

# **Historical Notes relating to Bideford's East-the-Water Shore**

## **Volume 2 (19<sup>th</sup> C.)**

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## **Contents of the volumes**

The contents of the three volumes are as follows:

- Volume 1, Introductory material and Pre-history to 18<sup>th</sup> C.
- Volume 2, 19<sup>th</sup> C.
- Volume 3, 20<sup>th</sup> C. to present.

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## **19<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **1800s early half, the exodus to the Empire**

The early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. were shaped by the conflict with France, but the defeat of Napoleon, together with the Victorian expansion of the British Empire, brought a boom in maritime trade. Bideford's quays were a hive of activity: large quantities of timber, hemp, and tallow were imported from the Baltic and America; wines and fruits arrived from the Mediterranean, cattle came from Ireland; coal, culm, iron, and flag-stones from Wales; and marble and slate from Cornwall. The Newfoundland trade had also revived. Yet something else was also going on. The early half of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. saw a mass exodus from England of folk seeking a better life abroad. For many, Bideford was their chosen port of embarkation.

### **1800, Bideford's 67 vessels**

A table, published on 30 Sep 1800, shows 67 vessels registered at Bideford, with a cumulative tonnage of 5,387, and employing 256 men. Whilst Dartmouth had far more registered ships (209), they were, on average, smaller, whilst Bideford's ships were significantly more manpower efficient (handling 18.2 tons of shipping per man employed, compared with Plymouth's 10.7)<sup>1</sup>.

### **1800, a wretched and dirty place**

In 1800, the Rev. Richard Warner passed through Bideford at this point, and his overall impression was far from complimentary, in contrasting it with Barnstaple he described it as “A large, wretched and dirty place, with all the filth, inconvenience, and disagreeableness of a sea-port, and little of its bustle and animation.”<sup>2</sup>

### **c. 1802, clay exports to Staffordshire dwindle**

At one time clay was shipped from Bideford to Bristol for use in refining of sugar and the making of clay tobacco pipes, thereby becoming known as tobacco-pipe clay<sup>3</sup> (or simply pipe-clay). In 1822 the *Magna Britannica* reflected that “Pipe-clay was formerly dug in great abundance at Weare Giffard, and in the parishes of Peters Marland and Petrockstow. It was sent coastwise from the port of Bideford, and by canals to the potteries of Staffordshire. The pits at the last two mentioned places have not been worked for twenty years.”<sup>4</sup>

1 John Besly Gribble, *Memorials of Barnstaple*, Barnstaple: Avery, 1830, pg 608

2 Richard Warner. *A Walk Through Some of the Western Counties of England*. Bath:R. Cruttwell, 1800. Cited without a page number in “West Country” Ambra Books. Online: <http://www.localhistory.co.uk/ambra/ab-ge.htm> Accessed 9 Jan 2018

3 Grant, *North Devon Pottery*, 2005, 4

4 Lysons & Lysons, *Magna Britannica*, 1822, Pg ccxc

## **1802, a light to guide ships across the bar**

A first attempt was made to provide a permanent lighthouse on Braunton Sands in 1802. Little more than a hut, with a lamp, and only 15 feet high. A more substantial light, on a tower of 87 feet, was provided, a short distance from the first, in 1820. Both served until 1957<sup>5</sup>.

## **1803, coasters from London**

The shopkeeper's and tradesman's assistant for 1803, which claimed to be annually updated, listed coasting vessels to "Biddeford," Devon, from "cotton's, Symond's and beal's wharfs, Southwark." There was also at least one coach and two waggons departing for Bideford daily <sup>6</sup>.

## **1803-1815, Napoleon and the Baltic blockade**

By 1803 Napoleon was seeking to conquer Europe, plunging the region into turmoil until 1815<sup>7</sup>. Naval production in the shipyards inevitably rose, whilst local people lived uneasily with the potential threat of an invasion of the West Country via Ireland.

## **1803-13, Taylor launching naval vessels from Cross Park**

Including the fire-ship Comet (1805) and the bomb vessel Beelzebub (1813)<sup>8</sup>. Taylor's yard would continue to operate until about 1830.

## **1804, a new map of Hartland reveals the river's course**

A map of the Hartland region, produced in 1804 and held in the British Museum, clearly shows the main channel of the river passing under the eastern end of the bridge, with a narrower, subsidiary channel, created by diverting the Potters Pill southward, running beside the western quay.

## **1806, French ports close to English shipping**

On 21 Nov 1806 Napoleon, responding to the Royal Navy's blockade of French ports, issued his Berlin Decree, which stated that "no ship which comes directly from England or from English colonies . . . shall . . . enter any of our harbours."

5 "Guide to English and Welsh Lights" Online:<http://www.mycetes.co.uk/a/page2.html> Accessed:25 Jun 2017

6 Shopkeeper's & Tradesman's Assistant: (For 1803.) Being a New and Correct Alphabetical List of All The Stage Coaches, Carriers, Coasting Vessels, &c. London: R & H Causton, 1803. Pg 20

7 David Gates. The Napoleonic Wars 1803-1815. Random House. 2011. Np.

8 R. I. & S. H. Kirby, Vessels Built or Refitted in East-the-Water, 15 August 2017.  
Online:[http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships\\_launched\\_from\\_East-the-Water.pdf](http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships_launched_from_East-the-Water.pdf) Accessed 20 September 2017

## **1807, bark, coal, herrings, and coarseware**

Published in 1807 the Complete Pocket Gazetteer states “the number of vessels belonging to this port is about 100, which are chiefly employed in the exportation of oak bark to Ireland and Scotland, in the conveyance of coals and culm to the southern parts of the country; in the herring trade ; and in bringing of fish from Newfoundland.--- The principal manufacture is that of coarse brown earthen-ware”<sup>9</sup>. The entry also mentions “regular vessels from Stanton’s, Cotton’s, Hayes’s, Griffin’s, and Pickle Herring wharves” [probably all in London].

## **1807, a Baltic blockade triggers a timber famine**

In Jul 1807 Napoleon’s Napoleon signed treaties at Tilsit with first Russian and then Prussia. Russias alliance with France allowed the blockade against English shipping to be extended, effectively blockading the Baltic<sup>10</sup>. As a result the supply of timber from that region dried up.

## **1807, introduction of duty on Baltic timber**

With the nation desperate for timber, merchants looked to the verdant American forests, but the cost of developing such a trade could only be justified if Baltic supplies were going to continue to be difficult to obtain. In 1807 a swingeing duty was imposed on Baltic timber, assurances were given that it would remain long enough for merchants to profit from investing in a transatlantic timber trade, and American wood began to flow into the country<sup>11</sup>.

## **1808, Torridge Regiment moved to Bideford**

In 1808 residents of East-the-Water would have witnessed the arrival of military men, as it seems, reinforcing the town against possible French invasion (via Ireland) “The Torridge Regiment of Volunteers, under the command of Lord Rolle, marched into Bideford, the 1st instant, on permanent duty; 797 men (out of 800, the strength of the regiment,) all in perfect health and fit for duty, and on the King’s birth-day they unanimously volunteered to become Local Militia.”<sup>12</sup>

## **1809, timber famine**

Despite the Baltic blockade, Bideford's yards could keep going on existing stocks for a while, but by 1809 those had dwindled, causing a slump in Torridge-side ship-building<sup>13</sup>. It is said that such was the shortage of wood that the prolific builder, Richard Chapman, of Cleave Houses, could only build one ship in that year<sup>14</sup>.

9 B. Crosby. Crosby’s Complete Pocket Gazetteer of England and Wales or Traveller’s Companion. London:J. D. Dewick,1807. Pg 52.

10 “The Continental System And The Blockade, 1807-1811” Britannia. Online: Accessed 17 Nov 2020

11 Greenhill & Giffard, Westcountrymen in Prince Edward's Island, 1967, 24-25

12 “Exeter, Wednesday, June 8.”Exeter Flying Post 09 June 1808 p4 c2

13 Greenhill & Giffard, Westcountrymen in Prince Edward's Island, 1967, 24

14 Greenhill & Giffard, Westcountrymen in Prince Edward's Island, 1967, 24

## **1809, the 1<sup>st</sup> Ordnance Survey mapping of the area**

Military strategy needs good information about the terrain, so, possibly spurred by the threat of invasion, the first series Ordnance Survey map of Bideford was published. Along with the riverside developments in East-the-Water, it marks Salterns, Grange, Grange Barn, and Lodge. Between these latter two, nestling between the spurs, is a structure marked as Conegor Hills, where there now remains only an empty field and parts of the ancient hedge-row that once adjoined its drive. The 1809 1st Series 1-63360 Ordnance Survey map shows the main channel of the Torridge running under the eastern end of the bridge, before then veering away from that bank to run centrally between the shores. A narrow legacy channel seems to run alongside the western keys.

## **1810, the navy introduced to mineral black**

Production of “a BLACK MINERAL” was already under way, at Greencliffe Mine, to the west of Bideford, and under the sanction of King's Royal Letters Patent. The pigment had recently been tried in his Majesty's Dock Yards, and found superior to other pigments for their purposes<sup>15</sup>. The mine was up for auction in Oct 1811, together with 3000 tons of Mineral Black, already raised and lying on the surface, and with the suggestion that the mine might also produce lead<sup>16</sup>.

## **1810, first glimmer of a canal to Great Torrington**

In 1810, a meeting was called, for Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August, for those interested in supporting the construction of a canal to link the navigable section of the river Torridge with Great Torrington<sup>17</sup>. This would finally take shape in the form of the Rolle Canal, substantially improving communications between the port of Bideford and its southern hinterland.

## **1811, the town's trade suffers**

An account from 1811 noted that, whilst the streets of Bideford were clean and many of the houses were well built and occupied by opulent merchants, the town's trade was suffering as the war dragged on<sup>18</sup>.

## **1811, Turner takes a trip to Bideford**

In 1811 the famous landscape artist Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851), embarked on a tour that took him into the West Country, leaving a rough pencil sketched of Bideford bridge (and its adjacent shores) adorning the pages of his notebook (now held by The Tate Gallery)<sup>19</sup>

15 Mineral Patent Paint, &c.” Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser 10 May 1810 London p1 c2

16 “Valuable Mining Concern” Trewman's Exeter Flying Post 10 October 1811 p2 c4

17 “Navigation of the River Torridge” Trewman's Exeter Flying Post 23 August 1810 p3 c1

18 Tristram Risdon. The Chorographical Description or Survey of the County of Devon. London: Rees and Curtis. 1811. Pg 423

19 ‘Bideford 1811 by Joseph Mallord William Turner’, catalogue entry, July 2011, in David Blayney Brown (ed.), *J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours*, Tate Research Publication, December 2012, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/joseph-mallord-william-turner-bideford-r1137461>, accessed 05 January 2019.

## **1812, a snapshot of Willcock's quay (wine and timber)**

An advertisement following the death of John Willcock, shows it in use for timber and wine imports.

## **1814, Appledore transferred to the Port of Bideford**

In response to complaints from the residents of Appledore, about the inconvenience of their village being part of the port of Barnstaple, the respective boundaries of the ports of Bideford and Barnstaple were altered,<sup>20</sup> such that, in 1814, the creek of Appledore was transferred from the Port of Barnstaple to the Port of Bideford<sup>21</sup>.

## **1814, Turner sketches the wharves**

In 1814, Joseph Mallord William Turner was again in Bideford and, somewhere near the modern junction of Barnstaple Street and the Old Barnstaple Road, took out his sketchbook to sketch the East-the-Water shore and Bideford's Long Bridge<sup>22</sup>. The sketch<sup>23</sup> is rather rough, but it does show the outlines of limekilns and the spars of a ship under construction.

## **1815, end of the Napoleonic War**

The battle of Waterloo in 1815, left Napoleon defeated and the seas a whole lot safer for Bideford's shipping. It was a good time to be a seafaring merchant, and such merchants needed ships.

## **1816, the Bideford potato riot**

This riot took place on 17<sup>th</sup> May, but an account of the trial, on 10 Aug 1816, of several of the rioters, made the pages of The Times. The case for the prosecution stated "It appeared, that on the day laid in the indictment, about 150 persons riotously and tumultuously assembled at Bideford, armed with bludgeons and other weapons, and by their violent proceedings endangered the lives of many of the inhabitants. The tumult was occasioned by a rumour, that a person of the name of Watts had purchased a great quantity of potatoes of the neighbouring farmers, and intended to ship them to London. This circumstance produced considerable irritation in the minds of the lower orders, who committed several acts of violence, when four women were taken into custody, and lodged in prison. The rioters then became more bold and daring : they procured large pieces of timber, with which they battered down the prison doors, released the women, and beat off the police of the borough ; and it was not till the military had been called in, and some of the ringleaders secured, that the peace of the town was restored. A more alarming disturbance had not existed in any part of the country, and it was extremely fortunate for the prisoners that greater excesses had not been committed." All the defendants were found guilty.

20 John Besly Gribble, Memorials of Barnstaple, Barnstaple: Avery, 1830, pg 606

21 Michael Nix, A Maritime History of the Ports of Bideford and Barnstaple 1786-1941. Thesis, University of Leicester. 1991. Pg 9

22 "Joseph Mallord William Turner Bideford Bridge 1814" Tate. Online: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-bideford-bridge-d09564> Accessed 14 Mar 2019

23 D09564 Turner Bequest CXXXII 79

## **1816, failure of Hamlyn & Chanter, Bideford bankers**

The collapse of any bank is likely to have a knock on effect within the local business community, and on 3 April 1816 the Bideford bankers Robert Hamlyn and John Chanter were declared bankrupt. It was not until the 6 March 1826 that a final dividend was paid to their creditors<sup>24</sup>.

## **1817, Ilfracombe begins to compete for Irish passenger traffic**

During 1817 Ilfracombe was established as a summer terminal for Irish bound passenger services. Their ability to compete with the 'poluccas' trading out of Bideford was initially restricted by lack of cargo capacity<sup>25</sup>.

## **1818, voyage of the *Peter and Sarah***

In 1818 the *Peter and Sarah*, the only ship to come from Chapman's yard in the year of the timber famine, set sail for Prince Edward Island. Aboard was the master shipwright William Ellis, who had gradually taken over from Chapman as Chapman's health declined. The *Peter and Sarah* was owned by Thomas Burnard (who, by 1832, had a quay just south of Crosspark Rock)<sup>26</sup>. Some sources suggest that Burnard also financed the expedition<sup>27</sup>, though others suggest the financier was John Evans<sup>28</sup>. John Evans appears to have occupied a yard next to Richard Chapman's<sup>29</sup> and then to have taken over Chapman's yard in 1818, when Chapman health declined further<sup>30</sup>. In Pigots Trade Directory for 1822-23 John Evans address is given as "East-the-Water," and it seems he may also have had an interest in a yard there, for his son Thomas is reported launching ships from there from 1824, and as the prior occupant of Johnson's yard.

The trading model established by William Ellis and subsequently exploited by James Yeo, would later be espoused, to good effect, by East-the-Water based merchant Richard Heard, of Colonial House.

## **1819, Coal Duty is holding industry back**

24 Trewman's Exeter Flying Post 16 February 1826 p1 c3

25 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 59

26 As shown on a plan of that date, drawn up for the proposed railway terminus.

27 "Ellis, William" Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Online  
[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ellis\\_william\\_1774\\_1855\\_8E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ellis_william_1774_1855_8E.html). Accessed 20 Aug 2016.

28 "William Ellis" Online: <https://findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=103860752> Accessed 18 May 2017

29 Nix, Maritime History of the Ports of Bideford and Barnstaple 1786-1841, 1991, pg 393

30 "Ellis, William" Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Online  
[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ellis\\_william\\_1774\\_1855\\_8E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ellis_william_1774_1855_8E.html). Accessed 20 Aug 2016.

Lord Ebrington, speaking to second a motion to repeal Coal Duty observed “The duties on coals in Devon and Cornwall last year amounted to near 60,000l. and this impost was paid at twelve ports. The consumption of coal in Devonshire was confined to a small part of it comparatively; it was chiefly among the higher classes, and that part of the population residing near the sea ports. This was a consequence of the high price of that article; the same cause operated to depress the manufactories, and prevent their establishment; It was not, perhaps, generally known, that a great portion of the clay now used for the making of the finer sort of china in the Staffordshire potteries, was the produce of the county of Devon, and neither spirit nor industry was wanting in that county to turn it to account. A china manufactory was set up some time since at Plymouth. But the difficulty of procuring coals caused it to be abandoned; another manufactory of coarser ware was undertaken afterwards, and also on the same account nearly given up. All who were acquainted with the west of England knew, that the best manure for the soil of Devonshire was lime: lime was not to be had without fuel.” The motion was rejected, 49 ayes to 151 noes.<sup>31</sup>

## **1820, earliest reference to mining at Chapel Park**

Black mining once flourishing in East-the-Water at Chapel Park, in which area there was mining as early as 1820.

The Magna Britannica, published in 1822, identified that anthracite occurred on the coast near Bideford, and, from there, the bed ran directly eastward, tilted into a near vertical position. The description of this seam, however, gave little indication of the quantities that would later be produced from Bideford's mines, for it stated that “it approaches black chalk, as it contains not above ten percent carbon,” with “its thickness varying from two inches to two feet”<sup>32</sup>.

## **1820, a further map produced**

A map from 1820 shows the Torridge with its main channel running under the eastern end of the bridge but then veering westward, away from the eastern bank, whilst Potter's Pill is still diverted southward.<sup>33</sup>

## **1822, a snapshot of turnpikes and trade**

The Magna Britannia presents a sketch of Bideford history, but also several contemporary observations. After noting that the cod and herring trade had all but disappeared. “A ship or two are still occasionally fitted out for Newfoundland and a few for the Baltic, but there is no foreign trade of any consequence. More than 100 vessels, however, are employed in the coasting trade, importing limestone in large quantities, coals, and culm ; and exporting oak-board to Ireland and Scotland, and oats and malt to Wales”<sup>34</sup>. It summarised the provision of turnpikes around Bideford, from which it is clear that the Torrington to Bideford route, passing west of Hunshaw and east of Weare Giffard, was already a turnpike, as was a route from Barnstaple, via Westleigh and Eastleigh<sup>35</sup>.

31 HC Deb 20 May 1819 vol 40 cc569-86. Pages 572-3.

Online:<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1819/may/20/coal-duties> Accessed 24 Jan 2021

32 Lysons & Lysons, Magna Britannica, 1822, pg cclxvi

33 A map of undeclared provenance, but appearing reasonably accurate in its detail, reproduced as Fig. 17 (pg59) in Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, and dated by him to the 1820s

34 Lysons & Lysons, Magna Britannica, 1822, pg 49

35 Lysons & Lysons, Magna Britannica, 1822, pg 29

## 1822, compilation of Pigot's Directory

Pigot's Directory of 1822-23 lists various traders in East-the-Water, some of whom, by their trade, or their location in later directories, may be assumed to be on the shore. They are:

- George Cooke, a bar iron, coal, and general merchant (potentially linked to the Cook's Wharf shown on Wood's plan of 1842);
- William Brook, a coal and salt merchant who also traded as a lime burner (one of the limekilns was at Cross Park and, as a William Brook succeeded William Taylor as shipbuilder at that location, it seems likely that this William was operating the Cross Park lime Kiln);
- Hutchings, a cooper (using timber and producing barrels for product shipment, e.g. salt, so likely to be near the ships);
- an earthenware and glass dealer (Hannah Jones);
- John Swain, earthenware manufacturer (later listed at Barnstaple Street, Simon Madge and Edward Petherick were also active in this trade but could have been at the Torrington Lane Pottery);
- Courtice, a lime burner (there were several limekilns on the eastern shore, of which he is likely to have operated one);
- Facey, a lime burner (there were several limekilns on the eastern shore, of which he is likely to have operated one);
- Henry Tucker, a ship-builder (probably the same individual who is also listed under maltsters and was based at Clarence Wharf);
- John Evans, a ship-builder (based, until c. 1824, at a shipyard that would become part of Brunswick Wharf, though also from c. ).
- William Taylor, a ship-builder (based at Cross Park);
- Isaac Baker, a stone-mason (this is likely to be a relation of the I Baker of I Baker and Sons. However, in later years there was a stone-mason's business based on Barnstaple Street for many years, so he is likely to have been occupying that yard. He possibly left to develop his business on a larger site on the Western shore.);

There are also several tavern or Inn landlords listed:

- Thomas Clarke at the Blacksmith's Arms, in Torrington Street (at that time next door to its current location)
- William Palmer at the Currier's Arms, in Barnstaple Street (later the Terminus Inn, then the East of the Water restaurant)
- John Daniel at the New London Inn (location uncertain, but most of the trade would have been near the shore, so likely to have been there)
- John Embery at the Ship & Launch, in Barnstaple Street
- W Spearman at the Swan, in Torrington Street
- William Mock at the Three Cranes [sic=Three Crowns], located within what is now known as Clarence Wharf).



## **c. 1822, earliest report of mining near Barnstaple Street**

In giving evidence, in a court case of July 1856, Thomas Pollard claimed to have been involved with the mines near Barnstaple Street for 31 or 32 years, i.e. since about 1822-23.<sup>36</sup> He would later switch his attention to Chapel Park<sup>37</sup>.

## **1823-4, the Rolle Canal dug**

During 1823-4 the Rolle Canal was dug to facilitate transport between Great Torrington and Bideford. The canal, which joined the Torridge at Landcross, allowed limestone from Wales to be imported further inland, along with the coal needed to slake it. In return, clay from the Peters Marland pits (south of Great Torrington), together with other products from Rolle's mills, could make the reverse journey, then, as required, trans-ship into ocean going vessels for export from Bideford's quays.

This marked the start of the flow of clay that would ultimately keep the later Bideford to Barnstaple rail line open beyond its passenger-service lifespan.

## **1824, lunch of the North Devon Magazine in Barnstaple**

In 1824 the North Devon Magazine published its first issue, in which Bideford is referred to in an introductory poem as Renton-by-the-Ford<sup>38</sup>, a later article suggesting that "Renton-by-the-Ford" was the was "the name of Bideford before she was abridged to Bideford"<sup>39</sup>. Renton appears to have been derived from "Wren-town", and intended as an ironic reference to the influence of the Wren family on the town. However, it has been suggested that an unidentified, though somewhat earlier topographic work stated that it was "Bideford, anciently Renton by the Ford, from whence its present name."<sup>40</sup>

## **1824, launch of the North Devon Journal**

Launched on 6 August 1824, the Journal would prove an invaluable source for information on events East-the-Water<sup>41</sup>.

## **1824, William Brook launches the *Apollo***

The 1824 launch of the *Apollo* is the earliest yet found attributable to East-the-Water ship-builder William Brook<sup>42</sup>. A William Brook is mentioned in Pigots directory of 1822, but only as a merchant, dealing in coal and salt, and a lime burner. Brooks continued to produce ships on his yard (just north of Clarence Wharf), until his death in 1845, where-after the yard was sold in 1846<sup>43</sup>.

36 "County Courts" North Devon Journal 17 July 1856 p3 c2-3

37 Kirby, "Historical Directory," 2017, Appendix 2

38 "The Cave" North Devon Magazine: Containing the Cave and Lundy Review, Barnstaple: 1824. Vol 1 Pg 13.

39 "The Lucubator" pgs 224-231 in in North Devon Magazine. Barnstaple:Dec 1824 Vol 2 Pg 227

40 J. A. Parry. "A Brief Sketch of the Early History of Bideford" Pages 400-408 in Reports and Transactions of the Devonshire Association. Vol 4. Pg 400.

41 North Devon Journal 26 August 1824 p7 c2

42 "Bideford." North Devon Journal 30 July 1824 p4 c2

43 Kirby & Kirby, "Vessels," 2017, 11-13

## **1824, an interruption to the mail**

One imagines that mail was conveyed as quickly as possible, by the use of stage-coaches, but an incident in 1824 reveals that the mail from Torrington and Bideford to Barnstaple travelled by mail cart. When the cart was upset by those of two fish jobbers seeking to pass it, the fishmongers made reparations to the Mail Farmer and to his injured driver<sup>44</sup>.

## **1825, coal discovered on the Saltern's estate**

In Dec 1825 the Dorset County Chronicle announced “A fine vein of coal has lately been discovered on the estate called Saltern, near the Bideford Turnpike Gate, belonging to L. W. Buck, Esq., of Daddon House, which will be a great advantage to the neighbourhood, as it will thereby be supplied with coals duty free. The mine will be worked by a company.”<sup>45</sup>.

## **1825, the New Road between Bideford and Great Torrington**

Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> C. traffic from Bideford to Great Torrington left the town via the Torrington road (now Torrington Street) and had to face a steep climb up Torrington Lane, before winding along lanes over Gammerton Moor and over Huntshaw Bridge<sup>46</sup>. But in 1824 that was about to change. In that year, the Torrington Turnpike Trust applied for “An Act for more effectually improving and keeping in Repair the several Roads in and near Great Torrington; and to make a new Line of Road on the Western Side of the River Torridge, in the County of Devon.”<sup>47</sup> At which time Bideford Turnpike Trust sought to link into this scheme, applying for “An Act for improving and keeping in repair several Roads in and near the Town of Bideford, and for making a new Line of Road on the Western Side of the River Torridge, and also a new Line of Road to unite such Road with the Road leading from Bideford to Buckland Brewer in the County of Devon.”<sup>48</sup> Once built, this would substantially reduce the traffic along the old Torrington road.

Rogers gives the date of construction of New Road as 1825<sup>49</sup>. Writing about 1840, he may have been relying upon memory rather than published sources. This date refers to completion of the original route. This ran up to the Pannier Market and finished there, but such an entrance into the town was considered unsatisfactory<sup>50</sup> (presumably due to the gradients involved to reach the quays and the railway terminus that the town hoped it might soon have).

44 Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 23 August 1828 p2 c5

45 “Devon and Cornwall.” Dorset County Chronicle 15 December 1825 p3 c5

46 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 58

47 Rosavear, “Great Torrington Turnpike Road,” 2013, n.p.

48 Rosavear, “Barnstaple Turnpike Road,” 2013, n.p.

49 Rogers, Notes on Bideford, Vol 2 Pg. 95

50 “MDV58453 New Road Bideford” Devon & Dartmoor HER. Heritage Gateway:  
Online:<https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk> Accessed 2 Feb 2020

Alison Grant suggests that the building of this New Road to Great Torrington displaced an established potter Bryant Ching (c. 1768-1848) from his Hallsannery Pottery, whereupon he moved the business to East-the-Water<sup>51</sup>. Following Ching's move, it would have been logical for his goods to ship from eastern wharves. This, however, requires further confirmation, as it is not clear how the Ching of Hallsannery related (if at all) to the Bryant Ching of East-the-Water (1812-1848). An 'Old Pottery' is clearly marked beside the New Road at Hallsannery on the 1881 OS Map. The 1804 Ordnance Survey sketch, for the 1809 1<sup>st</sup> Series map, which pre-dates the construction of the New Road, shows no building in the later position of the pottery, or any track or road by which that position might be reached.

The East-the-Water Bryant Ching was born in Clovelly c. 1814, to a farmer named Hugh Ching. By 1840, when he married, he was already a potter and living in Bideford. On the 1841 Census he is listed in East-the-Water, with his wife Mary, just two entries from another potter, Samuel Ching. On the 1851 census he is listed in Torrington Lane, a potter and coal merchant, employing nine men. By the 1861 Census Ching employed 6 men and 5 boys. By that time the pottery had become renowned for the fire-clay ovens it produced<sup>52</sup>.

