

**July 2017
Newsletter**

website: www.dawlishhistory.org.uk

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Report of the AGM held on 4th April 2017.

The presentation at the AGM held on 4th April 2017 included the highlights of the preceding year including the success of the second History Open Day held in September, the surprisingly interesting visit to the Kelly Mine, various improvements to the DLHG website, completion of the review and reorganisation of the archives, and three new publications. Although there was a deficit of £439 in the last year, Group finances continue to be healthy. The total income was £1,936 of which book sales were £960 and membership fees £390. Expenditure was £2,375 of which book printing was £1,120 and meeting costs £477. We've now reached the point where we feel we need to maintain our cash reserves more or less at the current level, so from now on we will aim to keep income and expenditure in balance, and in particular try to ensure we make a small net profit from publications year on year.

We welcomed Dave Strawbridge to the Committee as Treasurer/ Membership Secretary in place of Sheila Ralls. Sheila has made a very valuable contribution to the Group as Secretary and Treasurer and in many other ways; we will miss her from the Committee.

The roles of 2017/8 Committee members are as follows: David Allanach: Secretary; Ray Bickel: Meetings/ Visits + Book Sales; David Gearing: Committee Chair + Publications; Keith Gibson: Projects; Dave Strawbridge: Treasurer + Membership; Mike Trigger: Website + Meetings Equipment.

☆ Additional Event in 2017 Programme: Guided Tour of Dawlish Museum ☆

We have arranged for DLHG members to have a guided tour of the museum on **Tuesday September 19th** starting at 2.30pm. Tea and biscuits will be provided. If this appeals, put the date in your diary now.

Report on the (April 4th) talk on Devon Toll Houses by Tim Jenkinson



Devon has a particularly rich legacy of former tollhouses, most of which were built in the late 18th or early 19th century by Turnpike Trusts. The oldest one in Devon is thought to be at Newton Poppleford, built in 1758. At the height of the toll road era in the 1830s about one fifth of Devon's 8,000 miles of roads were turnpiked. The original 'turnpikes' were spiked poles set across the road to discourage a horse rider to jump over them.

Toll houses were located where travellers between towns and villages had to pass and were designed to catch people trying to avoid paying the tolls. In most cases there

was a gate set across the road next to the toll house which was raised by the tollkeeper once the fee had been paid. Understandably, road tolls were unpopular and it was not unknown for tollkeepers to be attacked. In

spite of this, some families stayed with the job for decades and even moved between various tollhouses owned by a single Turnpike Trust.

The turnpike system was never formally abolished but from the 1870s Parliament stopped renewing the legislation that enabled Trusts to operate and roads began to revert to local authorities, the last Trust vanishing in 1895. When a Trust was ended, there were often great celebrations as the gates were thrown open, but tolls lingered on in some places, and it wasn't until 1924 that all the tollhouses in Plymouth were demolished.

Designs varied, but many were octagonal in plan enabling windows to provide views of the road in both directions, with a payment window facing the road. They were built right on the edge of the road and this causes difficulties in the present day - they may be in the way of road widening, cause obstructions at road junctions, and are vulnerable to damage by vehicles. They are liable to be demolished unless Listed, and even then sometimes it is only a campaign by local people that saves them.

Local examples can be found at Oak Hill Cross Road, Teignmouth Hill, Shaldon Bridge, Powderham Pound, and at Vennbridge, Starcross, on the Mamhead Road. The tollhouse at the junction of Warren Road and the A379 in Dawlish (pictured above) was demolished in 1936. Other previous tollhouses now gone were at Penn Inn, Newton Abbot (it was originally called the Penguin Inn) which was demolished in 1968, and at Forches Cross on the A382 north of Newton Abbot, removed as recently as 2009.

Report of the visit to the Devon Rural Archive and Shilstone House.



