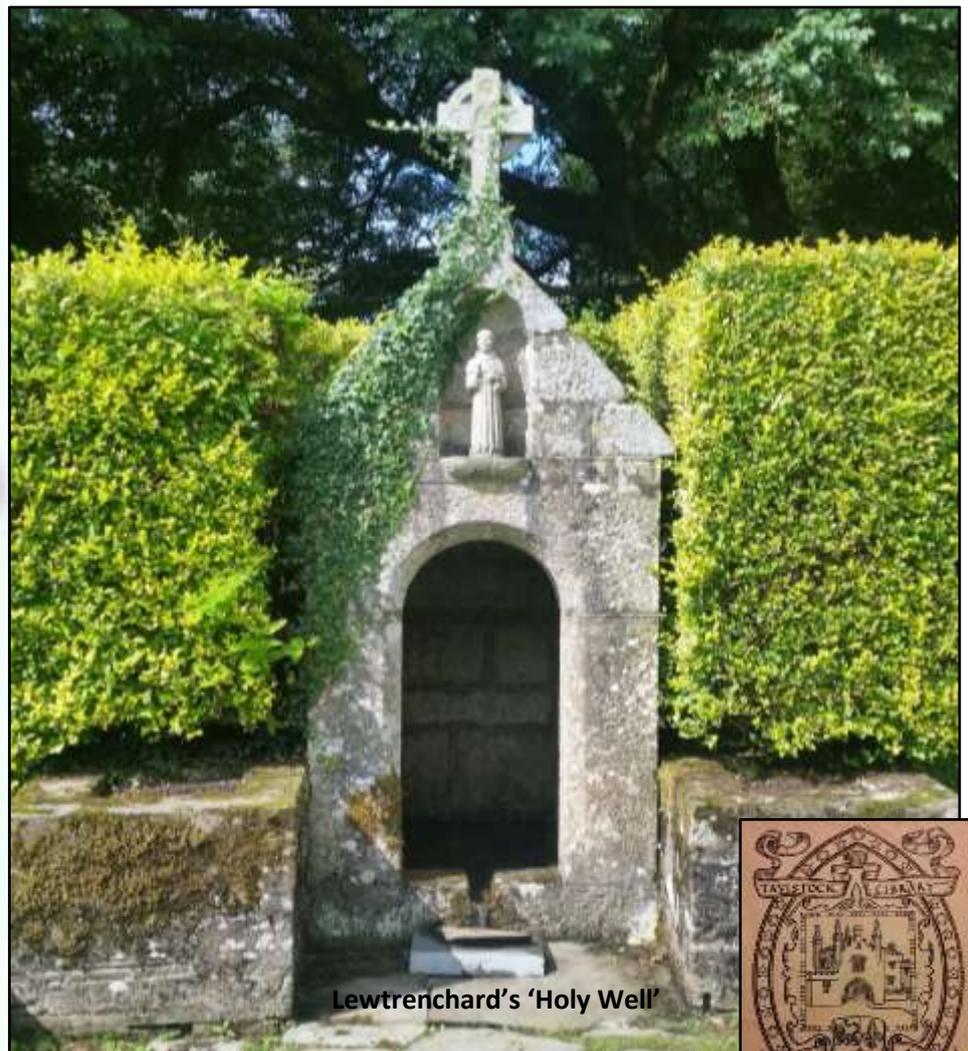


Tavistock

SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY

Established
1799

NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2018

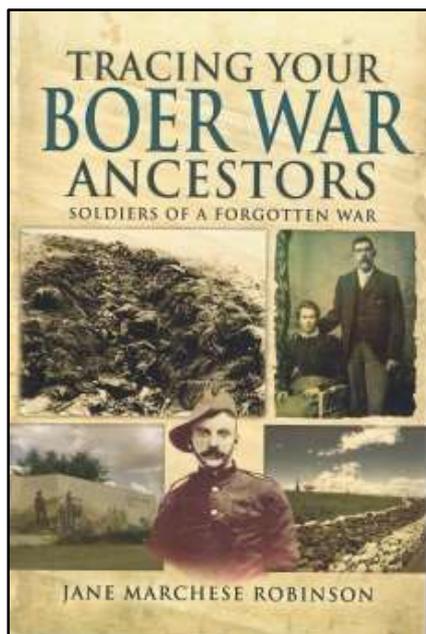


Lewtrenchard's 'Holy Well'



