings with its famous music room, and the people who lived in it.



Sidmouth Spotting – Great fun for kids – see how many of the things in this book you can spot in Sidmouth and qualify for a Sidmouth Spotter badge.

Sidmouth's Coast, Sidmouth's River and Sidmouth's Rocks – Three books by Roger Trend. Collapsing cliffs, disappearing beaches and flooding coasts, landslides and river blockages – what causes them and how can we manage them. And why are Sidmouth's rocks red?



Sidmouth – A History – The most comprehensive history of Sidmouth in print, from prehistoric times to the 21st century.

Keith Owen – Sidmouth's Remarkable Benefactor – Keith was passionate about protecting the landscape, the heritage and the community of the Sid Valley and left most of his estate for a Trust Fund to be set up and run by the SVA.

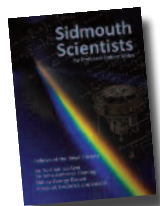


Sidmouth's Lace – The luxury fabric that hides a world of poverty, distress and power. A fascinating history of the lace making industry in Sidmouth, and some of the families involved.



Sidmouth's Literary Connections – Jane Austen, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, JRR Tolkien, Rupert Brooke, Beatrix Potter, John Betjeman, RF Delderfield, Stephen Fry and many others had links with the town.

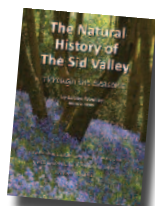




Sidmouth Scientists – The contributions to science of four Fellows of the Royal Society who lived in Sidmouth.

The Natural History of the Sid Valley through the seasons

– An introduction to some of the plants and animals that are present in the Sid Valley.



Sidmouth People & Places – Discover Sidmouth's rich history of colourful personalities and its legacy of fascinating buildings.



The Knowle, Sidmouth – A house and its history – The story of one of Sidmouth's most important buildings from its early days as one of the country's first zoos, through its time as the 'Friendly Hotel' to its use as East Devon Council's offices.



The Story of Sidmouth's Long Print

and **Sidmouth's Long Print – A Picture in Time** – Two fully illustrated companion books charting the fascinating history of the famous panorama print of

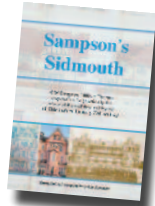


Sidmouth's Seafront painted by Hubert Cornish in 1815, the original of which can be seen in Sidmouth Museum.

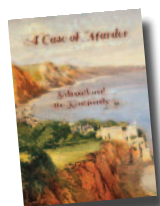


Brandy for the Parson – Tales of smuggling in the Sid Valley.

Sampson's Sidmouth – Architect R W Sampson was responsible for changing the face of Sidmouth in the early 20th century.



A Case of Murder – The brutal murder of a three year-old boy made the headlines in the 1860s. This book tells Sidmouth's small, but not insignificant part in the drama of the Kent Family.



Elizabeth Barrett-Browning: Sidmouth Letters and Poems 1832-5

– The unlikely friendship between a privileged poet, daughter of one of England's richest men, and a poor non-conformist minister with the gift of inspired oratory.



These publications and more, including booklets on walks around the town and the Byes are on sale in Sidmouth Museum and on our online shop. A selection of our publications are also available from Paragon Books, Winstones and the Tourist Information Centre.

John Dowell

George Rowe, Artist, Lithographer and Printer 1796-1864

George Rowe, one of the most prolific topographical printers in the first half of the 19th Century produced the largest set of Sidmouth views ever published. He was a notable watercolourist whose scenes of the gold fields in Australia earned him the only medal awarded to an artist at the International Exhibition of 1862 and his views of Exeter, Cheltenham and Hastings are considered historically important architectural records of the period.



Born in Dartmouth (but raised in Exeter) in 1796 to a builder and auctioneer, his artistic talent developed early but his first known published work does not appear until 1823 when he was 27 years old. By then he is recorded as living in Hastings where he was making a living as a drawing master, teaching private pupils in their homes and at his own residence. His earliest topographical prints depict the scenery around Hastings, Sussex and Kent. These were drawn and lithographed by Rowe, some published by a Hastings East librarian and others in partnership with local print seller, George Wool, and are believed to date between 1825 and

1830. Many of these were published after George Rowe moved back to his native Exeter where is known to be living at 38 Paris Street in 1826.

During this period of the early nineteenth century, Sidmouth attracted more printmakers than any other Devon resort, one of those being George Rowe. His first lithographic prints of Devon were a series of forty-eight views of the cottages orné in Sidmouth (then an emerging sea-bathing resort), which he drew for John Wallis of the Marine Library in 1826 and was the largest single set of prints ever to be produced in the town. They are often seen in colour produced from an early colour printing process adopted by Rowe known as chromolithography. In 1829 a further series "Scraps Illustrating the Picturesque Scenery of the Southern Coast of Devonshire from Seaton to Plymouth" was published, this time in partnership with John Wallis. Additional views of the town were also produced including one of Fortfield Terrace which was dedicated to the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna of Russia when she visited Sidmouth in 1831. This work is on display in the museum and all other George Rowe prints can be viewed in the museum archives.

This is the legacy that George gave our town, but his story does not end here. He left Exeter in 1832 after producing 177 Devonshire views and went to live in Cheltenham. By then he had met his wife Philippa, a former pupil at Mount Radford College where he was drawing master. It is said that he found her talent so extraordinary that it warranted extra tuition.



Rosebank Cottage, Elysian Fields, Sidmouth 1826

Two possibilities prompted the move to Cheltenham; the first might have been due to a cholera epidemic that swept through Exeter that year or secondly that the competition from his fellow artists and printmakers was becoming so intense that he decided to seek opportunities elsewhere. The Rowe family had by then expanded to three children, two surviving infancy; Philippa and George.

In Cheltenham, George established a Repository of Arts where he sold art materials and prints and carried out printing work. His business and family grew; he became a well-known lithographic printer eventually taking over as printer and publisher of the Cheltenham Examiner and his wife Philippa had eight more children. Aside from the printing business George continued as a drawing teacher along with his wife and eldest daughter with classes being held at their Cheltenham Home. George also became involved with many aspects of public life; he was an active member of his local church, held key positions in various financial institutions and was a founding member of the Cheltenham Liberal Association. His final public involvement culminated with the purchase and sale of The Royal Old Wells – the town's oldest spa which was redesigned and hosted some very successful Gala events. However, George had further plans for the building and decided that it would be the perfect venue to host theatrical productions despite the opposition from some of the town's more conservative citizens who considered such playhouses as 'places of ill repute'. Sadly, the theatre business proved a step too far and although there was initially some success, audiences began to dwindle and in 1851 The Great Exhibition in London drew away the expected crowds from the town. Business at The Cheltenham Examiner also suffered from a long series of libel actions, for which Rowe was personally liable, leading to major financial difficulties. Finally, in desperation George decided that the only possible solution to his troubles would be emigration to the Australian gold mines to recoup his losses and support his family.

At 56 years old George Rowe set sail for Australia to join thousands of other emigrants for the gold fields of New South Wales and Victoria which had been in the throes of a gold rush since 1851. His aim was to dig enough gold to send for his family and buy some land where they could all settle. As a middle-aged man unused to physical labour in harsh conditions Rowe's health suffered. His eldest son joined him and together they eked out a living from modest finds. To supplement their income, they set up a canteen for the diggers at Bendigo diggings (about 100 miles north of Melbourne). Unfortunately, their timing

couldn't have been worse as just as they were about to open for business a new site was discovered and most of the diggers decamped leaving Bendigo empty. At this point George decided to go back to his roots and started to paint the scenes around him, including the settlers, aborigines, landscapes and the tents where they lived. He quickly became successful, commissions coming from the settlers wanting to send pictures to their



'The End of The Rainbow', Bendigo, Australia – 1857

families back home. George would not have realised at the time, but he had just embarked on a career that would earn him a place among Australia's greatest gold field artists. His work can still be viewed in several galleries and institutions in Melbourne and Sydney today.