On May 2nd nineteen of us found our way to Shilstone in deepest South Hams to visit the Devon Rural Archive (DRA) and Shilstone House. The DRA has been in operation since 2006 and is now based in a separate building in the Shilstone grounds. The current focus of the small team of archaeologists is to investigate and record the history, significance and development over time of manor houses and farmhouses in Devon. Using the 1765 Benjamin Donn map of Devon nearly 1000 sites have been identified for further investigation, and to date they have produced reports on 160 of these sites through archaeological surveys plus map and document research. The DRA is open to the public, and hosts talks, events and exhibitions (see devonruralarchive.com). We were given an introduction to the Archive by Abi Gray, the resident archaeologist. Thus far the DRA has focused on sites in SW Devon and has relatively little on our area, but Abi had extracted some materials relating to Dawlish and district. We were intrigued and amused by a small collection of papers dating from 1912 to 1918 that referred to a property called 'Great

Bottoms' in Dawlish, which none of us had heard of.

After lunch Abi also gave us a comprehensive tour of the house and garden. Recent archaeological work has confirmed that the site has a long history of human habitation, going back to the Iron Age. In medieval times there was a small manor house, later extended and then rebuilt in the 18th century, with terraced gardens and an elaborate water feature. But by the time Sebastian and Lucy Fenwick discovered and bought the property in 1997 the house was less than half its original size and rather neglected. They employed architect Christopher Rae Scott to design and oversee the rebuilding and remodelling of the house and garden. Work on the house began in 2002 and is still not quite complete. What remained of the 18th century house has been subtly incorporated into the new building. The interior has been designed



to reflect three different period styles from 1680 to 1760, in order to provide variety and give the impression of a building evolving over time. Similarly the garden layout has distinct elements to look like they were built in 1600, 1690, and 1730. During the renovation work much was uncovered, including the lost water gardens and terracing thought to be as early as the 14th century, with walls built of stone quarried from land within the estate. Nearly all the interior panelling and other features in the house have been newly built by a team of local craftsmen, but there is some original Jacobean panelling which was kept when the house was being remodelled. Originally the panelling (part of which is shown at right) would have been stained but unusually, after it had been restored and re-installed, it was agreed with English Heritage that it should be painted white to show off the fine features of the carving. The afternoon was rounded off with a cream tea, and the general conclusion was that the visit had exceeded our expectations and was well worth the journey from Dawlish. (More pictures taken during the visit can be seen under the Images tab on the DLHG website.)



(The three items above by David Gearing.)

John Edye Manning 1783-1870 by David Allanach

Dawlish owes a lot to John Edye Manning and his lasting memorials include the Lawn and the Manor House. However, he might never have become interested in Dawlish if it wasn't for the first love of his paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Bottrell. She fell in love with Samuel Merivale but her father forbade her to marry Samuel and so in due course she married William Manning instead. Samuel was heartbroken and decided to move as far away from their home area of Northamptonshire as possible and moved to Tavistock. His calling was as a non-conformist minister and this led in time to his teaching in Exeter. Fast forward many years and both Elizabeth and Samuel had lost their spouses and so their love could be rekindled which is how Elizabeth moved to Exeter and married Samuel in 1766, bringing her 12 year old son James with her.

James got on well with his stepfather and it influenced the course of his life as he went on to train as a minister, and at a fairly young age took charge of George's chapel or meeting house in South Street, Exeter (he would doubtless have been appalled to know that it is now a J.D. Wetherspoon pub).

In 1777 Rev. James Manning married Maria Oke in Lyme Regis and they had a son William Oke Manning, but alas Maria died in 1779. However, a year later James married again to Lydia Edye. So now we know how John got his middle name. They had three children James, Lydia and our John Edye Manning. William Oke became a solicitor in London and James became another reverend but then spent most of his working life as a 'barrister cum land agent'. The family seem to have been close and supported each other.

John Edye Manning took articles to train as a solicitor in 1798 and entered a partnership with John Williams in Exeter about 1804, the same time that he married Matilda Jordan Cooke at Almondsbury, Gloucestershire.

John seemed a man in a hurry and three years later, at the age of 24, he bought a sizeable portion of land in what is now the centre of Dawlish when the land that had belonged to the manor of Dawlish was being sold off. He very quickly set about developing this land by draining the marsh through which the brook made its way to the sea.