## **1826, wages cut in the shipyards**

The Bristol Mercury of 18 September 1826 reported "The master shipwrights of Bideford, in consequence of the depression of trade, have reduced the wages of their workmen 3s. a-week."<sup>53</sup>.

## **1826, parliament asked about developing Bideford's coal**

The Western Times of 18 June 1826 reported that "In the House of Commons on Tuesday, Colonel Day asked the Secretary for Mines if his attention had been drawn to the discovery of a seam of anthracite coal near Bideford, and whether any steps to develop this seam had come to the knowledge of the Department. Colonel Lane Fox replied that he was aware operations had been in progress in the neighbourhood of Bideford with the object of opening out workable seams of anthracite"<sup>54</sup>.

## **1827, the New Road gets a new entrance**

The new road to Great Torrington, whilst welcome, failed to provide easy access to the Bideford's Quay or East-the-Water's wharves. A level route to the bridge was needed and in March 1827 the "workmen began to demolish the Bridge-End-House" and it was "expected that the site will be cleared in another fortnight, when the long expected entrance to the new road will be thrown open to the public."<sup>55</sup>

Progress does not seem to have been as rapid as was hoped, for, on 22 November 1827, the North Devon Journal carried a notice from the Bideford Turnpike Trust, announcing that they intended to use the next session of Parliament to bring a bill, the content of which included "making a New Line of Road on the Western side of the Torridge," and other sections of a new route to Torrington<sup>56</sup>.

51 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 84

52 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 50

53 "London, Wednesday" Bristol Mercury 18 September 1826 p1 c3

54 "Coal Near Bideford; Questions Raised in the House of Commons." Western Times 18 June 1826 p3 c5

55 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 09 March 1827 p4 c2

56 "Bideford Turnpike Trust" p1 c3

By 1829 an advertisement for a house in Butt Garden, Bideford, could boast of being “near the entrance to the new line of road to Torrington.”<sup>57</sup>

## 1827, faltering shipping trade fails to impact ship-building

“Notwithstanding the depression in the Shipping Trade, there are no less than eight Vessels from 70 to 250 tons burthen now building in this town, several are in a forward state, and when launched, others are to be laid down in their room.”<sup>58</sup>

## 1827, a fine vein of culm found in a Barnstaple Street garden

The Royal Cornwall Gazette, Falmouth Packet & Plymouth Journal (Truro, England) reported that "A fine vein of culm has been found in the garden of Mr. Rodd, east the water, Bideford."<sup>59</sup> This discovery was possibly as the result of Thomas Pollard's activities.

## 1827, a first attempt at a steam packet services

In January 1827 the steam packed *Lady Rodney* ventured into the Torridge, only to go aground near the Bridge. The town crier was then used to offer tours of the vessel before she was floated again on the next tide. Later in the year she offered a Bristol, Bideford, Barnstaple service, but only for a month<sup>60</sup>. The *Lady Rodney* had already been operating in the Bristol Channel for several years at this point. In 1823-4, she, together with the *Cambria*, trialled the Bristol to Newport packet route, successfully enough to consider a larger vessel in 1825.<sup>61</sup> In 1824 the *Lady Rodney* had run the first excursion to Minehead<sup>62</sup>. In July of that year she operated an excursion to Flat Holme and Barry Island, in June 1825 to Weston and Barry, and a month later to Minehead again<sup>63</sup>. The *Lady Rodney* continued to operate as a Newport to Bristol packet throughout 1827 and 1828, as a series of advertisements in *The Cambrian* attest<sup>64</sup>, and indeed was still doing so in 1830<sup>65</sup>. The only obvious summer gap being in June 1827. with the exception of June operating a packet service between Swansea and Bristol .

57 “Bideford” Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 25 July 1829 p1 c4

58 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 09 March 1827 p4 c2

59 Issue 1277. 19th Century British Library Newspapers Col 3, Heading London, Monday, December 10-12

60 Peter Christie & Alison Grant, *The Book of Bideford* (Tiverton: Halsgrove House, 2005), 43

61 “On this Day 15th October 1824” Penwith Local History Group.

Online:<http://www.penwithlocalhistorygroup.co.uk/on-this-day/?id=246> Accessed 8 Feb 2021

62 Fenella Rook “Name Index To Ships and Harbours of Exmoor, Exmoor Press, 11 High Street, Dulverton, Somerset, (1970) ISBN-13: 978-0900131158 by Graham Farr” GenUKI.

Online:<https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/MerchantMarine/Farr1970> Accessed 8 Feb 2021

63 John Armstrong, David M. Williams. *The Impact of Technological Change, The Early Steamship in Britain*. Liverpool University Press, 2017. Pg 88

64 A small selection, by way of example, are in the editions for 9 Aug 1827 (page 3), 28th June 1828 (page 3), 22 Nov 1828 (page 2)

65 Weston Dillwyn. *The Journals of Lewis Weston Dillwyn* (b.1778 d.1855). Trans. Richard Morris. Swansea Historical Collections: The Dillwyn Collection. Entry for 30 April 1930. Online: Accessed 8 Feb 2021

## **1828, a wider quay and additional lamps on the bridge**

In 1828 a package of highway changes awaited the passing of an act, works such as improvement of the under road, leading to the gate on the New Torrington Road, and widening of the Town Quay, would include the following - “seven additional lamps will be affixed on the bridge, on the upper side, which will prevent them from being broken by the bowsprits of vessels, which often, through the carelessness of sailors, knock down part of the wall.”<sup>66</sup> The widening of the Town Quay would undoubtedly have made it more attractive, as it competed for users with the eastern establishments.

## **1828, Bideford Harbour Act establishes quay dues**

In August 1827 Augustus Saltran Willet, Lord of the Manor of Bideford, published notice of his intention to apply to Parliament for an act to enable him to collect rates, dues, and tolls, from his “Quay or Pier on the West side of the navigable River Torridge, but also to set rates of Keyage and Keelage to be paid by vessels remaining in the harbour of Bideford”<sup>67</sup>. In 1828 Parliament enacted as the Bideford Quay Dues Bill as the Bideford Harbour Act<sup>68</sup>. Rogers, in his Notes on Bideford comments on the act's explicit recognition of the existence of ancient rights, stating 'Keelage was to be paid for every ship, resting upon sand or soil, “within the Limits where Keelage hath heretofore been accustomed to be paid in the harbour of Bideford”<sup>69</sup>. He also cites the act's statement that whereas certain authorities “claim to be entitled by several Royal Charters to the Right and Privilege of Exemption from the payment of any Toll, Rate or Duty whatsoever; be it therefore enacted and declared, that this Act, or any Matter or Thing herein contained, shall not operate either to the Prejudice or Advantage of any such Right or Privilege in any matter howsoever”<sup>70</sup>. The Act thereby seems to recognise that there were areas of the harbour in which Keelage had not traditionally been paid, such as seems to be the case for East-the-Water's wharves, whilst throwing the task of defining the validity of any supposed historic claims, such as those claimed for East-the-Water, back upon the courts.

## **1828, a terrible limekiln tragedy**

“On Monday morning last the body of a man called Henry Holwell, a miner, was discovered burning in the lime-kiln, at the end of the town of Bideford, leading to Barnstaple. It appeared he had been turned out of a public-house the preceding night, in a state of intoxication, and when found presented a most appalling spectacle, a great part of the body having been consumed”<sup>71</sup>.

## **1829, 111 vessels belong to the port**

A local reporter noted “Notwithstanding the complaint of dullness of trade, vessels of all sizes continue to be built here ; we have no less than seven building yards, and no sooner is one vessel launched, than the keel of another is laid down, and in most instances, sold before half finished. We have 111 vessels belonging to this Port, employed in Foreign and Coasting Trade, measurement per register 9,215 tons, which give employment to 415 men and boys”<sup>72</sup>.

66 “North Devon” Western Times 17 May 1828 p4 c3

67 “Notice is Hereby Given” North Devon Journal 24 August 1827 p1 c1

68 9 Geo IV Cap XXXIX; “Bideford Harbour” The London Gazette, 6 Jan 1925, pg 160

69 Rogers, Notes on Bideford, Bideford Library manuscript, c.1940 Vol. 2 Pg. 98

70 Rogers, Notes on Bideford, Bideford Library manuscript, c.1940 Vol. 2 Pg. 98

71 The Times 21 March 1828 London p3 c4

72 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 19 March 1829 p3 c2

## 1830, Barnstaple Road improvements agreed

Barnstaple Turnpike Trust heard proposals for a series of improvements to the Barnstaple to Bideford Road. “Mr. Mc. Adam laid before the meeting sections of cuttings and fillings” including a section for “Saltern's Hill, near Bideford Turnpike Gate.” It was understood that should they be adopted, then the proposed new road from Barnstaple to Bideford via Instow was to have been abandoned<sup>73</sup>.

Mr W. McAdam was superintendent of the Barnstaple Road, upon which he introduced his father John's new system of road-making<sup>74</sup>. This was a system of construction using layers of loose stones, that greatly improved the stability of the road. It was in order to stabilise these loose macadam layers that Edgar Hooley would later discover the Tarmac system (in 1901), patenting a commercial application a year later<sup>75</sup>.

William McAdam superintended a large number of trusts in the South West, though by 1823 he had involved his twenty-year-old son in that task. He informed a parliamentary committee “when I took possession of the Exeter roads I made a promise to the gentlemen that my son William would reside there constantly, as I reside in Wiltshire ; he has resided in Devonshire ever since I took the Exeter Trust, and superintends all the Devonshire roads in my absence, at my expense.”<sup>76</sup>

## 1830, Ordnance Survey maps and accessibility of ports

The 1830 Ordnance Survey Unions map shows the main channel of the Torridge running under the eastern end of the bridge and then continuing somewhat nearer to the eastern side.

In 1830 access to Barnstaples quays was limited, whilst Bideford was much more accessible. Barnstaple's historian Gribble stated, in 1830, that “there is sufficient water at the Quays [in Barnstaple] on spring tides for vessels of 100 tons burden, and four miles down for ships carrying 200 tons- In the "Pool" formed by the confluence of the Taw and Torridge, a ship of war may lie afloat at low water”<sup>77</sup>. Contrast that with the ability of East-the-Water's wharf-side shipyards to launch at least eight ships of over 200 tons, including several of over 300 tons, between 1800 & 1830<sup>78</sup>.

73 North Devon Journal 11 February 1830 p4 c2

74 “Report From Select Committee on Mr. McAdam's Petition, Relating to his Improved System of Constructing and Repairing the Public Roads of the Kingdom.” Ordered printed 1823 and appeared in Selection of Reports and Papers of the House of Commons: Public works, Volume 38. 1836. Pg 33

75 “Tarmac” Wolverhampton History & Heritage Website.  
Online:<http://www.historywebsite.co.uk/Museum/Tarmac/Group.htm> Accessed 27 June 2017

76 “Report From Select Committee on Mr. McAdam's Petition, Relating to his Improved System of Constructing and Repairing the Public Roads of the Kingdom.” Ordered printed 1823 and appeared in Selection of Reports and Papers of the House of Commons: Public works, Volume 38. 1836. Pg 37

77 John Besly Gribble, Memorials of Barnstaple, Barnstaple: Avery, 1830, pg 554

78 Review of tables in Inkerman Rogers. Ships and Shipyards of Bideford Devon 1568 to 1938. Bideford:Gazette Printing Service, 1947

## **1830, Pigot's Directory presents a picture of the trade**

“Since the warehousing system has been extended to the port of Bideford, its trade has kept increasing, and consists chiefly in importing timber from North America, general goods from Ireland, and coals from the north-west of the country : exporting oak bark, iron and other goods to Ireland; earthenware, tiles, &c. to Guernsey and Jersey ; linen and woollen goods, cordage, iron, provisions, naval stores &c. &c. to the colonies in North America. The coasting trade is in corn to, and general goods from, London and Bristol ; slates, china ware, iron castings, bar iron and limestone from Wales. The principal manufacture of the place is a peculiar kind of earthenware, viz. ovens, salting-pans, pitchers and other coarse wares. There are in the neighbourhood some culm, and mineral black paint mines ; the former are becoming very productive, having been worked but partially, until lately, for nearly two hundred years”<sup>79</sup>.

The Nobility, Gentry and Clergy in East-the-Water are listed as follows (with indications of their whereabouts added parenthetically from other records): Admiral Glynn (Torridge House); Rev. Chris. Passmore (to the N of Colonial House); John Rodd, gent (east of Way's Yard); Mrs. Mary Willcock (Colonial Buildings)<sup>80</sup>.

## **1830, closure of William Taylor's shipyard at Crosspark Rock**

This closure was almost certainly precipitated by the imminent construction of the new road to Barnstaple, via the shoreline to Instow, for this would have rendered shipbuilding on the site less viable. It was probably following this closure that a potter was established on Crosspark Rock.

## **1830, start of an economic slump in the local area**

The period from 1830-1844 marked a low point for the economy of Devon and across that period some 1,500 people sailed to Prince Edward Island from the West Country, the majority choosing Bideford as their point of departure<sup>81</sup>. James Yeo's 283 ton vessel, *British Lady* (built in 1836) regularly sailed between Bideford and Charlottetown, carrying lumber for Bideford's shipbuilders and carpenters (potentially including those on the east bank), and returning with goods and passengers<sup>82</sup>. Bideford's popularity amongst West Country emigrants as a point of departure would continue until the coming of the railway provided easier access to Bristol, Plymouth, and eventually Liverpool.

## **1830 Colonial Building becomes a workhouse**

In Dec 1830 Jane Wilcock leased the Colonial Buildings to the Overseers of the Poor for a year, at the cost of five shillings. They then used it as a workhouse<sup>83</sup>. This might be the initial part of a lease & release property transfer, as Peter Christie notes, in his “A North Devon Chronology”<sup>84</sup>, that in 1830 “The old workhouse in Bideford (today's Royal Hotel) is put up for sale.”

79 Pigot's Directory for Devonshire, 1830. Pg. 183

80 Pigot's Directory for Devonshire, 1830. Pg. 184

81 Lucille H. Campey, *Ignored but Not Forgotten: Canada's English Immigrants*, Toronto:Dundurn, 2014, 51

82 Lucille H. Campey, *Planters, Paupers, and Pioneers: English Settlers in Atlantic Canada*, Toronto:Natural Heritage (Dundurn), 2010, 175

83 A brief History of the Royal Hotel. The Royal Hotel. Pg 6.

84 Peter Christie “A North Devon Chronology”

Online:<http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/DevonMisc/NDJchronology.html>. Accessed 6/4/2016.

## **1830, Thomas Allom's etching**

In 1832 J. Britton & E.W. Brayley published an account of Devon and Cornwall. In this they report that in Bideford the streets are “much cleaner than those of maritime towns generally are ; but many of the houses being of rude materials, and covered with bad slate, or thatch, have a mean appearance.”<sup>85</sup> Accompanying the description is an etching, dated 1830, by Thomas Allom, showing the bridge from the East-the-Water approach, with a limekiln just below the point where the Old Barnstaple Road swung into town. The hull of a ship under construction is visible at William Brook's shipyard.

## **1831, apples to Scotland and oak-bark to Ireland's**

Exports from Bideford are described as “sails, cordage, and articles of general supply to the fisheries of Newfoundland, oak-bark to Ireland, apples to Scotland, earthenware to Wales, and corn and flour to Bristol” with “timber from America and the Baltic, and coal from Bristol and Wales” arriving as imports.<sup>86</sup>

## **1831, Gaol moved to Barnstaple Street**

In May 1831 it was ordered at the Bideford Quarter Sessions that a common gaol, to serve the borough and the manor of Bideford, should be set up. The money was duly raised and the jail opened up accordingly, in its position adjoining the workhouse. These premises remained as a prison until 1897, when the present police station was built.”<sup>87</sup>.

## **1832, Bideford Town Council established**

In 1832 Bideford Town Council were established, but they didn't get their robes until 1951 when they were donated by Bideford born, Cardiff businessman McTaggart Short, just one of his many gifts to the town<sup>88</sup>.

## **1832 a new Bideford to Barnstaple turnpike, via Instow**

Up until this time the main road between Barnstaple and Bideford had run via Holmcott and Eastleigh, but in 1831 an existing order facilitating the development of a new road from Barnstaple, via Instow, to Bideford was rescinded, as it was subject to sufficient being raised for fund a planned £6,000 development and that sum had not been raised. A revised, and cheaper, plan had been drawn up, but before that could proceed the original order had to be rescinded<sup>89</sup>.

85 Devonshire & Cornwall Illustrated, From Original Drawings by Thomas Allom, W. H. Bartlett, & c. With Historical and Topographical Descriptions. London: H. Fisher, R. Fisher, & P. Jackson, 1832. Pg 50

86 “Bideford” in Samuel Lewis. A Topographical Dictionary of England. 1831

87 A brief History of the Royal Hotel. The Royal Hotel. Pg 7.

88 Peter Christie, North Devon, The Golden Years. Tiverton, Devon: Halsgrove, 2002, 93

89 “To Correspondents.” North Devon Journal and General Advertiser. 22 December 1831 p4 c5



On 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 1832 a new order was placed granting £5,000 for “the purpose of making a new road from Barnstaple to Bideford.” This was the road that would run via Instow and therefore across Southcott Marsh and various other smaller marshy inlets near Tapley. In march that year the Barnstaple Turnpike Trust were considering Mr. Buck's response to their letter to him, requesting that he indemnify the trust against the inundation of the road where it crossed his marshland. Buck had suggested that he was too frequently away from the area to give attention to the work that it would require, this work presumably being that of maintaining sea defences. He also stressed that he had presented the trust with £500, above and beyond nearly £100 worth of land that they had required from him for the road itself, which sums he considered “ample equivalent for any advantage he might gain from the undertaking, as well as any risk the trust might sustain.” The Trustees decided that Mr. Buck's refusal to accept their terms (which were apparently not unusual for such roads) was never-the-less insufficient grounds for cancellation of the project<sup>90</sup>.

In Feb. 1832 work began on the new route<sup>91</sup>.

In Oct 1832 a workman called Pollard was killed at Cross Park, when rocks collapsed onto him and crushed his skull, whilst working on a section of the new road<sup>92</sup>.

## **1832, plans for a Bideford & Okehampton railway**

In 1832-3 the Bideford and Okehampton Railway Company submitted plans for roads and a quay at “Crossparks.” This unsuccessful attempt to develop a line was the first in a series, but has left us with good quality plans of the northern section of the East-the-water shore, showing limekilns, quays, and a pottery near Crossparks Rock.<sup>93</sup>

## **1832, Admiralty charts “Bideford Creek” (aka the Torridge)**

In 1832 Lieut. H.M. Denham R.N., assisted by Lieut. C.G. Robinson and Mr. E.I. Bedford, undertook a nautical survey of the north-east coast of Devonshire, between Hartland Point and Combermartin to a scale of 1:35,000<sup>94</sup>. The area charted included the approach up the Torridge to Bideford, or “Bideford Creek” as the navy called it. Prominent landmarks were marked, such as the “New Road” from East-the-Water to Instow and the pottery on Cross Park Rock.

## **1833, a plummeting horse, evidence of a new toll-house**

90 “Barnstaple Turnpike Trust.” North Devon Journal and General Advertiser 08 March 1832 p4 c2

91 Henry William Rogers. Notes on Bideford. manuscript. c1940. NDRO. Vol. 2II Pg. 96

92 “Barnstaple and North Devon Dispensary” North Devon Journal 11 October 1832 p4 c3

93 Sir R. Lethbride. “The Bideford & Okehampton Railway” Devon Assoc. trans.XXXIV-1902.; “Bideford and Okehampton Railway.” Exeter Flying Post 20 September 1832 p4 c3-4; Papers (a letter and maps) for the Bideford and Okehampton Railway at Cross Park are held by the Devon Archives and Local Studies Service (South West Heritage Trust), ref:R2379A/Z38/67

94 A chart of the north-east coast of Devonshire, between Hartland Point and Combermartin, including the bar and ports of Barnstaple and Bideford, the harbour of Ilfracombe and Lundy Island, surveyed in 1832, by Lieut. H.M. Denham R.N. with the assistance of Lieut. C.G. Robinson and Mr. E.I. Bedford. Extracted from the survey of the Bristol Channel under the sanction of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. Ilfracombe:N.V. Lee and G.F. Herbert, 1833.

The Liverpool Mercury of 28 June 1833 re-published from the Bristol Mercury the following account: “Thursday last, as a horse and cart belonging to Mr. Lee, of Salterns Farm, Bideford, was drawing earth from near the new toll-house, on Barnstaple road, the horse backed with the load and was precipitated over the cliff, which was 44 feet high – strange to say, the horse received no injury, with the exception of a small cut behind the ear.”<sup>95</sup>.

## **1833, the Folly Field sold by bridge trust**

The Bridge trust undertook to sell various of their lands to Thomas Burnard, including a “Field or Close of Land, called or known by the name of *The Folly Field*, containing by admeasurement 1a. 0r. 38p., in the possession of the said Thomas Burnard, situate on the east side of the river Torridge, in *Bideford* aforesaid, and lying at or near a place called *Nuttaberry*, bounded on the north by Trust Lands of the said Feoffees, on the west, by the strand of the said river, and on the east and south by the lands of Lewis William Buck, Esquire.”<sup>96</sup>

## **1833, partnership of Hamlyn & Hatherly dissolved**

The merchant partnership between John Hatherly and John Hamlyn was dissolved, with the business subsequently to be operated by Hamlyn alone. The partnership had operated a timber business in Barnstaple Street, the site of which (now part of Brunswick Wharf) was occupied, by 1836, when Hamlyn and Hatherly sold their interest in the site, it was occupied by the shipbuilder and timber merchant Thomas Evans<sup>97</sup>.

## **1833, new road turnpike to Barnstaple via Instow opens**

On 31 Oct 1833, the board of the Barnstaple Turnpike Trust heard how the new road to Bideford via Instow, together with its footpaths, was complete. Some landowners had insisted on building land prices (increasing the expense by £140), whilst others had given land (worth £524 7s 6d) at no expense. Those gifting land were: A.S. Willet, Esq.; L.W. Buck Esq.; G. A. Barbor, Esq.; Rev. W. C. Hill, and Rev. A.F. Lloyd.<sup>98</sup>

## **1834, the first steamer built on the Torridge**

In September 1834, a crowd estimated at five thousand strong, assembled to watch the launch of *The Torridge* from Appledore, the first steamer to be build on the Torridge, and a sign of where things were headed<sup>99</sup>. *The Torridge* would help accustom Bideford folk to the benefits of a packet-steamer service to Bristol, a service that would later be provided from East-the-Water’s wharves.

95 “Varieties” Liverpool Mercury of 28 June 1833 p6 c5

96 “Bideford Bridge Trust” North Devon Journal 07 February 1833 p1 c1

97 North Devon Journal 04 July 1833 p1 c1

98 “Barnstaple Turnpike Trust” North Devon Journal. 31 October 1833 p4 c2

99 “Launch of ‘The Torridge’ Steamer” North Devon Journal 11 September 1834 p4 c2-3

## **1834, Bideford fossils and the Devonian Controversy**

At the end of 1834 the eminent geologist Henry De La Beche presented a collection of fossil plants, including species of the ferns *Alethopteris*, *Mariopteris*, and the horsetail *Calamocladus*, from the anthracite horizons in the Culm Measures near Bideford, to the Geological Society<sup>100</sup>. Given the timing of De La Beche's collection it is likely that some of these were from the various mines and workings then active in East-the-Water, as De La Beche is later reported to have visited them and ventured the opinion that the amount of anthracite in that hillside was not sufficient for an economically viable mine. De La Beche would go on to found the British Geological Survey (in 1835), the oldest in the world, but his views on these discoveries, soon trigger disagreement amongst Britain's leading geologists. The resultant debate, which could have derailed De La Beche's career, has become a landmark in the development of the science of geology now known as the Devonian Controversy, for its resolution led to a fundamental change in geological practice, with the value of fossils recognised as stratigraphic markers<sup>101</sup>.

## **1835, sale of southern end of Brunswick Wharf**

A later abstract of title shows the section of the quay opposite the Colonial Buildings belonged to Jane Willcocks, who, at that time, sold it to Augustus Saltren Willet Cleveland (1781–1849), of Tapley Park, for £530<sup>102</sup>.

## **1835, death of Chapman, shipbuilder at Cleavehouses**

Richard Chapman, shipbuilder, at Cleavehouses, Northam, died in the summer of 1835<sup>103</sup>, having been assisted at that yard, in his later years, by John Evans, formerly of East-the-Water. His son Thomas Evans, who also seems to have started out in East-the-Water, would later choose to introduce the well known Northam shipbuilder George Cox to his trade by taking him as his partner, and thereby indirectly bringing Henry Moran Restarick to the area.

## **1835, Penny Cyclopædia's snapshot of trade**

At this time Bideford's primary exports are described by the Penny Cyclopædia or 1835 as “oak bark, which is shipped in great quantities to Scotland and Ireland, oats, malt, and sails, cordage, and articles of general supply to the fisheries of Newfoundland.” The primary imports were “timber from North America and the Baltic, coals from Bristol and Wales, and spices and Tobacco from the West Indies.” The Cyclopædia notes that “Shipbuilding is carried on to a great extent; there are nine or ten building yards, and several frigates were built here during the last war.”<sup>104</sup>

100 E.A. Newell Arber “The Fossil Flora of the Culm Measures of North-West Devon, and the Palaeobotanical Evidence with Regard to the Age of the Beds.” Pages 291–325 in Vol 197 of *E Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Containing Papers of a Biological Character* (1896-1934). 1 Jan 1905. Page 295. Online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rstb.1905.0010> Accessed 28 Feb 2020

101 Bate, David G. “Sir Henry Thomas De la Beche and the founding of the British Geological Survey” Pages 149-165 in *Mercian Geologist*, 2010. 17 (3). Pg 162-3

102 Peter Christie. “Bideford history . . . with Peter Christie: Brunswick Wharf.” Page 14 in *My Town Bideford*. Issue 28. *North Devon Gazette*, July 2015

103 “Deaths” *North Devon Journal* 4 June 1835 p4 c3

104 “Bideford.” Pages 387-388 in Volume 4 of *The Penny Cyclopædia of The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*. London: Charles Knight, 1835.

## **1835, gasworks constructed, pipe laid under the bridge**

In 1834 the Gas Company was promoted<sup>105</sup>.

On 24 December 1835 the Bideford Gas Works advertised for “a few good workmen, as fitters up of Iron Works.”<sup>106</sup>. They were required presumably required for maintenance or finishing off of the works, which was accomplished “at the cost of £2800, raised in £10 shares.”<sup>107</sup> The works stood on land leased from the Bridge Trust and the mains were run under the Long Bridge<sup>108</sup>. Gas was first used on the bridge itself in the 1835<sup>109</sup>.

At least one history of Bideford cites this gas-works opening date as 1853, but this is clearly just a simple transposition of 53 for 35<sup>110</sup>.