The Rowe family did not move out to Australia and in 1859 George returned to England, settling once again in Exeter where he spent the remaining years of his life. He continued to sketch local views and produced eight large Australian paintings which were submitted to the International Exhibition in 1862, earning him the only prize given to an artist. In 1864 George died after a long illness. He was buried in Heavitree churchyard in Exeter where his grave can still be seen.

In a long and interesting life of 67 years, George Rowe produced 650 lithographs, nearly half of them of his native county of Devon. His artistic contribution to Sidmouth may only amount to a small segment of his work but his prints provide us with unique snapshots of Georgian life in our town long before the invention of photography.

Deborah Robertson (museum art department)

Growing Figs in the Sid Valley

Figs originated in Western Asia and are amongst the most ancient of foods. When we moved to our current property in Sidmouth we found one growing in our front garden. We lifted it out and put it in a large pot. I had read that figs need to have their roots contained to ensure they produce figs. A year later we bought another fig tree and put that in a pot. Over the next few years we had a few figs from both trees, but last year we went away in July for a week and the figs on them shrivelled. It was time for drastic action. Either we got rid of them or put them in the ground. Realistically they need a south facing garden, a sheltered site and their roots constrained. We could provide all of that and so decided to plant them in one of the beds. They had a half wall behind them and steps on one side. For good measure we surrounded the roots with old bathroom tiles. We planted them in April and the results were astounding. Within a few weeks both trees had grown large numbers of little figs. It was as if we had released them from imprisonment. We tried not to get too excited at the thought of thirty or forty figs being produced. We fed them with liquid feed every fortnight and made sure they were watered over the dry summer. They grew and grew and by mid-August the first few had begun to go from green to brown. They gradually hung their heads as a prelude to being completely ripe. When we harvested them, they tasted as delicious as anything that can be bought in shops. Figs such as Brown Turkey have been specially bred for our climate but they still need a very sunny site as our summers are not predictable. However with a little attention it is possible to successfully grow them in this country. They say the best figs come from Smyrna in Turkey, but we think the second best come from Sidmouth!



Sheridan Ralph

Lady Magdalene De Lancey – *The author of a masterpiece who died in Sidmouth in 1822, aged 29*

In the churchyard at Salcombe Regis, near the south door of the church, lies buried Lady Magdalene de Lancey, who died in July 1822. She was staying in Sidmouth at Salcombe House (now Hunters Moon) at the time. Her fame came much later however, in 1906, when her narrative 'A Week at Waterloo' was first published.

Her narrative describes vividly how in 1815, aged 22, she travelled to the battlefield at Waterloo to search for her wounded husband and nurse him for six days until his death.

Magdalene's brother showed the manuscript to Charles Dickens in 1841 and he was profoundly moved by it – he said, "...reading that most astonishing and tremendous account has constituted an epoch in my life... that I shall never forget the lightest word of it." He said he would dream about it forever.

Magdalene was born into a remarkable family. Her father, Sir James Hall, was a geologist, geophysicist and President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. His ancestors had accumulated wealth through commerce and the law, and the family had a large estate at Dunglass (below Dunbar), where Magdalene was born in 1793. There was also a town house in Edinburgh. Magdalene's mother, Lady Helen, came from the Scottish aristocracy and was formidable and dynamic. Uncommon at the time, the Halls insisted that their daughters should be properly educated, like their sons, and so Magdalene was sent away to school.

In December 1814 Magdalene met Colonel William Howe de Lancey in Edinburgh and, following a whirlwind romance, they were married on 21 March 1815. Shortly after they met he was knighted for his service in the Peninsular War against Napoleon, so when they married Magdalene became Lady de Lancey.

William De Lancey was born in New York in 1778 into to an eminent family of Huguenot descent. His parents remained loyal to the Crown during the American Revolution and so moved to England. He went to Harrow school before becoming a junior officer in the 16th Light Dragoons at the age of 15. He served on a number of overseas campaigns before, in 1801, attending the newly-established Royal Military College, making him one of the first professional officers in the British army. In the army he was always known as 'The American'.

It was during the Peninsular war that William de Lancey became a close friend and confidant of the Duke of Wellington, who held him very high regard. This was to seal his fate. Whilst Magdalene and William were on their honeymoon at Dunglass, news arrived that Napoleon had escaped from Elba and Wellington had been placed in command of an Anglo-Dutch army, in anticipation of a major battle with the French. William was ordered to join Wellington in Brussels, as his Quarter Master General. Reacting to this unwelcome news the couple travelled down to London on 21 April, and Magdalene then followed William to Brussels on 8 June. With the battle looming and with Brussels under potential threat, on 16 June William sent Magdalene to the relative safety of Antwerp.



The battle took place on Sunday 18 June. At 3.00 pm William was with Wellington when he was wounded by a cannon ball. Wellington dismounted and ran to speak to him, and William asked to be left on the ground to die in peace. However, judging it too dangerous a spot, Wellington ordered that he be taken to the rear, and so William was carried to a cottage in the hamlet of Mont St Jean. Wellington's dispatch that evening reported that William was dead.

The following day Magdalene received a report in Antwerp that the battle was over and her husband was safe. Then a report that he was wounded. Then that he was dead. Having spent a miserable night she was awoken with news that he was still alive and she was determined to go to him. She set out in a carriage with her servant Emma and a dragoon. Her narrative describes a frustratingly slow journey as the road was choked with traffic - horses, carts, the wounded, deserters, prisoners and 'rabble'.

Some 20 miles from Waterloo, the smell of gunpowder was perceptible, and on reaching the battlefield the smell of death was heavy in the air. The horses drawing her carriage screamed (Magdalene's word) at the smell of the dead horses.

On arrival at the cottage she found that William was still alive and army surgeons thought he might recover. Conditions in the cottage were bleak, but she nursed him, rarely sleeping, until he died on Monday 26 June. As would be expected, these are the especially poignant passages in her story and, like Charles Dickens, many readers find them difficult to forget.

An independent account was given Captain William Hay of the 12th Light Dragoons, who was a friend and neighbour of the Hall family in Scotland. He wrote:

'How wholly shocked I was, on entering, to find her seated on the only broken chair the hovel contained by the side of her dying husband! An amiable, kind and beautiful young woman, I had so recently left in the midst of her delightful family, surrounded by every luxury....she grasped me by the hand and pointed to poor de Lancey, covered with his coat, just a spark of life left in him. [she looked] earnestly into my face, pale from long fatigue...[and] brought me some wine in an old broken teacup'.

William was buried on June 28th in a cemetery near Brussels and Magdalene set out for home a week later. It was at the request of her brother Basil that she put her story her down on paper in 1816, a narrative of some 15,000 words, so the family might read it. An abridged version of 2,800 words was published in a British magazine in 1888 and then the full version in 1906, first in a New York magazine and then in book form, in London.

