

# **Historical Notes relating to Bideford's East-the-Water Shore Volume 1 (Prehistory to 18<sup>th</sup> C.)**

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## General Introduction

### Nature of this document

These are roughly-chronological notes. They focus on events that affected East-the-Water's shoreline, the subsequent development of its wharves, and the people who lived and worked there. In earlier periods, when records generally do not sufficiently distinguish East-the-Water from Bideford as a whole, events that effected Bideford's general maritime history have been considered relevant.

The focus of the document has been on the history of the wharves prior to living memory. The idea being that details of more recent events are already available within the community memory. There is an aim to correct this omission as time allows.

This document is a snapshot, the current state of an evolving product, and therefore continues to be a working draft. As such, it has never been subject to formal proofreading or peer review. It may, therefore, be expected to contain somewhat more errors than a finished document would. It is the author's aim to take snapshots periodically and to make the latest available on the Way of the Wharves charity's web-site, <https://thewharves.org>, via the "Wharf Creations" section's "Writings" page.

### Development of this document

This document started life, in 2015, as a series of web pages, produced to try and introduce a wider audience to the history of East-the-Water and its wharves. In 2016, in support of the Way of the Wharves project, the author drew upon personal research to significantly enhanced the web-based material and produce the first draft of this "timeline document." At which time he made it available for reference use by the Way of the Wharves project. Through 2016 and 2017 it was further extended by the author to incorporate material arising from his ongoing research. Throughout the latter part of 2017 and much of 2018 it was updated to improve the level of citation support. The original web-site did not cite its sources, but most were recorded elsewhere. Some sources for this early material have, however, still to be traced. During this phase of development, much of the material taken from derivative sources (such as web-sites, reports and histories) was traced back to its original source/s, or at least to sources far closer to its point of origin. Where divergent opinions existed, these were also investigated to try to clarify what really happened.

Since 2019 the author has continued to expand the document in line with his ongoing research.

In 2021, with the document having grown significantly, it became necessary to break it into a series of volumes.

### 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.

## Prior to written records

### Prehistory

East-the-Water sits on the folded and eroded Carboniferous rocks of the Bideford Formation<sup>1</sup>, a division within those rock strata less technically considered the Culm Measures. The formation was of economic significance as some layers proved suitable for building stone (e.g. being mined for roadstone at East-the-Water's Broadstone Quarry), whilst others yielded the coal-like materials, locally known as Culm. This Culm is found in a belt running east to west across the middle of the community, with a generally southerly dip. The miners considered that there were four seams, three of Anthracite, and one (the most southerly) of Bideford Black<sup>2</sup>. Bideford's 'culm' was an anthracite (technically a relatively pure vitrinite)<sup>3</sup>, a dense energy source that burned too hot for domestic stoves, but was better suited to industrial applications. The seams, having formed in lenses, vary greatly in their thickness. This, coupled with the lack of fossilised spores amongst material, have lead geologists to conclude that these coals formed from log-jams<sup>4</sup>. The Bideford Black seam is a carbonaceous shale, technically classified as a carbargillite (a coal that contain between 20% and 60% of clay minerals)<sup>5</sup>.

A variety of fossil ferns and horsetails have been identified from outcrops in East-the-Water, including an exposure "above the railway station" (the later one), "Mr. Robert's quarry," Moor Park, and an old adit at Broadstone quarry near Chapel Park, though, at least in Pollard's day, the Paint Mine failed to yield any<sup>6</sup>. Elsewhere, where these strata intersect with the coast near Abbotsham, they have yielded a wider range of fossils helping to refine our understanding of their age<sup>7</sup>.

Much later, in the Oligocene, and to the south of Torrington, at Marland, a gradually subsiding basin slowly filled with clay. This "ball-clay," or "tobacco pipe-clay," as it was once called, would later prove significant, not only for the potters of Bideford, but for as a raw-material exported through the port to the pottery industry further afield<sup>8</sup>.

### Stone Age, flint tools

Whilst there is little evidence for early human occupation in East-the-Water, there is enough to suggest there was some.

Near the mouth of the estuary, at Westward Ho!, the evidence is more extensive, the foreshore there being well known for its kitchen midden (now eroded away), and its finds of flint tools<sup>9</sup>.