## **1836, a foundry opens on the wharves**

In 1836, Messrs. Paramore and Bodley, of Exeter, opened an Iron and Brass foundry, situated on what had formerly been Vickery's Wharf<sup>111</sup>. By 1838, Parramore had split from Bodley and was going it alone.<sup>112</sup> The foundry seems to have cashed in on the sudden rage for Arnott's Stoves, which offered incredible efficiency for their time, but quality control issues and lack of control over the trade-name had, by 1839, earned these stoves a reputation for exploding<sup>113</sup>. The foundry business was offered for sale in May of that year<sup>114</sup>, and the site was auctioned off in July 1840<sup>115</sup>.

## **1837, the Workhouse leaves Barnstaple Street**

In 1837 the Board of Guardians invited tenders for a new Workhouse, to replace that which was currently housed in the Colonial Building.<sup>116</sup>

## **1837, Customs approval excepts warehousing tobacco**

The honourable Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs” approved the Port of Bideford for “warehousing all goods excepting tobacco and silks.” Commenting that it had a 400ft quay which enjoyed 17ft of water at spring tide.<sup>117</sup> This at a time when, etchings and maps suggest, the deep water channel lay against the eastern shore.

105 “Bideford Long Bridge” Bideford Weekly Gazette 05 August 1902 p7 c3

106 North Devon Journal 4 December 1835 p1 c1

107 Whites Directory, 1850, 758

108 Frank E Whiting & Peter Christie. The Long Bridge of Bideford Through The Centuries. Bideford:Bideford Bridge Trust, 2006, pg 13

109 “Bideford Long Bridge” Bideford Weekly Gazette 05 August 1902 p7 c3

110 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 98

111 “North Devon” Western Times 16 July 1836 p3 c5

112 “Partnershi Dissolved” Birmingham Journal 10 March 1838 p8 c2

113 “An Investigation Into Dr Neil Arnott, MD. FRS.”

Online:[http://www.hevac-heritage.org/victorian\\_engineers/arnott/arnott.htm](http://www.hevac-heritage.org/victorian_engineers/arnott/arnott.htm) Accessed: 4 Aug 2017

114 “To Be Disposed Of” Bristol Mercury 11 May 1839 p2 c6

115 “Desirable Property” Monmouthshire Merlin 25 July 1840 p1 c3

116 “Bideford Union” Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 23 September 1837 p1 c6

117 “Bideford” Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 21 January 1837 p3 c3

## **1837, passing of the Slave Compensation Act**

By the time slavery was abolished, most town and even larger villages would have had somebody who was involved in slave ownership. Whilst this was clearly a sorry affair by modern standards, at that time slaves formed part of people's wealth and they could not simply be set free without effecting the balance sheet of their former owners. Hence, the government set out to compensate former owners for their loss. Not every instance of slave ownership involved large numbers of slaves, sometimes just one or two, or even a share in a slave would be owned, but the applications for compensation provide an accurate snapshot of the extent of slave ownership at that time.

The preliminary report of the Friend's of Devon Archives' Black History Project observes "It is self-evident that Devon has not the history of slavery and black immigration that some parts of the country has had. The comparative lack of references in financial papers indicates the local economy was never built on slavery, a supposition confirmed by published histories of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Individual merchants and gentlemen had estate interests in the West Indies but to a lesser degree than in Ireland."<sup>118</sup> The compensation applications show that, amongst the local gentry, Torrington-based Lord Rolle had a significant holding, but only a handful of folk in Bideford itself were entitled to compensation and that for very few slaves.

## **1838, exceptionally high tides cause flooding**

An exceptional tide, greater than for thirty years, was only prevented from inundating the town by workmen placing clay and planks on the riverbank, nevertheless, all the houses on the quay suffered, as did some in East-the-Water, to a depth of two feet. Further catastrophe was only avoided by a shift in the wind to the east<sup>119</sup>.

## **1838, notice of more turnpikes East-the-Water**

In Nov 1838 the North Devon Journal carried a notice from the South Molton Turnpike Trust concerning an act that they intended to bring forward<sup>120</sup>. This included "ANOTHER of such roads to commence in the parish of Chittlehampton, at or near the three mile post in the present South Molton turnpike leading from the town of South Molton to Torrington, and to terminate at or near the east end of Bideford Bridge, in the town of Bideford; and for the building, repairing, and maintaining, a bridge across the Taw, on the same intended road. ANOTHER of such roads to diverge from the last-mentioned intended road at or near a place called Salterns, in the parish of Bideford, and to terminate also at or near the said east end of Bideford Bridge."

## **1838, Thomas Evans, ship-builder, leaves East-the-Water**

In 1833 the shipbuilder Thomas Evans, of East-the-Water, seems to have acquired various property at Orchard Hill, Northam, including marshland on which he would later establish a new ship-building yard.<sup>121</sup> In May 1838 he launched the first vessel from his new shipyard at Orchard Hill, leaving his facilities in East-the-Water now redundant.

118 Friends of Devon's Archives: preliminary report of the Black History Project. Online <http://www.foda.org.uk/main/projects/blackhistory.htm>

119 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 1 March 1838 p4 c3

120 "South Molton Turnpike Trust" North Devon Journal 15 November 1838 p1 c2-3

121 R. I. & S. H. Kirby, Vessels Built or Refitted in East-the-Water, 15 August 2017.

Online:[http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships\\_launched\\_from\\_East-the-Water.pdf](http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships_launched_from_East-the-Water.pdf) Accessed 20 September 2017

## **1839, workhouse moves from Barnstaple Street, but gaol stays**

When the workhouse moved from Barnstaple Street in 1839, the gaol stayed<sup>122</sup>.

## **1839, Newfoundland fishing boats serve the clay trade**

An article from 1839, on the pottery industry, noted that Wedgewood, in giving evidence before the Lords, in support of lifting certain restrictions, pointed out the beneficial impact of the clay trade both for Staffordshire and for those transporting clay, such as that brought from “near the Land's End in Cornwall” to a variety of places, including Bideford. “The coasting vessels, which have been employed at the proper season in the Newfoundland fishery, carry these materials coastwise to Liverpool and Hull,” amounting to a total annual quantity (from Devon and Dorset combined) of “more than twenty thousand tons”<sup>123</sup>.

## **1839, significant exports of corn, bark, and earthenware**

Robson's Devonshire Directory of 1839 paints the following picture, concerning Bideford, “Bideford is a place of very considerable trade, and many of the merchants are large ship-owners, consequently the quay presents an animated appearance. It is the principal port in Devonshire for the export of corn, large quantities being annually sent to different parts of the kingdom. Here are manufacturers of carpeting, woollen clothes, and earthenware, which last item is exported to Wales, Ireland, and Bristol. Timber being plentiful in the vicinity, ship-building is actively carried on ; and great quantities of oak-bark are shipped to Scotland and Ireland. The Newfoundland fishery is also a productive branch of trade.”<sup>124</sup>.

## **1839, John Crocker building boats**

Robson's 1839 Directory for Devonshire list a John Crocker as a boatbuilder in East-the-Water. Possibly located near Nutaberry, the business was short-lived, as Croker died in 1842. Aged only 42, his death notice stated that he was a block-maker and boat builder<sup>125</sup>.

## **1840, Colonial Buildings' wine cellar becomes a prison**

In 1840 the civil prison was removed from Meddon Street to East-the-Water, where, for a time, it occupied the wine cellars of the Colonial Building (now the Royal Hotel)<sup>126</sup>.

122 A brief History of the Royal Hotel. The Royal Hotel. Pg 7.

123 “The History of a Teacup” The Penny Magazine 23 March 1839 p110 c1

124 Robson's Directory for Devonshire, 1839. Pg. 75

125 Kirby, “Vessels”, 2017, 19; “Deaths” North Devon Journal 10 November 1842 p3 c1

126 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 56

## 1840, Johnson launched first vessel from his shipyard

By 1840 Thomas Evans had left his East-the-Water to focus on his new yard at Orchard Hill. His East-the -Water shipyard was taken over by East-the-Water resident, Robert Johnson (1794-1855)<sup>127</sup>. In 1855 Robert died and the business later passed to his son John, who lived in Springfield Terrace<sup>128</sup>. Early photographs show that their shipyard could eventually build up to three vessels at once.

## 1841, first national census carried out

With no street names, and addresses simply given as “East-the Water” this census is less useful than later ones, but still provides a picture of employment in the area at that time. Turnover between the 1841 and 1851 census appears high, probably because of a mix of emigration and the tendency for poorer folk, who often rented property as monthly or annual tenants, to move to find work.

## 1841, an Act to enable further local Turnpikes is passed

In January 1841 an advocate for Barnstaple reflected on the growing network of improved roads into Bideford: “The people of Barnstaple should not forget that they had no mean rival in the town of Bideford; its river was far preferable, and if the roads to it were improved, there would be a strong inducement in some parts of the neighbourhood to transfer their traffic from Barnstaple to Bideford”<sup>129</sup>.

Later in that year Barnstaple Turnpike Trust (established in 1763) clearly thought it worth capitalizing upon that anticipated trade, for they brought forward an Act of parliament to legitimise further Turnpike development involving East-the-Water. The following were mentioned in the 1841 Act:

*“The way post near Hele in Tawstock parish to Bideford. Confirmed in the 1865 Act. Now Old Bideford Road in Barnstaple and then an unclassified road through Eastleigh (SS488279) to Old Barnstaple Road in Bideford.*

*Bideford to the bridge on Great Torrington Common. Confirmed in the 1865 Act. Now an unclassified road through Gammaton Moor and Huntshaw Mill Bridge (SS492225) to within half a mile of Great Torrington (SS493198).*

*‘Sticklepath Gate’ in Tawstock parish through Instow to Bideford. This was by the ‘back road’ through Instow. The 1865 Act disturnpiked the back road and added the quay road instead. Now mostly B3233 from Barnstaple through Fremington, Yelland and Instow to Bideford.”<sup>130</sup>*

## 1841, American built ships arriving

<sup>127</sup> Kirby, “Vessels”, 2017, 34

<sup>128</sup> Kirby, “Vessels”, 2017, 30

<sup>129</sup> “Banstaple Turnpike Trust” North Devon Journal 28 January 1841 p2 c3

<sup>130</sup> Martin Ebdon, The Turnpike Roads of Devon in 1840. Martin Ebdon, 2014. Page 11.

The scene, in February, on the western quay, provides testimony to the importance of the American shipyards for Bideford's merchants. The Western Times reported it as follows: "Bideford Quay presents a very lively, gay, and animated appearance—seven or eight large new barques and vessels that have arrived from America, built for our merchants here, are rigging and fitting out for their spring voyages. The two largest barques were built at Prince Edward Island, for Thomas B. Chanter, Esq."<sup>131</sup>.

## **1842, duties on Baltic timber reduced**

The prohibitive duties introduced in 1807 had been slightly reduced in 1821, but it was not until 1842 that these duties, which had indirectly prompted the growth of shipbuilding in Prince Edward's Island, were substantially reduced<sup>132</sup>.

## **1842, a slump leads to speculative shipbuilding**

Brooks is reported, in the local press, to be building speculatively, following a slump in orders.

"The large and extensive ship building for many years carried out at the Ports of Bideford and Appledore, is at present very flat and dull, there are no less than between 3 and 4000 tons of shipping at present upon the stocks in the above ports, the whole we hear (with the exception of about 5 or 600 tons contracted for) is building upon speculation. We have not heard but of very few of the workmen that have been discharged from the respective yards, or that only about one shilling a week reduction in men's wages has taken place in either of the Ports since the winter.-- A most splendid vessel of 900 tons burthen, will be ready to be launched from the building yards of Mr. W. Brooks, East the Water, in the course of 6 weeks or 2 months hence. The model and workmanship of this fine structure are and will be additional proofs of the abilities of Mr. Brooks, the owner and sole contractor and manager from the commencement to the completion."<sup>133</sup>

## **1842, Woods' plan of Bideford**

In 1842 John Woods produced a Plan of Bideford in which he set out the names of many of the building's occupants. The level of detail is slightly lower for East-the-Water than some other parts, but never-the-less very useful.

## **c. 1843, Wood, Pollard & Co. mining**

Wood, Pollard & Co. appears to be the earliest company formed for exploiting the Barnstaple Street culm deposits, as the company, which owned and operated its own lighter, presumably had easy access to the river.<sup>134</sup>

131 Western Times, 6 February 1841 p3 c5

132 Greenhill & Giffard, Westcountrymen in Prince Edward's Island, 1967, 25

133 "North Devon" Trewman's Exeter Flying Post 29 June 1843 p3 c6

134 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 13 April 1843 p3 c2-3



## 1843, manure stored at Clarence Wharf

Mr Chanter begins to use a store on Clarence Wharf for the storage of manures. On and off, parts of Clarence Wharf continued in such use until at least 1884, at which time a manure store there was owned by Mr. Geo. Heard<sup>135</sup>.

## 1843, photography comes to Bideford

An early, possibly the first, appearance of photography in Bideford is attested by an article from 1843 – “*Photography*. – This inimitable invention for taking miniature likenesses by the agency of light is now for a few days open to the inhabitants of Bideford, who will doubtless be eager to avail themselves of the beautiful operation of the art which has ensured the patronage of the first and most distinguished personages in the realm.”<sup>136</sup>

## 1843, Heard's imports and his loss

In September, in addition to a full load of timber, Richard Heard advertised that his latest shipment included two young Canadian bears, one of each sex and both of a suitable age for training<sup>137</sup>. In October the arrival of his American ship, *Lady Sale*, Richards master, 350 tons, was far less welcome<sup>138</sup>. She arrived in Bideford “presenting a truly melancholy appearance, and a picture of the sufferings the master and remaining part of the crew must have endured,” for, having sailed from Bideford on 26<sup>th</sup> August, a gale had carried away her main top-mast, fore-mast, fore and main yards, topsail yard and jibbson, together with four men who were reefing the fore-topsails. One fell on deck, the rest plunged, with the mast, into the water, from which the captain gallantly hauled two. The fourth, the vessel's mate, and Mr Heard's own son, was drowned.

## 1844, Publication of Pigot's 1844 directory

Pigot's Directory of 1844 lists various traders in East-the-Water, some of whom, by their trade, or their location in later directories, may be assumed to be on the shore<sup>139</sup>. They are (with parenthetical comments being mine):

- Lang George, school, East-the-Water (an individual so presumably a schoolmaster, the school would later)
- James Vicary, blacksmith and shipsmith (in later directories it appears the local blacksmiths forge was in Barnstaple Street)
- William Blake, butcher (likely to have been in Torrington Street, as later into the 19<sup>th</sup> C. there was a butchers shop in Torrington Street, only in the 20<sup>th</sup> C. did one appear in Torrington Lane)
- John Daniel, a coal merchant (in East-the-Water, also listed in 1853 but no more specific location)

135 “Bideford Borough Magistrates” Bideford Weekly Gazette 29 April 1884 p5 c2

136 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 09 March 1843 p3 c3

137 “American Red and Yellow Pine and Birch Logs” Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 16 September 1843 p2 c6

138 “Melancholy Shipwreck and Loss of Life” Trewman's Exeter Flying Post 12 October 1843 p3 c6

139 Slater, I. Pigot & Co.'s Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography of the Counties of Berkshire, Dorsetshire, Monmouthshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Cornwall, Hampshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, Herefordshire, Wiltshire and North and South Wales. 1844. [Part 1: Berks to Glos], Manchester:I. Slater, 1844.

- William Eastman, a coal merchant, based simply at 'Wharf,' so could be in East-the-Water, but this is not certain.
- Richard Lake, a coal merchant, lime burner, and maltster (likely to be based on the shore for his lime burning operations)
- Thomas Stanbury, coal merchant
- Edward Hutchings, cooper
- Row & Facey, Steam Mills and Corn Merchants (In 1822 Facey is given as the name of a lime-burner in East-the-Water, and in 1845 Roe and Facey are linked with sites of operation later used by WCA Co-Op, so the mill was probably on the WCA building site, and the lime kiln may also have been there)
- Edward Petherick, Earthenware manufacturers (not yet sure where he was based)
- William Embery, listed under Joiners and Carpenters (for many years the Embery family were based in Barnstaple Street)
- Thomas Ley, a lime burner (leased property from the Bridge Trust in Nuttaberry in 1839, so probably based near there. Early paintings suggest a lime-kiln in that area)
- Henry Tucker, maltster and merchant
- William Brook, shipbuilder (at Cross Park)
- John Johnson, shipbuilder (on the Brunswick Wharf shipyard site) [only one other – Evans & Cox – is listed for Bideford, they were on the other bank]
- Gas Works, East-the-Water – Edward Martin White, manager
- Wood & Pollard, culm proprietors, East-the-Water (later using the wharves)

Several inns or public houses are mentioned

- Barnstaple Inn, John Hopgood, East-the-Water
- Ship on Launch, William Elliot, East-the-Water
- Swan, James Plucknett, East-the-Water
- Three Crowns, Robt. Young, East-the-Water
- Welcome Inn, Richard Lake, East-the-Water

In this directory I Baker is listed at New Road (the head office), rather than in East-the-Water (the yard).

## 1844, prosperity in search of a rail link to markets

With the prospect of the Taw Vale Railway servicing port facilities at Barnstaple (via Fremington Quay) and Ilfracombe, the people of Bideford called a public meeting at which they accepted the desirability of extending a railway line to Bideford<sup>140</sup>. The meeting was informed that Bideford's estimated catchment as a market extended to Kilkhampton in the west, taking in Holsworthy, Meeth, and Black Torrington to the south-west and south, and extending to Fremington in the east. A summary of the annual trade of Bideford was given at that time as follows: 10,000 quarters of wheat; 15,000 quarters of barley; 20,000 quarters of oats; 3,000 tons of potatoes. In 1843 vessels landed 27,852 tons of coal, 9,169 tons of culm, and 102,600 tons of limestone (comprising 1,026 cargoes). 5,521 tons of European timber were landed and the import of hemp, tallow, tar, and hides was also important to the port's trade. A total of 12,475 tons of shipping was registered at the port, employing over one thousand seamen. Conspicuous by their absence are any mention of trade in clay, pottery, or fish, such items presumably being of less interest to railmen.

140 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 31 October 1844 p2 c6-7

## **1845, North Devon Railway Company issues shares**

In July 1845 the North Devon Railway Company published its prospectus in Bristol<sup>141</sup>. Whilst it only planned to bring a line to Barnstaple, that increased the pressure on Bideford's merchants and officials to persuade a railway company to connect the town to the rapidly growing rail network. Eventually, this Tiverton to Barnstaple scheme would loose out to the Taw Vale Railway and Dock Company's scheme.

The prospectus provides some interesting insights into the general trade of Bideford at that time, mentioning that large quantities of limestone, culm, coal, and iron, were brought from Wales, whilst foreign timber and general merchandise were also major imports, whilst potters clay and agricultural produce were major exports, the clay being shipped to Liverpool amongst other places<sup>142</sup>.

## **1846, Thomas Waters takes over William Brook's shipyard**

In 1846 Thomas Waters (1796-1875) established his shipyard, which would eventually closed in 1871, on the site formerly occupied by William Brooks. By 1947 the site of Thomas Water's yard was occupied by the Western Counties Association Ltd. and known as Victoria Wharf.<sup>143</sup>

## **1846, Taw Vale Railway and Dock Company track laid**

In 1846 Taw Vale Railway and Dock Company finally laid its first stretch of track, bringing the railway one step closer to Bideford.<sup>144</sup>

## **1846, Bideford Anthracite Mining Company formed**

In November of 1846 a preliminary meeting of shareholders was held for the newly formed Bideford Anthracite Mining Company<sup>145</sup>. Their aim was to exploit the seams of culm adjacent to Clarence Wharf. To get the anthracite to the wharf, an adit was driven into the hillside, entering it in what is now the car-park of Croft's Financial Advisors, in Barnstaple Street.

Acworth states that Chapel Park was sold, by a Mr Pollard, to the newly formed company, for which Pollard would continue to act as agent<sup>146</sup>. This statement, however, requires further investigation, as it appears inconsistent with the growing body of evidence concerning the history of Chapel Park. Newspaper accounts of a later court case, in which Pollard appeared as an expert witness, identify that part of the mine sold by Pollard to the company lay not at Chapel Park, but adjacent to Barnstaple Street<sup>147</sup>. The case being concerned with a for damages arising from subsidence caused by mining in that area.

141 "North Devon Railway Company" Bristol Times and Mirror 26 July 1845 p2 c5-6

142 "Bideford and Tavistock Railway" Herapath's Railway Journal 17 May 1845 p723 c1-3

143 R. I. & S. H. Kirby, Vessels Built or Refitted in East-the-Water, 15 August 2017.

Online:[http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships\\_launched\\_from\\_East-the-Water.pdf](http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships_launched_from_East-the-Water.pdf) Accessed 20 September 2017

144 Kit Batten & Francis Bennett. "The Development of the Railways in Devon." Printed Maps of Devon:1575 – 1837 Second Edition. Online: <http://www.printed-maps-of-devon.eu> Accessed 21 Jun 2016

145 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 19 November 1846 p3 c1

146 Richard Acworth. "The anthracite seams of north Devon." Pages 117-125 in The Journal of the Trevithick Society, Issues 18 1991, pg122

147 North Devon Journal 17 July 1856 p3 c2-3.

## **1846, a terrible storm distresses Bideford**

In October 1846 a terrible storm struck the west coast, the same story being carried by many local newspapers. In addition to terrible destruction in the west of Wales, there was damage at “Swansea, Exmouth, Cardigan, Bideford, and Portland,” where “the damage is described to have been of the most lamentable character. At each of these ports many wrecks occurred, some being attended with loss of life”<sup>148</sup>.

## **1846, 60,000 tons of limestone up the Torridge**

In 1846 it was reported that 76,000 tons of limestone had entered the estuary, of which 60,000 tons had gone up the Torridge. Some, no doubt, supplied East-the-Water’s numerous limekilns<sup>149</sup>.

## **1847, Richard Heard buys the workhouse**

On 2 Mar, 1847 the Guardians of the Bideford Union (who seem by then to own the building) sold it to Richard Heard, who set about restoring it<sup>150</sup>.

## **1848, faculty for use of a church room**

In 1848 a faculty was granted for the use of Church Room, East-the-Water, Bideford, for divine service, the first evidence of a resurgence of the Church’s involvement with the community<sup>151</sup>.

In the same year *A Topographical Dictionary of England* reported that “a gaol and bridewell have been lately built on the eastern side of the river.”<sup>152</sup> This may suggest that the gaol was re-built, as part of Mr. Richard Heard's restoration work on Colonial House.

## **1848, a mining accident averted**

“The miners had a narrow escape from destruction yesterday week. It appears that in digging, they came across one of the old excavations made years ago, in which a vast quantity of water had settled: this water, which they had dug *under*, came through a narrow aperture above, and but for its timely discovery, would have deluged the mine and inevitably caused serious loss of life. The operations were suspended for some days in consequence.”<sup>153</sup>

## **1848, declining trade prompts emigration plans**

148 “Awful Storm in England – Loss of life and property” Inverness Courier 04 November 1846, P4 c4

149 “Important Public Meeting at Bideford” North Devon Journal 12 March 1846 p2 c6

150 A brief History of the Royal Hotel. The Royal Hotel. Pg 7.

151 North Devon Records Office catalogue 799A/PI 181

152 Samuel Lewis, Ed. *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, London: , 1848

153 “The Anthracite Mining Company.” North Devon Journal 4 Jan 1849 p3 c4

The Western Times reported “The state of trade in Bideford is very bad. It is said that a large party of both the middle and the lower ranks in society intend to emigrate from this neighbourhood to Australia early next spring.”<sup>154</sup> A rough assessment of the population turnover of the families in East-the-Water’s Barnstaple Street between each major census between 1841 and 1881 suggests it was usually over 50%, and often over 60%. With such a mobile population and a lot of short-let property, it is hard to see a significant impact from any emigration, especially as the number of households remained roughly equivalent in size from 1841 (c. 56) to 1851 (c. 53).

## **1848, Bideford adopts London time**

On 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 1848, timekeeping in Bideford Post-office was switched to London time, with a timepiece sent daily to and from London to ensure the 16 minute difference was effected with exactitude.<sup>155</sup>

## **1849, a productive culm lode found**

The North Devon Journal of 4 Jan 1849 carried the following article: “This has been a memorable week for the projectors of the culm mines worked in Bideford under the above name. A rich vein has been discovered at last; all former rumours to that effect having, it appears, been premature. The proprietors will soon be able to supply culm in any quantity, which well be shipped from the quay adjoining the building yard of Mr. Brook.”<sup>156</sup> The quay mentioned here is now known as Clarence Wharf.

Later in the month it was reported that the Bideford Anthracite Mine was “now in full work, the adit from the quay having been driven into the north lode: the lode is very large, and the product equal to the finest culm raised in Wales. The demand has rapidly increased, the consumption being on the lime establishments on the river; and large quantities are carted to the South of Devon. Maltsters are eagerly purchasing it for drying malt, by whom it is considered superior far to any supplied from Wales”.<sup>157</sup> This adit appears to have entered the hillside at street level, the former entrance being concealed behind the old sheds at the rear of the private car-park between Vinegar Hill and Croft’s Financial Advisors, as some of East-the-Water’s older residents report having once seen its entrance.

The Barnstaple Street adit carried a tramway into the mine, but its precise extent, and its intended purpose, are still somewhat shrouded in mystery. Earlier authors, who seem to have considered the Barnstaple Street works as little more than an outlet for the produce of mines that lay further east, suggest that the tramway was provided to connect works at Broadstone and Chapel Park to the quay<sup>158</sup>. It seems clear, however, from contemporary press reports, that the Bideford Anthracite Mining Co. were extracting culm from areas adjacent to Barnstaple Street, for they were being accused of causing subsidence in that area. Moreover, they had tunnels extending under the river, the only purpose for which would be extracting or locating culm. A prospectus for potential investors, which describes the extent of the land under which the company had rights to extend their mine, shows that it did not extend all the way to Chapel Park<sup>159</sup>.

154 “Bideford” Western Times 2 December 1848 p7 c5

155 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 07 December 1848 p3 c3

156 “The Anthracite Mining Company.” North Devon Journal 4 Jan 1849 p3 c4

157 “Bideford,” North Devon Journal, 18 Jan 1849, p3 c4

158 Richard Acworth. "The anthracite seams of north Devon." Pages 117-125 in The Journal of the Trevithick Society, Issues 18 1991, pg122

159 R. I. Kirby. Historical directory of East-the-Water traders and civic bodies., manuscript, 2017

## 1849, a flood of emigrants

On 5 April 1849 a local Bideford paper reported “The extent of emigration from this town and from the neighbourhood will scarcely be credited. Upwards of fifty are on the point of leaving Bideford alone; and in almost every parish and union, able-bodied men and women, who have been compelled to apply for partial relief, are “picking up their alls” and preparing to begin life *de novo* in another clime. We understand that all the berths of Mr. Heard’s fine barque “Secret” have been taken”<sup>160</sup>.