In 1819 Magdalene married again, to Captain Henry Harvey of the Madras Infantry. Like William de Lancey, he was older than her and had served under Wellington in a major battle (at Assye, India), where he had been wounded. They had three children, but Magdalene was clearly ill at the time of the third birth in February 1822, and Henry Harvey took the whole family, along with two of Magdalene's sisters, to Sidmouth. The aim was for Magdalene to benefit from the sea air, but this was to no avail and she died 4 months later. The precise cause of



William

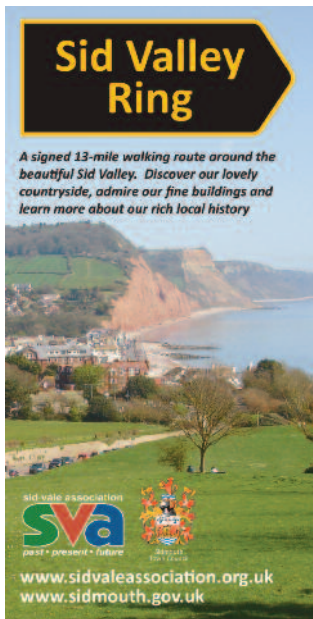


death is not known but when a present-day doctor reviewed the reported symptoms he thought it likely that she died of consumption (TB).

The gravestone at Salcombe Regis says simply that she was Magdalene Harvey, wife of Henry Harvey. However the burial register was annotated by somebody, probably one of her sisters, to say that formerly she was the widow Sir William Howe de Lancey, Quartermaster-General of the army under the Duke of Wellington.

The full story is told in *Lady De Lancey at Waterloo* by David Miller (Spellmount Press, 2000).

John McCarthy



Sid Valley Ring

The Sid Vale Association and the Sidmouth Town Council, have jointly waymarked a circular footpath route in the Sid Valley. It is called the Sid Valley Ring, (SVR).

It starts at the STC Tourist office, and goes westwards along the Esplanade, up Bickwell valley, then north-westward along Core Hill Road, northwards along White Cross Strips, White Cross then eastwards to Sidbury, Harcombe, then southwards to Trow and Dunscombe to meet the Coast path at Lincombe. It then goes westward to Sidmouth. It is 14 miles long. The route may be completed as one, taking about 6-7 hours, or in two parts, using the Byes as a "shortcut" to get back to Sidmouth.

The SVR uses existing footpaths and has been set up with two main ideas in mind, firstly to encourage more walking in the area and secondly to show walkers, many of whom are tourists, what a fantastic range of buildings and scenery the valley has to offer.

Walking is a very popular activity for tourists to the West of England and by encouraging signed paths in the valley,

we hope that Sidmouth may become a walking destination, which will bring significant economic benefits to the town.

We have a marvellous mix of coastal and inland scenery, and a fine built environment. Sidmouth is a visually interesting and diverse place, with plenty of accommodation.

Although set up independently of the Walking Festival, it was "officially opened" on September 21st, when the Walking Festival started.

A brochure has been produced, showing the route and the major attractions along it. It is available from the Museum or the Sidmouth Tourist Office at the Ham.

Richard Thurlow, Phil Bradbury

Ash Dieback – an update from Kate Tobin (Forestry Commission)

Ash trees hold a strong cultural, landscape and wildlife place in the UK. Home to almost 1000 species and a highly valued wood for tools and furniture, the importance of our ash woodlands has been calculated annually at over £230m in social and environmental value. Of England's 10.2% woodland cover in total, 12%



is Ash. East Devon AONB, with 18% woodland cover, has around 22% Ash and so Ash Dieback will inevitably hit the AONB hard. Many East Devon woodlands, lime and field maple, oak or aspen may fill the ecological and landscape gap left by ash. In urban or parkland locations, sycamore may provide a similar function. For silviculture, we may struggle to find broadleaved species that resist squirrel damage as well as ash, so we may need to be open to the idea of more softwoods like Douglas fir or Scots pine, which can provide an income and carbon storage, protection from soil erosion and still offer ecological benefits when compared with some alternative habitats. Whatever our objectives, we need to be planning and planting now to mitigate the impact of the disease. Since 2012 government has invested over £6 million in research to protect ash from pest and disease threats. As well as basic research into the biology and pathology of the disease, scientists have sequenced the ash genome and the Ash Dieback fungus. Good progress has been made in screening for tolerant trees and conserving the genetic diversity of our native ash trees. The first planting of tolerant ash trees will take place in 2020 and these trees may allow us to develop seed orchards of tolerant trees. The Devon Ash Dieback Forum (to which East Devon AONB belongs) has produced a set of useful leaflets covering the disease, the importance of ash trees and choosing alternative species. They are promoting the Devon formula of 3-2-1: for every large ash tree removed, three should be replanted to replace it, for a medium tree, replace with two trees and for small trees, replace one for one. Devon Wildlife Trust are taking forward a project called Saving Devon's Treescapes, supported by East Devon AONB, to encourage everyone to get involved with celebrating Ash in our landscape, and planting replacement trees for the future.

CIVIC VOICE/NATIONAL TRUST PASSES

The National Trust are no longer offering free passes for their properties to civic voice members. They do not have the resources at the moment to deal with all the enquiries. Apologies to any SVA members who have been trying to get a pass. If the situation changes, hopefully we will be informed.

Membership Application Form

Please send completed form, with payment if applicable, to The Membership Secretary (SVA)
67 Malden Road, Sidmouth EX10 9LZ



I/We wish to become Member(s) of the Sid Vale Association

Title Surname (BLOCK LETTERS please)

First name(s) 1

Second member

Address

Post Code

E-Mail Address

EITHER I/We enclose my/our Annual/Life Membership subscription of £
Please delete as appropriate and make cheques payable to *The Sid Vale Association*

OR I/We have completed the standing order mandate opposite (Please ✓) ☐

GIFT AID SCHEME

I wish to make payments under the Gift Aid Scheme. I want the Charity to treat as Gift Aid ALL donations and subscriptions I make to the Association, from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise. I confirm that I pay an annual amount of Income Tax which is not less than the amount of tax which may be redeemed by the Sid Vale Association.

Signature Date

The Sid Vale Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registration number 1154749

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

By cheque or cash – or cheaper by standing order!

		Outside the Sid Valley including postage		Within the Sid Valley	
		Cheque/ cash	Standing order	Cheque/ cash	Standing order
ANNUAL MEMBER	an individual	£12	£10	£10	£8
	2 at same address	£18	£16	£16	£14
LIFE MEMBER	an individual	£120	-	£100	-
	2 at same address	£180	-	£160	-

Area Date Receipt Memb.Card WG NMM GA

Help us – and make new friends at the same time!

Thank you for joining the SVA. Your membership is greatly appreciated.

If you would like to become more involved or know more about all the work we do, there are many areas where we need help, whether it be on a regular basis or just a few hours. See the point of contact list for the relevant person (inside the back cover) who will be happy to hear from you, or ✓ any of the following and your interest will be passed on for you.

Membership ☐ Local delivery of magazines to members

Museum ☐ Stewards ☐ Archivists

Website ☐ Updating of content ☐ Technical management

River/Woodlands and Estates ☐ 'Hands-on' managing grass, hedging, trees, wild-life

Conservation and Planning Team ☐ Monitoring planning applications

Privacy Policy

The Sid Vale Association will only collect and use your personal information which is needed in order for us to provide you with the benefits of membership. We collect this information to enable us to send you magazines, annual reports and email reminders about walks/talks/special events. You have the right to unsubscribe from communications at any time by contacting us via membership@sidvaleassociation.org

More information about the SVA's Privacy Policy and Cookie Policy is available on the website. By signing this form, you agree to the SVA using this information.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To The Manager Bank

Branch Address

Post Code

Please set up the following Standing Order from my/our account:

Name(s) of account

Sort Code – Account Number

Recipient Sid Vale Association CIO

Recipient's Bank CAF Bank (Charities Aid Foundation)

25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

Sort Code 40 – 52 – 40 Account Number 00016416

Please pay the sum of £ First payment date

And annually thereafter until further notice

Quoting SVA reference (please leave blank for SVA use)

Signature Date

A History of Govier's China Shop of Sidmouth

"Good Morning Norman, Les Read here up at Sidmouth railway station. We have a truck load of crates for you today, just arrived. Quite a big load – just to warn you. We will load up and be down in about an hour".