1 Geology of Bideford and Lundy Island. Pgs 47-50

2 #####

3 Chris Popham "Coal Mining In Devon" Open University Geological Society. Posted 6 Mar 2015. Online:<https://ougs.org/southwest/local-geology/133/coal-mining-in-devon/> Accessed 24 Jan 2021

4 Chris Popham "Coal Mining In Devon" Open University Geological Society. Posted 6 Mar 2015. Online:<https://ougs.org/southwest/local-geology/133/coal-mining-in-devon/> Accessed 24 Jan 2021

5 Chris Popham "Coal Mining In Devon" Open University Geological Society. Posted 6 Mar 2015. Online:<https://ougs.org/southwest/local-geology/133/coal-mining-in-devon/> Accessed 24 Jan 2021

6 Edward Alexander Newell Arber. "The fossil flora of the Culm measures of north-west Devon, and the age of the coal beds." Pages 291-323 in Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London : ser. B, v. 197. London: Dulau & Co., 1904. Pgs 298-299

7 C.J. Cleal, B.A. Thomas, British Upper Carboniferous Stratigraphy. Springer Science & Business Media, 2013. Pg 51

8 "How the Ball Clay Deposits Occurred" The Ball Clay Heritage Society. Online:<http://www.clayheritage.org/pages/deposits.htm> Accessed 12 Apr 2017

9 Heritage Gateway: Devon & Dartmoor Historic Environment Record. MDV468. Mesolithic Tools from Westward

Two flint flakes have been recovered from Ayeres Close (SS 4605 2640), one possibly Neolithic or Early Bronze Age in date<sup>10</sup>. A further two flint flakes were found during investigations associated with the development of the Industrial Link Road, Manteo Way<sup>11</sup>. Implements, including a fine Neolithic greenstone axe-head, were found during the construction of the Torridge Bridge (now exhibited in the museum at Burton Gallery, Bideford).

## Bronze and Iron Age

An ariel photograph of Eastridge Farm, from 1946, shows a cropmark (centred on SS 4610 2641) representing an “oval enclosure apparently with two concentric ditches on its western side”<sup>12</sup>.

A barrow is said to have been located at SS45652619, just N of Railway Cottages<sup>13</sup>. Larger scale enclosures existed not so very far distant, such as one at Alverdiscott, Berry Castle (at Huntshaw), Hennaborough near Abbotsham, or the impressive structure at Clovelly Dykes<sup>14</sup>. Such sites were a fairly easy walk, or canoe ride, from East-the-Water and lay near enough to have influenced the local area.

In addition to movement by water, the Iron Age traveller could also resort to a network of established track often linking the hill forts, and often sticking to watersheds, from which they gain the colloquial name of ridgeways. Antiquarians have variously mused over the possibility of an easterly route and a westerly route, both converging on Bideford. The former from Harepath, across Exford, crossing Bratton to descend to Barnstaple, and thence on to Bideford a way running out of Cornwall to Bideford<sup>15</sup>. The latter, inspired by a “Ridgeway” described by 15<sup>th</sup> C. Richard of Westminster, was interpreted as running from Stratton to Barnstaple, through Molland, thence on to Taunton, in Cornwall<sup>16</sup>. This purported 15<sup>th</sup> C. work turned out to be a fake, but not before it had acted as a major influence on the antiquaries of the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> C.

Settlers on the eastern bank, during an era when major rivers were the equivalent of motorways, were likely to have made some use of the shore associated with the hilltop enclosure at Eastridge.

Ho! & MDV44568 Submerged Forest, Westward Ho! Online:<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk> Accessed: 14 April 2017; Rogers E. H. (1946) The Raised Beach, Submerged Forest and Kitchen Midden of Westward Ho! and the Submerged Stonebarrow of Yelland. *Proc. Dev. Archaeo. Explor. Soc.*, 3, 109-135.

10 Eastridge Farm, Bideford East-the-Water, Devon: Topsoil Magnetic Susceptibility & Magnetometer (Gradiometer) Survey. Oxford Archaeotechnics Limited, 2001. Pg 2

11 Gareth Davies. North Devon Wind Farm, Environmental Impact Assessment. Vol 2 – Appendices Part B. West Coast Energy. 2011. Pg 103

12 Eastridge Farm, Bideford East-the-Water, Devon: Topsoil Magnetic Susceptibility & Magnetometer (Gradiometer) Survey. Oxford Archaeotechnics Limited, 2001. Pg 2 ; Gareth Davies. North Devon Wind Farm, Environmental Impact Assessment. Vol 2 – Appendices Part B. West Coast Energy. 2011. Pg 100

13 Gareth Davies. North Devon Wind Farm, Environmental Impact Assessment. Vol 2 – Appendices Part B. West Coast Energy. 2011. Pg 103

