

sid vale association



past • present • future

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free to members



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...

This is my first contribution to the magazine since I was elected Chairman last May. This was a challenging time to take over and I am grateful for all the help and support from my colleagues. As we appear, hopefully, to be past the worst of what has been nearly two years of unprecedented restrictions I am pleased to report that all is well.

Our monthly Management meetings have recommenced face to face as have all the other committees. You may not have realised that all our work is carried out by volunteers, both on committees as trustees or behind the scenes.

The Museum re-opened in the summer with its smart new look and the new extension providing disabled access, a new cloakroom and kitchen. Many new exhibits have been provided.

For reasons beyond our control the Excursions were not able to take place but we hope they will re-commence next year.

Following the success of the Zoom talks we have decided that the winter programme will continue on Zoom.

18th September marked the 175th Anniversary of the founding of The SVA. The two day Exhibition at Kennaway House was a resounding success. My thanks go to Ann Tanner and her team for the organisation of this event. On the morning of the first day I took part in a live interview with Radio Devon at 6.50 am! We made the front page of The Herald recently and I am grateful to Tom Griffiths for providing the Toastrack for the Exhibition. The finale by The Town Band was the perfect end to the weekend.

The Planning and Conservation Committee have continued work throughout the pandemic. We were not surprised to see an application recently from the developers of the Sidford Business Park for Retail Use. This type of use is at odds with the Inspector's decision and the Local Plan. Needless to say that we have submitted a detailed objection. We always suspected that a supermarket was behind this development. We shall fight this with every means at our disposal. We urge our members to object as well. Full details can be found on the EDDC planning portal.

Edmund Harrison

Editor's Note

Looking back to the 1846 records when the Sid Vale Improvement Committee was formed, the aims were very similar to those of the current SVA. In the words of Lady Lockyer – *A small committee of townsmen who were concerned for the conservation and improvement of the great natural beauties of the neighbourhood.* She should have included townswomen as both herself and her sister were heavily involved with SVA activities. I was intrigued to follow her involvement with Sidmouth and have failed to do her justice by only writing a very small piece about her achievements. I wonder whether in the next



175 years, our benefactor, Keith Owen, will be regarded in a similar way, as you will see in the articles about the Keith Owen Fund awards to the football and sailing clubs and Sidmouth in Bloom's success at Chelsea, which certainly put Sidmouth on the map.

Talking of maps, in Ken Robertson's article about OS maps is another name which appears frequently in Sidmouth's history – Peter Orlando Hutchinson. An extraordinary man, who made meticulous local observations of natural history, which included the washed up whale described in John Govier's article. He also undertook a geological survey that helped map out the local railway routes from Feniton and Salcombe Regis to Sidmouth. The Salcombe Regis route never materialised. Nick Thompson's article also talks of the Sidmouth railway and Norma Cox's article recalls a walk she did which perchance happened to be one noted by Peter Orlando Hutchinson. The significance of maps and footpaths is mentioned again in Nigel Hyman's article about the postman's annoyance at some footpaths being deliberately blocked. They still are, proving that over the years, nothing changes!!

People in the valley are still observing and recording flora and fauna. There are 3 articles in this edition – by Simon Papworth, Ed Dolphin and Rambling Sid of Salcombe Regis.

Val Huntington

Why your legacy is important to the Sid Vale

As we celebrate our 175th year, our members and volunteers have had considerations aplenty, besides braving the elements to nurture the environment of the magical Sid Vale as well as manning the Museum. Their care, consideration, and generosity of time and skills ensure Sidmouth and the Vale remain a leading destination for visitors, as well as beautiful environment in which to live.

We continue to be grateful to those volunteers who have continued their work in isolation and in bubbles throughout the various stages of the pandemic and the various restrictions imposed.

The years 2020 and 2021 will have presented a great many challenges for everyone. For the SVA, it meant the Museum was closed to the public in 2020 and we were unable to continue with our other activities which generate funds. The Museum only re-opened in June 2021.

The regular income from subscriptions and investments, sadly, is insufficient to fund our works even in a normal year and so the loss of donation and other income in 2020 and 2021 has been sorely felt. The Keith Owen Fund is closely restricted to other purposes and cannot subsidise our regular activities, including the Museum.

More than ever then, we are greatly appreciative of those remember the Sid Vale Association through their Wills. 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.

Lifetime donations are also welcome and can be made direct to our bank account no. 00016416, sort code 40-52-40, giving your name as a reference.

Gary Turner, Treasurer

Sidmouth: The War Years – 1939-1945

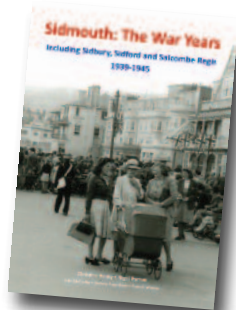
Including Sidbury, Sidford and Salcombe Regis

The new SVA publication is its most ambitious to date. It is A4 size, 212 pages with over 400 illustrations. Many of the photographs are from private collections and have not been seen before.

The five authors (Christine Hardy, Nigel Hyman, John McCarthy, Andrew Rugg-Gunn, Alastair Watson) have attempted to cover every aspect of these extraordinary years. A number of local residents kindly allowed us to interview them. Most of them were young children in the war years and all gave vivid descriptions of life in the 1940s.

The single most important event in the war years, and possibly in the entire history of the town, was the arrival of the evacuees who came in successive waves and mainly from London. It is estimated that the town's population doubled. Individual evacuee stories are told for the first time. Due to the shortage of suitable private billets, large houses were requisitioned, and named hostels with paid matrons in charge. One, Pauntley, started a nursery for evacuee children, the first in Devon and one of the first in the country. In 1944 Sidholme had a residential nursery, also the first in Devon.

The Coastal Defence Battery (below) was established in 1940 when invasion seemed imminent following Dunkirk. We are extremely fortunate to have photographs of these as photography of the defences was strictly prohibited but local surveyor, Louis Blanchard, correctly predicted their historic significance. A number of bombs fell and there were also tragic plane accidents which we record in detail, including eye witness descriptions.



Back row: L/Bdr. T. P. Hughes, Gnr. A. F. Abbott, Gnr. D. R. Finlayson, Gnr. A. W. Stevens, Gnr. W. R. J. Sparkes, Gnr. W. J. Mitchell, Gnr. H. Clarke, L/Bdr E. W. Ling, Gnr E. W. Colley.
Second row: Gnr. R. O. Squire, Gnr. E. R. Howard, Gnr. W. G. Backhouse, Gnr. P. L. Rutley, Gnr. C. Prettejohn, Gnr. A. C. Bennett, L/Bdr. A. Clews, Gnr. R. E. Chapman.
Third row: L/Bdr. R. W. Willmington, Gnr. B. Trivett, Gnr. C. Sheppard, Gnr D. F. Harris, Gnr. A. E. Weeks, Gnr. J. C. Braund, Gnr. G. Skinner, Gnr. P. S. Russell, Gnr. A. Northcote, Gnr. S. J. Summers, Gnr. W. R. Boundy, Gnr. H. Gooding, L/Bdr. H. Lightawler, Gnr. R. C. Farrant.
Seated: Bdr. J. Cooke, Bdr. F. G. Russell, Bdr. E. F. Carnell, L/Sgt. D. H. R. Turbitt, 2nd/Lt. F. C. Smale, Capt. R. L. Madge, Lt. W. J. G. Eveleigh, Sgt. R. W. Stapleton, Sgt. W. R. Wilson. Bdr. T. E. Nicol, Bdr. P. Lee.

The major role of the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) was enforcing the blackout, a role that some, it seems, relished. Home Guard platoons in the Sid Vale took more volunteers than the ARP and included a Sidmouth Sergeant Wilson and a Sidbury Private Pike but, sadly, no Captain Mainwaring.

Although most of the information is about Sidmouth, fascinating material is included about Sidbury Manor where members of the local secret 'Churchill's Army' met. The evacuated girls' school, Alexandra College, also at the Manor, came for the duration of the war but stayed 20 years. Living in Sidford was a teacher who kept a wartime diary and she describes cycling twice a week to see films at both the Grand and Radway Cinemas. There are photographs and descriptions of the bombed Salcombe Regis Church in which incredibly nobody was killed.

Initially we thought that the Observer and Herald newspapers would have little information due to enforced paper rationing and censorship. We were wrong. There are many moving stories and often controversial letters concerning subjects such as the Sunday opening of Cinemas. When a correspondent complained about the noise of low flying RAF planes, a flurry of letters followed. Newspaper cartoons and adverts help recreate the culture of the times.

RAF Sidmouth is divided into two parts: the highly secret radar station (called interchangeably Sidmouth and Branscombe) and the better documented Medical Training Depot and Air Crew Officers School in Sidmouth itself. At times there were over 1,500 servicemen and



No No Nanette dancers – Local girl Sheila Holland, 2nd right, met and later married Jack Hedger who attended an RAF training course



Disguised gun emplacement 'Cottage', Clifton Slipway

RADWAY CINEMA,
 By kind permission of U F Chesbir, Esq.

THE
Sid Vale Male Voice Choir
 (President: Dr. R. G. Michelmoro).
 announce a Grand
Matinee Concert
 in aid of the
SIDMOUTH 'SPITFIRE' FUND
 on
MONDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 1940,
 at 2.45 p.m.; doors open 2.15.

Soloists:
OLIVE FRANKS
 (LADY FLEMING)
 (SOPRANO), London, Provincial and
 B.B.C. Concerts),
 and
ROY HENDERSON
 The eminent English Baritone,
 (by arrangement with Messrs. Ibbis and
 Tillet, London).
 Hon. Conductor **Mr. HAROLD SELWOOD**
 Accompanists:
Mrs. Clifford Brown and Mr. Clifford Heard.

Reserved and Numbered Seats 3/6
 and 2/6; Unreserved 1/-. Plan of
 Theatre may be seen and Seats reserved
 at E Culverwell and Sons, Fore Street.
 Tickets may also be obtained from
 Members of the Choir.



women in the town. It is a fascinating story complete with many wartime romances.

An entire chapter is devoted to the role of the town's women in the war years. Women fed, clothed, and cared for their families when food and clothing were rationed and many welcomed evacuees, joined voluntary organisations and raised funds for local and wartime causes.

The amount of fundraising was staggering; from jumble sales, mannequin parades and whist drives to talks and concerts given by national celebrities. It would have been possible for an individual to go to a different event daily.