## 1849, shipbuilding prospering

In congratulating Barnstaple's Mr. Westacott on securing a contract for a first class 300 ton vessel to stand A. 1 for 15 years at Lloyds, a correspondent comments “We believe we are correct in saying that no vessel of this class has never [sic] been built in this port.” They go on to observe “We are equally pleased to add that, in the neighbouring port of Bideford, the shipbuilding trade is even more prosperous; for besides shipping now on the stocks, in the yard of Mr. Cocks [sic=Cox], to the amount of 800 or 900 tons, which is ordered and prepared for the sea, he has just contracted for the erection of the largest vessel ever built within the bar, viz, a ship of 600 tons for the service of William Jenkins, Esq. of Swansea.” Cox's yard, which was on the west of the Torridge, was beginning to outstrip the East-the-Water yards in the size of shipping it could handle<sup>161</sup>.

## 1849, repeal of the Navigation Act

The original act of 1651, and a series of subsequent ones to renew its powers, effectively prevented the shipping of English colonies from trading directly with other countries, forcing them to trade with England alone, the English then re-exporting the produce. Up until this point English ships had enjoyed a distinct advantage over those in other sections of the Empire. Graeme J. Milne suggests “The repeal of the Navigation Act in 1849 was seen by many British shipowners as a devastating act of betrayal by government, which threatened the very survival of their industry.”<sup>162</sup>

## 1849, restoration of a steamer link with Bristol

The North Devon Journal of 15 Feb 1849 carried an article under the heading WELCOMING THE 'WATERWITCH' STEAMER, from which it was clear that the steamer represented a much anticipated restoration of a steamer link from Bideford and Barnstaple to Bristol. That a grand public welcome had been planned and attracted large crowds, but that the steamer was delayed due to technical difficulties and failed to show until the next day. The dinner to celebrate her arrival was not, however, delayed and many column inches are devoted to the toasts proposed by various of the 50 worthy gentlemen who enjoyed it. Hopes were high that she would be the first of many steamers to cross the bar in years to come<sup>163</sup>.

160 “Emigration” North Devon Journal. 5 April 1849 p3 c3

161 “Local Intelligence” North Devon Journal 13 December 1849 p4 c4

162 Graeme J. Milne. Trade and Traders in Mid-Victorian Liverpool: Mercantile Business and the Making of a World Port. Liverpool University Press, 2000, 147

163 “Welcoming the Water Witch Steamer” North Devon Journal 15 February 1849

Exeter and Plymouth Gazette of 24 February 1849 noted that the *Waterwitch* made an extraordinary quick trip, “being only thirty-four hours from the time she left Appledore port until her return to the [Barnstaple] railway docks; having in the meantime discharged a cargo of goods at Bristol Quay, and shipped another cargo of general merchandize at that city for the neighbourhood of North Devon.”<sup>164</sup>.

The North Devon Journal of 13 December 1849 reported that the *Waterwitch* had crossed to Lundy to retrieve wreckage from the *Archelaus*, which sank in Lundy road on the 7<sup>th</sup> <sup>165</sup>.

On the 14 March 1850 The North Devon Journal reported that the steamer *Waterwitch*, returning from Bristol, “had run ashore on the Braunton side after she had passed within the lights.”<sup>166</sup> Passengers were taken by boat to Appledore, and the cargo shipped the next day to Bideford, so she could be re-floated. The London Evening Standard of 9 Mar 1850 reported a somewhat different picture, that she was “on shore on the Ware Rocks, apparently much strained, and making a great deal of water – cargo discharging, and she is expected off next tide.”<sup>167</sup>. The North Devon Journal article suggests that the re-floating was successful, that she suffered less damage than expected, and that the incident had little impact on the volume of passengers and goods using her.

In 1850, “To accommodate persons desirous of being present [at the opening of Lynton Independent Chapel], we notice that the 'Waterwitch' has arranged to sail from Bristol on 6<sup>th</sup> to bring passengers to Lynton; and to return again to Bideford on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>, landing her passengers at Lynmouth before the hour of the morning service. We have no doubt that many will be happy to avail themselves of the accommodation. By the bye, we find that the 'Waterwitch' sailed from Bideford to Bristol on Monday, having on board no less than 140 passengers.”<sup>168</sup>.

The 1851 Census lists, amongst those staying at the Ship-on-Launch, Barnstaple Street, one Thomas French, Stoker on the *Waterwitch* Steamer. An article from 1855 mentions that her berth had been alongside the Steamer Wharf<sup>169</sup>.

## 1850, White provides a snapshot of Bideford's trade

White's directory for Devon provides a snapshot of Bideford's “The trade of this port is still very considerable; large quantities of timber, hemp, tallow, &c., are imported from the Baltic and America; wines, fruits, &c., from the Mediterranean; cattle, &c., from Ireland; coal, culm, iron, flag-stones, &c., from Wales; and marble and slate from Cornwall. The Newfoundland trade is again revived, and bids fair to equal its former importance.

“The number of registered vessels belonging to the port is 150, of the aggregate tonnage of 12,436 tons. The exports consist chiefly of agricultural produce. Ship building is carried on here to a considerable extent; and during the late war, several frigates, bombs, and gun brigs, were built here for the royal navy.

“Steam and sailing vessels ply to Bristol, in connexion with steamers to Liverpool, London, &c.”

164 'The “Waterwitch”.' Exeter and Plymouth Gazette of 24 February 1849 pg5, col5

165 North Devon Journal 13 December 1849 pg5, col 5

166 The North Devon Journal 14 March 1850 pg5, col 2

167 “Ship News”, London Evening Standard, 9 Mar 1850, pg3, col4

168 North Devon Journal, 1 August 1850, Barnstaple, Devon, England Pg 5 Col 2

169 “Bideford.” 01 August 1850 - North Devon Journal - Barnstaple, Devon, England, pg 8, col 2

“Here are three large potteries, which employ many hands in the manufacture of coarse earthenware. Here are also several malt-houses, two breweries, a number of lime-kilns, and an iron-foundry.”<sup>170</sup>

The directory appears to have muddled its facts when it states “at Chapple Park is the valuable CULM MINE of the Bideford Anthracite Mining Company, lately established, and now employing a considerable number of hands. A tram road, more than a mile in length, is being made underground to the heart of the mine.” White's description seems to fit events surrounding the Bideford Anthracite Mining Company, but evidence from better-placed sources suggests that company was based on Barnstaple Street rather than at Chapple Park (the area now known as Chapel Park).

## **1850, cholera breaks out and the Little White Town is born**

In 1849 a major, and lengthy, outbreak of cholera hit Devon, that ran till 1852, resulting in thousands of deaths<sup>171</sup>. In the hope of combating the disease, the council ordered tar barrels to be burned to purify the air, Bideford's houses to be lime-washed, and the street's to be spread with lime ash<sup>172</sup>.

A correspondent to the local press penned a poem that speaks of Bideford, “Where milk-white mansions deck the mountain's brow;” and as “That spot so clean and healthy,” with a footnote stating that “Up to this time not a single case of cholera has been known to exist.”<sup>173</sup>

The council's measures seem to have been largely ineffective, for in 1854 Bideford was the district of Devon worst hit by cholera, with 46 deaths<sup>174</sup>. Almost overnight, however, all the lime-washing transformed Bideford into Charles Kingsley's “little white town.” The use of white rendering or white bricks during later developments has preserved much of that whiteness.

At this time a sewage system was implemented, improving the streets, but discharging directly into the Torridge<sup>175</sup>.

## **1850, construction of gantry over Barnstaple Street**

Early in 1850, to moved culm from its tramway to waiting colliers, the Bideford Anthracite Co. constructed an aerial chute that ran across Barnstaple Street<sup>176</sup>. So high was the chute and so urgent the miner's desire to get the anthracite to market, that falling culm became a menace to the public and the town council issued the company with a public warning<sup>177</sup>.

At some point a shaft and pumping station were also installed, on the hillside above the East-the-Water quays, between Vinegar Hill and Chudleigh Fort, to lift the culm carts to the gantry.

170 Whites Directory for Devon, 1850

171 M. E. Brine. “Cholera in Devon” Devon Heritage. 2009 Online:

<http://www.devonheritage.org/Places/DevonCounty/CholeraInDevon.htm> Accessed: 29 Dec 2016.

172 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 63

173 T. S. A. “On Bideford, North Devon” North Devon Journal 18 October 1849 p5 c2

174 Charles Creighton. A History of Epidemics in Britain. Vol 2 of 2. Cambridge: University Press, 1894. Pg 852

175 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 63

176 “The Anthracite Mine Nuisance” North Devon Journal 13 April 1865 p8 c3

177 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 64



## 1851, second national census

This was the first to show, in all cases, age and place of birth details. The section of most relevance covers “All that part of the Parish of Bideford which lies on the East side of the River Torridge inside the Turnpike Toll Gates including the Borough Gaol and including the Turnpike Toll Houses and Nuttaberry which extends Southward as far as and includes the Gas Houses.”

## 1851, Bideford lags behind in providing smallpox vaccinations

In 1851 91% of children in England were inoculated at birth, in Leicester that figure was only 41%, but in Bideford just a meager 11%<sup>178</sup>.

## 1851, the brig *Colina* wrecked on Crosspark Rock

In June 1851 the following report appeared “Wreck,-On Friday the brig *Colina* took in her load of culm from the mining company's yard east the water, and began her voyage down the river, when, owing to her not having wind enough to fill her canvass, she went upon Crosspark rock, and the tide ebbing, left her in a most critical position on the edge. She was then fastened with ropes to the shore, but about two o'clock the ropes snapped, and she went over on her side, and was irrecoverably injured. The masts and moveables have been taken away, and she presents the singular appearance of a wreck in the river.”<sup>179</sup>

## 1851, Bideford Black features at the Great Exhibition

In October 1849 plans were already underway for the Great Exhibition of 1851 to showcase the produce of the world, including, it was suggested, no lesser item than “clays from Bideford.”<sup>180</sup> By the time the exhibition opened in May 1851, Barnstaple Street's Bideford Anthracite Company had a display, showing “Anthracite coal. Compressed fuel, moulded in blocks. Mineral black paint, in powder, and mixed with oil or coal tar”<sup>181</sup>

## 1851, a new town hall and an origin for Shamwickshire?

The origin of East-the-Water's other name, “Shamwickshire” has been much disputed. Local traditions, ranging from the plausible to the bizarre, circulate freely, including:

- It was the shire with a sham, or mock mayor (referring to the local practice of electing a burlesque or mock version of the real thing;
- That ‘shammy’ was a local name for the oyster that grew on East-the-Water's shore and that the name comes from that;
- That the name comes from a local abundance of deer known as chamois (the chamois is more usually understood to be a type of antelope native of the mountains of Europe);
- It was derived from ‘Shanrockshire,’ a name reflecting the areas strong connections with Ireland.

178 “Compulsory Vaccinations” Illustrated London News 16 April 1853 p290 c2

179 “Bideford” Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 28 June 1851 p8 c4

180 “Great Exhibition of Industry of All Nations” Bell's Weekly Messenger 22 October 1849 p2 c5

181 The Cornish Telegraph 09 May 1851 p2 c5

Two events in the Autumn of 1851 suggest the bizarre ‘Chamois’ tradition may yet contain a grain of truth.

The first was the culmination of Thomas Evans double mayoral period, with the opening, in October 1851, of Bideford’s new town hall, an event heralded by a 21 gun salute from Chudleigh fort<sup>182</sup>. Amidst bunting and cheering the Mayor, accompanied by a parade of council dignitaries, a brass band, and the children from two local schools, processed along the quay to the new building. The press report remarked how the day had gone off with a remarkable degree of political unity, but Evans was possibly not held in quite such high esteem amongst those with a sense for East-the-Water’s proud tradition of shipbuilding. Johnson’s ship-yard lay on a site which had certainly existed in c. 1717, and had potentially existed since Elizabethan times, but which had been abandoned by Thomas Evens in c. 1838 in favour of developing a new, and very successful, yard at Cleavehouses.

The second event was the launch, in September, of the re-built vessel *Chamois*. Evan’s Mayoral building project would have been closely observed by the shipwrights of Johnson’s yard as they worked on *Chamois*, for it lay immediately across the river.

1. It is thus possible to envisage disgruntled shipwrights, wishing to poke fun at the man who, having not just let them down, had gone on to become their yard’s main local competitor. Their chosen method being to claim the ancient right of freemen to elect a man over them, then appoint a Mayor over the vessel that was their domain, a Mayor of *Cham*’ickshire, ruling over this *Cham*’mock-shire.

## 1852, rabies scare

As for any port, Bideford stood at risk of contagion from abroad. Many know about the plague in arriving in the days of John Strange, but that was not the only time an unwanted pathogen turned up in the local area. In 1852, a dog was found with rabies (known then as hydrophobia). The Journal covered the ensuing precautions – “Hydrophobia.--In consequence of a case of canine madness having occurred in this neighbourhood, notice has been given both by the public crier and hand-bills in different parts of the town that all dogs found in the streets without a muzzle will be destroyed, and that parties suffering such animals to go at large would be subject to a penalty not exceeding £5. We are sorry, however, to add that notwithstanding this warning, many parties seem disposed to act in disobedience to it.”<sup>183</sup>

## 1852, anthracite mine seeks extra funding

“Bideford Anthracite Mine, Situate on the East of the navigable River Torridge, and contiguous thereto.” offered for sale three £100 shares in the business, to which the proprietor had already advanced £270. Tenders were to be submitted to Mr Charles Carter, jun<sup>184</sup>.

## 1852, the Bideford Extension Railway is launched

182 “Opening of the New Town Hall at Bideford” North Devon Journal 23 October 1851 p2 c1- p3 c2

183 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 15 July 1852 p8 c4

184 “Bideford Anthracite Mine” North Devon Journal 29 August 1852 p4 c2

By 1842 the railway had reached Fremington, making Fremington Quay a serious competitor for Bideford's port business. Attempts put in place more grandiose schemes, and link Bideford to the main network via Tavistock had failed and there was little sign that Taw Vale Railway and Port company were likely to extend their route and promote competition with their business. Aggrieved by the situation, the merchants of Bideford took matters into their own hands. In November 1852 they published the "Provisional Registration" for the Bideford Extension Railway Company, a company instituted with the sole aim of building the link from Fremington to Bideford<sup>185</sup>. Head of the list of directors was George Bragington, Esq., Banker, Torrington and Bideford, Mayor of Torrington."

## **1852, 140 boats and one steamer**

In 1852 the port of Bideford (which included Appledore) had about 140 vessels belonging to it, but only a single steamer."<sup>186</sup>

## **1852, wind and rain render many roads impassable**

In November 1852 a spell of exceptionally heavy wind and rain left many local streets impassable, with the report singling out Torrington Lane [now Torrington Lane and Torrington Street] as particularly badly affected, with the road completely ploughed up in many places and the sewers broken up. It should be recalled that, at this time, road surfaces were only protected by compacted stones<sup>187</sup>.

## **1853, Bideford Extension Railway bill progressing**

By June 1853 the construction of the *North Devon Railway* was progressing well and the preamble of a Bideford Extension Railway Bill was proved in committee. The *Bideford Extension Railway* was to be a continuation of the North Devon Railway from Barnstaple to Bideford."<sup>188</sup>

Backed by commercial interests in Bideford, the Bideford Extension Railway Co. obtained powers on 4 August 1853, enabling a broad-gauge line to be constructed<sup>189</sup>.

## **1854, Mr. Buck purchases substantial tracts of foreshore**

The construction of a line to extend the North Devon Railway to Bideford would, at least were it to follow a coastal route, necessitate the building of a coastal embankment over much of its length. In 1854 local landowner Mr. Buck purchased most of the foreshore to the north of Clarence Wharf, including much of the land on which Railway Wharf would be built. Whether this was a move designed to facilitate the progress of the railway, or simply to profit from it, remains unclear<sup>190</sup>. As the land was subject to compulsory purchase it was probably the former, but with the hope that once the railway was in place the foreshore would become more valuable.

185 "Bideford Extension Railway" North Devon Journal 18 November 1852 p1 c1-2

186 "Bideford" The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland, 1868

187 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 11 November 1852 p5 c3

188 "Railways" Western Times of 11 June 1853 p5 c2

189 "North Devon Railway" Online:[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North\\_Devon\\_Railway#Parliamentary\\_battles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Devon_Railway#Parliamentary_battles), accessed 21 Jun 2016

190 Personal communication, Derek Barnes, 2016

## 1855, the *Waterwitch*'s ignominious return

The *Waterwitch*'s steamer service seems to have struggled toward the end of 1854 or the beginning of 1855. An article in the North Devon Journal of 3 May 1855 mentions that a vessel had towed the *Waterwitch* steamer back to Bideford where they "placed her in her old berth, alongside the steam-wharf. She had been purchased by T. B. Chanter, Esq., to be converted into a schooner, by raising her fore even with her after-deck. Her appearance was particularly disheveled [sic]; having lain so long in dock at Bristol, she had scarcely a rope about her." It also mentions that she had originally been built to carry mail to France<sup>191</sup>.

## 1855, opening of the Bideford Extension Railway (to Crosspark)

On 2 November 1855, the North Devon Railway Company opened the Bideford Extension Railway, a line which linked Barnstaple with East-the-Water.

In the autumn of 1855 the first train ran to Bideford station. The town is estimated to have hosted 4000 visitors to witness the event and enjoy the accompanying celebrations, about 300 of which, by some contrivance, were left stranded on the platform at the end of the day<sup>192</sup>.

The original terminus, at Cross Park (now the northern end of Ethelwyn Brown Close), extended into the river to provide room for a station, a quay, and a large goods depot. The quay, later extended as Railway Wharf, was eventually equipped with a travelling steam crane, which served for unloading coasters laden with coal and river barges full of locally-dredged gravel, as well as for loading clay<sup>193</sup>.

A particularly entrenched local myth persists, that the building of the railway embankments allowed the construction of the road from Bideford to Barnstaple via Instow. This was not the case, as an admiralty chart, from 1833, shows that this road already existed long before the railway was constructed (see 1833 above), the southern end of it even appears on Woods plan of 1842. The misconception may have arisen from the date on plans produced for the abortive Bideford and Okehampton Railway company's scheme.

Within a week of the railway opening the Barnstaple Turnpike Trust were considering the impact on horse-drawn traffic on their road between East-the-Water and Instow, proposing that the railway be forced to erect screens to prevent horses being disturbed by oncoming trains.<sup>194</sup> The public response, from a director of the railway, gives assurance that appropriate screens will be erected, whilst ensuring folk that, until they are erected, "Horses have much more discrimination than you give them credit for possessing" . . . "to quadrupeds as well as bipeds" of a nervous disposition the use of the Old Barnstaple Road was recommended.<sup>195</sup> The screen was to be a composite one, comprised of various stretches of board fencing, planting, and wall<sup>196</sup>. The wall that still survives between stretches of the Tarka trail and the road, may thus have originated at this time.

191 "Bideford." 01 August 1850 - North Devon Journal - Barnstaple, Devon, England, pg 8, col 2

192 North Devon Journal, 1 Nov 1855 p8 c1

193 Barry D Hughes, "Shipping 7 Ship Building in Bideford" Bideford 500, 2009. Online: <http://bidefordheritage.co.uk/shipping1900topresent.html> Accessed: 27 Jun 2017

194 "Bideford Extension Railway" North Devon Journal 08 November 1855 p5 c1

195 "To the Trustees of the Barnstaple Turnpike Roads" North Devon Journal 15 November 1855 p6 c3-4

196 North Devon Journal 10 January 1856 p5 c3

## 1855, Torridge freezing over, with nine inches of ice

“The weather was so severe at South Molton that all the streams in the district froze over. The public gas lamps could not be lighted. The same story came from Bideford, all the corn mills in the district being stopped owing to the frost. More than once the Torridge was frozen over, the ice being nine inches thick. Barges were frozen up in the canal”<sup>197</sup>.

## 1855, Westward Ho! published

The Rev. Charles Kingsley published his blockbuster novel *Westward Ho!*, bringing the attractions of the area to a wider audience. Set in the Elizabethan era, it did much to form lay opinion concerning the events of that period. The following vivid description from the book's opening lines has coloured perceptions of the town since the book was written - “All who have travelled through the delicious scenery of North Devon must needs know the little white town of Bideford, which slopes upwards from its broad tide-river paved with yellow sands, and many-arched old bridge, where salmon wait for autumn floods, toward the pleasant upland in the west. Above the town the hills close in, cushioned with deep oak-woods, through which juts here and there a crag of fern-fringed slate; below they lower and open more and more on softly rounded knolls and fertile squares of red and green, till they sink into the wide expanse of hazy flats, rich salt-marshes, and rolling sand-hills, where Torridge joins her sister Taw, and both together flow quietly toward the broad surges of the bar and the everlasting thunder of the long Atlantic swell.”<sup>198</sup> This description, coupled with the book's block-buster status, did wonders for Bideford's status as a tourist destination.

Part of *Westward Ho!* was reputedly written in Colonial House (now The Royal Hotel). Some sources note that, in Kingsley's day, Colonial House housed the local library and was therefore an ideal place for a writer to research his book, but, at that period Colonial House was in private ownership, and there is an alternate account in circulation, which is cited by Snell<sup>199</sup>. This tells how Richard Heard, then owner of the house, not only had a personal library, but had also discovered various documents of historical interest hidden behind a wooden panel in one of the rooms (this panel, in the Oak Room, is still pointed out today, and is effectively a built-in cupboard, not particularly hidden, but with its door blended into the décor of the room). Kingsley, who seems to have been on reasonable terms with Mr Heard, wished to draw upon these documents as source material for his novel, so, as Mr Heard was not willing for the documents to leave his premises, he permitted Kingsley to write in the library at Colonial House, whenever he needed access to the reference material.

Black's Guide to Devonshire claimed that the owner of the Royal Hotel “possessed a collection of rare works consulted both by Kingsley and the late Mr. Froude.”<sup>200</sup> The Froude spoken of was, James Anthony Froude, an eminent but controversial historian, who had married Charlotte Grenfell, daughter of Pascoe Grenfell, and sister of Kingsley's wife<sup>201</sup>. This Grenfell family traced their pedigree to Sir Richard Grenville<sup>202</sup>. Froude, was author of a multi-volume *History of England from the fall of Wolsey to the defeat of the Spanish Armada*, published in 1893.

197 “February 1855” North Devon Journal 30 March 1905 p7 c7

198 Charles Kingsley, *Westward Ho!: Or, The Voyages and Adventures of Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight, of Burrough, in the County of Devon, in the Reign of Her Most Glorious Majesty Queen Elizabeth*. Cambridge: Mcmillan, 1855

199 F.J. Snell, *North Devon*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906. Pg 121-2

200 A. R. Hope Moncrieff, *Black's Guide to Devonshire*, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902, pg 220

201 M.C. Rintoul. *Dictionary of Real People and Places in Fiction*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 571

202 Margaret Farrand Thorp, *Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875*, Princeton University Press, 2015, 19

When later (in 1866) facing criticism over *Westward Ho!*'s elevation of the role of Bideford over that of Barnstaple, Kingsley penned the following confession "I wrote *Westward Ho!* without any access to town records, much more [sic] to state papers, chiefly by the light of my dear old Hakluyt." Kingsley is referring to the works of the Elizabethan historian Richard Hakluyt, an early promoter of the idea of colonisation in the New World. Some other details Kingsley thought he must have got from the Hakluyt Society's publications<sup>203</sup>. Those who would criticise Kingsley for plagiarism might note that his title page only claimed the adventures of Leigh had been "Rendered into Modern English By Charles Kingsley," inferring significant reliance on some un-named source.

The simplest explanation for the controversy is perhaps that the document found, behind the panel at the Royal, was an old copy of Hakluyt, but that those concerned would rather not advertise that fact.

Whilst the railway carried clay and culm out, it brought tourists in, drawn to the area by Kingsley's prose, and accommodated by the growth of his book's namesake village, Westward Ho! The majority no-doubt, having arrived in East-the-Water, were then conveyed across the bridge to swell western Bideford's coffers, or for onward transit. With the advent of the railways, cheaper mass-produced goods began to flood into the area, out-competing the local lime-kilns and potteries. Thus, one-by-one, their fires were extinguished for good.

## 1856, first publication of the Bideford Gazette

The Bideford Gazette first appeared on January 1, 1856, under the grandiose title *North Devon and East Cornwall Gazette, and Commercial Advertiser*<sup>204</sup>.

## 1856, the Crimean War and a Mayor of Shamwickshire

The treaty of Paris, signed on 30 March 1856, marked the end of the Crimean War. A great day of rejoicing was proclaimed, with many towns organising corporate celebrations. But rather than do anything systematically, Bideford seems to have simply shut down for the day, and allowed people to improvised their own celebrations. It may be to this improvisation that we owe the modern practice of the election of a Mayor of Shamwickshire<sup>205</sup>, though a later account of an election, and local traditions about freedom of East-the-Water, hints at this mayor-making having its roots in the ancient custom of freeman status acquired through guild membership.

203 F.J. Snell, *North Devon*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906. Pg 107

204 Sarah Howells. "Former Gazette offices up for sale in Bideford." *North Devon Gazette*. 27 May 2014 ; 29 May 2014 Online: <http://www.northdevongazette.co.uk/news/former-gazette-offices-up-for-sale-in-bideford-1-3616786> Accessed 27 June 2017

205 1868 is the date of the first appointment of a Mayor of Shamwickshire suggested in Peter Christie's *Secret Bideford*, but by 1874 the appointment of the mayor was already being described as "time-honoured," which suggests something with more than six years history behind it. Christie may well have found the earliest report of the title Mayor of Shamwickshire, but a mock mayor ceremony seems to have arisen, or been resurrected, in these 1856 proceedings.

The recently started local newspaper, reporting on the 1856 improvisation, brings us an early account of the election of a Mayor of Shamwickshire – ‘Some celebrated the end of war by visiting other towns, some by taking tea, and some by enjoying the beautiful local scenery, and some by feasting. But the North Devon Gazette's account of that day, published on 3 Jun 1856, explains “This was not satisfactory to all however, as some of the more sensitive to these matters took it upon themselves to elect a temporary mayor, East-the-Water, and decorate his *lordship* off with ribbons, &c., and convey him on an elevation up and down the street, giving him an opportunity to address the multitude, which (considering it was his maiden speech,) was delivered with marked effect, and was applauded by the disappointed and hungry auditors, – tar barrels were lighted, and fireworks displayed after the mayor and corporation (*pro tem*) had retired”<sup>206</sup>. At least on this occasion, the election of a Mayor of Shamwickshire may thus have originated in, what seems to be, a light-hearted jibe against the appointed mayor for his failure, at least in some eyes, to mark the day of celebration properly, by providing something for the disadvantaged and the poor.

The modern role of Mayor of Shamwickshire is currently an honorary one, accompanied by considerably more respect than it once was, but the practice clearly seems rooted in a mock mayoral tradition. Such traditions are more frequent than might be supposed, and most seem to hark back to the days of limited parliamentary franchise, when the protest election of a mock mayor was a widespread practice (well known instances include the election of a Mayor of Barthelmas in Newbury, Berkshire, on St Annes Day, and the election of a Mayor of Garratt at Wandsworth, London). Nor was East-the-Water the only community in Devon with such a practice (e.g. Bovey Tracey had an annual mock mayor<sup>207</sup>). Geoffrey Holmes suggests that the election of a mock mayor in Bideford, as with most other mock corporations, arose through “burlesquing the procedures of the real corporation of the town as a protest against the proceedings under which the body was self elected”<sup>208</sup>. The newspaper article quoted above would seem to suggest the origins of the East-the-Water practice were, perhaps, not quite the same as those elsewhere.