14 Heritage Gateway: Devon & Dartmoor Historic Environment Record MDV4457 Roman Marching Camp at Alverdiscott. Online:<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk> Accessed: 14 April 2017; John Bradbeer and Terry Green compilers, Barnstaple: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, 2016. Pg s 66-67

15 W. Phelps. The History and Antiquities of Somersetshire. 4 Vols. London: Nichols, 1836. Vol. 3. Pg 84

16 J. R. Chanter. “Devonshire Lanes”. Pages 173 to 196 in Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature and Art, Volume 6, 1874. Pg 182

## Roman period, tin roads, transit camps, and the ford

### An ancient tin route?

Devon and Cornwall, though already sources of tin in antiquity, came to dominate the European and the Mediterranean trade from late Roman times until the 3rd century CE<sup>17</sup>. Earlier antiquarians made much of the commercial significance of the West Country's metal reserves in the narrative that they developed for the history of the area in Roman times. By stitching together assumptions, based on scattered Roman finds, suggestive place-names, fragments of old trackway, local lore, and the sites of ancient forts, they developed the idea that there were two major Roman routes into Cornwall, a Roman route into the south of Cornwall, coming via Exeter, but Victorian sources discuss the likelihood of a second route, via Stratton and Camelford, to Bodmin, Redruth, and St. Ives, and thence onward to the Land's End<sup>18</sup>. Thus, as early as 1754, William Borlase could write "by what already appears, there is reason to believe, that there are two Roman Ways leading into Cornwall, and therein to be trac'd; one by Exeter through Totnes, passing near Plymouth towards Lescard; the other higher up, coming through Somersetshire, the North of Devonshire by Torington, to Stratton, Camelford, and Bodman in the same County"<sup>19</sup>. The idea proliferated with later authors, such as Chapple, who suggests an etymology for "Torridge" based on the idea that the northern Roman route into Cornwall crossed the river at Little Torrington<sup>20</sup>. Others, seemingly accepting the existence of a northern route as fact, disputed its precise route through Devon. For example Polwhele, after reviewing evidence for the northern road, believed it went somewhat south of Torrington<sup>21</sup>. Rogers, however, thought it more likely that any Roman tin route would have left the Torridge loop via the Bideford crossing<sup>22</sup>.

Modern archaeology, taking a more evidence-based approach, once thought that Roman routes stopped at Exeter and there was none in the north. Further research and discoveries have, however, slowly built up a picture of a southern route extending well into Cornwall (as well as well as one that extended toward Bideford). Equivalent evidence has not been forthcoming for the antiquarians supposed northern route, though, having dispelled the myth that there was no Roman presence in North Devon, that situation could easily change.

It has been speculated that conditions in North Devon may have necessitated alternate surface construction, e.g. from brushwood on clay<sup>23</sup>, making North Devon's Roman roads that much harder to find.

17 S. Gerrard, *The Early British Tin Industry*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2000, 21

18 "Ancient Roads in Cornwall. *Western Morning News and Mercury*, 2 December 1924, quoted online: [https://www.cantab.net/users/michael.behrend/aw\\_cuttings/ocr/q\\_cornwal.html](https://www.cantab.net/users/michael.behrend/aw_cuttings/ocr/q_cornwal.html) Accessed 15 Nov 2020;

19 William Borlase. *Observations on the Antiquities, Historical and Monumental, of the County of Cornwall*. Consisting of several essays . Oxford: W. Jackson, 1754. Pg 302

20 William Chapple. *A Review of Part of Risdon's Survey of Devon*. Exeter: Thorn, 1785. Pg 67

21 Richard Polwhele. *The History of Cornwall, Civil, Military, Religious, Architectural, Agricultural, Commercial, Biographical, and Miscellaneous*, 7 Volumes.. Michaels & Company, 1816. Vol 3, Pg 103

22 Watkins, *Essay*, 1792. Pg 8; Rogers, *Notes on Bideford*, c. 1940, Vol 1. Pg 11

23 A "typed article on Roman Roads in North Devon, in Ilfracombe Museum (Roman Roads folder), probably by Michael Lambert c1960" cited in John Moore. "Romans" Online: <https://johnhmoore.co.uk/hele/roman.htm> Accessed 15 Nov 2020

## The old ford

Major Ascott, writing as recently as 1953, noted that remains of the ancient approaches to the ford were still visible on either side of the Torridge: “the old road from the West Country came down from Cats Hole (just above Westcroft) to the fording place,” the ford itself “begins under Ford farm and runs diagonally down and across the river to a point near the gas works, where remains of the old paved Roman road and brick walls leading to the Ford are still to be found”<sup>24</sup>. Ford Farm is now known as Ford House, and the “Roman road” that Ascott spoke of was a paved track about twelve feet wide discovered in 1877 during excavations at the Gas Works, where remains of it were presumably buried beneath the later buildings (so they are still to be found only in the sense that if you dug in the right place you would likely find such remains).