The names of 69 servicemen are fully commemorated in the year in which they died. Elsewhere are details of those (that we know) who won honours in the armed services and the Merchant Navy. The full story and distinguished record of the minesweeper, HMS Sidmouth, is given, so called as she was funded by the town.

We hope that those who helped us with their memories will feel that we have done them justice and that those who did not live through the war years will better understand the hardships, losses and camaraderie in this small Devon town.

The book is available in the Museum Shop or on the SVA website. There is free delivery for SVA members who live in Sidmouth.

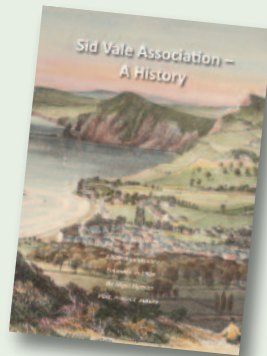
Nigel Hyman

The Sid Vale Association – its 175 year history

To celebrate the Anniversary, Nigel Hyman's book tells the fascinating story of England's first Civic Society from its formation as the 'Sidmouth Improvement Committee' in 1846 to the present day.

The Association was founded to 'Conserve and promote the Valley's architecture, environment and culture, protect and enhance the Valley's landscape and amenities, and record the history of the Valley' and of course the SVA through its many activities continues to promote conservation and heritage, Sidmouth Museum, and facilities for recreational and cultural activities in the Sid Valley.

We are indebted to Nigel for his painstaking research which has led to this publication. The book is also a reflection on the changes in society as a whole, some for the better, some perhaps not!



Lady Lockyer and the Sid Vale Association.

Thomazine Mary Browne came to Sidmouth with her 'delicate' sister, Leigh, to spend long holidays with their grandparents, the Carslakes at Cotmaton in Sidmouth. The sea air was deemed to be of benefit to Leigh. She was interested in history and philosophy whereas Mary was never happier than when horse riding over the moors. She had a very scientific mind and married the surgeon Bernard Brodhurst FRCS. She became interested in practical matters regarding women's welfare, housing and education. Along with other members of her family she was responsible for the foundation of a female students' College Hall at University College and the London School of Medicine for Women.

In 1903, recently widowed, she married again to the scientist Norman Lockyer, whom she had met when attending the solar physics laboratory in London. So began her keen interest in Sidmouth affairs and the amenities of the Sid Valley, in particular the Sid Vale Improvement Society, along with her sister Annie Leigh Browne. She became treasurer of the Sidmouth Maternity and Infant Welfare centre at Woolcombe House and provided a schoolroom at the Old Meeting. Along with her sister, her name appears in the SVA records many times in matters where conservation and preservation of open spaces was concerned. In 1924, she is listed as treasurer. In an appeal for donations to continue the work of the SVA, the same appeal pamphlet could be used today as the aims and concerns are still the same.

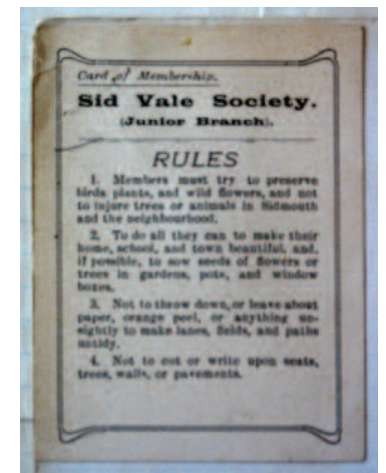
One can imagine her as a wealthy influential lady, living in Lockyer House (Brownlands), held in high esteem in the town but maybe somewhat muted by the fact she was a woman. She obviously had the interests of children at heart, even though childless herself (although she had 13 stepchildren). Looking through the old SVA documents, she was the vice chair of the newly formed 'Sidmouth Juvenile Organisation Society' in 1909, part of the Sid Vale Association. (Dr Sheldon Withers was chairman). She played a significant part in fundraising for a playground for the children of Sidmouth through the Juvenile Society.

Juvenile Society Playground Fundraising

The early records of the Juvenile Society make amusing reading. Records from 1918 show much debate took place about having a children's play area in the town. The archery field (now Sidmouth RFC) was offered at a rent of 5/- per year. Boys 12-16 were allowed 3 days and girls 11-16 on 3 days. Long discussions followed about the unfairness of girls being



Mary Lockyer (left) and her sister Annie Leigh Browne



allocated a Monday as this was the day that girls traditionally helped their mothers. A survey found that attendance at school was no fewer on Mondays compared to other days so the objection was quashed. The field was also used for football and army training by C Company of the volunteer brigade on the remaining day. It was proposed that the gallows belonging to C Company could be used as a swing but this was also voted out as they probably would not be strong enough. (Presumably the gallows were not for hanging!)

It was decided to hold a grand gymkhana, open to all the children in Sidmouth, with free entry apart from the grandstand (belonging to the football club) where entry was to be 1/-. A collection would be made during the afternoon to raise funds for equipment such as cricket bats and balls etc. for the play area.

Not a pony gymkhana as the word is used for these days but what we now call sports day games such as running, three legged, potato, egg and spoon races, tug of war etc. for boys and girls – definitely not mixed though there was a game called Gretna Green race which one could assume might be mixed! The committee offered to provide prizes. Lady Lockyer offering six as well as providing spoons and potatoes for the potato and egg and spoon races.

The day of the gymkhana, August 1st 1918, unfortunately was wet. A write up in Sidmouth Observer on Aug 7th 1918 hardly makes political correctness.

'The various events proved interesting, not only as events but as studies of the children. I suppose everybody who ran, rode or waddled or jumped or came in somewhere but as is usually the case, much spirited intercourse was exchanged between competitors as to their exact relative position. For instance, here is an example of a really eloquent episode: *'e wasn't fird, I'm sure I wus, t' ain't fair and "G'out wi'yer, I'll punch you one, in a minute. I wus fird"* (Not language to be found in the current Sidmouth Herald!) Sadly the Gretna Green race was abandoned due to the weather so we will never know whether it was a mixed event. The day was a success and Miss Leigh Brown presented a cheque for £3 to the Juvenile Organisation committee to cover the rent of the playground. Further arrangements were made by Lady Lockyer that she would 'instruct her man Mitchell to scythe a cricket pitch.' She was also instructed by the committee that she could spend up to 20/- on urgent necessities for the children.

Further reading of the minutes of the meetings of the junior SVA, which numbered over one hundred children at its peak, show that both Sir Norman and Lady Lockyer along with her sister Annie took an active interest in the education of local children. Their names feature many times in the lists of events that were laid on for the juniors whether it be nature trips, talks about the cliffs, river etc. One such event organised was a magic lantern show of thunderstorm clouds as seen from an aeroplane which at that time must have been enthralling.



Val Huntington



Sidmouth in Bloom 2021

It was in 2019, pre Covid, when Jon Wheatley (Chair of South West in Bloom, landscaper and nurseryman) announced at the South West seminar his intention that SW in Bloom and Sidmouth would showcase a garden at the next Chelsea Flower Show. Originally, one elephant would be planted up, but after the 2020 Chelsea cancellation and a new 2021 May prospect of a show happening, Jon decided that two elephants were better.

The Royal Parks collected two elephants from Sidmouth, took them to Hyde Park greenhouses to be planted up by Sidmouth in Bloom in July, on the condition that Lynette was to train two apprentices and one professional in the art of 3-D planting. Royal Parks would sponsor the transport to and fro from the Chelsea show and provide any additional plants needed for Lynette's design, returning the structures eventually to Sidmouth.



The Sidmouth design was themed: 'Diversity and Protection' keeping in mind the story of Elmer, the patchwork elephant who was different and his acceptance into his grey herd tribe, and to highlight the protection of the elephants across the world and their habitat under threat from competition for habitat and hunted for ivory and medicine.

The elephants were set with a background of large-leaf tropical plants – strelizias, bananas, cannas, etc, walking through a grassy savanna towards a more flowery velde type border. Some other plants used were Abutilon 'Orange glow', irisines, dahlias and different grasses. Our three 'assistants' from Royal Parks were invited for a day's visit to help on the stand, but given time off to visit the other exhibits.

The other three sections of the South West Region Stand consisted of: a cottage garden, a picking garden (dahlias and chrysanthemums), an eating garden with Terry Porter's fabulous vegetables, all carefully partitioned by greenhouse, shed and hedge. The colours flowed around the stand from cool to hot, united by Jon's knowledge of planting schemes.

On the Monday, Gala Day, the Royal Party visited the stand in three groups: The Princess Royal and husband; The Count and Countess of Wessex, and then the Duke of Kent. It was wonderful to spend time discussing the elephants with each of these people who lingered and were interested in the stand and theme.

On Tuesday, we found our Gold Award on the stand. Jon Wheatley, the landscape designer in charge of this 12m x 10m display, was thrilled to then be awarded the lead-glass vase and certificate for the 'Best in the Great Pavilion' as well as, with Suttons Seeds, 'Plant of the Year' for the Cercis 'Eternal Flame'.

Peter and I had very long days helping to build the stand, showcasing Sidmouth with





handouts and highlighting the themes of elephants, plants, and recipes for the vegetables! We learned a lot and hope that Sidmouth, including the South West, gains more tourism from it. The elephants were, according to the Chelsea stewards, the most requested display, some people had bought tickets just to see them, and parents brought their children who identified 'Elmer' immediately, justifying all the hard work Sidmouth in Bloom had done.

Lynette Talbot

Monday Mornings in the Byes

We are the Monday volunteers. You may have seen us working in the Byes on a Monday morning or, just as likely, sitting in the Golden Copse enjoying some coffee and cake!

Not being able to meet during lockdown meant that some brambly areas got rather out of control but always up for a challenge we have been gradually clearing undergrowth to rediscover the trees that we planted a couple of years ago in Livonia field. We are trying



to improve the bio-diversity in our end of the Byes and make space for other wild plants and flowers to flourish. We are trialling several patches of yellow-flowered rattle in Margaret's Meadow to try to reduce the growth of the coarser grasses. Rattle is semi-parasitic and grows on grass roots and was often found in old British pastures.

The old pond at the back of Gilchrist had been turned into a wildlife reserve a couple of years ago and we are now starting to see the benefit. This quiet haven has seen several broods of baby moorhens hatch and is home to many other nesting birds. During the summer it has been wonderful to see so many butterflies in the canopy and dragonflies skimming the water.

Volunteering with the SVA is a great excuse to get your wellies on and get out in the fresh air. Whether we are in the river clearing Himalayan Balsam or hacking back brambles to keep the paths clear it's always good fun.