Yes, before the railway closed, 90% of all our goods arrived by rail – that was in the 1960s but gradually after that, it all came by road.

Crates from Royal Doulton, Meakins, Aynsley, Shelley, Woods, Johnsons etc and wooden barrels all beautifully packed with cut glass from the manufacturers in Stourbridge – Royal Brierly, Webbs and Stuart Crystal. Those were the days!

My grandfather, William John Govier and his wife Ada started the shop in 1904 in a modest way. The Victoria Hotel had just been built and Sidmouth was very much a 'Royal Regency resort by the sea', attracting a discerning type of visitor and it was expanding. It was really my grandmother Ada's idea to open a shop. William, who had been working for Colonel Balfour as a carpenter, fitted out the shop and put the front in. (Incidentally, most of the oak panelling in the Victoria Hotel and in Sidmouth Manor was also his work).

Norman Govier, their son, was born in 1904 and would become a partner in the firm in 1929. I don't know much about those early years but they all survived WW1.

I did ask my father Norman, what effect the depression in the 1930s had on Sidmouth? His reply was that "Although they read about it in the newspapers, it had little effect in Sidmouth. We were in a way, living in a different world."

Sadly in 1939 WW2 started and it was not until the late 1940s that things started to get back to normal. After the war, every possible thing that was manufactured in the UK went for export to pay for the war effort. There was little for the home market and so we had a very limited amount from the Potteries in Stoke on Trent. Goviers survived on export rejects. I have fond memories of travelling with my father to the 'local' potteries –

Dartmouth, Royal Allervale and Watcombe (near Torquay), Middlemore pottery, Branham's of Barnstable, Poole and perhaps the one that kept the basics going – Bovey Pottery (now the site of House of Marbles).

Bovey Pottery was a large factory, the English china clay was not far away in Cornwall and the coal fuel was brought in by rail. Bovey Pottery, in my opinion, played a major role in keeping the West of England supplied with the basics (all white) earthenware. Our pottery travelled in a big Austin, which towed a full trailer which would be packed by the



Crown Derby model of Goviers Shop

factory and delivered to the shop.

Jula Pottery was produced on the premises in Sidmouth in the 1950s for several years. Angela Govier (Norman's daughter, my sister) had graduated from Exeter Art College and had a small studio on the first floor of the shop with an electric kiln. It was very successful. The white china blanks came from Bovey and Poole Potteries and were decorated by her and then fired in Sidmouth. I remember her having an exhibition of her pottery at Quaglino's in London.

Angela got married and unfortunately at that point, the pottery ceased. The period of years from the mid 1950s to 1970s saw the china shop flourish. Norman Govier retired in the mid 1970s and the shop was sold to Bob Sellers who ran it well for a few years. In 1978, it was taken over by the Morgenroth family – Kurt and June and son Alan. They continued the tradition which the shop had built up over the years and when Alan took it over from his parents, he added a mail order department. Indeed, at that time it was the largest outlet of Crown Derby in the world. They can be very proud of their success. When Alan retired in 2019, the shop closed. What a great loss for Sidmouth. Times had changed and the closure was understandable but sad for me and my family, but what fond memories.



Example of Jula Pottery

John Govier



Original Govier Shop, now next door to latest premises



Sanditon

The screenwriter, Andrew Davies, spoke at Kennaway House in July 2017 and mentioned his intention to adapt the unfinished Jane Austen novel, *Sanditon*, for television. Last year two members of the production team visited Sidmouth including our Museum. I tried to persuade them to take some shots of our local landscape including the red cliffs and the Regency architecture including the cottage orné style. They explained that the 'early resort' impression would only be possible with computer-generated imagery. Their visit was more to understand the context of seaside resort development in the late 18th century.

In the event the locations used were Brean Beach in Somerset, the front at Clevedon, but with CGI, and swimming scenes at Weston. The National trust property, Dyrham Park, between Bristol and Chippenham became Sanditon House.

Austen loved the seaside, especially the new south coast resorts. It is doubtful that she could swim but she may have been 'dipped' from a bathing machine. The only definite 'portrait' of her is by her sister, Cassandra, and is unfortunately her back view but she is gazing out to sea, probably at Charmouth. In her novel, *Persuasion*, she writes of new visitors who: soon found themselves on the sea-shore; and lingering only, as all must linger and gaze on a first return to the sea, who ever deserved to look on it at all.

Her letters give the best evidence of her family travels but there are tantalising gaps probably due to Cassandra destroying some letters after Jane's death. The seaside resorts Jane mentions include Ramsgate and Deal on the Kent coast and she likely visited Brighton on the Sussex coast. After the family moved to Bath, late summer and autumn trips were planned to the new south Devonshire and west Dorsetshire resorts; Sidmouth in 1801, Dawlish (and probably Teignmouth) in 1802, famously Lyme Regis, and Charmouth in both 1803 and 1804. And finally the fledgling Worthing, again on the Sussex coast, was visited in 1805. Members of Jane's family, but not Jane herself, had an unsuccessful visit to Weymouth which prompted this comment in a letter from her in 1804 which reflects her sharp wit: Weymouth is altogether a shocking place I perceive, without recommendations of any kind and worthy only of being frequented by the inhabitants of Gloucester.

It is likely that *Sanditon* is an amalgam of many of the resorts she visited. The first sentence of the novel indicates that we are on the Sussex coast and Worthing



Jane Austen, watercolour by
Cassandra Austen 1804

was an even newer resort than Sidmouth. But we do see much of our own town in her descriptions. The property developer, Mr Parker says: '...and if we have encouragement enough this year for a little crescent to be ventured on (as I trust we will) then we shall call it Waterloo crescent.' She will have remembered the unfinished Fortfield Crescent that became a Terrace. More tellingly she refers to cottage orné buildings. These mainly thatched houses, with picturesque interior and exterior decoration, were especially common, and very fine, in Sidmouth.

Sanditon is her only truly seaside novel. It was started in January 1817 but only 12 short chapters were written, barely 60 pages in all. Jane became increasingly ill and died in July. Her illness has been attributed to Addison's Disease or, more recently, lymphoma. Both diagnoses are fanciful in the absence of any reliable data. The unfinished novel is a satirical comedy which, in view of her rapidly failing physical state, is all the more remarkable as she parodies the vogue for hypochondriacal visitors who seek spurious cures.

The other major theme is business speculation, a vital feature in all the new south coast resorts. In Sidmouth speculation was essential for the town's success. Emanuel Lousada bought and developed land and his home, Peak House, became a focus for social gatherings. John Wallis provided a library on the front which served as a meeting place for the gentry. He commissioned artists to paint views of both the town and the important houses which were then sold as prints. William Barrett bought and developed agricultural land which he named Elysian Fields and his six new cottages orné were the first planned housing development in the town.

In *Sanditon* several of the characters speculate but for different reasons. Sir Edward Denham builds a cottage orné specifically to lease to visitors. Lady Denham married a titled much older man simply to acquire his title and the Sanditon estate. Mr Parker believes that his mission as a property developer is a cause for good: He held it indeed as certain that no person could be really well, no person (however upheld for the present by fortuitous aids of exercise and spirits in a semblance of health) could be really in a state of secure and permanent health without spending at least six weeks by the sea every year. The sea air and sea bathing together were nearly infallible, one or the other of them being a match for every disorder of the stomach, the lungs or the blood. They were anti-spasmodic, anti-pulmonary, anti-septic, anti-bilious and anti-rheumatic. Nobody could catch cold by the sea; nobody wanted appetite by the sea; nobody wanted spirits; nobody wanted strength. Sea air was healing, softening, relaxing, fortifying and bracing, seemingly just as was wanted, sometimes one, sometimes the other. If the sea breeze failed, the sea-bath was the certain corrective; and where bathing disagreed, the sea air



Sidmouth, print from original drawing
painting by Mr Rowe, 1796, showing
'incomplete' Fortfield Crescent

alone was evidently designed by nature for the cure.