The Monuments layer of the Devon Historic Environment Record shows a Roman road from Crediton to Burrington Moor<sup>25</sup>. Beyond that, however, there is a moderately straight route that continues, once extrapolated, past Gammerton to Bideford, thereby linking a string of places with ‘cross’ suffixed names (from Burrington Moor Cross, through Middlemoor Cross, Natty Cross, Withy Cross, Natty Cross, through Cranford Cross, and Huntshaw Cross). Such places, usually named for a wayside cross, may reasonably be taken as evidence that the route on which they lie is of some antiquity. Margery, in cataloguing our Roman Roads, recognises that the Crediton to Middleton Moor stretch extends northward, designating the whole as route 493<sup>26</sup>. Thus, the Romans clearly had some interest in the Torridge estuary, though the precise nature of that interest remains unclear.

It is, perhaps, worth noting that there was a Roman fort at Nidum (Neath), occupied from A.D. 75 in phases until 320<sup>27</sup>, and a Roman town at Moridunum (Carmathen), occupied from c. 200 AD to the 4<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>28</sup>. Both of these could be conveniently reached by sea from Bideford. Roman outposts, interpreted as signal stations, have been found at The Beacon, Martinhoe, and Old Burrow, near County Gate, both thought to have been supplied by sea<sup>29</sup>, again a purpose for which Bideford would have been well situated.

## A Roman transit camp on the hills

Once the Romans arrived, they established a transit camp on the hills toward Alverdiscott, on the site of a former Iron Age enclosure<sup>30</sup>. The fort is situated on private land, at Higher Kingdon, just east of Gammerton, and occupies 3.75 acres of some of the highest land on this part of the eastern bank of the Torridge<sup>31</sup>.

24 Ascott, Random Notes, 1953, Pg 11

25 Online:<https://map.devon.gov.uk/DCCViewer/> Accessed 14 Nov 2020

26 Keith Bridges. Map of the 455 roads listed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Of I Margary’s Roman Roads of Britain (London:John Baker, 1973), 2013 Online: [keithbriggs.info/images/Roman\\_roads\\_NG\\_Margary\\_Latin.pdf](http://keithbriggs.info/images/Roman_roads_NG_Margary_Latin.pdf) Accessed: 15 Nov 2020

27 “Neath Auxiliary Fort; Nidum; Neath Roman Fort” Coflein

Online:<https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/301350/details/neath-auxiliary-fort-nidum-neath-roman-fort> Accessed 15 Nov 2020

28 “Carmathen Roman Town (Moridunum)” Coflein

Online:<https://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/94432/details/carmathen-roman-town-moridunum> Accessed 15 Nov 2020

29 “Fox & Ravenhill 1966” cited in John Moore. “Romans” Online: <https://johnhmoore.co.uk/hele/roman.htm> Accessed 15 Nov 2020

30 Heritage Gateway: Devon & Dartmoor Historic Environment Record. MDV4457 Roman Marching Camp at Alverdiscott. Online:<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk> Accessed: 14 April 2017

31 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 1

It is noticeable that the fort lies in the angle between the inferred ancient route from Crediton and any route that might have existed between the ancient river crossings at Bideford and Umberleigh. A camp in such a location might have served to protect, and provide convenient access to, both routes and both crossing points.

## **Saxon period, fisheries (monks and forts?)**

### **Administration**

Upon the departure of the Romans, a Saxon administration took over. East-the-Water fell at the NE edge of the Hundred of Shebbear<sup>32</sup>. The boundary between the Hundred's of Shebbear and Fremington, which follows the natural barrier of the River Torridge for much of its length, diverts inland to the east of the river to encompass Weare Gifford and East-the Water. This 'fossilised' boundary preserves a snapshot of Saxon times, suggesting that the river was readily crossable and that these East-lands had significance even then.

From the 6th C. the manor of Bideford was held by the Honour or Barony of Gloucester<sup>33</sup>, coming, eventually under the oversight of the Saxon leader Brihtric<sup>34</sup>.