206 “Provincial News. Bideford” North Devon and East Cornwall Gazette 03 June 1856, p1 c1

207 “Bovey Tracey” Western Times 02 May 1857 p7 c1

208 Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680-1750: Essays Presented by Geoffrey Holmes. Clyve Jones Editor. London: Hambledon, 1987. Pg 144

In 1861 the election, a somewhat more alcohol-laced affair in November, but with a similar basic format, was referred to as an “annual custom”<sup>209</sup>, suggesting that its origins lay further back still than 1856. The likelihood of the election being a far older custom seems greater, given the comment, in an article from 1862, that “Even at the present day a house in the Torridge is held to give an individual an indisputable right to the freedom of East-the-Water<sup>210</sup>” and “the worthy shipwrights, who have no doubt all either fallen into the honour of freedom or had it thrust upon them, have for a long time back exercised a right of putting a ruler over them”<sup>211</sup>. Early accounts of the election refer to the Mayoral election being announced by the ringing of the shipwrights bells<sup>212</sup>, whilst later reminiscences recall that the shipwrights were often the prime movers behind the event and the mayor often chosen from amongst the shipyard’s workers<sup>213</sup>. The practice may thus trace its roots as far back to a guild-based medieval freeman system, in which the freemen of the guild elected their own leader.

## **1856, riverbank breached**

In April 1856 a tide rose two feet higher than it had in the prior twelve years, bursting “the bank of the marsh, East-the-Water, with a noise like the discharge of ordnance, and overflowed the whole space to the foot of Round Hill. Mr. Berry’s osiers were set all afloat, doing him several pounds worth of damage” . . . “Mr. Parkin was seen rowing his punt through the street East-the-Water. The damage done was chiefly on the ground of L. W. Buck, Esq.”<sup>214</sup>

## **1857, Sir Gerald Graham awarded the VC**

In March 1857 Lieutenant Graham (later Lieutenant-General Sir Gerald Graham) of Corps of Royal Engineers was awarded the Victoria Cross for his part in an action at Sebastopol, Crimea, on 18 June 1855. Dying in 1899 in Bideford, he is buried in East-the-Water Cemetery<sup>215</sup>. At the assault of the Redan Graham showed determined gallantry and heroism at the head of a ladder party, sallying forth from the trenches on numerous occasions, to bring in wounded officers and men.<sup>216</sup>

## **1857, ship-building flourishes, as international trade contracts**

Billings Directory of 1857 reports that “ship-building is carried on to a very considerable extent, and gives employment to many of the inhabitants,” and “the chief of the vessels belonging to the port are now employed in the coasting trade.” The directory lists clergy and gentry from west of the bridge, but mentions none East-the-Water.

209 “Election of Mayor East-the-Water” Bideford Weekly Gazette 12 November 1861 p4 c 6

210 The idea being that by living on a boat on the Torridge you became a freeman of East-the-Water. More likely is the idea that a shipwrights apprenticeship to an existing freeman granted them the freedom, but if many apprentices lived on boats, the concept may well have become distorted over time. The feudal freeman system pre-dates the Borough system of administration, so finding it linked to East-the-Water is a sign of the antiquity of the place. At one time such freedom would have granted exemption from various tolls and charges, and the Local Government Act 1972 is said to specifically preserve such rights, though, in most places becoming a freeman is now largely a ceremonial and honorary affair.

211 “Election of Mayor East-the-Water” Bideford Weekly Gazette 18 November 1862 p4 c1

212 North Devon Journal 19 November 1874 - p2 c2; Bideford Weekly Gazette p5 c5

213 ‘Electing “Mayors” of Shamwickshire’ Western Morning News 27 February 1940 p4 c4

214 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 10 April 1856 p5 c5

215 Iain Stewart, 2016. Online: <http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/codevons.htm> accessed:4 Jan 2017

216 “Victoria Cross” Hereford Journal 4 March 1857 p7 c1



## **1857, lime kiln changes hands (Fry to Colwill)**

In August 1857 a dispute, Fry v Colwill, was settled at the Borough Magistrates Meeting, settling the respective amounts of rates due on a lime kiln, East-the-Water, from the former occupant (Mr. Fry) and the current occupant (Mr. P. Colwill). Fry, the then tenant having quitted at Christmas 1856<sup>217</sup>.

## **1857, 60 acres of crops lost to fire**

In September 1857, a crop fire, supposed to have been started by a boy playing with matches, destroyed 60 acres of corn, wheat, barley, and oats, on the lands of Mr. Wm. Turner, of the Bideford Barton estate<sup>218</sup>. Mr. Turner, one of East-the-Water's principal farmers, had lime kilns at Westleigh, and, in 1869, is recorded as occupying a manure store on the East-the-Water wharves, with 8 or 9 tons of manure stored in it<sup>219</sup>.

## **1857, a pickpocket at work on the steam packet wharf**

1857 saw an itinerant razor seller convicted of picking pockets on the Steam Packet Wharf, East-the-Water<sup>220</sup>.

## **1857, the Princess Royal and a Jerusalem Pony race**

The 1857 regatta boasted a Jerusalem Pony (i.e. donkey) race on the sands, in the presence of the steamer Princess Royal, carrying 300 spectators. The local press carried a fairly full account of the amusements provided at that time<sup>221</sup>.

## **1857, storm demolishes the railway goods shed**

Despite being only two years old, a fierce SW gale demolished the goods shed at the railway terminus, a 160 foot long, completely wooden, building, that had cost £300 to erect (about £24,000 at 2017 rates). "The structure was observed to be giving evidence of dislocation, when every precaution was taken to remove the goods, and the people being timely warned, kept out of harm's way. The roof first gave way and fell in, and then the "walls" all came down by the run, so that there was not one plank left upon another."<sup>222</sup>

## **1858, the human cost of moving timber**

217 Bideford Weekly Gazette. 11 August 1857 p1 c1

218 "Provincial News" Bideford Weekly Gazette 08 September 1857 p1 c1

219 "Charge of Stealing Guano" North Devon Journal 22 April 1869 p8 c3-4

220 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 16 July 1857 p5 c4

221 "Bideford Regatta" Western Times 11 July 1857 p5 c5

222 "Fierce Gale on Saturday" North Devon Journal 08 January 1857 p5 c3

“On Thursday last, a boy named Samuel Dannell, son of a sawyer living in East-the-Water, was accidentally drowned by the capsizing of a boat in the river. The deceased had been employed, in conjunction with three other boys named Brooks, Barridge, and Passmore, in removing timber from below the Railway Station to Mr. Water's ship-building yard; they had two sunken logs lashed one on each side of their boat, and were thus coming up with the tide, when the rope by which one of the pieces was attached snapped and the weight of the other log capsized the boat, throwing the four boys into the water. Two of them were rescued by timely assistance, one swam ashore, but poor Dannell was drowned”<sup>223</sup>.

## **1858, Richard Heard, of Colonial House, retires**

In May 1858 notices appeared in the press that successful merchant Richard Heard, of Colonial House, had retired and handed his business over to his sons William and George, who would now trade as *Heard, Brothers*<sup>224</sup>.

## **1858, the Long Quay's trade drawn away**

In August 1858, a correspondent reflected “Bideford Quay sadly feels the lack of trade since the introduction of more facile transit of goods and merchandise.” Lamenting the pitiful state of the mooring posts on the Long Quay, they commented they were “a disgrace to the much-improved and widened Quay of modern times, although there may be no shipping to moor to them. The poor pigeons are deprived of their pickings, consequent on the shipments of grain from the long quay, 1,200 feet in length, whilst the principal trade of the port is gone “due East” of the water. There is removed the trade of the town, where may be seen throngs of mercantiles and travellers busily engaged about shipping, or receiving their commodities by itran [sic] of Princess Royal, and excursionists taking their places or landing on the platform. What a mighty change does steam effect in the course of a few years!”<sup>225</sup>

## **1859, exceptional weather hits the area**

Clouds moving in contrary direction were observed. “At Bideford the people thought it was a water spout. At Fremington hail-stones fell which measured an inch in circumference.” Whilst, Barnstaple experienced 1.35 inches of rain in two showers<sup>226</sup>.

## **1859, a pillar postbox for East-the-Water**

The fact that “A pillar letter-box is to be placed near the bridge, East-the-Water” was considered newsworthy enough to find a place in the Exeter press<sup>227</sup>. The first pillar post-box in the UK had been installed in 1853<sup>228</sup>, some 16 years after the Penny Black introduced the world to adhesive pre-payment postage stamps<sup>229</sup>.

223 “Fatal Accident” North Devon Journal. 11 March 1858 p5 c3

224 Bideford Weekly Gazette 04 May 1858 p1 c3

225 “Bideford Quay” North Devon Journal 26 August 1858 p8 c1-2b

226 “Barnstaple” Western Times 9 July 1859 p7 c5

227 “Bideford” Trewman's Exeter Flying Post 8 September 1859 p5 c3

228 Paul Wicks “History of British Letter Boxes - Part 1” 2002 Online: <http://www.wicks.org/pulp/part1.html> Accessed: 27 June 2017

229 “1840 Penny Black Stamp” Harrington & Byrne Philatelic Experts. Online: <https://harringtonstamps.co.uk/index.php/1840-penny-black-stamp.html> Accessed: 27 Oct 2017

## **1859, the Royal Charter Storm**

On 25 and 26 October 1859, the Royal Charter Storm hit the west coast. Considered to be the worst storm in the Irish Sea in the 19<sup>th</sup> C, this blow prompted the introduction of gale warnings from the Met. Office. In the Bideford area “disasters and fatalities were numerous,” with 16 vessels lost between Morte and Hartland Points<sup>230</sup>.

## **1860, another limekiln death**

Robert Cade, having recently absconded from the Workhouse to live as a vagrant, sought shelter in one of East-the-Water’s limekilns, only to fall asleep and be so dreadfully burned that death resulted shortly after.<sup>231</sup>

## **1860, a start to recording of public nuisances**

On 2 Feb 1860 the Journal reported that “The Surveyor reported as to the insufficient state of the outlet sewer, East-the-Water, on the south side of Torrington Lane, and as to an outlet being formed for the drainage of the houses on the terrace, East-the-Water. – It was resolved that the Board at its rising should visit the localities mentioned. – It was further resolved that a record of all nuisances be kept by the Surveyor and be produced at every board meeting.” It was this practice of recording public nuisances, triggered by the state of the sewers, East-the-Water, that would eventually lead to the appointment of a Medical Officer for Bideford.<sup>232</sup>

## **1860, bark trade moves to Bristol**

In 1860 tree bark was clearly still a significant local export, but was now also being exported through Bristol, as the North Devon Railway saw fit to advertise a change in their price per truck-load for conveying bark from Bideford and Barnstaple to Bristol. The new rate would be 12s. 6d<sup>233</sup>.

## **1860, first mention of Springfield Terrace**

The earliest mention I have yet found of the name Springfield Terrace dates to 1860 when it features in the announcement of births to two of East-the-Waters most prominent citizens, both then living there. “Sept. 25, at Springfield-terrace, Bideford, the wife of Mr. John Johnson, of a son. Sept. 27, at Springfield-terrace, Bideford, the wife of Mr. G. Heard, merchant, of a son”<sup>234</sup>. Johnson was owner of the ship-building business on the wharves below, whilst Heard was the Bideford end of Heard Brothers transatlantic enterprise and driving force behind development of the Royal Hotel.

In 1861 Mr Heard was asking for two gas lamps to be fitted at Springfield Terrace which suggests that the terrace was relatively new at that point<sup>235</sup>.

230 “The Storm” Western Times 29 October 1859 p5 c6

231 “Inquest” North Devon Journal 2 February 1860 p5 c3

232 “Local Government Board” North Devon Journal 2 February 1860

233 Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 26 May 1860 p4 c2

234 Western Times 06 October 1860, p5 c4

235 Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 21 June 1861 p7 c1

## **1860, Charles Dickens passes throughout**

In an anonymous, undated, pamphlet, issued by the Royal Hotel in the early 1900s, the author suggests that Charles Dickens “wrote a story and conceived some of his most humorous sketches” in the parlour bar of the London Inn. Dickens did indeed stay at an inn in Bideford, as, on 1 Nov 1860, he arrived in Bideford on an overnight stay before onward transit to Clovelly. Intending to research the Christmas issue of the serialized *Great Expectations*, he was accompanied by Wilkie Collins (co-author of that issue), and Mary Boyle. That night Mary wrote of their stay to Georgina Hogarth - “We had stinking fish for dinner, and have been able to drink nothing, though we have ordered wine, beer, and brandy-and-water. There is nothing in the house but two tarts and a pair of snuffers. The landlady is playing cribbage with the landlord in the next room (behind a thin partition), and they seem quite comfortable.”<sup>236</sup>

## **1861, terrible gale causes widespread damage**

In Feb 1861 a terrific gale uprooted large trees and damaged almost every house in the town. “The chimney of Mr. Ching’s house, East-the-Water, was blown down, falling across the adjoining house, through the roof, and falling upon two old women as they lay in bed – both are severely injured”<sup>237</sup>

## **1861, carcasses in the river**

As a result of continual rain, in June 1861, the Torridge was “swollen amazingly,” inundating surrounding land such that “the carcasses of pigs and sheep, trees, &c., have passed through the arches of the bridge (or crossed the piers) in large quantities.”<sup>238</sup>

## **1861, an end to the *Waterwitch* Bristol packet steamer**

On the 28 Nov 1861 the North Devon Journal reported “A great quantity wreck has been seen floating about the Bay. The stern of the steamer *Waterwitch*, which foundered to the westward Lundy some time since.”<sup>239</sup>

## **1861, the Salmon fisheries in trouble**

‘Articles in the Bideford Weekly Gazette refer to fishing mill dams, fishing cruises, weirs, hutches, coops and fenders as well as the incongruous ‘privileged engines’. Given the use of nets and rod and line as well, it is not surprising that an editorial of 1860 in the Gazette describes fishing as a “war of extermination” and decries the “murderous system pursued here” . . . ‘Competing interests in a hierarchical society meant that while the Salmon Fishery Acts 1861- 1865 were intended to conserve stocks it seemed to be the poorest whose livelihood was most affected by restrictions. Capt. R.C. Whyte, conservator of the Taw and Torridge’ . . . ‘had taken it upon himself to destroy weirs and hutches on the Torridge in 1862’<sup>240</sup>.

236 Charles Dickens, et al. Mamie Dickens and Georgina Hogarth Editors. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. Vol. 2, 1857 to 1870. 3 Volumes. London: Chapman and Hall, 1980; Project Gutenberg, 2008 eBook edition. 108, 131-2.

237 “Terrific Gale” *Western Times* 23 February 1861 p3 c4

238 “Bideford” *North Devon Journal* 07 June 1860 p5 c6

239 “Appledore” *North Devon Journal* 28 Nov 1861 p5 c2

240 Fish weirs: as irritating as traffic-cones? A research update - Chris Preece (Newsletter No 4 Autumn 2002) North Devon Archaeological Society. Online: <http://www.ndas.org.uk/page12.html> Accessed: 23 Feb 2021

## 1861, Barnstaple Street improvement

On 18 Jul 1861 the North Devon Journal reported that the town council had received the report of a committee tasked with considering the improvement of Barnstaple Street by “purchasing part of the premises belonging to Mr. William Thomas, and throwing the same into the street.” The compensation of Mr. Thomas was approved, on the grounds that it would “greatly add to the appearance of the street, which is the north entrance to the town.”<sup>241</sup>

## 1862, bridge widening

In 1862 a committee was appointed to oversee the widening of the bridge, but few details are available of the nature and progress of the work<sup>242</sup>.

## 1862, launch of Copiapo is painted

A painting of the town (now hanging in the Burton Gallery museum), is believed to show the launch of *Copiapo* from Johnson’s ship-yard in 1862. It provides a glimpse of East-the-Water, as viewed from the south. Lime-kilns are shown at the southern end of the settlement, which may be some of those mentioned in 1794 by Instead Marshall, together with a tall chimney, possibly linked to the gas-works. The coal chute across Barnstaple Street and the hillside engine-house are all clearly seen.

## 1862, putting up eave-shutes

In January 1862 “the SURVEYOR reported that he had served the different occupiers of houses, East-the-Water, with notices to put up eave-shutes, and that many of them were preparing the same.” Eave-shutes are devices used to improve the ventilation of an attic<sup>243</sup>.

## 1862, the American blockade

On 25<sup>th</sup> March 1862 the Bideford Weekly Gazette reported that this blockade had been considered in Parliament<sup>244</sup>. There was clearly still a debate as to whether the American's actions constituted an effective blockade, at least in international law, but the article noted that “Excluding the small coasting vessels, who creep about the creeks, the number of ships who have forced either an egress or ingress is exceedingly small.”

## 1862, bridge improvements considered

In September 1862 the Bridge Feoffees met with the Town Council to discuss plans for improvements to the bridge, details of the specification being given in the Gazette's report<sup>245</sup>. The stone parapets were to be replaced with iron.

241 North Devon Journal 18 Jul 1861 p5 c4

242 “Bideford Long Bridge” Bideford Weekly Gazette 05 August 1902 p7 c3

243 “Local Government Board” Bideford Weekly Gazette 07 January 1862 p4 c3

244 “American Blockade” Bideford Weekly Gazette 25th March 1862 p3 c7

245 Bideford Weekly Gazette 02 September 1862 p4 c3

## 1863, Heard's new quay (Queen's Wharf) constructed

In June 1863 Messrs Heard constructed another new quay on the East-the-Water side. Initially, the Council were not too happy with this idea:-

"The Mayor, to start the subject, mentioned that Mr. Heard was building a quay at East-the-Water, which would project into the river.

Alderman White: Well, he is going to put up a crane.

Mr. Chanter thought the new quay would be a great benefit if the others would do the same ; but if they did not it would be a serious injury.

The Mayor: Has any party a right to encroach upon a public highway without permission of the Board?

"On suggestion by some members, the surveyor embodied in his report that Messrs. Hear brothers were building a quay about thirty feet into the river.

Mr. Chanter stated that Mr. Heard had bought the foreshore from the Woods and Forests

Commissioners, and had obtained permission from the Admiralty to enclose it. The question was whether the board have any and what powers to prevent it. The higher authorities said they had not, but he believed they could not go one foot into the river without the Board's consent." . . . etc.

The overall conclusion was that the Board should oppose the quay, as detrimental to East-the-Water<sup>246</sup>.

The quay is mentioned again in July, "The Messrs. Heard's Quay, East-the-Water, is progressing fast toward completion, notwithstanding the interference of the Council, who seem to regard the "improvement" as an "encroachment," although the Board of Trade do not think fit to rescind the permission given the owners . . ."<sup>247</sup>

From details given in a later trial (that Heard had constructed Queens Wharf about twenty years prior to 1887), this would appear to be Queen's Wharf<sup>248</sup>.

The Bideford Weekly Gazette of 29 September 1863, reporting on the testing of the newly installed steam crane (seemingly Bideford's first), posed an interesting question "The New Crane, erected by Messrs. Heard at East-the-Water, was partially tested yesterday, in the unloading of a cargo of freestone for the Church, from Mr. Down's vessel, the Fidelity. Blocks of two, three, or four tons, were lifted with the greatest ease and quickly landed on the Quay. Half the number of hands, it is said, can do in a day or two with the crane, as much work as could be done in a week under the old system. Do the Local Board still call the Quay an obstruction and a nuisance?"<sup>249</sup>

## 1863, Shamwickshire and Irishmen

Whilst the events of 1851 may have given birth to the idea of a Mayor of *Cham*'ickshire, the events of 1856's Crimea celebrations prove that the idea had traction.

246 Bideford Weekly Gazette 02 June 1863 p4 c2-3

247 "Bideford" North Devon Journal, Barnstaple, Devon, England 9 July 1863, p5 c5

248 North Devon Journal of 20 January 1887 p7 c1-2

249 "The New Crane" Bideford Weekly Gazette 29 September 1863 p4 c1

A report of the mock mayoral election of 1863<sup>250</sup> uses a version of the name that may suggest how *Cham* 'ickshire became . The report refers to the "Mayor of Shammockshire," a name occasionally also found in later periods. Whilst *Shammockshire* might, at first, seem as elusive as *Shamwickshire*, it is a perfectly plausible corruption of *Shamrockshire*, a colloquial name for Ireland<sup>251</sup>. Indeed, in 1880 one correspondent actually referred to "East-the-Water, known as Shamrockshire."<sup>252</sup> From the time of Sir Richard Grenville, Bideford had always had a particular involvement in Ireland and in the early 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> C. an Irish family by the name of Buck had arrived, as wealthy incomers to the area. These Irish immigrants came to dominate local politics, with Lewis William Buck (1784-1858) appointed seven-times as mayor of Bideford and for 18 years MP for North Devon. Buck was, perhaps, the particular posthumous target of the ironic name *Shammockshire*, but the modern *Shamwickshire*, divorced of mocking overtones, is a far more suitable nickname for the community.

### **c. 1863, Tedrake publishes his photo study of Bideford**

Around 1863, local photographer Thomas Tedrake published a series of six photographic studies of parts of Bideford. These included one that showed Johnson's shipyard, with all three slipways in use, the New London Inn the Long Bridge prior to the improvements started in 1864<sup>253</sup>.

### **1864, impact of action to protect salmon**

"It is reported that there are a greater number of salmon up the river than has been known for years and it is stated that they are in larger numbers higher up the river and in smaller branch rivers than they have ever been – a proof that the new Salmon Act is doing good"<sup>254</sup>.

### **1864, resolution to purchase foreshores**

The North Devon Journal of 03 March 1864 carried the following account of a resolution adopted by the local Board: "A letter was read from the Secretary of the Gas Company, asking if the authorities would purchase the foreshore of the Bridge property at East-the-Water, and if not, whether they would allow the Gas Company to buy it – The Feoffees had recommended that the foreshores be purchased by the Bridge and Council. The recommendation was adopted."<sup>255</sup>.

### **1864, start of bridge improvements**

Between 1864 and 1866 the roadway of the Long Bridge was widened, the new construction using iron, most obviously in the parapets<sup>256</sup>. The work widened it by 10 feet, by the addition of foot-paths on each side, at a cost of £5,000<sup>257</sup>.

250 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 19 November 1863 p8 c2

251 E.g. the of 17 Dec 1808 carried an anecdote ("Miscellaneous", p4 c3), with the following punchline 'the patience of the officers being exhausted, they insisted that a native of *shamrockshire* should explain. – "Och, dear Gentlemen," said Paddy, "I *make pegs for a slater!*"

252 E.g. "Random Rockets" North Devon Journal 25 November 1880 p6 c4

253 Talk given by Peter Christie, on the history of photography in North Devon, at the Burton Art Gallery, Bideford, 15 July 2017

254 "Salmon in the Torridge" Bideford Weekly Gazette 16 February 1864 p4 c1

255 "Bideford: Quays East-the-Water" North Devon Journal 03 March 1864 p8 c1

256 Frank E Whiting & Peter Christie. The Long Bridge of Bideford Through The Centuries. Bideford:Bideford Bridge Trust, 2006, pg 14-15

257 "Bideford" Kellys Directory, 1902

## **1864, obstructed access to the shore comes to court**

There used to be several public access points to the East-the-Water shore upstream of the bridge, but over the years they seem to have succumbed to private encroachment. From time to time feelings over the issue would erupt into litigation. For example, in 1864 Mr George Heard was summoned “for having deposited a quantity of rubbish on a certain passage, street, road, or common highway, leading to the Beach or Strand, between the premises of Mr. Richard Heard and Mr. Hutchings and others on the east side of the river Torridge,” and accused of “obstructing a public thoroughfare, over which the public have had uninterruptedly a lasting right of way.” The public road in question ran down to the shore roughly as a continuation of Torrington Lane, and was later known as the School slip. The bench found against Mr. Heard, who promised to appeal.<sup>258</sup>

## **1864, problems with the well at Vinegar Hill**

In August 1864 a deputation reported to the Mayor that the Well at Vinegar Hill was unusable, but were told that they should clean it out<sup>259</sup>.

## **1865, Lady of the Manor's quay extended**

In February 1865 it was reported that “the Lady of the Manor has in progress the extension of her quay.” It would appear that Mr. Johnson's yard was thus being extended to incorporate the area formerly occupied by Thomas Ley's wharf, extending the yard southward to occupy the area between Johnson's original shipyard and the Bridge Trust property adjacent to the bridge, as the extension would “terminate at the beginning of the Bridge Trust Quay, outside the bakery adjoining the bridge, in line with the first cutwater thereof”<sup>260</sup>.

## **1865, Miss Mock's extraordinary abstinence**

In February 1865, the North Devon Journal reported the extraordinary case of Miss Mock, daughter of the Foreman at Johnson's Shipyard. Having commenced medical treatment some ten months previous, for a condition that made eating difficult, she had come to a point after four months of a reduced diet where she is said to have abstained from food completely, having apparently eaten nothing for the past six months.<sup>261</sup>

## **1865, anthracite company wound up and gantry removed**

In April 1865 the Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette reported – “The anthracite mine at Bideford, East-the-Water has been closed in consequence of the working being unprofitable, and the affairs of the company are to be wound up. The removal of the works including the wooden tram bridge, which was justly regarded as a disfigurement to the town has given much satisfaction.”<sup>262</sup>

258 “Bideford Town Hall” Western Daily Mercury. 02 March 1864 p4 c1-2

259 “Adjourned Meeting” North Devon Journal 1 September 1864 p5 c5

260 “Bideford Improvements” North Devon Journal 02 February 1865 p5 c3-5

261 “Extraordinary Case of Abstinence From Food” North Devon Journal 2 February 1865 p5 c3

262 “Bideford” Woolmers Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 13 April 1865 p6 c1



In 1873, an article on coal mining in North Devon mentioned that 'Nearly fifty years ago Mr. Thomas Pollard, the owner of the "Black Paint and Anthracite Mine," opened up an old working at Chapel Park, about a mile from the town. It was worked by the "Bideford Anthracite Company," which lost considerably by the undertaking ; and some six or seven years ago the company wound up'<sup>263</sup>. This correspondent may have confused Chapel Park and the Barnstaple Street mine, as Chapel Park does not appear to have changed hands at this time.

## **1865, failure of the Torrington Agricultural Bank**

June 1865 saw the failure of the Torrington Agricultural Bank, of which George Braginton was the major partner<sup>264</sup>. Braginton, who had once done so much to drive forward business in East-the-Water, and had been a director of the recently defunct Anthracite Mine, was left bankrupt. The timing of the failure served to amplify its effect – most of the banks depositors, being farmers, were badly hit by this collapse, as, for many, their annual rents were about to fall due and they had banked most of their profits from the May markets in readiness for paying them. "The blank amazement and horror which were seen on the faces of many who were thus deprived of their all, were most sad to witness"<sup>265</sup>.