A second group of volunteers have done amazing work in the newly acquired Knapp renovating the paths and pond and planting many trees. I'm sure that like us there's always great excitement when you come across something special whether



Helleborine orchid

it's evidence of dormice nesting or the finding of a 'Broad-leaved Helleborine', a rare member of the orchid family with pale green flowers tinged pink at the tips. Or it might be spotting a kingfisher or a dipper as we work near the river or just appreciating the changing of the seasons as the year rolls on. There's always something to enjoy. If you would like to join us come along on a Monday morning and speak to any of us.

Naomi Lott



Planting of the golden copse to celebrate the Queen's golden jubilee 2002. Photo: Paddy Chew

Volunteers are always welcome

The SVA is staffed totally by volunteers and is dependent upon them to continue our work.

Helpers are needed for 2-3 hours of field work every week in the Knapp and our other estates – no experience necessary – just enthusiasm!

Even though the Museum is closed during the winter, there is still work to do behind the scenes on stored collections and preparing exhibitions.

If you are able to spare some time for these or any other jobs, please contact one of the organisers on the inside back page.

A Wealth of Wildflowers

The SVA is privileged to own several areas of old pasture and meadow which are havens for wildlife including a rich array of wildflowers. The different areas have distinct



Yellow rattle

characters, and their management is being tailored to allow them to maximise their potential to support a wide range of flora and fauna. The most visible sign of progress is the burgeoning of wildflowers that can be seen across the changing seasons.

The Sid Valley Biodiversity Group, which includes representatives of the SVA, is undertaking a survey of the valley's natural populations including the herbaceous wildflowers. Each month a group of twenty volunteers record which plants they find flowering in a number of sites around the valley. The sites include the SVA's grasslands: Margaret's



White knapweed

Meadow, Gilchrist Field, Peasland Knapp, The Knapp, and Soldiers Hill Field. As was said above, the sites have different characters, and this is reflected in their wildflower populations. The character of a grassland is a combination of its site and history. The clay with flints soil on Soldiers Hill is very different to the alluvial river deposits under Margaret's Meadow, and Peasland Knapp's marl soil is different again. Overlaying the soil character is the varied history of the sites.

The 1839 Tithe Map shows Soldiers Hill as open common which was probably grazed heathland. The Knapp was a patchwork of arable fields at the time, but we know that it was cattle pasture within living memory of local residents. Peasland Knapp was a pasture in 1839, probably it was too steep to plough. The old fields that make up Margaret's Meadow and Gilchrist Field were a mixture of pasture (grazed by animals) and meadow (cut for hay, probably with grazing after the cut) on the Tithe Map. All this leads to different plant populations so, what have the volunteer naturalists found?

Soldiers Hill, with its short history as grassland has the poorest floral biodiversity. Areas are dominated by modern Ryegrass sowings and this vigorous species suppresses many of the more delicate wildflowers. There is a lot of Clover, Red and White, and many Dandelions spread their leaf rosettes to create their own personal space. Of course, Dandelions are important wildflowers because they provide a rich food source for many insects throughout the year. A single Common Spotted Orchid was found in 2018 but it hasn't reappeared this year.

The edges of the fields are managed for wildlife and are developing an interesting character. Here you will find statuesque Angelica, wispy flower spikes of Wood Sage, and Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil. The edges soon revert to the old heathland character and become swamped by Brambles, Gorse and Bracken. This is controlled by being cut back every few years, but that is all part of the cycle.

The Byes grassland (next to the SVA's Margaret's Meadow) is really taking off, partly because of a plant called Yellow Rattle. This is a partial parasite that extracts nutrients from nearby grass roots. This weakens the grass and allows the more delicate plants to establish themselves. Yellow Rattle has been sown in several areas of the SVA grasslands. In The Byes this has created sites where you can now find delights such as Cowslips, Lady's Bedstraw, Knapweed (including a stand of the unusual white variety), Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil and Selfheal.

Peasland Knapp is now managed by a combination of volunteers cutting bothersome invaders such as Bracken and Bramble by hand. This is augmented with pastoral grazing in the autumn. A local farmer



Southern marsh orchid

lends the SVA a group of young sheep and they are left to enjoy themselves for several weeks. A particular feature of this site is the many large ant hills. The tops of these mounds are a favourite of Creeping Cinquefoil, its butter yellow flowers sometimes have four instead of five petals.

The two meadows of the recently purchased Knapp are very different. The western area accessed from Station Road is still dominated by rank grasses, but Tufted Vetch is fighting its way in. The eastern area adjacent to the Cemetery is responding to the cut and collect regime that is needed in a meadow, and the sowing of more Yellow Rattle. From the many Cowslips seen in April, June's Southern Marsh Orchids, through to the Agrimony, Purple Loosestrife and Meadow Cranesbill and Scabious of late summer, this area is a real delight.

I only have space to mention a sample of what has been found this year. All of the she survey group's observations are entered on the iNaturalist database. My personal collection can be seen at

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=any&user_id=ed-in-sidmouth&verifiable=any

If you choose map view and zoom in to a site, then click 'Redo search in map', you can explore what has been found. You can find out more about the whole project if you Google Sid Valley Biodiversity.



The Knapp

Ed Dolphin

Ramblings from Salcombe Regis

I found a Hop Dog in the garden this autumn.

The Hop Dog is a common name for the Pale Tussock Moth and it has the most attractive caterpillar form.

It is fairly common in the south of England and the moth emerges in May, laying its eggs in batches on the bark rather than leaves. The larva is very hairy, pale green or yellow and there are four thick brushes of yellow hairs along the back. At the tail is a red tuft of hairs. When rolled up it displays black patches between the hairs.

It feeds on oak, birch, hazel and cultivated fruit trees and hops, hence its nickname. It pupates in a crevice in the bark according to one source and according to another in a silken cocoon amongst the leaves near the ground.





We have a golden hop in the garden, planted about twenty years ago, so I assume that is the attraction. When hop orchards were common, the Pale Tussock was abundant and were known to the pickers as Hop Dogs. Their unusual appearance is a defence mechanism which enables them to feed openly on the leaves of hops and fortunately they feed too late in the year to cause very much damage.

The Elephant in the garden

Clearing the orchard we managed to disturb Elephant Hawk Moth larvae in the Bedstraw and had to relocate them in another area of Bedstraw.

These are extraordinary caterpillars which rear up and expand their heads when disturbed. The result is meant to scare predators and looks similar to an elephant's trunk. However the moth flies at night so we never see it.

The big mystery

A mystery this year was the non-appearance of frogspawn. I have not known a year without mounds of spawn being laid and when I ventured out one spring evening, with a torch, I could see several young frogs looking for mates. However no obvious signs of spawn appeared. Other places in Sidmouth had frogspawn including the Lower Knapp pond and the freshly renovated dew pond in the Knapp itself. So I can only assume that it was a local anomaly in Salcombe Regis, or I couldn't see for looking.

The toads turned up as usual and there were plenty of tadpoles, newts, various larvae etc.

I dug a second pond during lockdown and it has been very interesting watching it develop and mature. I put in a little weed and a small lily and many water edge plants. Five Ramshorn snails and a couple of the others. No fish.

Mosquito larvae were the first obvious occupants, followed by a lot of interest from Mayflies, Damsel flies and Dragon flies throughout the year. Soon water beetles appeared and water boatmen and skaters. Later three tiny fish appeared which must have been from eggs on the pondweed, these grew into two shubunkins and a carp. Last month I realised that the pond was inundated with water snails and they were eating through water hyacinth and other precious plants. I have removed about 50 snails and they have gone to stock the renovated Knapp pond, which has none and hopefully they will chomp through the mass of Spirogyra that is covering it.

Damsel fly larvae appeared and I expect there will be some dragon fly larvae as well, a mature frog has taken up residence. All this in the space of a few months.

Unfortunately I have unwittingly dug the pond on a Badger highway and they are continually knocking stuff into the water as they go for a drink, however they have to exist too so the pond is shared.



The Butterfly effect

It has been a very good year for butterflies in Salcombe Regis, but with the cold Spring some were very late arrivals. Apart from the over wintering Peacocks and Red Admirals the first were Brimstones, Painted Ladies, Common and Holly Blues, Orange Tip and the best year ever for a lot of Marbled Whites. Val claimed a Clouded Yellow sighting as well. During June and July the Meadow Browns, and Ringlets turned up,

followed by Gatekeepers. Later in the year when the buddleias came into flower we saw many Peacocks, more Painted Ladies, Red Admirals and Tortoiseshells, several Silver Washed Fritillaries, Speckled Woods and the occasional Comma and Small Copper. The Large White and Small White were very late but at the time of writing now plentiful. We missed out on spotting any Skippers but I expect that was because we are not so good at spotting them.

All is not lost

By carefully cutting the grass (not the lawn) to different lengths at different times of year we have been able to provide an environment that still supports glow worms and grasshoppers. Which grasshoppers we have has not been identified but it has been noticeable this year that they have been ping-pong all over the place in late summer.

The glow worms are not prolific but I have discovered that because they switch off after they have mated, I need to check all summer that they still exist. Not only have several been seen months apart, but I noticed some immature larvae which glimmer infrequently, almost as if they are practising for adulthood when they emit a strong steady glow. These youngsters will mature next year. Glow worm larvae feed on small slugs and so will be affected by the use of slug pellets.



And Finally

Along with the Peregrine Falcon, Salcombe Regis Valley is now host to the very rare Cirl Bunting, as verified by Rob Skinner the local National Trust ranger and Pete Youngman of the AONB. This bird is one of the creatures that the AONB Partnership has decided to sponsor and encourage as it has been on the decline. It is now increasing from a



population of about 100 pairs 30 years ago to an estimated over 1000 last year. It is only found in South and East Devon and requires a semi wild landscape with not too much interference from agriculture. Its preference for the coastal areas is because the mixed type of agriculture with more spring sowing of crops and consequent seed and stubble in winter provides the winter food sources that enable it to survive.

Rambling Sid of Salcombe Regis

This article has been reproduced with kind permission of Philip Bratby from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England's summer magazine . The SVA is affiliated to the CPRE. Some of the SVA's land is leased to a tenant beef farmer so it seemed appropriate to publish the article.