### **Viking incursions?**

In the early nineteenth Century, a Northam historian suggested that the great Viking defeat at Arx Cynuit (in 878 AD) took place at Kenwith Castle, the Viking fleet having supposedly landed in Appledore Skern. Modern historians are sceptical of this, but were it so, then the impact of such a battle would surely have been felt in Bideford<sup>35</sup>.

### **Saxons names in the landscape**

Richard King, arguing against the idea of Danish settlement around Bideford, suggests that "Beer," "bere," or "bear," either alone or in composition' are considered derive from the Saxon *bereó*, a small wood or grove of trees. 'The Ordnance map which contains Bideford contains no less than thirty "Beers," alone or suffixed (as in "Shebbear"), and four "Bereas"'<sup>36</sup>.

### **Saxon fisheries**

Commenting on the abundance of local fish weirs on the Taw and Torridge, Chris Preece suggests 'The earliest mention of fishing so far unearthed is a 9th century charter reference to the granting of land at Braunton to the Abbot of Glastonbury "for the taking of salmon for his house"'. He goes on to suggest that "Saxon fish-weirs in Essex have been dated from the 7th to 10th century AD and it would not be surprising to find earlier examples"<sup>37</sup>.

32 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985. Pg 1

33 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 16

34 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985. Pg 2-3

35 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985. Pg 1-2

36 Richard John King. "Davish Settlements in Devonshire." Notes and Queries. Vol. 6 3rd S. (149). Nov 5 1864. Pg 364 -5

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

The Domesday Book states, of Bideford, that “A fishery was attached to this manor before 1066; it pays 25s”<sup>38</sup>. Many fish were trapped using fish weirs. The remains of such fish traps, though probably of more recent vintage, may be found along the Torridge and the Taw as the tide ebbs<sup>39</sup>, though not every set of stakes in the mud represents a fish trap. The Bridge Pool may also have been used to net Salmon in antiquity, much as it has been up until living memory<sup>40</sup>.

### **Nuttaberry, a place with Saxon roots?**

Prior to the building of the bridge, crossing the Torridge would have required use of the ford. To the east of Bideford, the roads shown on older maps (from the 1700s) align toward a group of buildings, somewhat south of the current bridge, in the area now known as Nuttaberry. This collection of buildings, set aside from the later development, appearing like the relic of an earlier time, a pattern of settlement centred on the ford, rather than the bridge, but, by the 18<sup>th</sup> C., no more than a tiny relic.

This area seldom seems to be mentioned by name, but a plan dated 1776 marks a “Road to Nutterberry” running south from the Road to Torrington. In 1848 a local press report mentioned a man who lived in “Nuttaberry, East-the-Water”<sup>41</sup>. In 1851, the Bridge Trust leased out land at “Nuttabery”<sup>42</sup>.

The “berry” in the name seems, on occasions, to be used interchangeably with “bury”. In 1873, the local newspaper mentioned that “The road leading to Nuttlebury was ordered to be defined, and it was also resolved to construct a footpath thereon, and repitch the pathway from the bottom”<sup>43</sup>. Later, in 1873, it is twice mentioned as “Nuttlebury-road” in a single article<sup>44</sup>. The Fulford family, who had a long association with Bideford, had a house in that area and named it “Nuttabury House”<sup>45</sup>, though the property is now known as “Nuttaberry House”.

The name Nuttaberry/Nuttabury lends weight to the idea that this area was a remnant of a former settlement. Andy Powell suggests that ‘Berry,’ as used in Devon, denoted “a fortified farmhouse such as Blegberry, Titchberry etc,” or the small villages that had grown out of one (as in Berrynarbor, or, in corrupted form, Countisbury and Kentisbury Ford). In the case of Nutterberry he suggests it denotes a lost hamlet or farm<sup>46</sup>.

38 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985. Pg 5

39 Preece, C. 2005 ‘A Conflict of Interests: the Fish Traps of the Taw and Torridge Estuaries’ Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society 53: 139-165.

40 In 2016 Derek Barnes, local resident and former Salmon fisherman, recalled when this still happened.

41 North Devon Journal 7 December 1848 p3 c2-3

42 North Devon Record’s Office BBT/A1/b “1851 Rental No 31”

43 Western Times. 17 February 1873 p4 c2

44 “Urban Sanitary Authority” North Devon Journal 17 April 1873 p3 c2

45 Confirmed from their 1911 Census return.

46 “Berry - Colonist Surname Demography and History.”