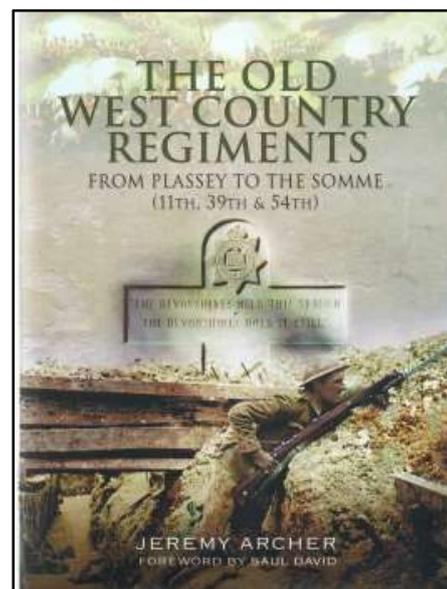
New Acquisitions in the Library.

We have been generously donated three new books recently



This book will act as an informative research guide for those seeking to discover and uncover the stories of the men who fought and the families they left behind. It will look in particular at the kind of support the men received if they were war injured and that offered to the families of the bereaved. Some pensions were available to regular soldiers and the Patriotic Fund, a charitable organisation, had been resurrected at the beginning of the conflict. However for those who did not fit these categories the Poor Law was the only support available at the time. This book explores a variety of research materials such as: contemporary national and local newspapers; military records via websites and directly through regimental archives; census, electoral, marriage and death records; records at the National Archives including the Book of Wounds from the Boer War, the Transvaal Widows' Fund and others.

Drawing on the distinguished records of the three original West Country Regiments, this delightful and substantial book brings together a superb and varied collection of military anecdotes. Reflecting Britain's Imperial history, these cover empire building in India, the American War of Independence, the Napoleonic era, the Crimean, Zulu and Boer Wars, as well as the horrors and heroism of The Great War. As fascinating as the events and battles themselves is the rich cast of Regimental characters: selfless heroes mix with spies, explorers, scientists, radical agitators and philanderers. Whatever their experiences, exploits and the occasional scandal, what they all have in common is service, both to Crown and also to the Regiment .



The 14th Century History of the Cotehele, Edgcumbe

and Brendon families
of St Dominick, Cornwall



*Including the History of the Brendon family
of St Dominick from 1540 to 1765*

Tom Brendon

Another book written by one of our members Tom Brendon, this title has been written with the expectation that it will be read by many people who are not related to the Cotehele, Edgcumbe or Brendon families, of Cornwall: but who will be interested in reading this 14th century history, which is mainly about the heiress Hilaria de Cotehele? The history tells the reader about the deaths of Maud de Brendon and one of her wards - Ralph de Cotehele, brother of Hilaria.

If any member wishes to loan one of these volumes to do a review then do get in touch with Hon Secretary Simon Dell at simondell1958@yahoo.co.uk

Visit to Lewtrenchard 31st October 2018



On 31st October seven members enjoyed a guided walk, lunch and visit to Lewtrenchard Manor Hotel, led by Dr Ron Wawman of the Lewdown History Society and expert on Rev Sabine Baring Gould who resided at Lewtrenchard Manor.

The history of Lewtrenchard Manor or Lew House, as it was originally known, is rich and extensive. It is first mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086AD as a Royal manor owned by the Sheriff of Devon and leased to one of his relatives, a Rogerius de Mole, for a rent of £4.00. Rogerius and his descendants are believed to have lived in the property until the beginning of the reign of Edward III in 1327, when the Trenchards took over. Although the Trenchards gave their name to the manor they lived there for a short period of time. It is believed that the name comes from 'Les Trenchen', the wood hewer. The Gould family acquired the estate from Sir Thomas Monk in 1626 and it is believed that Henry Gould built the beginnings of the house as we know it today.