The attack on Devon's meat and dairy farmers

We are told by the Climate Change Committee and by the National Food Strategy, which is led by the “food czar” Henry Dimbleby, that we should reduce meat eating by a third, cut down on dairy products and eat more fruit and vegetables. This is supposedly for our health and to save the planet by reducing the methane emissions from ruminants such as sheep and cattle.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states “Greenhouse gases are gases in the atmosphere such as water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that can absorb infrared radiation, trapping heat in the atmosphere” and “Water vapour is the most abundant and important greenhouse gas in the atmosphere”. However, whereas water vapour (H₂O) constitutes between 0.5 and 4% of the atmosphere (dependent on locality) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) constitutes 0.04%, methane (CH₄) only constitutes about 0.0002% of the atmosphere (i.e. one part in 500,000). It has been calculated that a doubling of the methane concentration would have an immeasurably small effect and even a 16-fold increase would only cause an increase in temperature of 0.3oC.

So it appears that we are going to be asked (or coerced) into eating less meat to reduce the trace gas methane which is almost undetectable in the atmosphere and has a negligible effect on the climate. We need to protect Devon's farmers from the potential impact of this dangerous and relentless attack on their industry by these government organisations and other NGOs which spread propaganda against our farmers. This propaganda against meat eating has been growing rapidly, but totally ignores the facts.

Humans evolved as hunter/gatherers, i.e. we are omnivores with a digestive system that has evolved to extract most of our energy and chemical needs from meat and dairy products, together with other needs from grains, fruit, vegetables and nuts. On the other hand, ruminants have evolved with digestive systems that have evolved to get all their nutritional needs from vegetation such as grass.

If we cut down on (or even eliminate) eating meat and dairy and increase our consumption of fruit and veg there will be knock-on effects that the above advisers have ignored.

Devon has a warm wet climate and is mostly of a soil type that is ideal for growing grass with little soil suitable for growing food crops for human consumption. Hence

Devon is perfect for producing top quality meat and dairy products. Devon's meat and dairy products are second to none in the world. Hundreds of years of agriculture in Devon has shown this. This type of grass-based farming is cyclical – it does not need irrigation. In fact little additional water is needed; rainwater supplying all the needs of the grass and of the animals. It also needs little extra fertiliser (just trace chemicals to replace those taken away in the meat and dairy produce), with the manure being constantly recycled, fertilising the grass and keeping the soil in good condition.

Other parts of the country (and indeed the world) have a hotter, drier climate with good soil that is much more suitable for growing grain, fruit, salad crops and vegetables. This type of farming is not cyclical, with lots of water needed for irrigation and a constant need for fertilisers to replace what is taken away in the crops. Furthermore, the food miles associated with a lot of this type of produce that we import and eat are enormous and the environment damage caused in growing the crops in many of the countries is huge.

We are also told that we must cut down on the enormous amount of food waste, but most of this waste comes from fruit and vegetables, meat products being too valuable to waste. A lot of the by-products from growing grain, fruit and vegetables are also inedible to humans, but can be and are fed to ruminants rather than being thrown away.

So what would happen in Devon if our meat and dairy farming industry was reduced by a third (and who is to say that in the future meat and dairy will be cut even more, or even banned all together as some extremists would like to see)? Since most of the land currently used for grazing animals, especially the upland and moorland areas, is only suitable for grazing, the impact would be devastating. Much of the land would be abandoned by farmers as there is little alternative use which can provide an income. The land would become scrub, the hedges would not be maintained and the local economy would be destroyed. Many communities which depend upon farming and the associated tourism industry would cease to exist. The Devon landscape that we know and love and which has been in existence for many centuries, would be changed for ever.

None of this impact appears to have been considered by the advisers who clearly have given no thought to the consequences of their policy recommendations.

Prince Charles at least seems aware of the situation, saying recently that the “heart will be ripped out of the British countryside” if, for example, small farms are replaced by intensive agriculture to produce the extra grains and fruit and vegetables, and that we can produce nutritious food without destroying the soil that grows it. He has watched with increasing concern as many of the country's precious landscapes have been slowly diminished in the name of efficiency.

We are with Prince Charles in that we are opposed to intensive agriculture in Devon, such as mega-dairy farms. Devon CPRE will continue to campaign on behalf of Devon's small meat and dairy farmers and the associated industries that are dependent on continuing production of their fine produce and their preservation of our precious landscape.

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

A Walk in Bulverton Hill

I remember when my sister Moira and I used to go for a walk around the summit of Bulverton Hill with our father Norman Morrish. The scenery was always at its best in the spring when the new leaves on the beech trees were so vividly lime-green and the bluebells with their drooping heads were so deeply blue. We would drive up to Mutersmoor Road and park the car at the top, on the shoulder of flints and stones which had formed a hard-shoulder at the junction with Moor Park Lane. I remember Moor Park Lane was always overgrown with wild flowers, nettles and grass, but wearing wellington boots offered some protection for our legs and besides there was a nice view of Bickwell Farm and Sidmouth, from the gate along the lane. Fig 1 shows this gate with my sister and I seated on it in the 1980s and I am on the left. In the background is Bickwell Farm and Sidmouth. The ground behind Moor Park Lane and Mutersmoor Road rose gently and our father used to call this area of land 'Betsey's Platt' and I think this was a folk-lore name as the name 'Betsey's Platt' is not shown on the O/S Devon Series maps 1889-1991⁽¹⁾. Our father would have known this area very well because he had lived in the South Lodge of the Manor estate with his parents and brothers for many years. His father was the Head Gardener to Colonel Balfour and the Manor estate was very near to Bulverton Hill. The O/S Devon Series maps from 1889-1991 clearly show Bulverton Hill, with the later maps showing the footpaths across it. The maps also show Mutersmoor Road, Moor Park Lane and a wood higher up the track at the end of Mutersmoor Road which had the name of Harts Hole Plantation. For our walk in Bulverton Hill we would walk up the remainder of Mutersmoor Road, which further up, ceased to be tarmacked and contained many rocks and sharp flints, making the going hard. This lane was flanked by the Sidmouth golf course and these golf links were first shown on the 1905 O/S Devon Series 1:2,500 map. Near to the top of the lane we turned to the right to pick up a grass track that seemed at first to lead us back towards the car but it suddenly turned sharp left and ascended into the woods. We walked along the grass track up through the woods where the new



Handel & Joan Bennett on Keble's Seat

growth seen on the larch trees had created a green halo around them. As we ascended up to the top of the hill, we saw on our right hand side the view showing the end of the Sid Valley and Higher Woolbrook. At the top we walked on through the woods and the track turned gradually to the left as we approached the end of the hill, where a view of the Bowd could be seen through the trees. We veered to the left and took another track which led us downhill through more trees. We were now on the north side

of the hill but being within the woods we were not able to see the view. The footpath came down to a crossroads of four tracks which was called Salters Cross. To our right we could see the flat plain of the Otter Valley spread out like a patchwork-throw, with Newton Poppleford, the River Otter and the road to Exeter ascending up to Aylesbeare Common. We climbed up two steps from the footpath to reach the view-point which allowed us to see the splendour of the Otter Valley. There was a seat here called Keble's Seat named after a vicar who used to holiday in Sidmouth during the Victorian era⁽²⁾. After a rest on Keble's Seat we walked back down the lane towards the car.

This walk remains very clear in my memory and I was very pleased to find the walk mentioned in Peter Orlando Hutchinson's book "A New Guide to Sidmouth and the Neighbourhood"⁽³⁾. More especially as the book had been given to me by a friend over four years ago in memory of her husband and he was my friend also. My friend's husband had been a writer and he often contributed to the Sid Vale Newsletter under the nom de plume of 'Old Sidburian', for he was a Devonian with connections to Sidbury.

Norma Cox

References

- (1) O/S Devon Series maps www.old-maps.co.uk to access the site I used the Sidmouth postcode of the house where my sister and I grew up EX10 9HX
- (2) Keble's Seat www.geograph.org.uk/photo/5372733
- (3) Hutchinson, Peter Orlando. 1857. A New Guide to Sidmouth. Thomas Perry, Sidmouth pp31-32
- (4) Photograph Moira O'Donnell

Editor's note

When I receive articles, I often check a few things for authenticity. Many times I have been referred to the writings of Peter Orlando Hutchinson. His notes of his wanderings around Sidmouth and observations of flora, fauna and local history make fascinating reading. His diaries are available to read on line on the AONB web page. www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/our-work/project/peter-orlando-hutchinson/hutchinsons-diaries. The project to get his diaries on line was partly funded by one of the first the Keith Owen awards back in 2010.

Colin Boynton who has been researching Peter Orlando's Diaries came across this amusing snippet:

In his diary entry for July 16th 1880, Peter Orlando Hutchinson quotes a quatrain in doggerel verse entitled "The Sidbury Anthem" on the subject of the bothersome insects to be encountered in Sidbury during the summer:

"Why do those flays torment me zo?

I never did mun wrong.

I catch them with my vore vinger,

An' kill um with my thumb."

POH added a flippant remark to the effect that he would not dare repeat that verse in Sidbury as he "did not wish to get his head broken"!



Our Museum Volunteers

I would like to thank all the Museum Volunteers for working through this extraordinary 2021 season. We had absolutely no idea what this season would throw at us and I am pleased to say that both our new and returning volunteers managed every challenge that came along, turning a problem into an opportunity. The front of house volunteers gave a warm greeting to all our visitors, even though at first a mask covered the welcoming smile. I must also thank the 'Lace Ladies' for their demonstration every Thursday which brought a welcome sense of normality to crazy times. Visitors have posted some excellent 5 star reviews on Google which I believe are very well deserved, here are just a few:

"Unfortunately, we only had a short time to visit – well worth spending an hour or two – a great collection of local artifacts from prehistoric through to modern times" – Graham Collins

"Lovely helpful staff. Nice museum" – Lee Taylor

"Fabulous town museum, with a fine collection of local geology, technology, crafts and history." – Nigel Fancourt

Thank you all for being so supportive during 2021, let's look forward to a great 2022 working together.

Ann Tanner – Museum Curator



A Fan Tale

I moved to Sidmouth in the summer of 2018, having spent the previous eleven years caring for my parents in West Sussex. My father's grandparents lived in Exeter in the 19th century, and my grandmother was born and got married in the city, so I was drawn to East Devon to discover more about my ancestors, and to build a new life for myself.

Having found my perfect home just a few doors down from Hope Cottage, I was interested in becoming a volunteer at the museum when it re-opened its doors to the public again in 2021 – and that is how my involvement with the Sid Vale Association began.