Several of her other characters have imagined illnesses as *Sanditon* attracts both the ill and those that supposed they were ill. The heroine, Charlotte, comments perceptively: Disorders and recoveries so very much out of the common way seemed more like amusement of eager minds in want of employment than of actual afflictions and relief. The domineering and the mean Lady Denham agreed: Going after a doctor! Why, what should we do with a doctor here? It would be only encouraging our servants and the poor to fancy themselves ill if there was a doctor at hand. Oh! Pray, let us have none of that tribe at Sanditon.

Scholars recognise that *Sanditon* marked a change in direction for Austen's literary style. It would have been, it is thought, a long novel but one that was both pacy and racy. Would you have recognised this quote as typically Jane Austen? The other girls, two Miss Beauforts, were just such young ladies as may be met with in at least one family in three in the kingdom; they had tolerable complexions, shewey figures, an upright decided carriage and an assured look.

Several authors have 'completed' the story. I bought such a copy entitled 'Sanditon, a Novel by Jane Austen and Another Lady'. I haven't read it as almost certainly the additional text will be a poor imitation. The Penguin Classics original version is the one to read. My reason for the purchase was the fine dust cover showing Sidmouth looking westwards.

Nigel Hyman



A Calm by James Gilray, 1810

Warning – don't read this at breakfast time – Pondering on Poo

Last month, a group of us were volunteering on Peaslands Knapp, cutting back some overgrowth on the main path. We nearly stood in 5 dog poos as we worked, fortunately all spotted in time. One man walked past and left his dog depositing right next to us – I called him back, nicely of course. Last winter, when we were coppicing in the same place, I had to move 8 piles of the stuff before we could start working. It's a problem that has built up again from the early days of taking on the site, when I once counted 13 dog poos on the way up the steps! A poster politely asking people to pick up had a great effect and for a long time, it wasn't a noticeable problem.

I've listened to so many people try to justify leaving poo because "it's in the long grass", "we're too far from home", "they should provide bins", or "no one can see it". I've challenged them and I've also wearily put up with the lame excuses for the sake of a

quiet life, and seethed quietly inside.

The problems caused by dog mess should be too well known to repeat, but briefly, they include Toxocariasis, a serious illness that can cause blindness in humans, Neospora which can cause abortion in cattle and Parvo virus which can kill dogs. It changes the soil nutrients, affecting wildflowers, and spoils beauty spots with its sheer unpleasantness. And for anyone who has seen their child come home having stepped in it, or worse, picked up something coated in it, it's just horrible. It's a big reason that parents often stop their children exploring off the beaten track, which puts them off enjoying nature.

24% of households have a dog – I have had dogs myself and love the companionship and fun they give you. But I don't miss picking up the poo – the squidgy feel of it, the dreadful wafts, the long walk back to the nearest bin, the third poo when you've only brought two bags with you...

So what is the answer? Sometimes land managers spray deposits a bright colour so the owner feels embarrassed next time they walk by, or mark each one with flags, so that it's obvious how many piles there are. Posters at gateways help a lot, although not when they are written in the heat of the moment. An angry poster just annoys more people than it converts.

More imaginative and successful solutions include the Spanish town, Brunete, where the local council worked with volunteers to identify perpetrators and delivered the poo back to their doors in boxes marked with the town's logo and "Lost Property". This reduced dog poo by 70%. Another solution that focused on reducing the amount, rather than shaming the owners, was in Taiwan, where residents of one city were offered a lottery ticket for every bag of poo handed in to the authorities, halving the amount on the streets.

DNA databases are becoming more common, but at the moment work best in closed environments, such as gated communities. A DNA swab is taken from every pet and can be checked if any deposits are found and penalties handed out to the owner.

Within East Devon, as with most other council areas, there are Public Spaces Protection Orders which require you to pick up after your dog and properly dispose of the faeces wherever you are, even on private land to which you have access. So if you do not pick up you are always committing an offence under these orders.

If, like me, you sometimes don't feel you have all the facts at your fingertips to challenge yet another excuse from friends, family or complete strangers, here are some ready answers:

"It's natural": very natural, as are the bacteria and ringworm, roundworm, lungworm and tapeworm eggs that come with it and stay in the soil for weeks, ready for the next dog or child to pass.

"It's biodegradable": But it will take at least 9 weeks to break down, and sometimes



Please put it in the bin and not tied to a tree!!!

Kate Tobin

al as part of SCCH's overall vision through heritage, her. Sea Fest creates a sense of community ecting up local and global issues such as climate ceans.

The spirit of volunteering across all ages is so ident at the festival where groups get stuck in to lp set up and organise the event and add their own ement into the whole.

Each year there is a theme, last year's was ebrating Diversity Creatively including a special usus on the hidden history of Stephen Reynolds – uthor, fisher and social commentator. Our unifying eme was widely embraced; Sidmouth school ildren created the most amazing masks for our arade through the town to the Ham; a plethora of cal groups got very creative on the day showcasing he coast.

r us with our Life Below Water theme, SCCH will tions Sustainable Development Goal 14 and connec as plastics pollution in the ocean.

s supported by the Sid Vale Association and as our heritage film Working the Sea hydX8ojVJMg the story of Sidmouth's last fishing



across Devon and at Sidmouth Museum, providing a creative connection through art and cooking fish creating conversations about local, sustainable fish stocks, connecting young people to the sea as their playground.

The Sid Vale Association has also had a presence at Sea Fest taking part in the celebrations and raising awareness of its valuable environmental work and role in promoting volunteerism in the community.

Sea Fest is a free community festival and the support of SVA has enabled us to develop the event and to pilot new projects. Without the support from SVA this would have been even more challenging particularly at a time when local grants to small start-up organisations is tricky to say the least. We are committed to growing our local offer with integrity and in line with our aims to make it accessible and contribute to Sidmouth's coastal identity and reflect the value placed on this by the community.

To find out more about SCCH please visit our website
<http://sidmouthcoastalcommunityhub.org/>

Sidmouth Coastal Community is grateful to the SVA Keith Owen fund for its support and looks forward to a continuing supportive relationship to progress innovative community projects.

Louise Cole, Director Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub



Frederick Morrish (1889-1942)

Frederick (Fred) Morrish was one of my grandfather Arthur's brothers. Fred was born in 1889 in Sidbury. In 1911 – aged 22 years – his address was 'the Cross' Sidford, in a cottage where today's public conveniences are (opposite the Rising Sun pub). He worked as a gardener and he was single. In the 1911 family home were his father William Henry Morrish aged 56 years, his mother Jesse Morrish aged 49 years, Arthur aged 18 years, Lilian aged 16 years, Annie aged 13 years, Ethel aged 10 (1). Fred married May Beatrice Mutters on 28th October 1911 and their address was Arcott Cottages Sidmouth (1). In 1911 Fred and his brothers Arthur and Bill won the Morrison Bell Miniature Rifle Cup (2). From the New Soldiers record WWI Service record 1914-1920 and pensions, Fred signed up aged 28 years on 15/5/1916 and enlisted in the Royal Garrison Artillery, Regimental number 82285, Short Service Attestation (1). The Royal Garrison Artillery manned the howitzer guns at coastal and colonial forts and on the Western Front (3).