## **1865, sale of Clarence Wharf and mine equipment**

In August 1865 Clarence Wharf was offered for sale, together with the old mining company's offices, William Row, a Culm Yard, a malt-house, and the garden containing the anthracite mine's old engine-house. The advertisement mentions that the railway would cross the site, which may be one reason why the company decided to close.<sup>266</sup>

In the same month the courts finally got round to condemning the gantry over Barnstaple Street as a public nuisance and ordered its removal, but by then the recently-closed company had already removed it.<sup>267</sup>

## **1865, Local Board decide a Medical Officer is needed**

Conditions in some of East-the-Water's smaller terraces were clearly cramped by modern standards. The general condition of some of Bideford's poorer housing stock was clearly concerning the local board. Things came to a head when 'The Inspector of Nuisances reported that he had found 12 houses without efficient drains and water closets. The report revealed a very bad state of things in some localities, these houses being not only without efficient drains, &c., but without gardens and courtelage, or, as the Inspector worded it, "without a backdoor." The Mayor considered the Board ought to see that this matter was attended to, and the only way they could go to work was by the appointment of a medical officer. Mr. Abbott wanted to know, supposing the property did not admit of a courtelage being made, was the house to be knocked down on account of that? The Mayor: Yes, if it is unfit for human habitation, and cannot be made so." . . . "The Surveyor said that the sewage from the twelve houses spoken of is thrown into the street, and often fouls the grating." The Board decided to consider the appointment of a medical officer at the next meeting."<sup>268</sup>

263 North Devon Journal 03 April 1873 p7 c2

264 "The Bank Failure at Torrington" Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette 01 June 1865 p3 c2

265 "The Bank Failure at Torrington" Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette 01 June 1865 p3 c2

266 "Freehold Property" Bideford Weekly Gazette of 1 August 1865 p1 c1

267 "Bideford, Devon" Bideford Weekly Gazette 15 August 1865 p1 c2

268 "Local Board" Bideford Weekly Gazette 6 June 1865 p4 c2

## **1865, timber blocking the road to the gasworks**

The Bideford Weekly Gazette reported "Complaints having been made of the road leading to the Gas Works being obstructed by timber, it was ordered that the Surveyor do give the necessary notice for its removal."<sup>269</sup>

## **1865, Pollard advocates some changes**

After topping the poll for new councillors, Mr. Thomas Pollard, of East-the-Water, addressed the crowd to share something of his vision for the town<sup>270</sup>. He advocated following Liverpool's example, by borrowing money to make the public improvements that would attract growth, consultation of the public and respecting their view in all matters of major expenditure, extension of the quay and the removal of it, and the market, from private hands, filling over of the potter's pill constructing a park for the people, establishing good water supplies by constructing a reservoir on Gammerton Moor.

## **1865, Act revises several of East-the-Water's Turnpike Roads**

Perhaps necessitated by the railway extension, a new Turnpike Act was passed. The route from the Old Bideford Road in Barnstaple, through Eastleigh to Old Barnstaple Road in Bideford, was confirmed. The route from Bideford to the bridge on Great Torrington Common, across Gammerton Moor was confirmed. The route from the 'Sticklepath Gate,' in Tawstock parish, via Instow to Bideford, was altered, to discontinue the back road through Instow and added the quay road through Instow instead.<sup>271</sup>

## **1866, Johnson's builds the first trawler for the Bideford Deep Sea Fishery Company**

In the early 19th C, Brixham developed an improved trawler design, known for its graceful lines, strength, and speed, it was capable of carrying fisheries into deeper water. The deep sea fishery had been born, but it would take Bideford a while to catch onto it. From 1854 Cox's Cleave Houses shipyard (on the western shore where Riverside Close now stands) had been producing vessels of up to 1,220 tons, but the East the Water ship-builders specialised in smaller vessels, with Johnson's yard producing boats of 100-430 ton capacity<sup>272</sup>. Boats for deep sea fishing fell into this latter class.

In December 1865, at a meeting of the shareholders of a newly formed venture "for developing the deep sea fisheries of the Bristol Channel." The company had raised enough money for their first vessel and resolved to raise the share capital to fund a second.<sup>273</sup>

269 "Local Board" Bideford Weekly Gazette 6 June 1865 p4 c2

270 "Municipal Election (Yesterday)" North Devon Journal 2 November 1865 p5 c5-6

271 Martin Ebdon, The Turnpike Roads of Devon in 1840. Martin Ebdon, 2014. Page 11.

272 Inkerman Rogers. Ships and Shipyards of Bideford Devon 1568 to 1938. Bideford:Gazette Printing Service, 1947

273 "Bideford" Western Times 22 December 1865 p7 c3

On the 24 April 1866 “H.”, a correspondent to the North Devon Journal, likened the feeling of Bidefordians on fish, to those of the Ancient Mariner on water. They had ““fishes, fishes, everywhere,--nor any fish to eat,” except an occasional thornback or plaice which is not worth sending away.<sup>1274</sup> It was primarily to address that local desire for fish that the Bideford Fishery Company was formed. The correspondent noted that “One smack has been bought already, to be used as a tender, &c., and a new and larger vessel, completely fitted, will be launched at the next spring tides, from Mr. Johnson's yard.”

In May 1866, Johnson's yard at East-the-Water launched the *Dolphin*, the first trawler for the Bideford Deep Sea Fishery Company<sup>275</sup>. A month later the people of Bideford began to enjoy the fruits of this new venture<sup>276</sup>.

The *Dolphin* landed her first catch at Peppercombe, from whence it was carted to Bideford and sold by auction, with soles reaching 8½ d per pound<sup>277</sup>. The company was not, however, to prove a success, for by July 1867 it was in liquidation, the *Dolphin* sold to Capt. Twynham for £610, with and Mary Jane realising a further c. £72

## 1866, Bideford's main bank closes its doors

On 15 May 1866, the local press reported the suspension of the English Joint Stock Bank the previous Friday.<sup>278</sup> Better known in its earlier incarnation of Harding, Yelland, Evans, Yeo, and Co., the private firm had been established in the town since 1844, but following the crash of Braginton's Bank at Torrington, they had merged with several other banks on 30 June 1865 to become the English Joint Stock Bank Company, a public company. The old firm had been considered “safe as the Bank of England” and, upon the news that it had closed its doors spreading, “tradesmen were seen with blank dismay and alarm depicted on their faces, hurrying on all sides to the Bank in the High Street, to have their hopes blasted and their fears realized.” The report suggests that most of Bideford's traders transacted their business with the bank, but that, fortunately, Bideford was the banks only West-country branch, so most of the financial burden would fall upon just the one town.

The Evening Standard was more circumspect, suggesting that the bank was believed to have adequate assets to meet its liabilities<sup>279</sup>.

In June 1866 the North Devon Journal reported that the Stock Exchange had announced that a first dividend of 8s in the £ was likely to be paid some time in August<sup>280</sup>.

274 “The Bideford Fishery Company” North Devon Journal 24 April 1866 p3 c2

275 “Launch” Bideford Weekly Gazette 01 May 1866 p4 c2; “North Devon Fifty Years Ago” North Devon Journal 20 January 1916 p3 c3

276 “Bideford” Western Times 15 June 1866 p5 c5

277 “Bideford” Western Times 22 May 1866 p3 c4

278 “Suspension of Payment By The Bideford Joint Stock Bank. – Great Excitement.” North Devon Journal 15 May 1866 p2 c4-5

279 North Devon Journal 15 May 1866 p2 c3 North Devon Journal

280 “The Bideford Bank Failure” North Devon Journal 14 June 1866 p8 c2

## **1867, cheap labour gives Bideford's shipbuilders an edge**

An article on Torridge-side shipbuilding extolled the ability of the yards to compete with any in the land for cost efficiency, attributing this to the various yard's extensive use of apprentices, who earned only 3s to 7s a week, a much cheaper rate than was charged by fully qualified journeymen<sup>281</sup>. The article also noted a recent slump in orders, which, coupled with a lack of appetite for speculative building, was depressing the local economy.

## **1867, passing of the British North America Act**

On July 1, 1867 the passing of the British North America Act brought about a union of the provinces of Canada (as new provinces Ontario and Quebec), Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, bringing Canada into existence<sup>282</sup>. Other provinces later accreted to this newly formed country, such as Prince Edward Island (in 1873) and Newfoundland (in 1949).

## **1867, Clarence Wharf comes up for sale again**

In November 1867 Johnson appears to have owned a portfolio of property, formerly owned by Henry Tucker, for he offered that ship-builder's house for auction, along with a walled garden, part of which was later used by the railway extension, three cottages off Barnstaple Street, and Clarence Wharf<sup>283</sup>. At which time the facilities on Clarence Wharf are said to be occupied by one "Mr. Mills," probably Mr. James Mills, a Bideford Merchant, whose name elsewhere crops up in connection with that of Johnson, and for whom Johnson built several vessels<sup>284</sup>. The notice for the auction adds that Clarence Wharf, whilst it contained 158ft in length and 154 in breadth, could be extended 50 feet toward the river, by purchasing a portion of beach from the Crown, which could be obtained on reasonable terms.

## **1867, The Bethel is established in a loft**

281 "Shipbuilding in North Devon" North Devon Journal 14 February 1867 p8 c5

282 "British North America Act, 1867 - Enactment no. 1." Department of Justice, Government of Canada.

Online:<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/constitution/lawreg-loireg/pl1t11.html> Accessed 27 June 2017.

283 "Bideford, Devon" North Devon Journal 28 November 1867 p1 c1

284 R. I. & S. H. Kirby, Vessels Built or Refitted in East-the-Water, 15 August 2017.

Online:[http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships\\_launched\\_from\\_East-the-Water.pdf](http://www.eastthewater.co.uk/History/Businesses/Ships_launched_from_East-the-Water.pdf) Accessed 20 September 2017

In 1867 a group of like-minded Christians established the Bethel, a body of believers that would go on to build the Bethel Chapel in Torrington Street. The newspaper report of their anniversary celebrations provides some background on their early days<sup>285</sup>. It recounts how “Mr C. Palmer, who must be regarded as the originator of the movement, gave an account of the establishment of the Bethel. He said that the need for a place of worship on the East side of the river had been felt for many years, and many attempts had been made to supply that want, but apparently without success, until the heart of Mr. George Heard was moved to generously offer the use of the large and commodious room in which they were then assembled.” He went on to record how the opening sermon was preached on 10 February 1867, attendances had been good on Sundays and a weekly prayer meeting had been established. He noted that “The Bethel was a thoroughly unisectarian mission, and all helpers were welcomed who held the Word of God as the standard of faith and practice, and whose hearts were in sympathy with rival works.” Amongst those who also delivered earnest and appropriate addresses appears a name that would later become especially linked with the Bethel, that of Restarick.

## **1867, local liquidations (Deep Sea Fishing Co. and Bryant Ching)**

In the same week in 1867, both the Deep Sea Fishery Company and Bryant Ching went into liquidation<sup>286</sup>. By the 1871 Census Bryant Ching was no longer living near to his works, but was at 4 Eastbourne Terrace, Northam. Still listed as a potter, he did not declare employing any staff.

## **1868, Cox and son's bankruptcy**

In January 1868 the failure of the English Joint Stock Bank, in 1866, claimed further high-profile casualties, in the shape of Bideford-based shipbuilders, George Cox and his son John, who had incurred heavy losses. The failure of the bank deprived them of the capital to finance continued work on contracts worth £60,000 (including five vessels for a Mr. Bath of Swansea), forcing a temporary cessation of work on the vessels and a consequent loss. At the time of their petition for Bankruptcy the Cox's joint estate was indebted to George Heard for £200, primarily for timber he had supplied, and there was much argument over whether Mr. Heard's men had sought to remove assets from the Cox's yard before or after the bankruptcy petition had been filed (and Heard was not the only person whose actions were subject to such scrutiny), but the judge found that there had been no impropriety.<sup>287</sup>

## **1868, a launch from Johnson's yard damages the bridge**

On 18<sup>th</sup> January the *G. A. Preston*, a vessel launched from John Johnson's shipyard, inclined to one side whilst leaving the slipway and collided violently with the bridge<sup>288</sup>, causing damage for which £28 3s, 2d. in damages were awarded in a later court case<sup>289</sup>. Some historian seems to have transposed 1886 (the date when this shipyard closed) for 1868, after which many Bidefordians came to believe that the last ship to be launched from East-the-Water had collided with the bridge.

285 “The Religious Movement at East-the-Water” North Devon Gazette 18 February 1868 p4 c2

286 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 11 July 1867 p8 c1

287 “Bankruptcy Court” Western Times 10 January 1868 p8 c3-4

288 “An Unsuccessful Ship Launch” Bideford Weekly Gazette 14 January 1868 p4 c1; Bideford Weekly Gazette 21 July 1868 p4 c4

289 Bideford Weekly Gazette 21 July 1868 p4 c4

## **1868, Johnson leases foreshore at Clarence Wharf**

On 27 July 1868 a formal notice was issued, that an application had been received by the Board of Trade, as managers of the rights of the Crown in the foreshore, from “Mr. John Johnson, of East-the-Water, Bideford,” wishing to lease the Crown’s rights and interests in a portion of foreshore adjoining Clarence Wharf, Bideford.<sup>290</sup>

In August 1868 the Board of Trade alerted the Local Government Board to Mr. Johnson's application to lease a portion of foreshore adjoining Clarence Wharf. The Local Board decided to request more information as to Johnson's plans<sup>291</sup>.

## **1868, purchase of property to widen Barnstaple Street**

In December 1868 the setting back, of Mr. Johnson's old house, was agreed with Mr. Lock, the steward to the Lady of the Manor, with the payment to be £65<sup>292</sup>.

## **1868, a snapshot of trade**

“The principal traffic is coastwise, but some of the vessels are engaged in the foreign and colonial trade. The chief exports are oak bark, earthenware, linens, woollens, sail-cloth, cordage, iron, corn, &c., to London and other large towns on the coast. Timber, coal, and lime are imported. A large number of boats are employed in the fishery.”<sup>293</sup>

## **1869, two die as barges are swamped on the Torridge**

On 19<sup>th</sup> March 1869 a severe gale hit North Devon with destruction to property and loss of life. “At Bideford, the bargemen on the river suffered considerably [from a gale]. Eight barges laden with limestone left Appledore for Bideford shortly after seven o’clock on Friday evening, when the gale was at its height, and so great was the swell in the river that all of them were suddenly swamped, and the crews left struggling in the water. As the barges were near the shore, the crews, with the exception of those of one barge, got safely ashore.” The two man crew of the ill-fated barge were both lost.<sup>294</sup>

## **1869, serious flooding in Bideford**

Gales caused a tidal surge, sufficient to do damage to houses on the Quay at Appledore (where a schooner mounted the quay), breach the pebble ridge (completely inundating Northam Burrows), and necessitate the use of boats in one or two of Bideford's streets

290 “The Foreshore of Bideford” Bideford Weekly Gazette 04 August 1868 p4 c7

291 “Foreshore and the Late Encroachments” Bideford Weekly Gazette 11 August 1868 p4 c3

292 “Bideford Local Government Board” Bideford Weekly Gazette 01 December 1868 p4 c3

293 “Bideford” The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland, 1868

294 “Devonshire” Royal Cornwall Gazette 25 March 1869 p6 c4

## 1869, Johnson's dry dock at Clarence Wharf

On 4 August 1868 the Bideford Weekly Gazette ("The Foreshore of Bideford" p4 c7) carried an official notice that Mr John Johnson, of East-the-Water, had applied to the board of trade to lease the rights of the crown in a certain portion of the Foreshore adjoining Clarence Wharf, at Bideford<sup>295</sup>. At this point no hint is given of what Johnson intended for this foreshore.

The North Devon Journal of 9 December 1869 reported that a special meeting of the Town Council was held to consider Mr Johnson's application to construct a dry dock, an application to purchase the necessary foreshore having already been made to the Board of Trade. A plan was produced and unanimously approved, as the council considered that "carrying it out would effect a public improvement, and be beneficial to the navigation of the river."<sup>296</sup>

Johnson's dry dock was subsequently used, between 1869 and 1870, for Johnson's work on converting the *Pace* into the *Lady Gertrude*<sup>297</sup>.

## 1870, the 850 ton *Lady Gertrude* is launched

The *Lady Gertrude*, whilst the largest vessel known to have been launched from East-the-Water, was not built there. The Austrian barque *Pace* had been wrecked off Westward Ho! in December, 1868. The hull was then purchased while embedded in the Northam Sands. Using the dry dock at Clarence Wharf, Johnson's men substantially repaired and completely refitted her, before she was launched in May 1870 as the 850 ton *Lady Gertrude*<sup>298</sup>.

## 1871, the Torridge shifts its favour westward

It has been suggested that, in 1871, the bridging of the Torridge at Landcross, as part of the extension of the railway to Great Torrington, had unanticipated repercussions<sup>299</sup>. The viaduct and its various embankments precipitating a shift in the river's deep-water channel from the eastern side of the river to its western side.

295 "The Foreshore of Bideford" Bideford Weekly Gazette, 4 August 1868, p4 c7

296 "Town Council," North Devon Journal, 09 December 1869, p8 c1

297 "Ship Launches" Bideford Weekly Gazette 22 March 1870 p4 c2

298 "Ship Launches" Bideford Weekly Gazette 22 March 1870 p4 c2; "Bideford" Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 25 March 1870 p6 c6

299 Barry D Hughes. "Shipping and Ship Building 1900 to the Present." Bideford 500. 2009.

Online:<http://www.bidefordheritage.co.uk>. Accessed: 16 Jun 2013, np

A court case from 1868 suggests the shift itself may already have been triggered and that the Landcross work had simply perpetuated it. The case involved a claim that work on the bridge in about 1865, when the resultant debris from the work was dumped to the SE of the bridge, had deprived Mr. Johnson of the depth of water that he had formerly enjoyed, and, in it, a witness claimed “This was done because it was contemplated to stop up the first arch of the bridge and continue the line of the quay.” They continued “I have heard complaints that this diverted the gut of the river. Twelve months since a considerable quantity of the deads was cleared away, but this did not deepen the gut. The gut was always on Mr. Johnson’s side of the river, until Mr. Heard carried out his quay [just south of the bridge]. I never knew the sand to fill up the gut at Mr. Johnsons’s side until the alterations were made. The gut used to be where Mr. Johnson’s quay now is, but is now on this [western] side of the river.”<sup>300</sup>

With the steady increase in size of shipping the usefulness of Bideford’s eastern quays was now bound to decline, but it would take a long time before their industry would finally fall silent.

## **1871, the bee man of Vinegar Hill**

A swarm of bees, finding no suitable place to settle in the neighbourhood of Vinegar Hill, chose to rest on the head and neck of one Mr. Mills, also from that neighbourhood, “keeping him spellbound for a considerable time,” until help arrived and “the bees were beat of [sic] with fireirons.”<sup>301</sup>

## **c. 1871, properties used by the railways**

The 1871 Census shows Torridge House occupied by Richard F. Church, a Civil Engineer, with known associations with the L.S.W.R.<sup>302</sup>, and therefore probably one working on the extension of the railway to Torrington, between 1881 and 1911, the censuses prove that the site of Torridge Auctions was in use as a station-master’s house; in 1929 it was still owned by the railway, who called it Lion House.

## **1872, a railway extension and a new water supply**

In 1872 a new Bideford railway station was opened, coinciding with the extension of the line to Great Torrington<sup>303</sup>. The position of the existing tracks ensured that this lay in East-the-Water. The Station Hotel, formerly in Barnstaple Street, appears to have relocated to Torrington Lane.

1872 also saw Bideford gain a waterworks, with additional works constructed in 1893. The water supply coming from two reservoirs on Gammaton Moor, with a catchment of 300 acres<sup>304</sup>. With this East-the-Water finally gained a reliable water supply, the reliability of its wells having been badly affected by mining operations (or so it was claimed).

300 “Damage to Bideford Bridge by a Vessel in Launching” North Devon Journal 21 May 1868 p3 c3-4.

301 “Bideford” Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 02 June 1871 p6 c6

302 In the introductory notes for the next Census District Richard is mentioned again, but as a “Railway Engineer.”

303 “Bideford” North Devon Journal of 23 May 1872 p8 c2; “Opening of the Bideford and Torrington Railway” 18 Jul 1872 the North Devon Journal p8 c1

304 “Bideford” Kellys Directory, 1902



## **1873, lecture reflects local interest in emigration**

“A lecture on Canada as a field for emigration was delivered in the Town Hall on Friday evening by Mr. G [unreadable] Kingsmill, a special emigration commissioner from the Canadian Government. Mr Councillor Burrow presided. The lecture was listened to with considerable interest by a respectable audience.”<sup>305</sup>

## **1873, George Heard buys the remains of the New London Inn**

The New London Inn had been purchased by the railway company, but only part of the plot was required, so the remainder was sold at auction on 30 Jul 1873. George Heard Bought it for £190<sup>306</sup>.

## **1873, a start made on a new Railway Wharf**

In December 1873 the Railway Company were approaching landowners with a view to purchasing the land needed for a proposed new Railway Wharf. The company also gave “Mr. Waters, Shipbuilder, and Mr. Philip Colwill, lime and coal merchant” 10 days notice to give up their yards (in accord with the terms under which they held them)<sup>307</sup>. Only the previous week the press had reported that the London and South West Railway Company “propose to extend their wharfage, and to carry out a quay wall to allow vessels to discharge alongside. It is further reported that the company propose putting a steamer on the station to run to and from Bristol. This will be a great acquisition to the trade of the town, as it has long been felt an injustice to the merchants of Bideford that they have not the same advantages offered them as other places, when we inform our readers that all the coal, &c., for Torrington is discharged at Fremington.”<sup>308</sup>

## **1874, Fison exhibits coprolites and fossil ear-bones**

In 1874, Joseph Fison, of Ipswich, took a stand at the Devon County Agricultural Society Show in Barnstaple, exhibiting “the various guanos, coprolites<sup>309</sup>, fossil whales’ ear-bones, and other ingredients of which their manures were made.”<sup>310</sup> By 1875 his company were trading via a store, formerly known as the Steamers’ Stores<sup>311</sup>, recently refurbished and altered by Mr. Heard. Fison had two vessels plying to Bideford (the Star of the Seas and the Rose), at least one of which returned to Ipswich via Newport where it loaded coal.<sup>312</sup> In 1877 Bideford was one of Fison’s three principal western depots, the others being Plymouth and Poole.<sup>313</sup>

305 “Bideford” Western Times 17 June 1873 p8 c6

306 A brief History of the Royal Hotel. The Royal Hotel. Pg 8.

307 “The Proposed New Railway Wharf at East-the-Water” North Devon Journal 04 December 1873 p8 c1

308 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 27 November 1873 p8 c3

309 Coprolites, supposed at that time to be fossil excrement, were phosphate nodules

310 “Devon County Agricultural Society Show” Western Daily Mercury. 27 May 1874 p3 c2

311 North Devon Journal 07 January 1875 p2 c2

312 “Bideford” Western Times 23 July 1875 p7 c5

313 “Joseph Fison & Co. Ipswich” Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 7 February 1877 p1 c3

## **1874, the new road to the station**

In June 1874 the committee for the “New Road at the Railway Station,” now Station Hill, met with the London and South Western Company, who informed them “that the Railway Company had been to a considerable expense in constructing the road, and they felt the directors would not be inclined to do anything further to it, but that part of the road not sold to Mr. Heard should be given to the Board.” The Board seemed somewhat lukewarm about the expense this might entail, prompting some within the railway company to consider constructing an alternative approach<sup>314</sup>.

## **1874, Heard develops plans for his new hotel (later the Royal)**

In September 1874 the case for a licence for Mr. Heard's new hotel was put before the Bench. This provides a succinct summary of what was proposed, explaining that “the proposed hotel would be a very superior one”. A petition from seventy of the town's worthies was advanced to support the case. A novel feature of the hotel was to be a large refreshment room, to which parties from the railway station would have access, there being no refreshment currently available at the station. It was explained that stabling for 55 horses had already been constructed in Torrington Street, and that the whole of Mr. Heard's yard would also be utilised, providing parking for more than 50 carriages. A petition signed by 458 people was submitted in opposition (on the grounds that it would promote drunkenness), but this was dismissed. The licence was granted<sup>315</sup>.

## **1874, plans for a public infant's school, East-the-Water**

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 established elementary education for all children of age 5-13, with local school boards to oversee it<sup>316</sup>. By 1874 Bideford's school board were struggling to meet their obligations, so contemplated enlarging the existing schools and establishing two new ones for infants. They were considering the purchase of foreshore land in East-the-Water for one of these, but the School Board, having second thoughts, had begun considering a site in Torrington Lane (now Torrington Street)<sup>317</sup>.

## **1875, Heard moves away (selling 100,000 feet of floorboard)**

The auction advertisement stated that Mr. George Heard had instructed the sale because he was going away. It also mentioned much that was at his yard, including “100,000 feet of 6 and 7 inch prepared flooring board, 50,000 feet of well seasoned board.” 100,000 feet of floorboard laid end-to-end would be enough to stretch from Bideford to Barnstaple and back<sup>318</sup>.

## **1875, the school site purchased**

314 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 11 June 1874 p3 c1

315 North Devon Journal 03 September 1874 p2 c4-5

316 Gillard D “Education in England: a brief history.” 2011. Online: [www.educationengland.org.uk/history](http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history) Accessed: 30 Oct 2017

317 “Bideford” Western Times 19 June 1874 p7 c2

318 The Western Times. 16 Apr 1875 p8 c5

In July 1875 the School Board drew cheques “in favour of the representatives of the late Mr. Carter and Mr. Emberry [sic], for the amount of purchase money for the premises East-the-Water, the site of the new schools.” Further cheques were drawn for payment of salaries and tradesmen’s bills. “Mr Emberry made application to be allowed a quarter of a year’s interest in lieu of rent, he having kept his premises without a tenant since Lady-day last”, which the Board felt fair to grant<sup>319</sup>. It is likely that Embury’s property had been the earlier premises that the board considered but eventually rejected.

## **1875, Heard submits his plans for his ‘new buildings’**

By Jul 1875, the Urban Sanitary Committee had received the plans for Mr Heard’s “new buildings” and the London and South Western Railway Co. were asking that they take possession of “the road”<sup>320</sup>, the buildings presumably being the Royal Hotel and the road being Station Hill.

## **1876, General George Nicholas Channer awarded the VC**

General George Nicholas Channer of the 1st Goorkha Regiment ( Bengal Staff Corps ) was awarded the Victoria Cross for his part in an action on 20 Dec 1875, at Perak, Malaysia (as part of the Perak War, 1875-76, between the British and local Malays). Dying in 1905, he is buried in East-the-Water cemetery<sup>321</sup>.

## **1876, Whaling ships on Bideford's slips?**

It is of interest to note a report for 1910, concerning Bideford, that “as recently as 1876 eleven whalers, with a tonnage of 1,314, were on the slips there in one year.”<sup>322</sup>. It is possible that some of these came from Johnson’s, though this has yet to be investigated.

## **1877, Restarick takes over from Johnson at the shipyard**

In March 1877 the North Devon Journal carried an advertisement for the sale, by auction, of the whole of the stock and stock-in-trade of Johnson's shipyard, in which it is stated that Mr. John Johnson was leaving the neighbourhood<sup>323</sup>. Johnson died in San Fransisco, California, but, regardless of how he got there, his departure vacated East-the-Water’s only surviving ship-building yard.