The Museum curator, Ann Tanner, planned a "Pop Up" museum as part of the exhibition to be held at Kennaway House to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the SVA. Ann wanted to exhibit an eclectic mix of Victorian and Edwardian items from the museum's costume and lace collections and asked me whether I would be interested in helping her to choose the items. This offered me a great opportunity to look through the many garments and accessories, as well as interesting ephemera, belonging to the museum.

We spent quite some time going through the Fan collection, deciding which were the most suitable. A few were damaged, with missing feathers and cracked ribbing, so I offered to do some basic repairs on them.

My career work had been in the theatre and in 1990 I had enrolled as a mature student at art college, where I gained a diploma in Theatre Design and Stage Property Making. Having studied the history of costume as part of my course I had a little knowledge of styles and usage of fans, and I wanted those to be displayed at the exhibition to look their best! The results of our efforts can be seen in the photograph. It was hard work but great fun, and very satisfying to see the whole exhibition come together.

This has sparked in me a further interest in the history of fans in particular; their specific 'language' and uses over the centuries, as well as helping me to extend my overall knowledge of costume and fashion.

I recently accepted the position of Costume and Lace Curator at the museum.

Over the next few months, I shall be taking some time to explore more of the items stored at the museum relating to clothes and accessories and share in working on future museum displays and exhibitions.

I am looking forward to working with the team on a new project to digitise the whole of the lace collection, which they hope will be ready to be viewed by the beginning of the 2022 season. This project is another innovative initiative to give the local community and museum visitors greater access to the collections, and an insight into people's past possessions and their way of life.

Lindsay Rodwell Barber



Pictures from an Exhibition



Some of the items in the SVA's 175th Anniversary 'Pop-up Museum'



Demonstration of Sidmouth lace-making by Marian Wagstaff





Above – just a few of the projects that have received Keith Owen Fund Grants.



How many SVA Trustees can you fit in a Toastrack? Left to right Chairman Ed Harrison, Museum Curator and Vice Chair Ann Tanner, Nigel Hyman, Secretary Liz Warren, Richard Huntington, Alan Clarke, Heather Hodge, Magazine Editor Val Huntington.



Whales, Turtles and Sharks off Sidmouth

I was lucky to have been born in Sidmouth and have lived here all my life. In between work and all the other commitments of life, my one redeeming hobby has been the love of the sea and particularly fishing. This year especially, like everybody else, I have been fascinated by the incredible journey and exploits of Wally the Walrus from Iceland – almost unbelievable! Yet advances in modern science have given us the opportunity to study marine creatures and learn much more about them – that can only be good.

In this article I hope to make readers aware of some of the marine creatures which have been sighted, caught or washed up in the last two centuries, including some I have seen myself in the sea around Sidmouth.



Moby Dick of Beer –

Feb 1st 1876 (from Peter Orlando Hutchinson's diary)

A 70' long Beer fishing boat was some four miles off the Axe Mouth when the crew saw what they thought was an upturned boat. On closer inspection, it was a dead giant whale. They towed it back to Beer with a rope around its tail, beached it and secured it to the shore with a capstan wire. It

was far too heavy to pull all the way up the beach so they pulled it as far as they could and secured it tail first, head facing the sea. Word spread and crowds flocked to see the spectacle. It was reputed to be a Rorqual or Physalus Boops whale. The fishermen, quick off the mark to make some profit from their haul, cordoned off their trophy and charged three pence to view. After a few days, the smell of the putrifying body was overwhelming. The corpse was sold to Messrs. Thomas and Co, tallow chandlers of Exeter, for the fat. The bone and skeleton was kept in the village for a visitor attraction. The skeleton was later sold to an enterprising Seaton 'entrepreneur' who put it on permanent display near the Dolphin hotel and charged six pence to see it.

Whales off Sidmouth

I have seen two dead pilot whales, both at Sidmouth. Not massive like the one recorded above but between 25-30ft. in length. I was fishing with Nick Hutchings back in 1970 when we saw what we thought was a log or an upturned boat. We approached carefully and when we were about 30 yards away, to our amazement and horror, it suddenly moved! It was far bigger than any basking shark or pilot whale. We were really frightened and sped away as quickly as possible. It must have been a whale of some sort.

July 1990

I had just purchased a new outboard engine for my boat. It was a beautiful day, the sea was like a mill pond so I decided to test the engine out. My wife Su came with me. Two and a half miles off Budleigh, we saw a fin shaped like a curved dagger circling in the

water some way away. Carefully but quickly we got to within a few yards – it was an enormous sunfish, at least six feet in depth, eating a large jellyfish. We watched it for a while until it saw us and dived down and swam away.

Similar conditions, in July 2000, this time with my friend, Jeremy Burgoyne. We were a mile out from Salcombe Hill when we saw our first ever Leatherback Giant Turtle. It was approx. ten feet long, swimming with eight or ten pilot fish. I have to say that this was the most amazing marine creature I



Leatherback Giant Turtle

have ever seen, with its beautifully coloured brown/green shell. We watched it for a while – it was completely

unperturbed by our presence. Three weeks later, in the same area, we came across another, this time a bit smaller – with a head like ET! It was eating a large jellyfish so we left it undisturbed to finish its meal. I haven't seen any leatherbacks since.



Sunfish

Sharks

It is a well known fact there are more sharks on dry land than in the sea – but I'm not mentioning any names! Back to my marine sightings...

September 1955

I was a young lad with my father (Norman Govier). He spotted a shoal of sprats about 2½ miles off Jacob's Ladder. Father suggested we put the line down and see if there were any fish feeding off the sprats. We didn't catch anything but about 20 yards from the boat, there was a sudden terrific crash and we saw the long tail of a thresher shark smack the water trying to stun the sprats. At the time it was quite frightening – I have never seen one since.



Thresher shark

Fishing at sea is full of danger even to the experienced fisherman. On October 20th 1879, two Sidmouth fishermen – James Govier and Skinner – were fishing for mackerel off Lade Foot (west of Sidmouth) when their boat was hit by a sudden squall. The boat overturned and tragically James Govier drowned. His body was recovered and he was buried in Sidmouth Parish Church graveyard, next to the Blackmore Gardens. He was one of my ancestors.

John Govier



John Sparks

'An old and most highly respected Sidmouth worthy'

In May 1941, at a time of paper shortage due to wartime requirements, both the Sidmouth Observer and Herald found space for lengthy obituaries on a very well-known local man, John Sparks, known as 'Old Jack' who died aged 82. The Herald described him as in the title.

He was born in 1858 and left school at 14 to become an apprentice shoe maker in Radway Place in 1872. By 1879 he had switched to become a postman, a job he continued for the rest of his working life. He started in Sidbury and then Branscombe but in 1880 had a morning round from Vallance's Brewery in Temple Street to Woolbrook and Core

Hill at 7/- a week. Between 1882 and 1884 he had a double walking round to Sidbury and, finally, in 1906, he was head postman in the town. Anna Sutton, in her Story of Sidmouth, includes him in a 'Worthies' section. She remembers from her earliest childhood his extraordinary method of delivering letters. He would open the door and shout out the person's name. He lived long enough to see the new Post Office in Radway which opened in 1938.

Mr Sparks was not only familiar with the streets and lanes of the Sid Vale but also the footpaths which became an obsession. He had a profound belief that the footpaths, some of which were ancient, were a right of way for everybody. He was a member of the Council's footpath Committee, a responsibility which he took very seriously. He was especially angered if a footpath was deliberately blocked.

In 1983 Geoffrey Holmes (1911-1995) wrote an article about him in a SVA Newsletter. Holmes, a Sidmothian, was the retired head of history at King's School, Ottery and editor of the Newsletter (precursor of this Magazine).

'He was a big barrel-chested man with a short, greyish-black beard, as I remember him. The local folk said he was a long-headed old chap. His powerful voice and slow diction enhanced his Devonshire accent. When I was a teenager I was collecting some old Sidmouth stories and I asked him about the Earl of Buckinghamshire who used to live at Sidholme and led the Low Church party in the quarrel that arose over the restoration of the Parish Church, 1859-1860. His reply was, "I minds'n well; 'e was a liddle vuller as used a to wear a box 'at." But in spite of his countryman's slow speech and lack of much schooling, he was a shrewd observer whose comments on people and events showed little or no respect for rank or institutions.'

Holmes owned a 1894 (8th edition) copy of Peter Orlando Hutchinson's Guide to Sidmouth published three years before the author's death. He donated it to the Museum archives but it had been previously owned by Ronald Wilson and Robert (Bob) Holmes, Geoffrey's uncle. However it belonged originally to Mr Sparks himself. It is of immense interest as it contains his marginalia written in pencil or ink and covering the years from the first decade of the 20th century to 1939. Some of the notes are difficult to read and the spelling is idiosyncratic but it is readily possible to imagine this large man, pencil in

hand, giving vent to his feelings. In 1927 he writes, "The [eastern cliff] path has been put back 25 feet & the Iron Railings for fence the field put up & the owner disclaim the right of path as the original is fallen out to sea. This is Phil Michelmores [Solicitors], this is his idea of an asset for the Town & its Visitors a Bounder." In 1938, in a reference to Pin Beacon, a hill rising behind Pin Farm on the road to Otterton, he wrote, "all Blocked by my Lord Clinton a Bounder"

He was a founder of the local Co-Operative movement and a pencilled note suggests his radical politics. The guide describes a Constitutional Club for Conservatives and Unionists opening in 1893 at the Town Hall, Market Place. Sparks writes, "no good in the end for this Town"

I find the following written entry difficult to understand and I haven't had the courage to attempt the route.

"I have just been for a walk up the Byes and at the Head of 2nd Field above the Lane got in over the Rails the Brick Drain for the Public here over the stream in over Rails having been Destroyed Last year by Cave's men as he tried to stop the public path by nailing up Corrugated Iron but was made take the same away by the public protests of the people of Sidford & Sid. The exit is up the old Lane by Manstone Stile which is continuation of the public path to Woolbrook. Should the old Lane be to Dirty & wet get over the Gate on the Left in the 2nd Field and come out by Primley as the Lane is in such a bad state. But I see has been repaired at places near Bottom this 9 Nov 1913 Sunday J Sparks, here also the wild Featherfew grow plentiful."