From the 1939 census it stated "Frederick Morrish of Lower Bullstone, Branscombe. Licensee of the Anchor Hotel Sidmouth, other household members, Francis G Selley, Alice M Selley, Morgan G Selly, Betty S Selley and Frederick Morrish. The record was then officially closed". From Probate records "Frederick of the Anchor Hotel died aged 54 years on 4th September 1942. Administration Llandudno 24/10/1942 to May Beatrice widow

and Phyllis May Jones (wife of Thomas James Jones) effect £3871 2/10" (1). Fred's death was in the local press for 5th Sept 1942 "died at the Anchor Hotel, beloved husband of May Morrish" (4).

The following week's newspaper for 12th Sept 1942 had details of his funeral (5). "The funeral of Frederick Morrish was at Sidbury Cemetery on Tuesday afternoon followed by a service at the church. He was for some years the landlord of the Royal Oak public house Sidbury before moving to the Anchor Hotel Sidmouth five years ago. He was well known in Sidmouth and Sidbury, his genial and kindly disposition endearing him to a wide circle of friends, his death at an early age has evoked much sorrow and sympathy. He was a prominent member of the local lodge of Buffaloes", which was a fraternal organisation (RAOB) of the UK founded in 1822 whose motto was 'No man is At All Times Wise' (6), Fred held the "position of KOM (Knight of the Order of Merit) and a large number of brethren were present at his funeral. The ritual of the order being read by Rev C K Woollcombe CP (former vicar of Sidbury). The service was conducted by the Rev A T Burden. The immediate mourners were Mrs Morrish (widow), Mrs Jones (daughter), Mr W Morrish (father), Mr W Morrish (brother), Mr A Morrish (brother), Mr & Mrs A Pidgeon (sister & brother in law), Mr & Mrs W Pinn (sister & brother in law), Mr & Mrs J West (sister & brother in law), Mr & Mrs D King (sister & brother in law), Mrs A Morrish (sister in law), Miss D Morrish (sister in law), Mr C Mutters (brother in law), Mr & Mrs T Mutters (brother in law & sister in law), Mrs Tucker (niece), Mrs Florrie Carter (cousin). Also present was the representative of Sidmouth British Legion Brig Gen MacLean, Mr G Butler (Royal Naval Old Comrades), Sidmouth Bowling Club F Marton. Capt Marshall RASC, Sergeant Payne, Corporal Cornish, Sergeant Major Mac of the Devonshire Regiment".

There were sixty-two floral tributes, some from the immediate family, one which was from my grandfather simply said from "Arthur, Gert and the boys". Other tributes which showed how respected Fred was were from "Sergeant Major Mac Devonshire Regiment. Brethren 'Ye Sid Valley Lodge' RAOB. Brethren Sidbury RAOB. Sid Vale Ladies Slate Club. Sid Vale Mens Slate Club. Employees Sidmouth Brewery. Fellow members of Sidmouth Bowling Club. Royal Naval Old Comrades Association. British Legion. Mr & Mrs Jenner & family from the Balfour Arms PH. Mr & Mrs Burgoyne (Marine PH). Mr & Mrs Duflet & family (Commercial Hotel). Mr & Mrs Prideaux & family (Dove Inn). Mr & Mrs Furzey (Radway Inn). Ford & Son. All at Bullstone (Mr & Mrs Selley & family). Also Geo & Ivy Hull. Eddie and Ern Hull. All at Devonian & Dull & Ern. Mr & Mrs Moysons (Starcombe)".

Fred had lived an interesting life which sadly was cut short.

Norma Cox

References

- (1) www.Ancestry.co.uk
- (2) Cox, N. 2017. Sid Vale Magazine No 87 Winter.
- (3) www.nam.ac.uk/explore/royal.artillery
- (4) Sidmouth Herald and Directory. 1942. September 5th.
- (5) Sidmouth Herald and Directory. 1942. September 12th.
- (6) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Antediluvian_Order_of_Buffaloes

The View from the Attic

The view from the attic in Hope Cottage has been very entertaining this summer. While stocktaking the social history collection I was able to get a birds eye view of the folk festival activities at Kennaway House and watch the chaos that ensued when delivery lorries, buses and large numbers of pedestrians mingled in the triangle. From my small dusty window I could see all those drivers who parked on double yellow lines and those who went the wrong way in the one way system. You have been warned! Perhaps we could deploy the old stocks which are on display outside the museum.

My mind has been much occupied by thoughts of law and order of late. In July I took advantage of having a young person, who was on a work experience placement, to help me lift a heavy box from a high shelf. Inside we found truncheons, handcuffs and several life preservers. Two of the life preservers are labelled as, "Belonged to an old Sidmouth Victorian Mr Carslake". Whose life Mr Carslake was preserving with these is an interesting question.

Life preservers are also known as bosun's persuaders, in some circles coshes and fishermen may know them as priests. They are usually about 30cm long and consist of two round lead weights joined by a strip of baleen or cane and covered in finely woven twine or leather. They are light and flexible and can be hidden up a sleeve or in a pocket. I will leave you to think of the many uses they could be put to.



We have a fine collection of truncheons. Some are beautifully decorated in red and gold and may have been purely ceremonial but others are very business like and were no doubt part of Sidmouth police force's armoury, as were the handcuffs and whistle. We also have a collection of wooden rattles some of which would have been used by the police to attract attention in the days before 1884 when whistles were introduced.

Finding all these objects has started me on a search for information about Sidmouth's early police force. One of our truncheons bears the date 1837 which suggests Sidmouth implemented the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, which allowed boroughs to form their own police forces, quite early.

If anyone has any information about policing Sidmouth in the past I would love to hear from them.

We are hoping to display many of these objects next year so when you visit the museum you can see them for yourself. We look forward to meeting you.

Maureen Thurlow



It's a small world

When we bought our house in Salcombe Regis in 2001, it was understood that it was for its position rather than its looks.

The location is superb and the views of the sea and the village are uplifting on a grey day, however the house itself is plain and we have always accepted that it is not of notable architectural merit. However from a building point of view it is an exceptional construction, given the way it clings to the hillside.

One day this year I was stopped by some walkers labouring up the hill from the village who turned out to be Professor Brian Golding (SVA History Society) and friends who were looking for a house known as Bland House. Amongst the group was Mrs Jean Bisset who was looking for the house she had stayed in as an evacuee in 1944. In 1944 the V1 and V2 campaigns were at their height and children were being moved from London, much as they had been in 1939.

Mrs Bisset thought the house she was looking for was ours but she remembered it as two flats. It came as no surprise to find it was known to her as the Bland House. I immediately assumed that it was named thus because of its looks, little realising that it in fact was known as the Bland's house. It transpired to have been built by a Mr George Bland in the period 1934-1939.

I checked the original documentation from the sale of the land by the Rev James George Cornish, which was to a George Bland, builder, of Pond Cottages, Dulwich, London, in 1934, for the princely sum of £80 which has the buying power of £5500 today.

I was amazed to find that he lived in Dulwich, bang opposite the entrance to the College, because I was a pupil at Dulwich College and used to walk past Pond Cottages every day, admittedly not in 1934.

To me it is an extraordinary coincidence that my house should be built by someone who lived in the very same area as I and who picked the same place as I to retire, the tiny hamlet of Salcombe Regis (even tinier in 1934) where he built his retirement home, when he had the whole of the UK from which to choose.

Investigative work by Anna Philpot into the Bland family reveals that the three unmarried Bland siblings moved into the "Bland house" after the war to live together but separately. This explains the original construction as two flats. The house was given the name of Meadowbank. George Bland, the last of the siblings, died in 1962 at which time the property was sold.