Henry Gould married Ann Wills and their initials are carved in the over mantle of the fireplace in the front hall, as well as the year in which they acquired Lewtrenchard. However, they mostly lived Floyer Hayes in Exeter until Henry's death when Ann came to the Dower House of Lew to live out her widowhood in 1636. The Dower House was built by her son Edward for her. Sabine Baring-Gould believed that the Dower House was the original site of Lew House, before it was moved to higher ground sometime during Edward III's reign.



Sabine was born in 1834. He was a complex character; likeable and unlikable, sensitive and insensitive, but with a good sense of humour. He showed great Christian compassion to those who needed help, however he elicited fear in his children and behaved roughly towards his sons. He ran a totalitarian state in his home, where only his wife could control him, up to a point. He took Holy Orders in 1864, and became the curate at Horbury Bridge, West Riding of Yorkshire. It was here he is believed to have composed 'Onward Christian Soldiers' in order to encourage the parishioners to climb the steep hill to the church on Sundays. It was here that Sabine met and fell in love with Grace Taylor, a mill girl, who was then aged fourteen. He and Grace were married in 1868 at Wakefield. Her portrait hangs in the back dining room. They had 15 children, all but one of whom lived to adulthood. Sabine then became the rector of East Mersea in Essex in 1871 and spent ten years there. In 1872 his father died and he inherited the 3,000 acre family estates, which included the gift of the parson's living of Lewtrenchard parish.

From 1876 onwards Sabine commenced a programme of building works, restoring the manor. In September 1881 Sabine moved back to Lewtrenchard and was joined by Grace and the children in October. When the parson's living became vacant in 1881, he was able to appoint himself to it, becoming parson as well as squire or as he called it – Squarson! He did a great deal of work restoring St Peter's Church. In 1924, when Sabine died, the estate passed to Edward the eldest son, and a successful businessman, and his wife Marian. Although they had made their way in America and were living in Minneapolis in 1897, they returned to London for the birth of their two youngest children. They lived at Lewtrenchard from 1924 until Marian's death in 1931, after this Edward lived in London until his death, as he was not really a countryman at heart.

The estate then passed to Sabine Linton Baring Gould, but as he lived and owned a business in America and Lewtrenchard was managed by trustees. The estate is now owned by his daughter Dr Merrial Almond, who plays an active part in Lewtrenchard's day to day life, although she lives mainly in America.



In 1949, the Paynter family opened it as a hotel, as it remains to this day. In 1988, Sue and James Murray and their young family made Lewtrenchard their home and created the hotel it is today. The hotel now owned once again by the Murray family, after 9 years away, Lewtrenchard Manor continues to impress and inspire its guests.

Obituary of Dr Mary Freeman

Formidable marine biologist who used fossils from Lyme Regis to analyse the colour of ichthyosaurs from 250 million years ago

Never happier than when searching among rock pools for new specimens Mary Freeman seldom took equipment beyond a fishing net and a jar because the principal tool of her trade was an electron microscope that weighed the best part of a tonne.

Petite and lightly built, she was unusually athletic for an academic and pursued outdoor activities all her life. As a marine biologist she devoted her career to unlocking the secrets of sea creatures, especially the neurology and cellular structure of fish and amphibian skin.



Dr Mary Freeman

She explored the waters from Sierra Leone to Sri Lanka, but one of her favourite excursions was closer to her Devon home, the wreck of the SS Emily Everson of the Channel Island of Alderney, which was rich in sea life.

Over four decades Freeman published dozens of papers that linked the structures of what she found with functions such as wound healing or the ability to forage for food. She would spend hours examining cross sections of cells at her microscope to tease out the minutiae of their structure, which she would reproduce with beautifully executed drawings made up of thousands of dots applied with a Rotring pen.