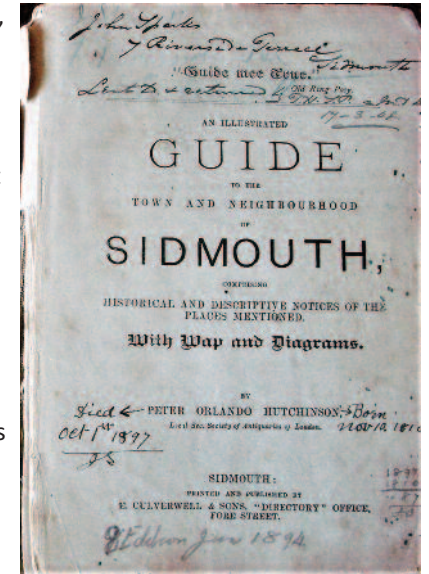
(Holmes added in 1983, 'The first Lane is the one beyond the little bridge above Lymebourne Lane. The second old lane must be the one that now leads to the back of the Community College from Sidford Road.')

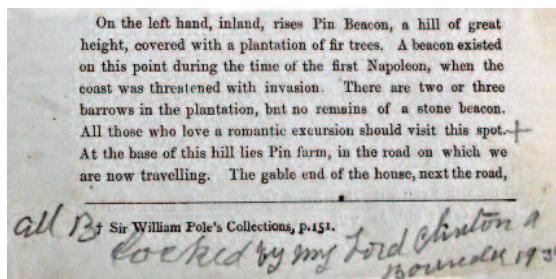
The feverfew mentioned reflected his interest in wild flowers. Anna Sutton learned of this passion when she met one of his old friends, Jimmy Clarke of Peaslands. '...they would walk for miles seeking out the earliest plants. Kneeling down on soaking ground, John would produce his microscope and say, "Gaw Jimmy, look-ee zee this yur flower, did ee ever zee anything more bootiful?"

Always keen to improve his local knowledge he wrote on 3.12.1928: "Have just been to a Lecture by Lady Lockyer on old Sidmouth. She has a wonderful collection of old prints of the Houses & Places."

He lived at 7 Riverside Terrace and then moved to Ascerton Bungalow Hill View, off Peaslands. A married man, his wife predeceased him. They had a son and a daughter.

In his retirement he was able to devote much time to gardening and was Treasurer of the Allotment's Association and its oldest allotment holder.





The Sidmouth Herald's obituary finishes:

"A man of much strength of character, transparently honest and sincere, and most outspoken, his independence and geniality won the warm affection and regard of a wide circle of friends."

Nigel Hyman

PARASITOIDS

Science fiction writers love parasitoids. The Xenomorph in the "Alien" film series is a scary example. After developing from an embryo inside its human host, it bursts out through the chest as a gruesome adult, killing the host.

In simple terms, a parasitoid is a parasite that kills its host. It does not kill its host immediately, like a predator. It feeds on non-essential parts of the host, developing towards maturity, before killing the host.

About ten percent of the insect population are parasitoids. In most cases, the adult female will use the sense of smell to locate a host. They have the greatest number of "smell receptors" in their antennae, and these are used to pick up a cocktail of volatile vapours released by damaged plants being eaten by the potential host. To a lesser extent, auditory, sight, vibration and thermal senses are used.

Once a host is detected, there are three main methods to parasitise it. A number of species inject venom into the host, paralysing it permanently. Eggs are then deposited onto the outer surface. Hatched larvae then slowly feed on the stricken prey, until it is dead.

A second method is for the parasitoid to lay eggs onto a feed plant. These eggs are then eaten by the host and develop inside the host's body.

The third method is for the female to insert eggs via her ovipositor into the host directly, usually after paralysing it for a short period.

All three methods are used to feed on, and kill butterfly and moth caterpillars.



Peacock butterfly pupa, Sturmia bella fly and pupa.

Sturmia Bella Fly

The *Sturmia bella* fly commonly lays eggs on nettle leaves that are being eaten by caterpillars of Small Tortoiseshell or Peacock butterflies. Once the egg is eaten, the larva of the fly hatches, and feeds off non-essential parts of the caterpillar, such as haemolymph. When the caterpillar reaches a size ready to pupate, the fly larva emerges, and pupates on the ground. This kills the caterpillar, although not immediately. I have found, to

my surprise and horror, that one poor caterpillar was still alive ten days later, until I dispatched it.

Costia Glomerate Wasp

The female *Cotesia glomerate*, a small black wasp, locates a Large or Small White Caterpillar by sense of smell. After temporarily immobilising its prey using her ovipositor, she lays twenty to sixty eggs inside the host. When they hatch, they release chemicals to suppress the caterpillar's immune response. Cleverly avoiding damage to vital organs, they feed and reach maturity, emerging through the skin. They pupate in cocoons on, and around, the still living caterpillar. Strangely, the caterpillar actually spins its own yellow silk to protect the cocoons further. This is an attempt to protect the *Cotesia* wasp from other parasitoid wasps. The dying butterfly caterpillar moves to protect the very creatures that have killed it. It is indeed a confusing and gruesome world.

The deeper one delves into this insect war zone, the more bizarre it becomes. Caterpillars have developed a strategy of "flicking themselves" off a leaf to escape attack. This can be commonly seen when a human disturbs a feeding caterpillar. The problem was that the caterpillar fell a distance from its food source. A number of species evolved to spin a silk thread, using this to return to its food source. Unfortunately for them, the parasitoid has evolved. In some cases, they lower themselves down the thread to find their prey, or, even more amazing, they have been observed hauling up the caterpillar using the silk thread!

Some caterpillars have learned to secrete irritant or poisonous secretions when under attack. Some aphids species produce nourishing juices which act as a food source for ants. These ants then protect the aphids from attack by parasitoids and predators.

The stories are endless.

Research into insect parasitoid behaviour shows they may have an important role in agriculture and forestry in the regulation and control of certain insects.



Cotesia glomerate wasps.



Cotesia glomerate cocoons and larvae, with Peacock butterfly caterpillars.

As a keen amateur entomologist, observing parasitoids as part of the "normal" development of butterflies and moths, has reinforced what I have already come to understand in life

That being, the more one observes the details of a subject, the more interesting the subject becomes.

Simon Papworth



Sidmouth Town AFC – A History

Firstly, as Football Club Secretary, then Chairman over many years and latterly as Club Development Officer, Sidmouth resident Andy Argyle has been working alongside the SVA (KOF) from the inception of the 'Plant a Million Bulbs' initiative, when Manstone Lane, the Club's home ground venue, was planted out by players and supporters, helping to fulfil Keith Owen's noble wishes.

Since then, on two occasions, the KOF (through Chairman Alan Clarke and his team) have offered fantastic support in helping to build the football facilities seen today. The Club now proudly bears an SVA plaque acknowledging the role of the SVA (KOF) in supporting sport in the community generally and the help given to Sidmouth Town AFC.

Andy has adapted and set out a history of the Club's inception and continuous development through to the present day.

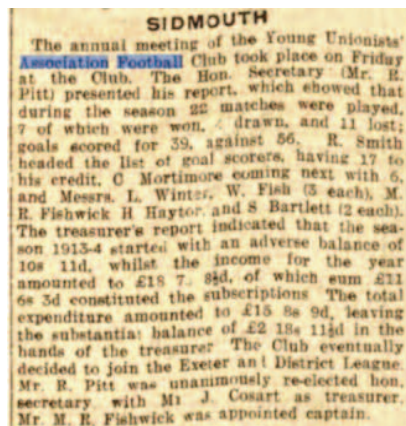
As you will see the Club is now a far cry from the humble beginnings in the century before last and a credit to the fathers of Sidmouth football down the years that the 'Vikings' continue to thrive to this day.

Although Sidmouth FC was founded in 1895 and football was regularly played in the town, the first evidence of a fully constituted league-based football club in Sidmouth was in 1912 when a team known as the Sidmouth 'Young Unionists Association Football Club' played in the East Devon League. However, after just two seasons the First World war disrupted their progress. The newspaper clipping below records the Club AGM of the time and mentions one C Mortimore as a frequent goal-scorer. He is an ancestor of Ken Mortimore who has been involved with the Club over many years and remains so to this day, as committee member and the club groundsman.

In 1919 the team seems to have been reformed and played until 1922 possibly as the Sidmouth 'Imps' when they joined the Ottery & District League for just one season. They won that at the first time of asking so re-joined the East Devon League until 1928 when they switched across to the Victory League for one season before a return to the East Devon League where, in 1931, they became Junior Division 1 East champions.

In 1937 Sidmouth became champions again so re-tried their hand back in the Victory League until progress was again hampered by the intervention of World War 2.

After the war Sidmouth moved back to the East Devon League which was now known as the Exeter & District League, and in 1957 were promoted to the Premier division for the first time.



Local newspaper report of Sidmouth (Young Unionists) Football Club AGM



Sidmouth Town AFC circa 1920s.

*Back Row – W. Wallis. Earland. A Skinner.
H. Maunder S. Hayman D. Pitt B. Simmons
Centre Row – F. Loveridge. B. Goodwin.
B. Manley. B. Palmer. C Watley. D Burgoyne.
F. Earland
Front Row – L. Winter. B. Game. M.
Garworthy. S. Bartlett. A. Sparkes*

In 1968 Sidmouth won the Premier title for the first time but in the 1980s they found themselves back in Senior division football on three occasions although they did win the Senior Division 1 'A' title in 1987.

In the 1990/1991 season, when three points were first awarded for a win, the Vikings were relegated, but returned to Premier a year later despite only finishing eighth. This is because the Devon & Exeter League, as it had now become, saw a number of its Premier teams transfer to the newly formed Devon League, and had to change its constitution so clubs with better facilities such as Sidmouth were favoured.

Sidmouth were then in the Premier Division where they won the championship for the second time in 2011. They then decided to step up to the South West Peninsular League where they play their football to this day.

Over the years matches were played variously on a field between Lawn Vista and the river Sid – now allotments, Vicarage Field – where Glebelands now is, occasionally on the hockey field at Manor Road, Blackmore Field – the current rugby pitch, a field in Sid Road – where Redwood Road now is (with players changing at the Anchor Inn) and finally at the Recreation Ground, Manstone.

The original changing accommodation at the "Rec" was sited at the top end of where the skate park now is. It was, to say the least, very small, comprising a wooden hut (through which the wind whistled) with two tin baths (filled by a gas copper) which, after use, were emptied into the stream behind.

The current Clubhouse has developed over several phases, the apex roofed area being the original, built in 1974 and financed by a reasonable bank balance, supplemented by grants from the Devon Playing Field Association and Devon County Council. A following phase, completed in 2010, saw the addition of modern changing facilities for players and officials and included an accessible toilet and laundry room. In 2013 the club bar and lounge areas were modernised and refurbished.