It has since undergone substantial work in the 1960s when it was converted to a single residence and a garage constructed (a date was written in the concrete at the time, which I think was 1964). We have since made significant alterations to the property which have consequently lost the date. The previous owners to us changed the name of the house to Combe Head.

I am thinking of forming a Bland house society to rival the Sampson society, so if anyone else has a Bland house then please let me know.

Richard Huntington

Athelhampton House and Gardens and Langham Wine Estate 11 September 2019

It was really quite misty and damp as we drove east past Dorchester on our way to Athelhampton House in Thomas Hardy country. Not ideal weather for viewing the gardens which extend to 29 acres, set in low-lying grounds along the River Piddle. So briskly our leader Stephen Pemberton divided us into two groups – one for the house tour first and the others to start with the impressive gardens.



The group arrive at the house



The group sit by roaring fire

I started with the house tour – welcomed with a roaring fire in the hearth of the Great Hall. Our guide Emma described the various owners of the house since the 15th century, some had extended the buildings, others provided the period furnishings and portraits on the walls. We learned that the property had been sold recently and indeed some of the furnishings had white tickets indicating their lot numbers for a forthcoming auction. This led to

some aspirational examining of items around the rooms. We moved on upstairs to the bedrooms and gallery, and too soon the tour was over. However we were able to view the Library and the copper bath on our own.

The Grade 1 listed gardens date from c1891 and are set out around the house in a series of rooms, including the famous 9 metre tall pyramid yews. There was much to admire in the use of water for fountains and channels.



Copper bath

There were some ancient trees including sweet chestnut and mulberry (your correspondent is President of Sidmouth Arboretum, so these could not go unmentioned! *see below). Some of us ate our sandwiches in the gardens, others took advantage of lunch in the café.

Garden yews and fountain



We departed on schedule at 1.30pm for Langham Wine Estate – en route we benefited from Stephen's introduction to the production process. On arrival we were introduced to Bryony – a lively young tour leader who promptly led us to the rows of vines, where a tractor was busy trimming the surplus growth with a specially designed trimmer which cut both sides on one pass.



Vines and roses

This is a family business and the site was chosen for its orientation (south), soil (chalk) and shelter (surrounding high hedges). With much help from Romanians 36,000 vines were planted 10 years ago. Bryony described why they had chosen high grafted plants – which means the harvesting and pruning work does not require kneeling but can be accomplished bending to knee height so is much quicker. We moved on to view the pressing machines, and the fermentation



Nearly ready for bottling

process including the secondary fermentation as this vineyard produces only sparkling wines. From there we settled into the comfy tea room and our tasting session, with first rate scones for the cream tea.

On the journey home our driver Barrie from Swards chose the coastal route. Though views were still damp and misty, our spirits were high having enjoyed a full and fascinating day which amply fulfilled the SVA commitment to heritage, culture, and the environment. Our thanks to Stephen for setting up and running such an excellent day out. We look forward to next year's programme.

Come and join us on the outings for next year

Diana East

*** You are invited to the Arboretum event to celebrate trees at Kennaway House, 26th November at 6.30pm**

SVA Magazine

The deadline for entries for the Summer edition is Sunday 17th May. Articles should be up to 800 words and an accompanying photograph or illustration would be most welcome. Please email your articles to Val Huntingdon.

publicity@sidvaleassociation.org.uk

SVA Excursions for 2020

Wednesday 13th May 2020

Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre, towards Launceston

We are going to the Fair!

The Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre is home to the National Fairground Collection and the Fairground Heritage Trust. It is a facility unique in the UK. There are displays of Fairground Art and Memorabilia, and a large array of vintage rides, stalls and shows.

We will have a private talk and tour exploring Fairground Social History and Culture. For the afternoon we will find something of contrast and our Cream Tea.



Wednesday 15th July 2020 Bodmin Jail, Buckfast Abbey and Cream Tea

We are going to jail!

We will discover life behind bars in the heart of Cornwall, in the 18th Century. With a private tour its rich history offers an ability to chart social and cultural history, the architectural evolution of the buildings, the entire penal system, changes in Law, Monarchy, wars, transport, and the economy.

In the afternoon we will visit Buckfast Abbey for a gentler and more relaxed tour. We will explore the life of the Benedictine Monks of Buckfast Abbey by visiting the Monastic Way Exhibition. This includes a detailed history of Buckfast Abbey and the Benedictine Community with animations, film and interactive models. We will take our Cream Tea here.



Wednesday 16th September 2020 Torre Abbey, Torquay

Upon arrival a Medieval Monk will greet us and give a brief introduction to the Abbey.

The story of Torre Abbey began on 25 March 1196 with the arrival of an abbot and six canons at Torre from Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire.

Today established as a museum we can learn about those early years and the Georgian Cary Family who resided in the Abbey for hundreds of years.

This Ancient Scheduled Monument has beautifully presented heritage rooms, galleries, art exhibitions, interactive displays, talking portraits and videos which bring the Abbey's colourful history and art to life. There are over 600 incredible works of art from the 18th century to the present day. We will have a private guided tour of the Art Exhibition rooms.

In the afternoon we will find something of contrast to enjoy and take our Cream Tea.

Stephen Pemberton, SVA Excursions

Details of trips available nearer the time or contact excursions@sidvaleassociation.org.uk

Remembering the Sid Vale

For 173 years, since 1846, Sidmouth and the Sid Vale have been protected and nurtured by members and volunteers who have given their time, skills and money to ensure the Vale remains a leading destination for visitors as well as a beautiful place to live.

The income from subscriptions and investments is, however, insufficient to fund those regular core activities. In addition, we are occasionally faced with exceptional circumstances for which there is no general provision. For example, the Museum is an old, listed building and has needed significant repairs and improvement in 2018.

We are very grateful, therefore, to those who, year after year, make one-off donations and remember the magical Sid Vale through their Wills. Such bequests can be general or they can be for specific purposes such as the maintenance of our green spaces or the development of the Sidmouth Museum.

Any bequest, large or small, is valued by the Association (which is a registered charity no.1154749). We remain deeply grateful for the thoughtfulness and generosity of past supporters, and for all who make provision for our future endeavours. Please continue to remember the Sid Vale Association.

Gary Turner, Treasurer



Sidford Women's Institute Centenary Banner

In April 2017, Sidford WI decided to create a banner in celebration of their WI's 100 year anniversary in May 2019. It would be a major project bringing members together in a task that was educational, instructive and fun!

Workshops were provided so that members could practice their embroidery skills. Making the banner would provide friendship and companionship.

Now completed, the banner is used as a backdrop at meetings and will be taken to group meetings and Federation and Regional meetings showing the village of Sidford, activities of the Sidford WI and important historical dates. It will also be used to promote the WI to other groups in the area and went to Bideford in October for the autumn meeting of Devon Federation where members from all over Devon were able to see the banner. It will become an heirloom for future WI members to enjoy.

The banner is made up of 100 squares each of five and half inches square which are sashed together to make a square of 77 inches. The individual squares depict one of the following:

- The village of Sidford
- The activities of the members of Sidford WI
- Historical dates that are important to women

Images were taken from photographs and artwork provided by members and then charted for counted stitches such as cross stitch and black work.

Images were drawn onto fabric for other embroidery techniques such as applique and computer generated images were then embellished with embroidery stitches and gold work. Silk paintings were also added and again, embellished with embroidery stitches.

Funding of £1,200 was provided by the Keith Owen Fund and anonymous donations of £400 and £200.

The Sidford WI Members would like to give our grateful thanks to the Keith Owen Fund and the anonymous donors without whom the banner would not have been made.