A full account of how Dawlish Water was straightened, the level of the dried out marsh bed raised and houses built along the Strand and elsewhere are given in Tricia Whiteaway's book *The Lawn*. Clearly this development must have been expensive and it would be interesting to know how John raised the money, although it seems likely that his brother and step brother probably contributed as their names are shown on some of the leases.

John's most prestigious building was the Manor House set in 3 acres of grounds. Maybe this was where he intended to establish his family home and yet he put it up for sale in July 1810, possibly to raise more capital. Everything seemed set for a successful future until the night of 10th November 1810 when snow melted on the hills above and the melt water came shooting down the now straightened water course and took away the new soil on the marshland, the bridges, the banks of the stream and even some of the houses. Indeed Mr Tapper's family had only just been persuaded to leave their house in the early morning when it was swept out to sea lock stock and barrel.

The consequences for his project were considerable and it is worth re-quoting from a letter written by Manning. 'I lost £11,000 in canal and house property. The first formation of the canal and lawn cost £5,000 and the revival £3,600. The lawn, all washed away, was made by sod from excavating Queen Street and Exeter Hill by the London Inn. The new built houses, which cost me £2,100 behind Cross Row had not 2 bricks standing upon each other, and two Flemish ponies valued at £120 were washed into the sea.' (3)

With commendable energy John set to and re-made the 'canal' and presumably this was when the weirs were installed to slow the water. However, the flood had put a severe strain on his finances and things began to fall apart. In 1811 his partnership with John Williams was dissolved although he continued in his office in Southgate Street, Exeter for a while, but effectively he was bankrupt by the end of the year and executed a deed of assignment of his property for the benefit of his creditors. He was therefore no longer in control of his affairs and this may explain the controversy surrounding plans put forward to build on the Lawn.

John left England in 1814 and headed for France. His daughter Elizabeth was born in Le Havre, Lydia in Dieppe and Arthur in Paris. He then seems to have gone to The Hermitage, County Wicklow, Ireland. Some financial legislation allowed him to return to England in 1823 and he set up home at no. 3 Manor Terrace, Kings Road, Chelsea where he was described as 'gent and insolvent debtor'. It is said that in 1824 he sold his property (1), presumably including all that was still in his name in Dawlish.

What John needed was a break and some influential friends and for this he became indebted to his brother. His brother James was a friend of Lord Brougham and advised him on the defence of Queen Caroline, wife of George IV, when her husband unsuccessfully tried to divorce her. In return Lord Brougham helped resettle the Manning family in Australia when John was appointed Registrar of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1828. In May 1829 he arrived in Sydney with his wife and five of his children. He was further appointed curator of intestate estates, but had to lodge a security of £2000 which was paid by his brother James and his father. He complained on a number of occasions that he wasn't paid enough and yet managed to acquire large land holdings. Life in Australia seemed to suit him and he became involved in several important companies. Some of his children also did well in this new environment.



His financial affairs were still not fully resolved in England and for example in 1834 solicitors announced a meeting to pay an insolvent debtor dividend. However, a little later there was also trouble brewing in Australia. His success fell apart in 1841 when he became a victim of the depression and his property and stock were heavily mortgaged and his shares became worthless. Australian newspapers were scathing about his guardianship of the intestate funds of the bereaved when it was revealed that his private and public funds had been kept in the same account and that he 'had neither day book, ledger nor cash book'. They sarcastically reported 'he was unlucky in his speculations and although it was other peoples' money, which he scattered abroad, still it must have been done with the best of intentions' [!]. (2)

The newspapers reported 'his connections are interposed to shield him from retributive justice' but he was suspended from office with debts of £30,000 and his town estate was sequestered. To help the creditors the £2000 security was reclaimed, which can't have pleased his brother (his father having died in 1831).

Manning left Australia in disgrace but some of his children stayed on and prospered. He returned to England and again spent some time on the continent, although Matilda is recorded at Sea Grove (later Lanherne) in 1842 (5). His mother Lydia died in 1847 and with understandable caution left money in her will to his wife 'for her sole use and not subject to the debts and engagements of her husband' (4). It appears that the family finances were helped by an annual remittance from the family of Lord Brougham (1).