In 2017, with the help of the Keith Owen Fund, the Club completed the construction of a Gym and Workshop (The Ken Mortimore Building) as part of a rear extension to the existing Clubhouse.

Further KOF assistance in 2021 saw the installation of a pitch-end ball-stop and together with Football Association funding the Club completed a major upgrade to the ground with the installation of covered seating, perimeter railings and additional spectator standing.

The Club has a large and loyal following in the town and many of Sidmouth's leading

businesses are involved in sponsorship and support. The teams travel the length and breadth of Devon and in cup-ties have played as far afield as south Gloucestershire, north Somerset and into Dorset.

The origin of the team-name 'Vikings' is explained in the following post on the Club website:

Andy Harris on October 25, 2013 at 8:28 pm said:

The nickname "The Vikings" was the result of a competition held by the Sidmouth Herald in about 1975. A prize of £10 was on offer for the winner of the competition, to give Sidmouth Town a nickname. I entered the competition myself as a then 15-year-old boy... and WON !!!!

Among the reasons I gave for choosing this name was that the Sidmouth crest/coat of arms had a Viking ship on it and it also described their attacking play. I was duly invited to the club house and then presented with my cash prize of ten crisp one pound notes, which were arranged in a large fan shape and subsequently my picture appeared in the following weeks Herald with a rather large grin on my face.

Ten pounds was a good sum of money back then, as when I began work the following year I was only earning £25 pounds a week and a pint of Trophy bitter was only 29 pence a pint in a pub.

Just thought I might add a little to the club history as I stumbled across this page today

The role played by the KOF in the development of Sidmouth Football Club exemplifies the linkage between the SVA and the community of Sidmouth in preserving the past, working with the present and influencing the future. I hope you have enjoyed reading and learning about our football club's long and illustrious history.

Andy Argyle – Club Development Officer

Alan Clarke from the KOF added

Representatives from Sidmouth Town Council, the Sid Vale Association (Keith Owen Fund), Sponsors, Club Officials and Committee, together with those who helped to bring the project to completion witnessed Club President, Councillor Stuart Hughes, cut the ribbon to officially declare open the new covered grandstand with seating for fifty people and, together with the Keith Owen Fund Committee Chairman Alan Clarke, unveil commemorative plaques to record their much appreciated funding contributions that assisted in the completion of the work.

Although the scheduled Saturday league game against Crediton United was postponed due to an incidence of covid, leading to unavailability of players through self-isolation, the ground was dressed out in full for the occasion, with the Stand, perimeter railings and new spectator areas complimenting the playing surface, making the ground look magnificent on a gloriously sunny day.

Sponsors banners were displayed in full and in speeches from Chairman Jay Thorne and Andy Argyle,

tributes were paid to all those who support the club through their sponsorship and help to make Sidmouth Town the focal point for youth (through the Junior Vikings) and adult level league football in the town.

Jay Thorne added that it was with a sense of immense pride that despite the ever-present threat of covid throughout the life of the project, people had stuck to the task and the results were visible today. Particular thanks should go to Ken Mortimore – Project Coordinator, for his work in overseeing the construction and installation of all the elements involved.

In conclusion, full credit should also be given for the contribution of the Football Association (Football Stadium Improvement Fund) who provided substantial help under their programme of financial assistance to grass roots football.

All round it was a terrific day to pause and consider, over the club Sponsors Day buffet lunch, a really momentous achievement in establishing quality facilities at Sidmouth's foremost football venue.



Ken Mortimore, Geoff West, Alan Clarke, Stuart Hughes, Jeff Turner, Andy Argyle, Tracy Latham, David Salter, Jay Thorne - Credit: Sidmouth FC

Sid Vale Association helps Sidmouth Sailing Club to 'Pull its Weight'



At the start of the new sailing season, the Sidmouth Sailing Club was delighted to purchase a new electric winch, 50% of which was funded by an award from the Sid Vale Association/Keith Owen Fund. This small and compact, yet powerful battery operated winch enables the Sailing Club to retrieve the safety boats from the



beach shore-line after sailing. The former diesel powered winch was unreliable, noisy and heavy to manoeuvre. The new winch is carried easily by one person, causes minimal inconvenience to bystanders on the beach and retrieves the safety boats quickly and efficiently, and without the risk of back injury to sailors!

The Sailing Club also received award funding towards the cost of new sails for two of their training dinghies, which have already had good use this season. The support from the Sid Vale Association/Keith Owen Fund helps the Sailing Club to be run entirely through voluntary effort and to continue to offer watersports opportunities to local families.





What could Cleethorpes possibly offer that Sidmouth didn't? Well, a railway station at sea level, with a conveniently located Helter Skelter for a start!

form of contemporary transport except, perhaps, a helicopter.

While London is an obvious destination for much travel in Britain, it's not the only one, and in the early 1960s there was a through train from Sidmouth to Cleethorpes in north Lincolnshire. You might well wonder why a resident of Sidmouth would wish to travel to Cleethorpes, and the reverse journey seems equally unlikely. However this train was a variation of a train which ran daily from Cleethorpes via several Midland cities to Birmingham and Gloucester and it was extended to Sidmouth on summer Saturdays. Part of the train split and went to Exmouth, which was just as well as it was too long to all fit into Sidmouth station. In this way holiday makers leaving Cleethorpes could return home to the Midlands, where others could to join the train for Devon. It's doubtful if anyone actually took the whole trip.

As the train only ran on Saturdays and the journey took about 10 hours two whole sets of coaches were required for the service, so each train made only one return trip per week. You would be forgiven to thinking that such an arrangement was extravagant, though BR had plenty of oldish coaches in those days and travellers were not too fussy.

The route followed was noteworthy too. Heading south from Gloucester it avoided Bristol and headed for Bath Green Park station (which now houses a Sainsburys, a brasserie and a farmers market!) and then south over the Mendips on the Somerset & Dorset line to Templecombe. If your train stops at Templecombe today you'll see a small station in a very small town, but until the late 60's it was a major railway junction. From here our train headed west to Sidmouth Junction and Sidmouth, where weary passengers would find their hotels or B&B's at around 6pm.

One might congratulate BR on devising such a service, though while passengers prefer to avoid changing trains it was quicker to travel via Exeter or London, and it was no surprise that the service only lasted for three years.

Nick Thompson

Holidays in Cleethorpes, anyone?

Most of us are familiar with the railway that served Sidmouth until 1967. From the station, now Bradfords yard where some of the old buildings are still easy to spot, it ran to the main line at Sidmouth Junction, now called Feniton. Around 10 trains per day served the town, with one or two including coaches which went through to London Waterloo. The best trains took a little over three hours from Sidmouth to Waterloo, a time you'd still find hard to match by any



Two locos were needed to haul the train over the Mendip hills from Templecombe to Bath.

Photo: R W Carroll collection.

Update on Restoration of 'Sidmouth'

27th June marked the 75th anniversary of naming of the express steam loco "Sidmouth" at our local station. The West Country class loco ran on the main line to Waterloo until 1965, when it was withdrawn from service and sent to a scrap yard in South Wales. Fortunately it was saved by preservationists determined to return it to steam. Sadly little work was done on it, and it changed hands several times before being offered to Southern Locomotives Ltd, (SLL) a not-for-profit group which had already restored similar locos, based at Swanage.

Since then work has gone more slowly than hoped, though many parts have been repaired or remade, and assembly advanced very much. The main issue was that the loco's frames needed to be grit blasted and painted before rebuilding could start. These days there are far fewer companies willing to grit blast large fabrications. This stymied work until earlier this year when SLL was offered a grit blasting machine, and associated fixtures to use at their other site in Kent. Lifting a 20-ton steel structure on to a large lorry, moving it to Kent and then lifting it on to a suitable spot is no small matter but it can now be cleaned, primed and painted. Some time next year we expect the frames to return to the Swanage workshop so that assembly can begin.

There's still much work to be done, with boiler repairs, a new cab, running board and many smaller parts, however the group have reconstructed five similar locos over the past 30 years and have the skills to tackle the job. However we do need financial support, and who wouldn't want to be part owner of a 75 year old steam loco?

If you'd like to know more please visit www.southern-locomotives.co.uk or email Nick Thompson at nicksidmouth@gmail.com

Nick Thompson



34010 Sidmouth leaving Southampton with an express for Weymouth in 1960.

Photo: Derek Cross collection.

The History of the acquisition of land by The Sid Vale Association

The Sidmouth Improvement Society held its first meeting on the 16th September 1846. The newly formed Society soon got to work and one of the first projects was to provide seating on The Esplanade. The Society promoted the building of the first Alma Bridge and later promoted The Byes Footpath.

131 years were to pass before The Society, now known as The Sid Vale Association, became the owners of a freehold parcel of land.

In 1977 Mavis Page (née Cornish) gave The SVA a field of almost 20 acres at Salcombe Regis. This is now known as The James Cornish Field and is opposite the war memorial. The woodland extends to about 3 acres and is maintained by our own volunteers. The 17 acre field was let to a local farming family who still farm it today. The public footpath from Fortescue to Salcombe Regis passes along the north east side of the land.

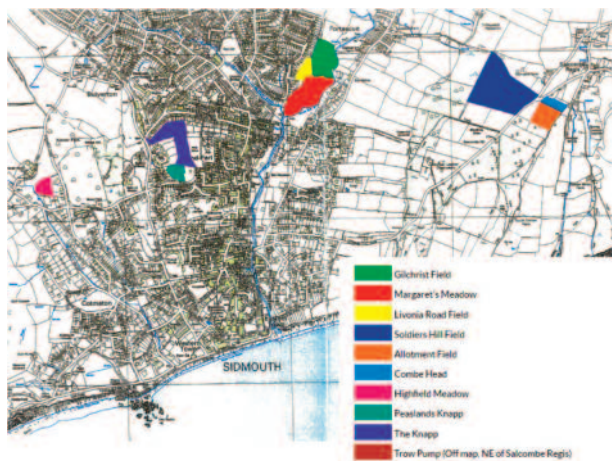
The following year, 1978, saw Anne Farwell-Jones give The SVA a 2 acre field below her house in Bickwell Lane. The field is known as Highfield and named after the house. This is also let to a local farming family.

A further 18 years elapsed until 1996 when The SVA purchased a field on the west side of The River Sid. This field of some 7.5 acres is now known as The Gilchrist Field and takes its name from the previous owners. The SVA opened up the land for use by the public.

In 1997 the SVA purchased a small steep field on the western outskirts of Salcombe Regis. This was planted with various trees etc.