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~molcgdrg/sur/2b/berry5.htm> Accessed 13 Apr 2016

Powell also mentions a connection between the Berry surname and “Bideford Pottery (North Devon Slipware or Sgrafittoware) in the mid 17th century”<sup>47</sup>. Given that one of Bideford's longer standing potteries, and one that was particularly associated with sgrafittoware, lay near to Nuttaberry, the surname could be a contraction of the placename, i.e. 'berry', and reflect a connection in antiquity with this place. But equally, Berry seems to be a name with considerable antiquity locally, and once connected with the local village of Eastleigh<sup>48</sup>, so it may be that the Berry family lent its name to Nuttaberry. The early use of “bury” in the name, tends to favour the fortified homestead.

There is some confusion over whether should really be spelt “Nutaberry” or “Nuttaberry”. The latter clearly carries the weight of historical precedent, but modern views are less unequivocal. The Post Office, in 2021, have “Nuttaberry Hill” as the spelling of that road, making that the preferred form. The modern road sign, however, spells it “Nutaberry Hill,” thereby raising confusion and Torridge District Council seem to have used Nuttaberry and Nutaberry interchangeably in recent years. This document, being primarily concerned with historical material, has standardised on the use of Nuttaberry.

## **The origin of the name Bideford**

Rogers notes that both Bedford and Bideford were at one time frequently called Bedeforde and that, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Bedford is referred to as Bedicanford, from Bedician, the Anglo-Saxon for a mound or fortification<sup>49</sup>. Roger's suggests that, as modern spellings only date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> C., an etymology involving By-the-ford is philologically impossible. Whilst Roger's appears correct concerning the relatively recent use of “Bideford,” the concept that Bideford is derived from “By-the-Ford” has a long history. An article in The Gentleman's Magazine for 1755, suggests 'Bideford was anciently written “By-the-ford”,’ but without citing any supporting evidence<sup>50</sup>. Their suggestion, however, finds support in an indenture from 1489 that refers to the town as Bydeford<sup>51</sup>.

A correspondent to the Western Times, calling themselves simply “antiquary,” suggested Bideford was likely to be a compound Saxon name from “bi,” meaning situated, and “ford,” a shallow place in a river. The same writer, noting that the compound township name East-the-Water seems to go back as far as that of By-the-ford, proposed that the two names related, in Saxon times, to a settlement East-the-Water, and a settlement by the fording place to get to it, By-the-Ford<sup>52</sup>.

Duncan Fielder suggests a possible derivation of Bideford from Bieda's, or Bydna's, ford<sup>53</sup>. Presumably, inspired by the Bidna area of Appledore, with its traces of a medieval field system<sup>54</sup>.

## **Saxon monastic influence (possible rather than proven)**

The monastic need for fish on Fridays, has elsewhere led to links between the taking of fish and

47 “Berry - Colonist Surname Demography and History.”

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~molcgdrg/sur/2b/berry5.htm> Accessed 13 Apr 2016

48 Tristram Risdon, The Chorographical Description or Survey of the County of Devon. London: Rees & Curtis, 1811. Pg 283

49 Rogers, Notes on Bideford, c. 1940, Vol 1, Pg 10

50 The Gentleman's Magazine. 1755, pp. 445-448, cited in George Laurence Gomme Editor. “Bideford.” The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. London: Elliot Stock, 1893. Pg 133

51 "Deeds: C.6901 - C.7000," in *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 6*, ed. H C Maxwell Lyte (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1915), 401-416. *British History Online*, accessed November 28, 2020, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/ancient-deeds/vol6/pp401-416>.

52 “The Derivation of the Name Bideford” Western Morning News 15 February 1865 p2 c7

53 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 5

54 “Walk - Appledore & Northam Burrows” South West Coast Path.

monasticism<sup>55</sup>. Hence, it would not be surprising to find evidence of monastic influence in Bideford. Much of what is now East-the-Water is built on a former grange. Granges typically originated as areas of land, centred on a manor house, and used for food production by a monastic establishment (though the establishment could often be some distance from the grange). There would often be some form of grain store on a grange and some early maps mark a *Grange Barn* near what is now Barton Tors. The name Barton is consistent with this, as it derives from the Anglo-Saxon for an area, typically an enclosed courtyard, used to store the equipment and agricultural produce of a *sele* or *wic* (i.e. a nobleman's house or manor). The Grange Barn area later developed into a farmstead known as Barton Farm, before being lost to modern estates.

Names such as Chapel Hays and Sanctuary Field all suggest ecclesiastical connections, though may reflect the practice of endowing chantries with land, rather than being indicative of monastic activity. Chapel Park, originally Chapple Park, is more likely to have derived its title from association with the local Chapple family, than with the church. Cross Park also seems to be a more recent name.