Her research included observing nerve endings in the skin of minnows, sticklebacks and gurnards, which suggested that bony fish felt pain and responded to harmful stimuli. In 1959 she appeared on a BBC programme to discuss the senses of animals.

Most famously she attempted to discover the colour of ichthyosaurs, marine reptiles that first appeared 250 million years ago, by microscopic analysis of a fossil that had been found near Lyme Regis in Dorset and retained traces of skin. After much labour she reported finding cells in which reddish brown pigment granules were present.

An independent-minded woman of austere tastes, Freeman always preferred solitary pursuits, such as swimming and rowing. She cared nothing for popular culture. Her sons grew up knowing about beetles rather than the Beatles and treasured presents she had given them that included AE Ellis's classic treatise on British snails.

Although she was always stylish and carefully turned out she shunned designer labels. However, she had a weakness for good food, particularly seafood and especially lobster and langoustine on holiday in the Channel Islands.

With her rigorous nature as a scientist and no-nonsense spirit she could appear formidable. Even when she had retired she terrified fellow members of the Tavistock History Society by insisting on their work being edited to her own high academic standards. She was also generous, proof-reading and correcting friends' manuscripts and paying for books to be repaired.

Mary Whitear was born in Teignmouth, Devon, in 1924. Her father was Jack Whitear, a headmaster and keen sailor from a family of seamen. She could sail and row from an early age; she was also inquisitive and quickly came to learn about the fauna and flora at the mouth of the Teign.

Early in the war she walked down to Teignmouth station to catch her daily train to Exeter, when she attended the Maynard School, when a strange object, a skeletal ruler made of ash fluttered down. Only when she reached Exeter did she discover that the city had been bombed and, perhaps not surprisingly, her school was shut.

To the incomprehension of other girls at school she refused to join any of the sports teams, despite her athletic prowess. It made her at times a fairly exasperating colleague, especially as she was top of the class more often than not. After continuing her studies in London, at Bedford College and briefly at Cambridge, she was appointed a lecturer at University College London in 1947. She remained there until 1989, lecturing on a broad range of topics, but focusing her research on marine biology. While she looked upon the male sex, human and animal, with a sort of quiet despair, she did not feel that being a woman had hampered her career.

Not without a keen sense of humour, she often recalled that her favourite story of the time was of a student at a spot exam, where specimens are set out for identification, who claimed that a tadpole was the spermatozoon of a whale.

She met her husband Richard Freeman, when he worked in the next room in the zoology department in London. He was the eldest son of George Sydney Freeman, who held various senior posts at *The Times*.

The couple did not marry until 1958, when Freeman finally overcame the snobbishness of her mother-in-law, who was against her son marrying a headmaster's daughter. Once they were married, Mary continued to use her maiden name of Whitear for professional purposes.

They settled in a house in Palmers Green, north London and pursued their many shared interests, particularly a love of nature. They had two sons. Felix was a mining analyst specialising in gold, but died in a climbing accident in 2000, which his mother never got over. Peter runs wine tastings and has written a number of books, including comic erotica.

After her husband's death in 1986 Freeman began to hunt for a suitable house in Devon, which she found by the river in Tavistock. Only on retirement did she change her focus, from biology to history, especially the industrial archaeology of west Devon. She was working on a paper dealing with Tavistock's ancient deer park during the final months of her life.

In old age she enjoyed sitting out in her garden, where she had redefined what was a weed and cultivated generations of cats and a tortoise. Even when she was housebound late in life she would ask her sons not to close the shutters so that she could watch the evening light fade away.

Simon would welcome any pictures, book reviews on recent acquisitions in the library, articles stories etc for the next newsletter so do please get in touch with him if you would like to get involved at either Simondell1958@yahoo.co.uk or mobile 07845 176870



IT HAPPENED IN PETER TAVY - A TALE OF TITHES

(A short local story by Bill Lane)

King William IV died on 20 June 1837 and due to the fact that his 10 children were all illegitimate he was succeeded by his cousin Princess Victoria of Kent. The news of the death of the king did not reach Tavistock until the 21st of June and despite the initial period of mourning the new Francis, Duke of Bedford, decided that there should be no delay in the collection of the Midsummer Day Quarter Day tithes.