In the same year, the SVA acquired a small triangular field which adjoins the west side of The Byes path. This was planted with some trees and having been previously privately owned, was opened up for public use.

Five years later in 2002, The SVA purchased another field on the west side of The River Sid. This field adjoins The Gilchrist Field and has an area of 8.8 acres. It too had previously been privately owned and was opened up for public use. An Agreement was entered into with Devon County Council to provide a new path which they are obliged to maintain.



Another 8 years were to pass before The SVA purchased a small steep field near the top of Peaslands Road. This had previously been part of a private garden, which, together with a large house, had been bought by developers. A piece of land was left over which the SVA bought at auction in Plymouth. Considerable works were carried out to enable it to be opened to the public. An Agreement was

made with The East Devon District Council to create a footpath through their adjoining nature reserve.

In 2011 The SVA acquired The Grade 2 listed Trow Pumphouse from The East Devon District Council.

In 2019, after prolonged negotiations The SVA purchased The Knapp Nature Reserve in Station Road. The East Devon District Council had originally acquired the land from the developer of the adjoining Deans Mead. They ran it as a nature reserve for more than 20 years. However, as finances became more stretched it had become somewhat neglected. As The SVA had already established the adjoining Peaslands Knapp it seemed sensible to acquire the 8.5 acre reserve.

In summary The SVA now owns some 52 acres of land of which 19 acres are let and the remainder open to the public. A large band of volunteers meet regularly to maintain our land which is open to the public. We have a large number of trees which are regularly inspected on our behalf. From time to time we employ tree surgeons and other contractors.

In 2017 we took a 999 year lease of part of the old Trumps Stores in Fore Street. Included in the lease is the original hall to the living accommodation above the shop. We took about half of the upper floors and carried out a comprehensive renovation project. This gives us offices and storage areas for the museum collections.

Hope Cottage, which houses The Museum, has been occupied by The SVA under various leases since 1970. The current lease expires in 2038.

Both these buildings are Grade 2 listed buildings. We have carried out extensive works in the Museum in recent years. Our most recent project was the construction of a single storey extension at the rear of this building to provide disabled access and a new cloakroom.

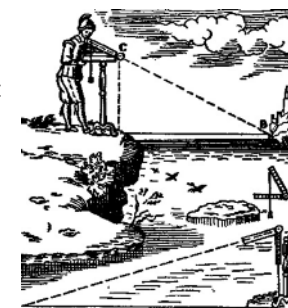
This year, celebrating the 175th anniversary of the formation of our Civic Society, one wonders what the future holds!

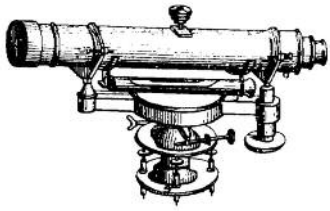
Edmund Harrison

The History of Ordnance Survey maps

Sidmouth Museum has some interesting Ordnance Survey maps from the 1880s to the 1960s. Most were created to meet a practical purpose, reflecting many maps which came by way of generous local councils, such as land use, planning and local development. Maps served several purposes, most commonly to cover the defence against the threat of invasion – a constant theme from the 18th to the 20th Century, the illustration of geology – often shown with hatching to mark contours, the routes of railways in the 19th Century; to aid the commercial promotion of tourism and advertising of local businesses; the calculation and payment of tithes and the desire of large estate owners to show the extent of their holdings.

The first official maps came about through threats of invasion starting with the Jacobite





Rebellion and later from across the channel by Napoleon, and then Germany during WWII. Why was it called Ordnance Survey which is a term for munitions? The answer lies in the purpose for which official maps were first required which was to better enable the transport of military ordnance, stores and equipment from one part of the Kingdom to another. It was extremely challenging to transport heavy items, such as

cannon and wagons, and to march troops, given the poor state of roads. The solution was to provide topographical maps showing ground relief (landforms and terrain), drainage (lakes and rivers), forest cover, populated areas and facilities such as bridges and ferries.

It was the threat of invasion from Napoleon, first mooted in 1798, that led to a commission to Colonel Mudge of the Tower of London to produce more accurate maps to better enable the transport of Army and Naval supplies to the defence of the coast of England. Napoleon's plan to invade became more likely after the sale of a large part of North America to the United States by France. In 1803 the Louisiana sale raised 50 million French Francs (15 million US Dollars), generally regarded as the best deal the US has ever made, since it represented roughly 1/3 of what is now the USA. With this bounty Bonaparte assembled an army of 200,000 men and thousands of transport barges at Boulogne.

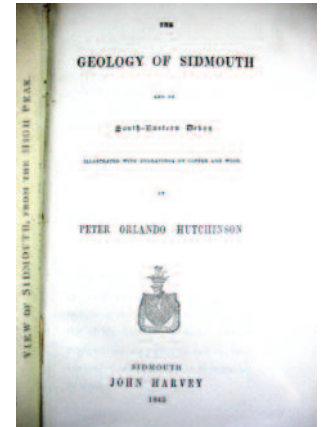
The Sidmouth museum has a much later (1874) printing of the first Ordnance, topographical map of East Devon, completed by Colonel Mudge in 1809. The actual threat of invasion had all but disappeared by 1809 as Napoleon was otherwise engaged in the invasion of Russia. However, the lesson had been learned that maps were essential. By 1810 one inch to the mile topographical maps of most of the south of England were completed and by 1840 the one-inch survey had covered all of Wales and all but the six northernmost counties of England. But it was not until later that the 'County' series of maps with scales of 25 inches and six inches to the mile were begun. In 1888 the familiar style, six inches to the mile, map of Sidmouth was completed.

The museum has several detailed maps of the area on a scale of 25 inches to a mile, often called 'planning' maps, since they were mainly used by public bodies and utilities for planning and development. In 1935, the Davidson Committee was established to review the Ordnance Survey's future. The new Director General, Major-General Malcolm MacLeod, started the retriangulation of Great Britain, an immense task involving the erection of concrete triangulation pillars ("trig points") on prominent hilltops as infallible positions for theodolites. Each measurement made by theodolite during the retriangulation was repeated no fewer than 32 times. This survey informed maps until the 1970s but by the late 1990s technology had made these draughtsmen and surveyor produced paper maps virtually redundant.

The Peter Orlando Hutchinson connection

The Geological Survey began in 1832 as a private venture by Henry De la Beche,

mapping in South West England. By 1835 it was agreed to continue the project but this time under the auspices of the official Ordnance Survey. In 1845, the Survey's position was consolidated in the much broader and fully independent Geological Survey of Great Britain & Ireland with Henry De la Beche as first Director. A somewhat later, and beloved figure to Sidmouth Museum, is Peter Orlando Hutchinson (POH) who produced sketches, drawings and observations on the geology of Sidmouth, many of which form part of the museum's collection. In 2006 the former museum curator Dr. "Bob" Symes co-authored an article with J D Mather on POH and the geology of S.E. Devon. The authors tell us that "His legacy also includes over 750 individual drawings, many of which were painted for their geological interest, which depict coastal features, faults and quarry sections, long since eroded or destroyed. His work forms a valuable resource still of use to modern professional geologists."



Maps and Sidmouth railways.

Maps detailing the rocks and cliffs of the Sidmouth coastline are of interest since the construction of railway lines is largely dictated by geology, playing a significant part, as seen in 1870 drawings by the engineer and surveyor of the line, W R Galbraith, relating to Sidmouth Harbour Railway and the branch line linking Sidmouth to the London and Exeter route. The earliest rail line was part of a plan to construct a harbour in Sidmouth and to run carriages along the seafront and under the cliffs to Salcombe Regis. The harbour was never constructed but railway track was laid in 1836 along the seafront from Chit Rock to Hook Ebb but it closed in 1838. The museum holds a drawing of the line from 1838. The first attempt to raise capital for the project to link Sidmouth to the London to Exeter rail line in 1861 failed but in 1871 funds became available and in 1874, the rail link from Sidmouth to the main line was opened. Due to the geology of the area, the only feasible route was to link Sidmouth to Feniton. The steepness of the gradient meant that special care had to be taken with goods trains and only locomotives suitable for light railways could be used.



Ken Robertson

Editor's note – this is an extract from a comprehensive account of the museum's collection of maps by Ken. Sadly for the SVA, Ken and his wife Deborah – who has written a book on the Sidmouth print collection – have decided to leave Sidmouth. The trustees thank them for all their hard work in sorting out the archives of maps and prints and wish them well in their new life.



*Some things never change. This lady was chancing her luck after a major cliff fall.
From John Tindall's diary. Below – a recent cliff fall.*



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

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.

FREE ZOOM TALKS

A series of talks has been arranged on Zoom. If you would like to attend one of the talks, please contact zoomtalks@sidvaleassociation.org.uk for the login details. The talks will also be posted on YouTube soon afterwards so they will be available to anyone not able to join on the day. Check our website for details.

Wednesday 10th November 2.30pm – *The Keith Owen Fund: Its achievements and its challenges* – Alan Clarke

Wednesday 12th January 2022 2.30pm – *What exactly is local heritage and should we be protecting it?* – Jeremy Woodward

FREE COUNTRYSIDE WALKS are held on the first Tuesday of each month and are typically 5 miles and of 3 hour duration. Please see the SVA website events page for details. SVA members emails also give details.

Wednesday 8th December 11.30am *Festive Walk 'n' Fork at the Hare & Hounds*

A 5 mile ramble around Roncombe followed by a convivial carvery lunch at this popular hostelry. Booking is required – call 01395 512815 before 26th November

SVA LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Monday 8th November and second Monday of every other month thereafter in the SVA HQ at 36a Fore street, next to Coffee#1, at 7pm. The Group aims to promote and support research into the history of the Sid Valley and surroundings. The usual format is for members to introduce discussion on topics of research that they are working on, but occasionally a full presentation is made of a completed piece of work. For more information please contact Brian Golding at history@sidvaleassociation.org.uk

MUSEUM

The Museum closes for the winter on Saturday 13th November at 1pm.

SVA members Pre-Season Reception Thursday 24th March 4-7pm

Re-opens to the public on Friday 25th March.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Although the Museum is closed for the winter, many of our books are available from Paragon Books and Winstones in the town or by mail order from the SVA website, and there is free delivery to SVA members who live in Sidmouth.

COPY DATE for the next issue of this magazine is **30th March**. Short articles and photos of local interest are always welcome. Please email your contributions to the Editor – news@sidvaleassociation.org.uk

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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