We know that in 1851 he was staying in Dawlish at 1 Teignmouth Hill with his wife and daughter Hannah. It shows that he still had a soft spot for the town and that there was no ill will towards him. One niggling unexplained detail is that the 1851 census suggested his employment in the army, could he have added even more colour to his CV?

John's wife came from north of Bristol and it was probably her influence that took them back to Clifton where they spent their final years. He died on 16 January 1870.

Was he visionary or villain? – probably a bit of both.

Sources

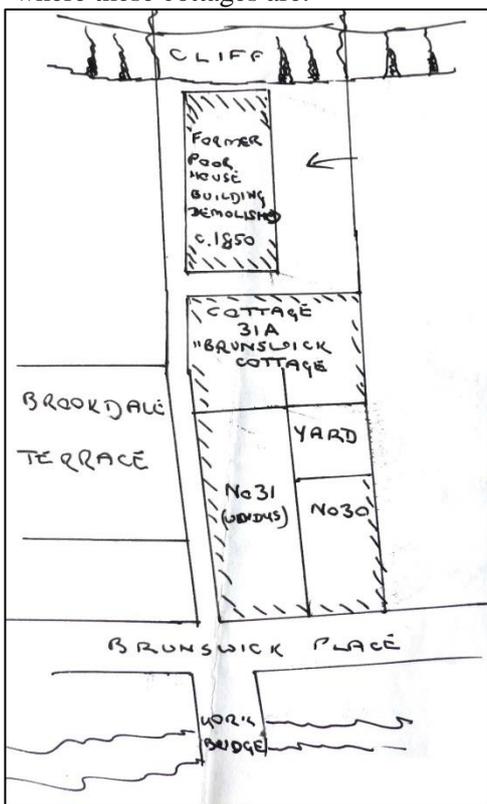
(1) Australian Dictionary of Biography; (2) Star & Working Men's Guardian 13 Sep 1845; (3) William Cornelius: Guide book of Dawlish quoted in (4); (4) Tricia Whiteaway: History of the Manor House; (5) Rate book

Dawlish Poor Houses and Work House by Tricia Whiteaway

After the dissolution of the Monasteries the problem with the poor became the problem of each town and village. Initially they were given outdoor relief, i.e. if they were resident and generally of good behaviour, their rent paid for a year or a smallholder's land was ploughed/harrowed for him until he had recovered from debt. Unfortunately the relevant parish ledger containing any records for Dawlish for the period 1600 – 1680 is missing (so please look in your attic if you have an old house, it might be there!)

Around 1700 the population in Dawlish was around 1,000 (according to the vicar on one of his reports to the Bishop.) We had many farms - so many boys, men, and sometimes women worked on them whilst the poor children were apprenticed into the employment of a local family to teach a trade, mainly of husbandry or domestics, but later they were taught spinning, weaving, thatching or tailoring etc. But of course there was still the elderly or the disabled, so altruistic people of Dawlish would offer an old cottage or house (usually run down) in order that a group of poor people could live together cheaper under the town's relief.

The earliest record we have is in 1719 when Thomas Edwards was paid 18s for the rent of his house 'For the Poor'. Twenty years later Gawin Welland, Giles Knight and Nicholas Babb each gave a house charging £1 rent p.a. whilst the Overseers of the Poor kept records of these houses, but we do not have the names of the occupiers. By 1766 there were two 'parish houses' and in 1772 one house caught fire and it must have been too bad to restore as it is recorded 'the cob was carried away of ye old house 4s.' This cob (a mixture of clay and straw and sometimes dung) was the main building material for cottages and old cob could be used again with a new inclusion of clay, fresh straw and a few men to stomp on it. The poorhouses also contained the parish oven which probably accounts for the frequency of the houses catching fire. We do not know where these cottages are.



However, we have more details on the next Poor House. It was situated behind 31 Brunswick Place (which now houses Gerald's Convenience Store), and appears in a lease of 1794. It lasted until November 1810 when the town had a disastrous flood which damaged The Lawn and demolished a number of houses. The Poor House was left in a dangerous condition. We know that William Angel assisted in getting the people out of the house and 'removing their beds etc for which he was paid 5 shillings'. He was then 'paid for a day's work in ripping of the old thatch, pulling down the walls etc' for which he received 2s. The owner of this poor house was William Tapper (who also owned other properties nearby) and we are lucky that his descendant Alan Tapper became a member of Dawlish History Group and some years ago provided the sketch map at left.