Up until 1836 the tithe rents had been paid in kind but under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 in kind payments were substituted by money payments. This change for tenants around Peter Tavy was very unpopular as it had frequently been possible to persuade the Duke's Steward, Arthur Fitzroy, to take the payments in kind with unwanted goods or goods of an indifferent quality. The Steward therefore realised that he probably had a very difficult day ahead when he set out in his pony and trap on 24th June.

Having called at the Wheelwright on the main route to Ashburton at the top of Pork Hill for some adjustment to the right hand wheel of the trap which appeared to be coming loose he made his first port of call on Thomas Prout at Harragrove. Thomas was a good friend of his and a jovial hour was spent over a jug of porter which Thomas had just acquired from London where it was a most popular drink.

The next call was on Samuel Fuge at North Godsworthy. Here was a very different man who in the summer had many sheep on the moor. Samuel had readily been able to pay his tithes by persuading the Steward to take some of his barren ewes off his hands but money was a different matter. After much argument he gave the Steward about half of what was due and told him to come back another day.

On his way into the village the Steward collected the tithes due from John Dodd who lived in the cottage by Smeardon Newtake and Thomas Mudge from the cottage near the church. At this stage it was apparent that there was about to be a very heavy thunder storm up on the moor and he felt it prudent to repair to the Peter Tavy Inn for refreshments and shelter. Here were many friends sheltering from the storm and amongst them was the Church Warden who was bemoaning the fact that Parson Macbean still insisted that he clear the Inn of customers before he would start his sermon on Sundays. After partaking well, and the storm being over, he set off for Tavistock in the trap.

The road from Peter Tavy to Tavistock was not well maintained and a short way out of Peter Tavy, with the Steward fast asleep and the horse keen to get home, the trap lurched into a very large pothole and the right hand wheel came off throwing the Steward to the ground. In a very dazed state he managed to disentangle his horse from the remains of the trap and decided that he would ride on to Tavistock but he was fearful that riding through the Western Union tin mine works at Harford bridge he would be accosted by some of the very rough mine workers and therefore before setting off he decided to bury the tithe takings in a nearby field to be collected on a later day when he was sober.

His fears were well founded because as he approached the bridge he saw that some miners were demanding a toll from all those crossing the bridge. To avoid paying any toll the Steward decided to ride through the ford beside the bridge although the river was in full spate. Sadly this decision was the last that he would make because, his mind still being unclear, he misjudged the strength of the river and when the horse slipped he fell in the water and was drowned.

(Author's note. In 2015 one 1823 Sovereign, some other coins and a small part of a trap wheel were found in a field close to the Peter Tavy road. The only fictitious name is that of the Steward.)

Notice of Annual General Meeting 2019

The 2019 AGM will be held on Monday 18th March 2019 at the Library at 7.30pm and all members are warmly invited to attend.

Subscription Library Wharf Talk 18th March 2019



On the same day as the Library AGM - Monday 18th March 2019 - the Chairman is giving a talk on Tavistock Subscription Library, its founding and history, at the Wharf Arts Theatre in Tavistock at 2pm. Cost £5 or £4 for Wharf Members. Starts at 2pm until 3pm entry includes tea/coffee & cake!. Hopefully the talk might attract some new members. Do come along and help with talking to people about the Tavistock Subscription Library.

News from the Reading Room

In September we again held two open days on consecutive Saturdays in support of the Historic England Heritage Open Days, where we welcomed members of the public and gained a few more members! We also hosted the Children's Tavistock Discover Town Trail again.

Assistance needed!



Are we happy to extend a welcome again in December for the CHICKS Santa Fun Run- Sunday 9th December 2018. If anyone is free that day to staff the library then your assistance would be gratefully received. Ruth, the Librarian is going to be there from 11.30am until 1pm and then Brian Fyfield-Shayler will do the afternoon 1pm until 3pm. They would welcome some company so do get in touch if you could spare an hour or two for a worthy case.