### **The Saxon church and the position of the crossing**

In his pamphlet, *Random Notes on Old Bideford and District*<sup>56</sup>, Major W. Ascott notes that remains of a Saxon church were found during the re-building of St Mary's. He then poses a pertinent question, concerning its location, "Why was it built there and not near the ford much higher up the river?" Before offering the church's more northerly location as evidence for the existence of a bridge prior to the earliest documentary mention of one.

The position of St Mary's is, however, not quite so neatly positioned for the current location of the bridge as Ascott supposed. The problem lies in the unusual northward orientation of the porch of modern St Mary's. Review the layout of any reasonably large number of cruciform Saxon/Norman English churches and it is clear that the main entrance to such a church usually lies on the south. Barring other constraints such a church would, therefore, be built to the north of the main route by which its congregation would approach it. Whilst St Mary's porch is today on the north of the structure, that may not necessarily always have been the case. It is likely that, before the gradual northward growth of the town, and the various re-buildings of the church, its main entrance could have faced toward the ford. A south aspect for the porch would also be compatible with approaching the church from Meddon Street, one of Bideford's oldest thoroughfares<sup>57</sup>. Major Ascott records that, prior to the church being re-built in 1864, it was accessed via Tower Street and Bilton Terrace, and that the later of which could, at that time, only be reached from Lower Meddon Street<sup>58</sup>. Fielder describes Lower Meddon Street, as "once a part of the main route to the west"<sup>59</sup>, an observation that would seem to fit with remnant road alignments.

55 Chris Preece. 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: 20 Apr 2017

56 Ascott, *Random Notes*, 1953, Pg 7

57 Burge plots, were a feature of development on the more important streets of medieval towns. Timms notes that "regular burge plots are clearly recognisable to either side of Meddon Street, which runs from Old Town to the church." [Timms, S. C., 1976, *The Devon Urban Survey, 1976. First Draft*, 94 (Report - Survey). SDV341346.].

58 Ascott *Random Notes*, 1953, Pg 17

59 Fielder, *History of Bideford*, 1985. Caption to plate 31.

## **Æthelstan's reforms**

King of the Anglo Saxons from 924 to 927 and rex anglorum (king of the Angles, from which derived "Englalande," and ultimately England) from 927 to 939, he built on the legal legacy of Alfred the Great (his grandfather) and centralised government. On the basis of having sent two burgesses to such a gathering, Barnstaple would latter successfully claim to have been established as a borough since Æthelstan's reign<sup>60</sup>.

## **The great sea-flood of 1014**

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles for 1014 record a devastating flood that hit England - "This year, on the eve of St. Michael's day, came the great sea-flood, which spread wide over this land, and ran so far up as it never did before, overwhelming many towns, and an innumerable multitude of people"<sup>61</sup>. Its effects were felt in both England and Holland, and it badly affected areas around the Severn Estuary. William of Malmesbury stated that a wave "grew to an astonishing size such as the memory of man cannot parallel, so as to submerge villages many miles inland and overwhelm and drown their inhabitants"<sup>62</sup>. From this brief description it appears the floods were the result of a Tsunami-like event. Whilst its effect would have been less sever in the Bristol Channel, it is still likely to have swept in over Bideford bar to make its effects felt along the Torridge shore.

## **Norman Conquest and its aftermath**

### **1066/7, Bideford becomes an ancient demesne**

The Norman conquest saw the manor of Bideford pass from Brictric to William the Conqueror's wife, Matilda of Flanders. She, acting out of spite toward Britric, who had spurned her youthful love, stripped Gloucester of both charter and all civic rights<sup>63</sup>. Thus Bideford become an ancient demesne (a legal term for land held by the crown at the time of William's conquest), and exempt from tax and toll by virtue of belonging to the crown<sup>64</sup>.

In the west country "barton" (from the Old English: *beretun* = barley enclosure) denoted that land or property thus designated was part of the Lord of the manor's demesne (i.e. property held by the Lord of the Manor)<sup>65</sup>. Richard Carew (d.1620), in his 1602 *Survey of Cornwall* explained that "That part of the demesne which appertaineth to the lord's dwelling-house they call his barton."<sup>66</sup>. These days it tends to designate a former manor house that has become a farm, or a large secondary manor building adjacent to the manor house itself. Thus, the presence of a Barton on the east of the Torridge suggests that, at some early point, a manor house lay on that side.