So after this poor house was demolished, the inmates were boarded out elsewhere until a new building described as a 'poor house and workhouse' was built in Old Town Street (we know it as the old school) where the Assistant Overseer, Thomas Martin, lived as Governor at a salary of £20 p.a. According to the late F J Carter there were five separate poorhouses there and they remained in use until 1850 when the last inmate had been removed to the Union House in Newton Abbot which had opened in 1839. It is noted in the burial register that when the inmate had died they were returned to their original parish to be buried.

However, a school was built next to the Workhouse by 1819 and later part of the outer building was turned into a Soup Kitchen open for two days a week in the winter where it sold soup at 1d. a quart. This in turn was converted into a library in 1930.

William Henry Barnard: Painting of Dawlish in 1801

Recently Jimmy Hill of Swiftprint kindly donated three historic pictures of Dawlish to the History Group. They had been in his possession for some time, and he gave them to us in the hope that we would enable them to be more widely seen. He was given them by his grandfather, who found them in the attic of the Conservative Club, where he worked.



This article focuses on one of these pictures, an original watercolour by the Reverend William Henry Barnard (1769-1818). It is probably one of the earliest known pictures of Dawlish; the notes written on the back of the picture says it was painted in 1801, when presumably he was on holiday or visiting someone here. Strictly speaking it isn't a *watercolour*, it's more accurately described as a grey (monochrome) wash, although in this case the paint actually appears to be shades of blue rather than grey.

A hour or two of internet research on the artist yielded the following. Barnard was the son of an Irish parson and grandson of a Bishop of Derry. He was a pupil of John Baptist Malchair, when an undergraduate at Pembroke College, Oxford from 1790. Malchair (1730-1812) was a talented watercolour artist and one of the most influential drawing masters active in Britain in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. He had many pupils, including John Austen, Jane Austen's brother. Barnard tended to favour the same sort of humble, inconsequential subject that Malchair had found in the alleyways and back streets of medieval Oxford. Malchair's pupils were encouraged to work in monochrome (pencil, chalks and grey washes) rather than watercolour. They were also taught to describe form using tone and mass rather than outline.

These influences can be seen in Barnard's approach to the Dawlish scene. It looks from the eastern side of Tunnicliffe Waste, then an area of rough pasture either side of Dawlish Water, towards a small group of buildings on the lower part of what is now Brunswick Place – the streets on both sides of the river were called the Strand at this time. The row of buildings to the right on a higher level are on Teignmouth Hill.

The notes on the back of the picture say that the view shows the 'old Strand Mills, now Torbay Hill', but there is no known record of Teignmouth Hill being called Torbay Hill. Intriguingly the notes also describe it as a 'diagonal wash', the 'diagonal' part of which apparently refers to a method used to determine which details the artist (deliberately or unconsciously) intended to emphasize, by aligning elements with lines drawn at roughly 45 degrees from the corners. The notes also claim that Barnard joined the Grenadier Guards as a young man, presumably before going to university, and that he took Holy Orders in 1793.

It is known that Barnard travelled widely on the Continent, probably before the Napoleonic War began in 1803, after which travel by British people in Europe became difficult. Several of his drawings and sketches of European locations, especially Rome, can be seen on art websites.

Three of his works are in the Tate Gallery's collection and there are two drawings of Windsor Castle in the Royal Collection – unusually these drawings were made on the back of an account from 'F. Stracy, Grocer to Their Majesties, Castle Street, Windsor, to the Reverend Mr. Hays for April to June 1805', and several pieces of paper have been joined together to make two pictures, dated 5th July 1805. We must assume that Barnard didn't have any proper art paper with him when this view presented itself, but he surely would be surprised to learn that his back-of-an-invoice drawings have ended up in the Royal Collection.

The museum has expressed interest in re-framing and displaying this picture next year.

David Gearing