Grace Essex



Sidmouth's Fatberg – "...All is revealed"

You may recall that Sidmouth experienced a major fatberg lurking beneath the eastern end of the Promenade. It was discovered just before Christmas and took 8 weeks to clear – with the contents being taken by tankers to Totnes sewage treatment works where it was anaerobically digested, to produce energy to run the plant. In all some 500 cubic metres were removed – much of which was water.

In order to advise and inform, the Museum mounted a small exhibition which gave details of the fatberg and how to prevent it re-occurring. Also the BBC's *Inside Out* programme featured the exhibition and Ann Tanner was interviewed by Jenny Walrond their Health Correspondent. The programme was broadcast on Monday 23 September, and created a lot of positive reaction, prompting a number of visitors to ask if they could actually visit the sewer.

In order to understand how the fatberg was "constructed", South West Water commissioned Exeter University to investigate its contents.

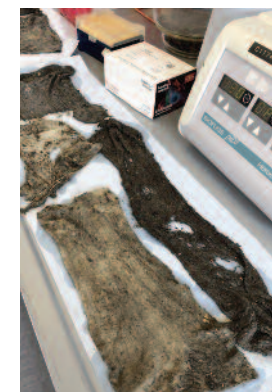
The team of scientists were asked to carry out an extensive 'autopsy' of the fatberg to try and solve the mystery of how it was constructed, and whether it posed any environmental risks. The scientists were given four samples from the fatberg, each weighing around 10kg. The team found that the samples they received were mostly made of animal fats – consistent with domestic food preparation – combined with household hygiene products such as wet wipes and sanitary products, as well as natural and artificial fibres from toilet tissues and laundry.

Crucially, the team found the fatberg contained no detectable levels of toxic chemicals – meaning its presence in the sewer, while increasing the risk of a blockage, did not pose a chemical or biological risk to the environment or human health. There was concern that the fatberg might contain concentrated fat-soluble chemicals such as those contained in the now-banned microplastic beads from cosmetics or be rich in potentially pathogenic microbes, but fortunately found no trace of these possible dangers.

The Sidmouth fatberg was simply a lump of fat aggregated with wet wipes, sanitary towels and other household products that really should be put in the bin and not down the toilet. The microfibres found probably came from toilet tissue and laundry, and the bacteria were those that would normally associate with a sewer.

Scientists from the Greenpeace laboratory, based at Exeter's Streatham Campus, also looked at the chemical composition of the fatberg for their own analysis. The results suggested that the fats found were more in keeping with domestic food preparation than commercial food outlets, while the chemicals were those found in personal care products, rather than pharmaceuticals or pesticides.

Crucially, they also found no evidence of harmful viruses or bacteria – offering reassurance given the importance of Sidmouth's bathing waters to the local community.



Fat, wet wipes etc still being detected at the Ham pumping station

South West Water has undertaken extensive communication with businesses and traders in the town along with broader publicity to advise how to prevent a reoccurrence, and will increase inspection to monitor how effective these measures are.

South West Water has now confirmed that from these inspections, there is still evidence of some fat, wet wipes etc (see photo) being detected at the Ham pumping station. They are proposing to undertake a survey of the sewer system to see what can be done to help reduce the problem, and ensure that there will be no pollution risk to the environment and particularly the seashore. Watch this space!

Peter Brookes – River Warden

The Elephant Hawk Moth

Out in the garden in August and scything the orchard, I noticed our pet Fox Terrier leaping up and down and attempting to play with something in a clump of bedstraw.

I walked over and saw that it was a brown caterpillar that was as thick as my middle finger and about 4 inches long. It had reared up and was staring with what appeared to be large eyes at my dog and looked very fierce.

I picked it up and realised that it was an Elephant Hawk Moth caterpillar which had pulled in its head and swelled the area behind enlarging the eyelike markings just behind its neck region. It then raises itself up and weaves about. This makes it look quite a daunting prospect to any predator, including Fox Terriers. The picture shows the caterpillar and why it is called the "Elephant" Hawk Moth, which is because the front looks like an elephant's trunk.

The caterpillar feeds on bedstraws and willowherbs and is classified as common although you will be lucky to see one as the food source is known as weeds, which are not encouraged in gardens and the moths fly at night.

The eggs are laid in May or June and the larvae are green to start with. They turn brown later and can be seen feeding on bedstraws, willowherbs and fuschias in August in the evening or by torchlight at night, having spent the day at the bottom of the plant, out of sight.

They pupate on the ground under moss or rubbish over winter. The moths hatch in May and are a beautiful pink with brown markings and a wing shaped like Concord. The moth is famous for its incredibly good night time vision which it uses to locate flowers that open at night with lots of nectar. They hover over the plant and have a long proboscis, so they are similar to the humming bird moth in flight style. Its colouration is thought to be helpful in identifying other elephant moths with which to mate and as a disguise during the day when it roosts amongst pink flowering plants.

Richard Huntington



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Dates for your Diary

Whilst we make every effort to ensure dates and times are correct at the time of going to press, please check the web page for the latest details and any updates.

MUSEUM Closes Saturday November 2nd 2019 Opens Friday 20th March 2020

Thursday 19th March – SVA members evening – preview of the new exhibits 5-8pm

EXCURSIONS

Wednesday 13th May Dingles Faiground Heritage Centre and Launceston.

Wednesday 15th July Bodmin Jail and Buckfast Abbey

Wednesday 16th September Torre Abbey

TALKS

Wednesday 13th November 2.30pm Manor Pavilion Sidmouth's new Blue Plaques – meet Mr Jones, Mr Wood, Miss Buckley, Olga and Looty – speaker Nigel Hyman

Wednesday 15th January 2.30pm Manor Pavilion Churchill's Secret Army in E. Devon

Wednesday 12th February 2.30pm Manor Pavilion TBA

Wednesday 11th March 2.30pm Manor Pavilion Annual NT/Bob Symes lecture TBA

Wednesday 20th May 2.30 All Saint's Church Hall SVA AGM

SVA COUNTRYSIDE WALKS

Tuesday 3rd December 10am Otterton Village Green (near King's Arms) – Roadside parking (Grid ref. SY081 853) A river ramble and back for lunch – 5 miles
Leader: Roger Livesey 01395 577 651 (07399905436)

Tuesday 7th January 2020 10am Livonia Road Sidmouth (Grid ref: SY130887) Parks and open spaces in Sidmouth – 5 miles Leader: Jackie Stokes 01395 577 651

Tuesday 4th February 10am Newton Poppleford Recreation Ground C.P. (Grid ref: SY088 899) A walk to the Pebble Beds and Commons– 5 miles
Leader: Roger Livesey 01395 577 651 (07399905436)

Tuesday 3rd March 10am Bowd lay-by, west of pub, A3052 (Grid ref. SY104 898) A circle around Fire Beacon – 5.5 miles. Leader: Graham Knapton 01395 445 872

Tuesday 7th April 10am Budleigh Salterton Lime Kiln CP (£) (Grid Ref: SY073 820) Coastal and River Walk – 6 miles Leader: Peter Kuh 01395 576 641

Tuesday 5th May 10am Bowd lay-by, west of pub, A3052 (Grid ref. SY104 898) A Saltwynds and Core Hill ramble – 4.5 miles Leader: Norma Self 01395 513 974

HISTORY GROUP

Monday 13th January and second Monday of every other month after – 7pm Trumps SVA HQ,



The Sid Vale Association CIO, 36a Fore Street, Sidmouth EX10 8AQ

The Sid Vale Association CIO is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registration number 1154749. The Association promotes conservation and heritage, the museum, and facilities for recreational and cultural activities in the Sid Valley

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