319 “School Board” North Devon Journal 15 July 1875 p2 c3-4

320 “Urban Sanitary Authority” North Devon Journal 15 July 1875 p2 c4

321 Iain Stewart, 2016. Online: <http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/codevons.htm> accessed:4 Jan 2017

322 “Devon Gossip” Western Times 18 March 1910 p3 c2

323 North Devon Journal 15 March 1877 p1 c2

The 1871 Census shows a single man by the name of Henry M Restarick lodging at Ridgeway cottages in Northam. In 1871 he gave his occupation as “Ropemaker, employing 3 men and 3 boys.” In 1877 this same Henry Morgan Restarick (1833-1899) took over Johnson’s East-the-Water Shipyard (the Brunswick Wharf site). Restarick was an Axminster man, but no stranger to shipbuilding, for he had been office manager for John Cox & Son, shipbuilders of Bridport, and had also served as office manager at the Cleave Houses shipyard under George and John Cox. He presumably served at Cleave Houses until it closed, for it did so in 1877, no-doubt enabling Restarick to cherry-pick the redundant staff for his new enterprise. At the time he took over Johnson’s, it was the last working ship-yard in Bideford<sup>324</sup>. Under him it continued to specialise in building deep sea fishing vessels.

## **1877, The Bethel, led by Restarick, builds its chapel**

For several years lay members of various denominations, meeting under the banner of The Bethel, had been conducting services in a loft over some stores, but in 1876, having outgrown the loft, it was determined to purchase some suitable buildings, then for sale. By 1877, and at a cost of £600 for the necessary alterations, a hall had been constructed<sup>325</sup>.

1877 proved a busy year for Restarick, for in addition to marrying he became the Bethel chapel’s first pastor. John Cox, Restarick’s former employer, had been a Wesleyan preacher and Restarick continued in the Methodist tradition. As such Restarick was a strong advocate of the temperance movement, and very involved in local matters, twice serving as Bideford’s mayor<sup>326</sup>.

The Bethel’s opening service was conducted on 13 September 1877<sup>327</sup>

## **1877, an ancient trackway is discovered**

In 1877, whilst excavating for the Gasworks, workmen at Bideford uncovered a paved footway, about twelve feet wide, and running toward the river.<sup>328</sup> A width of 12 Roman Feet, or about 11.5 ft, was common for Roman public roads in rural areas<sup>329</sup>, so it was perhaps this find that led to the idea that a Roman road ran to the ford.

## **1878, West of England Bank fails, hitting Bideford's trade**

A depression of trade in Bideford, as well as other Devonshire towns, was attributed in part, to the failure of the West of England Bank at the close of 1878. The closure of Alfred Cook’s shipyard at Appledore was cited as a direct consequence of this collapse<sup>330</sup>.

324 His was not, however, the last shipyard in Bideford, as there were several that sprang up in the 20<sup>th</sup> C. on the Torridge’s western shore.

325 “Bazaar in Aid of the New Bethel” North Devon Journal, 9 August 1877, p8 c7

326 “Death of Alderman Restarick J. P.” Bideford Weekly Gazette 03 January 1899 p5 c5-6

327 “Opening of the New Bethel” North Devon Journal 13 September 1877 p8 c1

328 Roger Granville, The History of Bideford, 1883, pg2

329 Laurence, Ray (1999). The roads of Roman Italy: mobility and cultural change. London:Routledge, 1999. Pgs. 58–59

330 “Bideford” Western Morning News 07 January 1880 p2 c7

## 1878-9 International trade revives

White's account for 1878 starts out by re-iterating text from the 1850 first-edition as if it refers to the current situation, "The trade of this port is still very considerable" . . . "The Newfoundland trade is again revived, and bids fair to equal its former importance."<sup>331</sup> Well illustrating the need for caution when dealing with evidence from secondary sources!

It reminds us that "The port of Bideford includes Appledore, Clovelly, Hartland, and all the north coast of Devon, extending westward from the estuary of the Taw and Torridge."<sup>332</sup>

But then adds material that is probably more contemporary. "Steam and sailing vessels ply to Bristol, in connection with steamers to Liverpool, London, &c. Here are large potteries, which employ many hands in the manufacture of coarse earthenware. Here are also several malt-houses, breweries, a number of lime-kilns, and two iron foundries, two collar factories, and a ropery. Brown and grey paint and mineral black are got in the neighbourhood."<sup>333</sup>

White also provides a summary of both the value of trade and the numbers of ships. In reading the following, please recall a 19<sup>th</sup> C. harbour-master's observations that as much, if not more, trade went on East-the-Water, but that none of it was reflected in his books, the East-the-Water wharfs being private ones. "The amount of customs received here in 1840 was £5648 ; and in 1847, £3750. The value of the Total Imports of Foreign and Colonial merchandise of Bideford was £12,085 in 1872 ; £13,310 in 1873 ; £4792 in 1874 ; £2645 in 1875 : and £5676 in 1876. The gross amount of Customs Revenue received was £2711 in 1872 ; £2603 in 1873 ; £2950 in 1874 ; £2860 in 1875 ; and £2851 in 1876. The value of the total exports was £645 in 1872 ; £736 in 1873 ; £915 in 1874 ; and till in 1875 and 1876. The number and tonnage of sailing and steam vessels (including their repeated voyages) that entered and cleared during the year 1876 was :—

COASTWISE—ENTERED, with cargoes, 885 sailers, 38,783 tons ; 55 steamers, 3681 tons—total 940 vessels, 42,464 tons : in ballast, 63 sailers, 5812 tons ; 4 steamers, 370 tons—total 70 vessels, 7635 tons : cleared, with cargoes, 155 sailers, 5419 tons ; 53 steamers, 3549 tons—total, 208 vessels, 8968 tons : in ballast, 813 sailers, 43,670 tons ; 4 steamers, 370 tons—total, 833 vessels, 46,590 tons. British Possessions and Foreign

COUNTRIES—ENTERED, with cargoes, 6 sailers, 1545 tons ; in ballast, 3 sailers, 1453 tons : cleared, in ballast, 13 sailers, 3560 tons. The total number of registered vessels under the Merchant Shipping Acts on December 31, 1876, was 99 sailers, having a tonnage of 6649 tons. The total number of registered boats under the Sea Fisheries Act, 1868, on the same date was 149, having a tonnage of 359 tons."<sup>334</sup>

## 1879, closure of the Barnstaple turnpike trust and production of the Barum milestones

In 1879, just prior to its closure, the Barnstaple Turnpike Trust commissioned 104<sup>335</sup> new granite milestones, each to give the distance to Barum (the ancient name of Barnstaple)<sup>336</sup>.

331 White, History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Devon, 1878-9, 151

332 White, History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Devon, 1878-9, 151

333 White, History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Devon, 1878-9, 151

334 White, History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Devon, 1878-9, 151

335 Rosavear has 104, but Major Ascott (cited below) suggests there were 190.

336 Rosavear, "Barnstaple Turnpike Road," 2013, n.p.

Writing in 1953, Major Ascott describes how the distances were measured from Barnstaple Guildhall, with the eight-milestone on the Old Barnstaple Road, about 100 yards west of the railway bridge, the Barnstaple Street nine-milestone on the wall of the North Devon Farmers' office, and, on the Gammerton approach, the nine-milestone on the old Torrington Road, about a hundred yards below the barton<sup>337</sup>.

The Barnstaple Street milestone survives, as a listed feature, beside the bus shelter on the western side of Barnstaple Street.

## **1879, bakehouse fire in Torrington Street**

A fire at Mr Tucker's bakehouse in East-the-Water raised concerns for the new Bethel Chapel, but the prompt attendance by Sup. Chapman with his firemen confined the fire, such that only the bakehouse and part of the adjoining house were destroyed. The fire saw the first use of the firemen's new apparatus, which was said to have answered well<sup>338</sup>.

## **1880, bank failures continue to bite**

A report from Jan 1880 spoke of the depression of trade, that followed the collapse of the West of England Bank, having intensified, a notable casualty of which had been the "large and important shipbuilding yard of Mr. Alfred Cook, at Appledore."<sup>339</sup> Shipbuilding in the Taw/Torridge was in serious decline, but, despite that, Restarick's yard would hang on until 1886

## **1880, the Iron Church established**

In 1880 an 'Iron Church' was established in Barnstaple Street as a mission chapel. Iron churches were substantial pre-fabricated structures that could be erected quickly, then, if required, dismantled and moved elsewhere. In the 19<sup>th</sup> C. such churches could be bought from pattern books in a range of styles and sizes<sup>340</sup>.

In January of 1880 it was reported that 'A movement has been initiated for building a church East-the-Water, the only accommodation for religious worship at present existing in that part of the town being the "Bethel," a building used for occasional services irrespective of denominational distinctions.'<sup>341</sup>

17<sup>th</sup> June 1880 saw a report that "This new iron church, East-the-Water, is in a forward state, and is expected to be completed in about three weeks. The interior is of panelled polished deal and pine and has a very agreeable appearance."<sup>342</sup>

## **1881, Direct rail link established to Marland area**

1881 saw the opening of a private mineral line to connect the L&SW Railway at Torrington with the Marland area, facilitating the rail transport of ball clay from the mines to Railway Wharf<sup>343</sup>.

337 Ascott, Random Notes, 1953, pg 37.

338 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 07 August 1879 p8 c1

339 "Bideford" Western Morning News 07 January 1880 p2 c7

340 Colin Davies. The Prefabricated Home. Islington, London: Reaktion Books, 2005. n.p.

341 "Bideford" Western Morning News 07 January 1880 p2 c7

342 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 7 June 1880 Barnstaple, Devon, England p8 c3

343 "Marland Bricks" Posted 14 May 2018 by Modernmoocher.

Online: <https://modernmooch.com/2018/05/14/marland-bricks/> Accessed 18 Jan 2020

## 1881, Borough of Bideford buys most of the manor lands

In 1881 John Cleveland's widow Margaret, together with her daughter Agnes Hamilton Christie and her husband William Langham Christie, sold, the Manor of Bideford and its lands, with certain exclusions, to the Mayor and Corporation of Bideford. The transaction cost the Corporation £7,500, a loan of £10,000 having been applied for to improve the manorial facilities<sup>344</sup>.

The indenture is a long and complex one, but generally without specific details of the property covered, e.g. "all the Market Place and Market House, And all the messuage houses cottages edificies buildings stables barns dovehouses orchards gardens lands tenements walls quays wharves timber trees and other trees woods underwoods and wood grounds commons wastes and waste grounds fishing and fisheries fairs markets shops sheds stalls standings rents as well chief as other rents duties wharfages tolls dues duties stallages and hereditaments situate lying and being within the Borough town and precinct of Bideford aforesaid and elsewhere in the parish of Bideford in the County of Devon". It does however have some specific exclusions, including "save and except a quay and shipbuilding yard on the East side of the River Torridge formerly in the occupation of John JOHNSON but now of Henry Morgan RESTWICK [sic] which if not excepted would be included in the foregoing description."<sup>345</sup>

The whole process of the sale had been delayed when ownership of the foreshore, which had been included in the bill of sale, was claimed by the Board of Trade. A press article, from July 1880, suggested that the solicitors for the lord of the manor had decided, in order to resolve the issue, to purchase the foreshore from the Board of Trade, then transferring it to the Town Council, for no additional charge.<sup>346</sup>

The sale specified that "all the Estate right title interest property claim and demand whatsoever of the said Margaret Caroline CLEVELAND, William Langham CHRISTIE and Agnes Hamilton CHRISTIE and each of them of in or to the said hereditaments firstly and secondly hereinbefore described, Shall henceforth go remain and be to the use of the Corporation their successors and assigns forever."<sup>347</sup> Thus the Aldermen and Councillors of Bideford became the Lords of that Manor.

## 1881, Bideford loses its port status

In Sept 1881 the local board heard how the declining trade through Bideford had led the customs authorities to demote the town from the status of port to the status of creek<sup>348</sup>. They also reflected on the irony of customs collection reverting to Barnstaple, which port they felt was largely inaccessible except on the spring tides. The severe negative impact on wine merchants of the loss of bonded status was particularly noted. The board decided to petition the authorities to reverse their decision and the petition was duly sent.

344 "Bideford" Western Morning News 07 January 1880 p2 c7

345 "Sale of Manor of Bideford to Bideford Corporation (1881)." Transcribed by David Carter. Updated by Brian Randell 20 Sep 2012. Online: <http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/Bideford/GrenvilleDocuments/Sale1881.html> Accessed: 8/Apr/2016.

346 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 08 July 1880 p6 c1

347 "Sale of Manor of Bideford to Bideford Corporation (1881)." Transcribed by David Carter. Updated by Brian Randell 20 Sep 2012. Online: <http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/Bideford/GrenvilleDocuments/Sale1881.html> Accessed: 8/Apr/2016.

348 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 29 September 1881 p2 c1

On the 2 January 1882 a letter was read, before the Local Board, in which the Lords of the Treasury announced that the matter had been considered and that their original decision to demote Bideford to the status of creek would stand, but that the bonded stores could stay<sup>349</sup>.

The date of loss of port status on the towns Port Memorial is given as 1882, possibly due to the appeal process delaying the final decision.

## **1882, horse racing on the sands**

In August 1882, as a warm up for the annual Regatta, a Galloway Race, an Open Flat Race, a Pony Race, and a Donkey Race, were held upon the sands<sup>350</sup>.

## **c. 1882, Terminus Inn moves next door**

The original Terminus Inn was re-developed in about 1882, when buildings along the east of the stretch of Barnstaple Street seem to have been set back to facilitate road widening. The original site was redeveloped into three cottages (currently numbers 3-4), and the Inn moved into the current number 2.

## **1883 How's proposed jetty**

The Local Government Board wrote to the Local Board concerning a “new Jetty, which Mr. A. How, Barnstaple, proposed to erect at East-the-Water, and they enclosed an amended plan for the board's perusal.”<sup>351</sup>

## **1883, Devon County Show held in East-the-Water**

Following an unsuccessful bid to host the Bath and West of England Society's annual show, in which Mr. Wm. Turner's field, East-the-Water, a meeting in March 1882 considered whether to invite the Devon Agricultural Association's annual show (the Devon County Show) to the same field in 1883<sup>352</sup> (at this period the annual show still met in different locations). The invitation was clearly accepted as the show took place in May 1883, in Mr Turner's field, the first time it had ever been held in Bideford<sup>353</sup>. The show was advertised on 15 March 1883, its advert appearing immediately above a notice announcing restrictions in Barnstaple to control an outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth disease.<sup>354</sup> First appearing in England in 1839, by 1869 Foot-and-Mouth had spread throughout the country, but as only one percent of infected animals died, and the rest recovered after about a fortnight, and farmers could survive an outbreak, control was focused on quarantining infected animals.<sup>355</sup>

349 “Bideford No Longer a Port” Western Times 3 January 1882 p8 c6

350 “Bideford Regatta and Races” North Devon Journal 31 August 1882 p8 c1

351 “Bideford” Western Times 3 July 1883 Exeter P6 c5

352 “Devon Agricultural Association. Invitation to Bideford.” Western Times 22 March 1882 p2 c5

353 “Devon County Show” North Devon Journal 05 April 1883 p5 c2-3

354 “Devon County Agricultural Association” North Devon Journal 15 March 1883 p5 c1

355 “Foot and Mouth Disease” North Devon Journal 23 September 1875 p5 c4



## 1883-5, Restarick's mission ships

In the 1880s Restarick's Shipyard played a role in the early history of the Fisherman's Mission (aka. the Royal National Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen).

With tobacco selling for four shillings per pound onshore, but only eighteen-pence at sea, English seamen had a strong incentive to purchase their supplies offshore. To meet this demand, Dutch vessels known as 'copers' (from the Dutch *kopen* for 'to buy') were sailing with the north-sea fishing fleets, but in addition to selling tobacco to the seamen, they also functioned as "grog-shops." As a result, drunken seamen were routinely endangering not only themselves and their ship-mates, but even their boats. Concerned about this situation, Ebenezer Mather, founder of the Fisherman's Mission, reasoned that, by equipping a mission vessel to accompany the fleet, he could help address the issue. The mission ship would finance itself by fishing, but also carry a missionary, a medical box, and a substantial quantity of cheap tobacco, the latter to be made available at cost price and without the accompanying temptation to drink.<sup>356</sup>

By 1883-84, Mather had already secured the support of tobacco manufacturers, launched a mission smack, and proved the model worked, so he decided to acquire a further three boats. The first, the *Salem*, he purchased from a Hull smack-owner, but the other two, the *Cholmondeley*, and the *Edward Auriot*, he had specially built at Restarick's shipyard<sup>357</sup>, as was the mission's fifth smack, the *Sir Edward Birkbeck*<sup>358</sup>.

The *Sir Edward Birkbeck*'s dedication service was photographed, and the picture graces many books on Bideford history (though sometimes wrongly captioned to suggest this picture was of the last ship launch from the yard).

The activity of the mission ships was welcomed by the fleet owners, whilst the copers, finding demand for their services reduced, were eventually driven out of business.<sup>359</sup>

By 1887 the ships seem to have found a role as maritime dispensaries, providing valued medical support to the fishing fleets, "for each of the mission boats is a floating dispensary, and the skippers are trained in ambulance work."<sup>360</sup>

## 1884, Clarence Wharf manure store declared a nuisance

A store on Clarence Wharf, owned by Mr. Geo Heard, formerly of East-the-Water, and operated by Messrs. W. and M. H. Goulding, manure merchants, of Dublin and Cork, was declared to be a nuisance to those living in adjacent cottages, due to the level of effluent and the smell from it<sup>361</sup>.

356 Wood, *North Sea fishers and fighters*, 1911, 205-6

357 Ebenezer J. Mather. "Nor'ard of the Dogger", or Deep-sea trials and Gospel triumphs. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. 1922. Pages 156-7; Rose Arno, *Bideford Buzz*, 2011, June Edition, page 9.  
Online: <http://bidefordbuzz.org.uk>. Accessed: 13 Jun 2013, np

358 Ronald Rompkey, *Grenfell of Labrador: A Biography*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009, chapter 3

359 Walter Wood. *North Sea fishers and fighters*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., 1911. Page 206

360 "A North Sea Gale" *Leeds Mercury* 22 October 1887 p9 c7

361 "Bideford Borough Magistrates" *Bideford Weekly Gazette* 29 April 1884 p5 c2

## 1884, disastrous gale hits the town

“During Friday night and Saturday morning a furious gale, far severer than has been known for many years, raged over the West of England” it uprooted trees, blew chimney tops through roofs, demolished the new Salvation Army Hall, which had been opened just hours beforehand, and caused widespread road closure due to fallen trees. On the river “the mooring posts on the Quay were pulled up by the strain of the warps. Several vessels were damaged.”<sup>362</sup>

## 1884, Marland Clay Co. shipping from Railway Wharf

One commodity that passed across the Railway Wharf were nine-inch rounded lumps of clay, weathered for several months, and then known as ball clay<sup>363</sup>. In 1884 the *Helstone*, owner Mr. Finch, was chartered to carry ball clay for the Marland Clay Co. But Finch had missed his opportunity to sail with the spring tide, having arrived five days late (due to repairs). The upper clay balls had dried out whilst the wagons waited on the wharf, so they then had to be replaced, and the railway Co. charged demurrage for the delay to their trucks<sup>364</sup>.

## 1886, Baker's purchase of Restarick's Yard

Henry. M. Restarick's Yard was leased, but the land was owned by William Langham Christie of Tapley Park, Westleigh. In 1886 it was purchased from Christie by John Baker, a merchant, with £1,500 changing hands. Under Baker's ownership it would become Brunswick Wharf. A plan produced at the time of the sale shows the land to the north in the ownership of Mr G Heard, and that to the south in the ownership of the Bridge Feoffees<sup>365</sup>.

The Baker family would be responsible for the I. Baker and Son, Merchants, sign that has become a familiar landmark at the eastern end of the bridge.

The sale agreement between Christie and Baker stipulated that Restarick should be allowed to complete the two vessels that he was currently constructing<sup>366</sup>.

## 1886, the “last” ship launched and Restarick's closes

A picture of the *Sir Edward Birkbeck* at Restarick's yard has been widely circulated under the misapprehension that it showed the launch of the last boat built there. This picture, however, shows neither the last boat launched, nor the launch. The picture shows the blessing of the *Sir Edward Birkbeck*, which took place about a week after her launch in August 1885<sup>367</sup>. The last launch from Restarick's was the fishing smack *Fair Fanny*, c. 99 tons, launched in September 1886<sup>368</sup>.

362 “Disastrous Gale” North Devon Gazette 23 December 1884 p5 c3

363 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 4

364 “Claim for Damages to Cargo” North Devon Journal 19 October 1884 p8 c5-6

365 Peter Christie. “Bideford history . . . with Peter Christie: Brunswick Wharf.” Page 14 in My Town Bideford. Issue 28. North Devon Gazette, July 2015

366 Peter Christie. “Bideford history . . . with Peter Christie: Brunswick Wharf.” Page 14 in My Town Bideford. Issue 28. North Devon Gazette, July 2015

367 “The North Sea Mission: Dedication of a Vessel at Bideford” Western Times 19 August 1885 p3 c2

368 Bideford” North Devon Journal 23 September 1886 p8 c3

It has been suggested that the last boat launched from Restarick's yard became caught by the tide and caused slight damage to the Long Bridge. It would be odd to launch a boat next to the bridge when the tide was flowing strongly, nor do any of the newspaper reports of this launch mention such a problem, so it is perhaps right to question if there is any truth in the story? Many years earlier, in 1868, the launch of the G. A. Preston from Johnson's yard had hit the bridge<sup>369</sup>, but that was due to a subsidence of the slipway superstructure, presumably on the bridge-ward side. Nothing similar was likely in 1886 and, on balance, it seems unlikely that anything happened. It seems probable, moreover, that the tradition of an incident in 1868 could have arisen from a simple typographic error, the transposition of 86 for 68, thereafter being indiscriminately propagated.

The close of Restarick's yard, the last operating in East-the-Water, brought an end to centuries of shipbuilding in East-the-Water shipbuilding.

By 1910 there was not a single slip in use in Bideford<sup>370</sup>. This was not, however, the end to shipbuilding in Bideford, but major enterprise of that kind would, henceforth, follow the deeper water westward across the river.

## 1886, the years of the Shamwickshire Regatta

By 1886 the Long Bridge was already familiar with spectators amassing on it to watch the annual Bideford regatta, but in that year they also assembled on the next Saturday evening as well. A correspondent at the time wrote 'A few days after the main regatta there is generally a "scratch race" or two East-the-Water.' This was known as the *Shamwickshire Regatta* and that year it featured races such as ones for: four-oared pleasure boats; pair-oar pleasure boats; stern sculling; ordinary ship's boats propelled by shovels<sup>371</sup>. On that occasion wheelbarrow race, two-legged race, and greasy pole also featured. The shovel race clearly proved popular as it appeared again in 1891.

The *Shamwickshire Regatta* proves that the concept of *Shamwickshire* was no longer a name attached simply to the mayor, but had become part of the identity of East-the-Water. The name of East-the-Water's football team could now be *Shamwickshire Rovers*, and one of its streets could be called *Shamwickshire Close*.

## c. 1887, construction of Canada Cottages in Barnstaple Street

In Feb 1886 one J. Way is mentioned as at Canada Wharf<sup>372</sup>. A year later an advertisement appears for the three cottages later known as Canada Cottages, mentioning that they were nearly new and that one was occupied by J. Way<sup>373</sup>.

## 1887, "foreign" behaviour in Torrington Lane

Mr. Kivell the baker testifying before the bench, suggested, of Torrington Lane, that 'The behaviour to be witnessed there daily was "more like what could be seen in Bulgaria or Siberia or such like uncivilised countries.'"

369 "An Unsuccessful Ship Launch" Bideford Weekly Gazette 14 January 1868 p4 c1; Bideford Weekly Gazette 21 July 1868 p4 c4

370 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 17 March 1910 p2 c7

371 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 19 August 1886 p8 c2

372 Bideford Weekly Gazette 16 Feb 1886 p1 c3

373 "Dwelling Houses" North Devon Journal 7 July 1887, p8 c1

## 1887, new barges for the pottery

The sailing barges *Jubilee* and *Queen* were built by Restarick's former Foreman, Whitefield, operating out of Cox's old yard at Cleave-houses. These barges were built for the East-the-Water firm of Phillips, Backway and Redcliff, who sourced their gravel from Landcross. James Redcliff is reported to have been very particular about the gravel he used and to have felt that it would only take a shovelful of salt water gravel, amidst a load of freshwater gravel, to ruin a kiln-full of ware<sup>374</sup>. In 1887, an advertisement in the local press sees H. Phillips and Co. advertising that they have two new barges available for any barging use<sup>375</sup>.

## 1888, the Ordnance Survey publish a new map of the area

The Ordnance Survey 1-2500 map of 1888 (surveyed in 1886) shows the main channel of the Torridge indisputably occupying a western position. On the eastern side, as one moved north from the Long Bridge, are marked: a shipyard (Restarick's); Queen's Wharf; Steamer Wharf; Clarence Wharf; St Peter's Mission Church; a goods station and railway sidings.

## 1888, concrete to Bristol and the gravel trade

During September and October 1888 "a large number of small vessels have arrived here [Bristol] from Bideford with concrete for the new quay wall, and yesterday no fewer than six came up on one tide"<sup>376</sup>. The gravel banks of the Taw and Torridge were a ready source for the gravel needed for such concrete, which gravel tended to be handled through East-the-Water's wharves and its bargemen. Throughout the 1890s there was also a steady trickle of gravel from the Taw/Torridge estuary to Cardiff<sup>377</sup>. By 1921 this trickle of gravel export had become a flood, with, e.g. ten gravel-laden boats arriving at Avonmouth from Bideford or Barnstaple in a single day<sup>378</sup>.

## 1889, Royal Hotel opens

The North Devon Journal of 03 Jan 1889 states that the Hotel was to open on Monday 7<sup>th</sup>, but the North Devon Journal of the 10 Jan 1889 carried an article that stated that the Royal Hotel had opened "yesterday," i.e. on 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 1889, the former date seems the more likely<sup>379</sup>. The latter article provided a description of the refurbished hotel, in which its author suggests that, given the nature of the establishment, "there is reason, therefore, for complimenting Mr G. Heard and his son Mr. Stanley Heard, upon their pluck in establishing an hotel which, should it succeed, will do much for the town at large as well as for the promoters themselves."

## 1889, East-the-Water lighting neglected

In April 1889 a meeting of Bideford Local Board sealed the new contract with the gas company, prompting Mr Pollard to comment that the Committee appointed to oversee the contract had neglected East-the-Water and it was arranged that they would give that their consideration<sup>380</sup>.

374 Grant & Hughes. North Devon Barges. Appledore, Devon: North Devon Museum Trust, 1975, 18

375 "H. Phillips & Co." Bideford Weekly Gazette 23 August 1887 p4 c5

376 "The Business of the Port" Western Daily Press 12 October 1888 p5 c6

377 for just one example see "Imports" Western Daily Press 12 October 1888 p8 c6

378 "City Docks-Arrived" Western Daily Press 17 January 1921 p7 c4

379 "Bideford." North Devon Journal 03 Jan 1889 p8 c2; North Devon Journal 10 Jan 1889 p2 c4

380 "The Improved Lighting" Bideford Weekly Gazette. 1 May 1888 p5 c2

## **1889, foundations laid for St Peter's mission church**

In 1889, the Rector, who had acquired land on the Grange Estate, took the decision to build a new stone church, rather than move the iron church. The iron church, which had suffered from an expensive ground-rent, was to be sold to help fund the new project. The foundation stone for the new church was laid in October 1889<sup>381</sup>.

The 300 seat building cost £2,150, and was constructed of local stone in the Gothic style (consisting of chancel, nave and porch). A handsome iron screen with brass gates separated the chancel from the nave and all the fittings of the church were of a costly character<sup>382</sup>.

## **1889, failure of the North Devon Pottery**

Candy & Co., operated Marland Brick Works, the North Devon Pottery, at Annery, in Weare Giffard, as well as a pottery in Bovey Tracy. The Marland Brick Works were responsible for the white bricks found in many of North Devon's Victorian buildings, though the company had increasingly become known for producing not just bricks, but also high quality architectural terracotta. It appears that it was this later aspect of their work that kept the company afloat, as failure to secure contracts in that area was blamed for financial difficulties in 1889. The elaborate ornaments found on some of I. Baker & Son's buildings (including the 'Baker Building' on Brunswick Wharf) are said to be items acquired when the North Devon Pottery closed.

## **1890, St Peter's replaces the Iron Mission Church**

The Bideford Weekly Gazette, December 30, 1890, noted "In religious matters, the principle event has been the consecration in July of the permanent Church of S. Peter's, East-the-Water, built to take the place of the Iron Mission Church. It was the gift of the Rector, Rev. Roger Granville, to the parish. At the same time the Bishop of Exeter consecrated the new Church Cemetery."<sup>383</sup> St Peter's was built almost entirely at the Rev. Roger Granville's own expense<sup>384</sup>.

381 Bideford Weekly Gazette 8 October 1889 p3 c3

382 "Bideford," Kelly's Directory of Devonshire & Cornwall. London: Kelly, 1893. Pg. 57

383 "1890 – A Retrospective," Bideford Weekly Gazette, December 30, 1890 pg 5 col 4

384 Communication from Joyce Eastley published by Rose Arno, Bideford Buzz, 2011, June Edition, page 9.

Online:<http://bidefordbuzz.org.uk>. Accessed: 13 Jun 2013

A somewhat later account states “A new Church of England Cemetery, near the new Barnstaple road, East-the-Water, was opened in 1890; it is about 2½ acres in extent, and includes a handsome chapel.”<sup>385</sup> The cemetery consecrated was therefore the one behind Northgate Cottage, and just south of the Cornwall Farmer’s site. In January 1888 the Local Board, who were already considering the need for a new cemetery, were reviewing a site west-the-water, when a counter proposal for a site East-the-Water was put before them as “more convenient and suitable in every way.” Not everyone at the meeting agreed, with one dissenter suggesting “the site East-the-Water is very exposed, and the dead would be blown out of their graves in such an exposed spot,” and “funerals from the bulk of the town would have to cross the Long Bridge” . . . “and this in the face of the great traffic over the bridge, and considering how exposed the bridge was in certain winds, would be very undesirable.”<sup>386</sup> The Board went ahead and opened a new public cemetery in Handicross, but the manner in which they went about it aroused enough offence amongst church-people, for them, with a gift of the ground from Sir George Stucley, to set about establishing their own cemetery in East-the-Water<sup>387</sup>.

## **1890, Bideford suffers from muddy roads and high tides**

In January 1890, a correspondent to the Bideford Weekly Gazette complained that about January the roads were covered with a thick coating of stones obtained from local quarries, but that “at Bideford those stones are left to work themselves in. The aid of a stone roller is never invoked. But it is not long before there is plenty of mud about. Presumably owing to its own inherent quality, the stone appears to lend itself to pulverisation and slush rather than the formation of good hard roads.”<sup>388</sup>

In the same month extraordinarily high tides flooded unprotected properties on the quay to 2-3 feet, whilst there was also damage at East-the-Water. “A large quantity of salt and manure were damaged and lost at Messrs. Pollard's stores; and also at Messrs. Packard's and Colwill's. A quantity of cement at Mr. Pritchard's was spoilt”<sup>389</sup>.

## **1892, new development at the gas works (retort and gas-holder)**

On 2 May 1892 the Bideford Gas and Coke Company invited tenders for work at their East-the-Water works, comprising: “The Excavation and Preparing and Construction of the New Gas Holder Tank”; “Building a New Retort House”, which were to be submitted to the Chairman of the Directors, 6. Grenville Street, Bideford” by the following 11<sup>th</sup> May.<sup>390</sup>

## **1892, post office opens in Barnstaple Street**

In March 1892 it was announced that a post office was about to open in Barnstaple Street<sup>391</sup>. In September 1892 a new post office opened in the shop of Mr. Delabridge, grocer<sup>392</sup>

385 Kelly's Directory of Devonshire & Cornwall. London: Kelly, 1893. Pg. 57

386 “Local Government Inquiry at Bideford” Bideford Weekly Gazette 10 January 1888 p5 c4

387 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 26 December 1889 p2 c3

388 “Our Streets and Roads” Bideford Weekly Gazette 28 January 1890 p4 c6

389 “Extraordinary High Tides” Bideford Weekly Gazette 28 January 1890 p4 c6

390 “To Builders & Contractors” Bideford Weekly Gazette 03 May 1892 p3 c5

391 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 31 March 1892 p8 c3

392 “Postal Facilities” Bideford Weekly Gazette 13 September 1892 p4 c6

## 1893, harbour charges under the spotlight

Traditionally, it appears that no keelage had been charged at the private wharves East-the-Water, but, under the banner of protecting the income of the town, one of the councillors had queried the right of the Town Council, as lords of the Manor, to levy keelage on all vessels entering the harbour (and more particularly those moored at private wharves in East-the-Water). Councillors felt that now the town had a right to both harbour and manor dues, it should enforce their claim, as Mr Christie had recently successfully done at Instow<sup>393</sup>. The situation was disputed, and to further complicate matters, every vessel that came up river was charged 2s. 6d., for anchorage<sup>394</sup>, whichever side they discharged. In the end, due to the uncertainty surrounding claim and counterclaim over the situation in East-the-Water, it was decided that legal council should be sought.

In November 1893 the result of that counsel were presented to Bideford Town Council<sup>395</sup>. It set out “the conditions under which the original quay rights were held by John, Earl of Bath, and subsequently by Augustus Saltern Willet.” It was also noted that no keelage had been charged in East-the-Water since 1881.

Four questions were put to the Council’s legal counsel, Borough Recorder Sir George Sherston Baker, to answer. These, together with his replies, were summarised as follows:-- (1) Whether the Town Council can enforce the payment of keyage or keelage on vessels anchoring in the soil of the river on its eastern side? Yes, provided they be within the limits of the private Act of 1828. – (2) Whether, under the Act of 1828, the Council has the sole franchise and right to levy quay dues within the harbour? Yes, within so much of the harbour as is defined by that Act. – (3) Whether the owners of private wharves can levy tolls or dues directly or indirectly, in respect of vessels moored at their private wharves East-the-Water? No, except possibly as a compensation for trespass. – (4) Whether such owners were liable for disturbance of the Corporation’s rights? He did not find that there had been any disturbance. – Finally Sir G. S. Baker suggested, that if the Town Council wished to test its rights, they should bring an action against the captain or owner of some vessel moored to a private wharf East-the-Water, but he would advise that the Council first frame bye-laws for the regulation of harbour dues, and have them confirmed at Exeter before a Judge.”<sup>396</sup>

In February 1894 the keelage question again came before the local board, this time in respect to whether the Council, as proprietors of the corporate wharf, were could oblige wharf owners to remove the build-up of mud that hindered their use. The local press recounts the Recorder’s response in some detail, but he is of the opinion that the Corporation “cannot cause the owners of land East-the-Water to remove mud layers; but it is possible that bye-laws might be framed to punish any persons obstructing the navigation of the river by wilful misfeasance.” Alderman Narraway counselled further consideration, whilst reflecting that the investigation had at least “shown clearly that it was illegal for wharf owners, East-the-Water, to charge keelage.”<sup>397</sup>

393 “The Public Rights Over the Shipping” North Devon Gazette 15 August 1893 p5 c1

394 All ports belonged to the sovereign, so no ship could anchor in one without payment of anchorage to the crown, which was collected by the state, as opposed to the manor [“Anchorage” in Joshua Montefiore. *A Commercial Dictionary: Containing the Present State of Mercantile Law, Practice, and Custom Intended for the Use of the Cabinet, the Counting-house, and the Library.* London: Joshua Motefiore, 1803]

395 “Harbour Keelage and Quay Dues, a Lengthy Document.” Bideford Weekly Gazette 28 November 1893 p5 c3

396 “Harbour Keelage and Quay Dues, a Lengthy Document.” Bideford Weekly Gazette 28 November 1893 p5 c3

397 “The Keelage Question” Bideford Weekly Gazette 20 February 1894 p5 c2

## **1893, the wealthiest man in Bideford and Salterns cottages**

The North Devon Journal of 11 May 1893(p2 c1) reported that the well supplying the Salterns Cottages was in an unfit state, at which time they were said to belong to Mr. George's Stucley<sup>398</sup>. In the article, Mr. George Stucley (1812-1900, formerly George Buck), owner of various property in East-the-Water and, on various occasions, Conservative MP for Barnstaple, was described as “the wealthiest man in the borough.”

## **1893, the Marquis of Lorne and a new wharf**

On 26 Jan 1893 the North Devon Journal reported that a syndicate of Local Tradesmen, who, as they were bringing heavy goods into the locality in quantity, and stood to lose through increased railway tariffs, had recently acquired a “small trading steamer, the Marquis of Lorne, running between Bideford and Bristol”<sup>399</sup> The day after the purchase was completed, she was steaming up river when one of her boilers gave out, badly scalding her stoker. She was, nevertheless, “enabled to make the New [Brunswick] Wharf, East-the-Water, where she will in future be berthed”.

## **1893, proposals for the W.C.A.'s Victoria Wharf**

On 29<sup>th</sup> July 1893 the Exeter Flying Post carried a note that the Bideford Local Board had received a letter, from the Board of Trade, “with respect to the proposed wharf on the east side of the Torridge for the Agricultural Co-operative Society,” which they referred to the full committee<sup>400</sup>.

On the 26 Oct 1893 the North Devon Journal reported that “The Board of Trade wrote that they had declined to allow the Western Agricultural Association [sic] to take the proposed wharf as far into the river as they had asked, but had given permission for the wharf to come on a line with Mr Fry's wharf, which must be regarded as the Board of Trade line.”<sup>401</sup>

In September 1893 the Bideford Weekly Gazette published a notice inviting tenders for the 'ERECTION OF WAREHOUSES at Bideford, for the “Western Counties' Agricultural Co-operative Association, Limited,” the plans were available for inspection at the company's “Offices, Railway Wharf, Bideford, on or after 4<sup>th</sup> Inst.” With tenders to be submitted “not later than the 16<sup>th</sup> Inst.” The notice was signed “W. T. M. Mear, Architect and Surveyor” and dated “Wadebridge, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1893.”<sup>402</sup>

398 North Devon Journal 11 May 1893 p2 c1

399 North Devon Journal 26 Jan 1893 p3 c5

400 “Bideford Local Board” Exeter Flying Post 29th July 1893 p2 c7

401 “Bideford Local Board” North Devon Journal 26 Oct 1893 p3 c1

402 “To Builders” Bideford Weekly Gazette 12 September 1893 p5 c1



## 1893, the Devon Trading Company arrive at Queen's Wharf

The Devon Trading Company was established in Exeter in 1892, by the amalgamation of Messrs. W. Scammell & Son, Messrs Wilson & Son, and Messrs. Scammell, Osler, & Co., at Exeter, Teignmouth, and Newton Abbot<sup>403</sup>. From 1893 until 1900 the Company had a branch operating from Queen's Wharf. During this period, the company's steamer, *Ina Mactavish*, traded between Bideford and Bristol<sup>404</sup>, and the company sold Cement, Lime, Bricks, Slates, Socket Pipes, and General Building Materials.<sup>405</sup>

After a slight hiatus until 1904, it then reappeared at Clarence Wharf.

## 1893, employment in the cuff and collar factories

Kelly's directory for 1893 states, of Bideford, "There is now no shipbuilding here., and the trade in timber and coal has diminished, but the prosperity of the town has greatly increased since 1883 by the rapid development of the cuff and collar manufactures: there are now nearly 600 persons, chiefly females, so employed; the principal factories being those of Vincent and Duncan, McBryde and Co. and Cooper and Co. of London. Here also is the large foundry of Messrs. Tardew and sons, two small potteries, tanneries and a number of malting establishments. There are three banks and a savings bank."<sup>406</sup> "There is steam packet communication between this place and Bristol twice a week. The town is lighted with gas, from works in East-the-Water, the- property of a company."<sup>407</sup>

## 1894, Pine-Coffin bust unveiled

Kelly's Directory notes that "At East-the-Water, near the bridge, is a marble bust of John Richard Pine-Coffin esq. J.P., D.L., A.C.C., of Portledge (d. 1890), erected by public subscription in 1893 as a tribute of esteem."<sup>408</sup> Pine-Coffin died in 1890, aged 48, and appears to have been a generally well respected public figure and role model, rather than someone who was notable for any particular action<sup>409</sup>. John held a commission in the 16th Regiment of Foot, but resigned it when he inherited the Pine-Coffin family estate at Portledge. He was a Deputy Lieutenant, a Justice of the Peace, Vice-Chairman of Bideford Board of Guardians, and also sometime President of Bideford Conservative Association.

With Pine-Coffin known as an active politician and holding a range of public offices, the shops in Bideford drew their blinds or closed their shutters for his funeral<sup>410</sup>

In practice Kelly's got the year wrong, for, on 18 Sept 1894, the Bideford Weekly Gazette reported that "After much delay the Pine-Coffin memorial was placed in position and unveiled last Wednesday." The reporter noted that some people questioned the raising of the bust as "Mr Pine-Coffin was not a borough man in the strict sense of the term," before suggesting that it was an unnecessarily narrow "to confine our honours to a narrow municipal groove."<sup>411</sup>

403 "The Devon Trading Company Ltd" Devon and Exeter Gazette 23 January 1892 p4 c3

404 "The Water Supply" Bideford Weekly Gazette 06 June 1893 p8 c2

405 Bideford Weekly Gazette 8 May 1900 p1 c2

406 Kelly's Directory of Devonshire & Cornwall. London: Kelly, 1893. Pg. 58

407 Kelly's Directory of Devonshire & Cornwall. London: Kelly, 1893. Pg. 57

408 Kelly's Directory 1906. Pg. 70

409 Peter Christie. Secret Bideford. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley, 2015. Pg 11.

410 "Funeral of the Late Mr. J. R. Pine-Coffin of Portledge." Western Times 22 March 1890 p4 c5

411 Bideford Weekly Gazette 18 September 1894 p5 c2

Peter Christie has suggested that the desire to raise a bust, to a prominent local Conservative, arose from the earlier honouring, in similar manner and in Barnstaple square, of the prominent Liberal Charles Willshire<sup>412</sup>. Though the article in the Bideford Weekly Gazette of 18 September 1894 suggests the proponents of the scheme were concerned that it should not be interpreted in such a manner – “It was distinctly affirmed in the initial circular that the object was purely public, and entirely without political bias, and as evidence of this the Mayor of Bideford, at that time Mr. Alderman Restarick, J.P., became a member of the committee and subscribed to the fund.”<sup>413</sup>

## **1894, W.C.A.C.A. store and mill opens at Victoria Wharf**

The new W.C.A.C.A. buildings opened on 7 Nov 1894. The North Devon Journal gave the following account: ‘At Bideford yesterday the splendid new warehouse erected by the W.C.A.C.A. in the Railway Yard, East-the-Water, was formally opened. With a river frontage of 100 feet, and an elevation of 87 feet, the premises are the finest of their kind in the West of England. The store is divided into four floors, each 87 feet by 60 feet. It has an elevator capable of raising 1,000 bushels an hour, and a “Spencer” conveyor to distribute the material over the floors. The machinery includes three large millstones, a kibbler, to deal with 60 bushels an hour, a roller mill and a cake mill, capable of grinding five tons per hour. The motive power is an Otto gas engine of 20 nominal and 48 indicative horse power, and shafting varying from 3½in to 2½in.. The store has a capacity of 5,000 tons and is estimated to cost over £5,000.’<sup>414</sup>

## **1894, the municipal steam-roller dares to cross the bridge**

In 1894 the council decided, despite the Bridge Trust failing to give their consent, to take their steam-roller over to East-the-Water, the aim being to compact aggregate surfaced roads. They gave instruction to use the roller only on those parts of the roads well coated with stones<sup>415</sup>.

## **1894, Harbour Byelaws are introduced**

Acting on the legal advice received in November 1893 (see above), new Harbour Byelaws were set before Bideford Town Council, having been signed by a Judge of Assize in Exeter. This drew “protest from Mr. Pollard to the effect that the Council had been discourteous to the private wharf-owners, East-the-Water, against whom the bye-laws was [sic] principally levelled, and had got them smuggled through without an opportunity being allowed the private owners to defend what they considered their legitimate rights.” One councillor felt that the by-laws said nothing about tolls East-the-Water and were simply a matter of protecting the public interest, whilst another suggested that the owners of the private quays “must not interfere with the Local Authority, who had a right to levy dues.” A motion to publish the byelaws was unanimously carried.<sup>416</sup> Mr. T. Pollard wanted it put on record that none of the private owners, of East-the-Water “had ever attempted to charge a halfpenny keelage.”

412 Peter Christie. *Secret Bideford*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley, 2015. Pg 11.

413 Bideford Weekly Gazette 18 September 1894 p5 c2

414 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 08 November 1894 p5 c3

415 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 22 November 1894 p2 c5

416 “Bideford Town Council” North Devon Journal 12 July 1894 p2 c3

## 1894, concern at the obstruction of ancient paths

In February 1894 an Inquiry was held into encroachment of rights of way and public footpaths. Amidst those reported as no longer accessible was a route formerly used by fishermen. It followed “paths running on the higher and lower side of Round Hill” and used to go to Saddle Rock, but by 1894 it was obstructed just beyond Round Hill. Mr. George Heard explained that “anciently the path went beyond Saddle Rock, even to Wear Gifford.”

## 1895, the S.S. *Devonia* berthed at East-the-Water

Built in 1894, by the Clyde firm of John H. Gilmour & Co, Irvine, the *Devonia* was a steel screw steamer, initially owned by the Bideford & Bristol Steamship Co., of Bideford<sup>417</sup>. The Bideford and Bristol Steamship Company, was a not-for-profit co-operative<sup>418</sup>. The Steamship Co. had the S.S. *Devonia* built to replace the 16 ton *Marquis of Lorne*, in response to an increase in railway rates<sup>419</sup>.

In 1895 the North Devon Journal reported the recovery of Mr. Manley Tucker, who had suffered complications after falling into the hold of the “S.S. *Devonia*, East-the-Water,” and breaking his leg<sup>420</sup>.

In 1912 a ship of the same name, *Devonia*, was still in the area, as she took over the mail run to Lundy. “in 1912 the contract for the mails was changed from Captain Dark and his [*Lundy*] *Gannet* to the *Devonia* belonging to the Bristol Steamship Co. of Bideford”<sup>421</sup>.

A picture showing the S.S. *Devonia* appears on an undated letterhead of I. Baker and Sons, portraying her moored at their Brunswick Wharf site.

Fielder suggests that “arguably the best-loved of the Bideford steam packets was the *Devonia*.”<sup>422</sup>

Operated in 1921 by the Devon SS Co, Bideford (manager, Francis T. Beer, Bideford), then after 1937 by Alfred J. Smith Ltd, Bideford, she struck a German mine, off Barry (Cardiff) and was lost<sup>423</sup>. The only survivor being an East-the-Water man, one William Turner<sup>424</sup>.

## 1895, Thomas Fry establishes a steam bakery

Thomas Fry, of Wear Giffard Mills, at this time operating on Agricultural Wharf, constructed a new steam bakery<sup>425</sup>. In 1914 the operation was taken over by Frank Ernest Routley<sup>426</sup>, and moved elsewhere in Barnstaple Street.

417 Record for *Devonia* at “Clyde Built Ships” Online: <http://www.clydeships.co.uk/view.php?ref=8332> Accessed 21 May 2017

418 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 60

419 “Local News” Western Times 21 February 1894 p2 c4

420 “Mr. Manley Tucker.” North Devon Journal. 21 March 1895 p8 c3

421 Myrtle Ternstrom. “Footnotes on the Saunt History.” Pages 22-23 in Lundy Field Society Newsletter. No. 40, Dec. 2010. Pg 23.

422 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 60

423 Record for *Devonia* at “Clyde Built Ships” Online: <http://www.clydeships.co.uk/view.php?ref=8332> Accessed 21 May 2017

424 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 60

425 North Devon Journal, 02 January 1896, p8 c4

426 “Frank E. Routley” North Devon Journal 8 January 1914 p1 c6

## **1895, the Torridge freezes over, the soup kitchen deploys**

On 6 February 1895 the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette reported “There is a lot of ice in the Torridge, the river being frozen over to Bideford Bridge yesterday morning. The Soup Kitchen has been opened to relieve the threatened distress, so many men being out of work here.”<sup>427</sup>

The North Devon Journal of 7 February 1895 reported “The Torridge at Bideford is frozen completely over, and presents a very pretty spectacle, which has been utilized by local photographers. It is stated that such a mass of ice has not been seen here for fifty years. The Soup Kitchen has been opened, and the nourishing fluid dispensed there is in much demand amongst poor families, made poorer by the run of hard weather, which has stopped all building operations absolutely.”<sup>428</sup>

The Western Times of 6 February 1895 adds further detail “A sight rarely to be witnessed here (writes our Bideford correspondent) was seen yesterday, when the lower side of the bridge which spans the Torridge was covered with ice and a barge in the middle of the river was immovable, being strongly icebound. There were several ships lying at the Quay surrounded by strong ice. Hundreds of skaters are daily indulging in the healthy exercise on Goosey Pool, Westward Ho! At Bideford Braddick and Son have flooded a marsh which contains a good sheet of ice, and is being largely patronized.”<sup>429</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> February 1895 it was reported that “A free distribution of 80 gallons of soup is being made at the Music Hall daily by a committee. Mr. Dalby, the stationmaster, has placed the big furnace of his house East-the-Water at the disposal of the Committee, and free distributions of soup will be made there also.”<sup>430</sup>

The Western Morning News of 23 Feb 1895 reported that there were large ice floes drifting off the Kent coast, some of the largest being two foot thick and ten to fifteen feet in length<sup>431</sup>. Whilst, nearer to home, “the ice floes were heaped up in most fantastic shapes” on the River Taw at Barnstaple<sup>432</sup>.

Peter Christie has arranged for a rare, and badly faded, photograph of this event to be restored. It is reproduced on page 13 of his Illustrations of Old Bideford<sup>433</sup>. Christie dates this picture to the winter of 1893/4 and notes that, at this time, icebergs “10 feet high and eight feet thick” were in the channel, but, in the light of the comments in the above reports, his photograph seems certain to relate to this event.

## **1895, new harbour bylaws are published**

Local bylaws, to govern various issues pertaining to the harbour and its estate, were put in place (thes remained unchanged until at least 2018, by which time they were deemed no longer fit for purpose)<sup>434</sup>

427 “The Severe Weather” 6 February 1895 Exeter and Plymouth Gazette reported p4 c2

428 “Bideford” North Devon Journal 7 February 1895 p8 c2

429 “The Continued Frost” Western Times 6 February 1895 p4 c4

430 “Distress in Bideford” Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 13 February 1895 p4 c2

431 “Walking on the Ice Floes” Western Morning News 23 February 1895 p8 c3

432 “The Severe Frost” Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 09 February 1895 p3 c2

433 Christie, Illustrations, 2008, 13.

434 Report of Planning and Economy Manager to Bideford Harbour Board Workin g Group, Harbour and Pilotage Activity Quarter 2, Torridge District Council, 22 Nov 2018

## **1896, L.S.W.R. given permission for a new quay**

In October 1896 an agreement<sup>435</sup> was drawn up, between the London and South Western Railway Company and the North Devon Clay Company, Limited, for Enlargement of the wharf at Bideford Quay, and the North Devon Journal's review of 1896 observed that "the London and South Western Railway has secured the consent of the Town Council to a new Quay at East-the-Water"<sup>436</sup>. An accompanying plan clarifies that the "Bideford Quay" referred to in the agreement was not what we think of as Bideford Quay today, but was actually what we now think of as Railway Wharf.

## **1896, the board of trade line and inadequate layers**

By Feb 1896 the Board of Trade had forced the owners of East-the-Water quays to set back their line of foreshore (which they claimed extended far further across the river), but concern was being expressed about the state of the layers, East-the-Water, which had recently prevented a loaded vessel reaching the Western Counties Agricultural Association's quay to unload<sup>437</sup>.

## **1896, planning for road improvements**

In 1896 the Bideford Town Council were considering the matter of compensation for land, East-the-Water, needed for road improvements<sup>438</sup>. In the same year it was agreed that the Alvescott Road should be widened to two carriageways<sup>439</sup>.

## **1896, negotiations to purchase Chudleigh for the public**

In 1896 Bideford Town Council were in negotiation with the Rev. Robertson, owner of Chudleigh Fort, for the purchase of the fort and a portion of the Grange land, for public use. One councillor expressed concern that the public had not treated the fort kindly in the past, throwing down the flag pole and rolling cannons down the hill<sup>440</sup>.

## **1897, unsettling sight of a lifeboat on a railway truck**

In January 1897, a dismayed correspondent reported seeing the Northam Burrows' lifeboat loaded on a railway truck, East-the-Water. It transpired that the Local Committee, who had suggested they might move the boat to Westward Ho!, had no knowledge of its removal further afield. The parent society had, however, decided to take the boat to London (for purpose or duration unknown). The incident immediately prompted a petition for its return or replacement<sup>441</sup>.

435 North Devon Records Office Ref. 3518B/L26

436 "Bideford" North Devon Journal 31 December 1896 p2 c3

437 "East-the-Water Wharves" Bideford Weekly Gazette 11 February 1896 p5 c2

438 "Bideford Town Council" Bideford Weekly Gazette 25 August 1896 p8 c3

439 "Bideford Town Council" Bideford Weekly Gazette 25 August 1896 p8 c3

440 "Bideford Town Council" Bideford Weekly Gazette 25 August 1896 p8 c3

441 "Notes and Notions" Bideford Weekly Gazette 26 January 1897 p5 c1

## **1898, Molesworth suggests a second bridge**

In 1898 Capt. Molesworth proposed linking the Bideford to Barnstaple main line, with the Bideford to Westward Ho! route, via a new bridge across the Torridge. 'The intention was to carry the line up the Quay, across the bridge entrance, then on an extension of the road above the Long Bridge, and over a curved railway bridge into the East-the-Water station. They intended straightening the quay front, and taking in the first arch. The crossing by the Long Bridge would be a level one, and the slip opposite "Tantons Hotel" would not be interfered with.' After discussing the scheme in committee, Bideford Town Council decided against sanctioning it<sup>442</sup>.

442 Hartland Chronicle 07 November 1898 p6 c2