60 Humphry Hody. A History of English Councils and Convocations And of the Clergy's Sitting in Parliament. London: Clavell, 1701

61 Lars Ulwencreutz Ed. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Lulu.com, 2013. Pg 129

62 "The Year in Review: 1014." Online: Medievalists.net Accessed 16 Apr 2017.

63 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 16

64 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985. Pg 4.

65 Giles Jacob "Barton or Berton" The law-dictionary: explaining the rise, progress, and present state, of the English law; defining and interpreting the terms or words of art; and comprising copious information on the subjects of law, trade, and government, Volume 1. New-York, I. Riley, 1811. Pg 239

66 Richard Carew. Carew's Survey of Cornwall: to which are added, notes illustrative of its history and antiquities. T. Bensley for J. Faulder, 1811. Pgs 110-1

## 1069, Defeat of Godwine and Edmund at Northam

The site of the battle, between the Norman Count Brian of Brittany and Harold's sons Godwine and Edmund, that finally secured William the Conqueror's claim to the throne, has recently been claimed, fairly decisively, to be just south of Northam. It is unlikely that the people of Bideford would have remained unaware of such significant events on their doorstep<sup>67</sup>.

## 1083, Death of Matilda

Upon the death of Matilda, in 1083, the Manor of Bideford reverted to the crown, it was subsequently granted to Richard de Granavilla, though by whom has been the source of some dispute. Watkins states that it was the Conqueror<sup>68</sup>. Risdon, the early historian of Devon, in the context of mentioning other grants made by William the Conqueror, states simply that "Richard de Granavilla was settled at Bideford, where his issue male contyneweth unto these dayes," though as Risdon writes this in the context of discussing men of renown "sithen the coming of the Conqueror," there is scope for ambiguity<sup>69</sup>. Later sources<sup>70</sup> have suggested the grant took place in the reign of William Rufus, in about 1089 (see entry for that date below).

The ancestors of the Granville family if Stowe adopted many versions of their surname. Prior to 1661, when the family adopted the name Granville, this history reflects the spellings used in original sources, whilst adopting Grenville as the generic version, up until the family adopted Granville.

## 1086, Domesday

### The Domesday entry

In the Domesday survey of 1086, the entry for Bideford (Bediforda or Bedeford as it was then known), translates as follows:

"The king has a manor called Bediforda, which Brihtric held on the day on which king Edward was alive and dead, and it rendered geld for three hides. These can be ploughed by twenty-six ploughs. Of them the king has half a hide and four ploughs in demesne, and the villeins have two hides and a half and twenty ploughs. There the king has thirty villeins, and eight bordars, and fourteen serfs, and eighteen head of cattle, and three hundred sheep, and one hundred and fifty acres of wood, and ten acres of meadow, and twenty acres of pasture; and it renders yearly sixteen pounds. To this manor was annexed a certain fishery on the day on which king Edward was alive and dead, which renders yearly twenty-five shillings"<sup>71</sup>. The second entry abbreviates this, but under the name "Bedeford"<sup>72</sup>.

67 Nick Arnold. The Battle of Northam 1069 – the Evidence. Presentation to Torridge District Council. 8 Feb 2016. Online: Accessed 15 Apr 2017

68 Watkins, Essay, 1792, pg 11

69 Tristram Risdon. The Notebook of Tristram Risdon 1608-1628. Transcribed by James Dallas and Henry Porter. London: Elliot Stock. 1897. Pgs 122-3

70 E.g. White's Devonshire Directory of 1850

71 Exon. D. (1086) 100 cited in The Devonshire Association. The Devonshire Domesday and Geld Inquest: Extensions, Translations and Indices. Vol 2 of 2. Plymouth:W. Brendon and Son. 1884-1892. Pg 80

72 Exch. D. loi (2) ; 3 b cited in The Devonshire Association. The Devonshire Domesday and Geld Inquest: Extensions, Translations and Indices. Vol 2 of 2. Plymouth:W. Brendon and Son. 1884-1892. Pg 80

The Open Domesday site explains the population as 30 villagers, 8 smallholders and 14 slaves<sup>73</sup>. Comparison with other entries on that site suggests that the ratio of slaves to other occupants was unusually high, which argues for a wealthy population.

## Bediforda and its environment

It is interesting to compare Bideford's population, value, and land use, with adjacent properties. In the following table the figures are taken from <http://opendomesday.org>, except Appledore, which is from Duncan Fielder<sup>74</sup>. Areas are in acres.

Modern Name	Original name	Households	Value in 1086	Ploughs	Pasture	Meadow	Wood	Lord's Land
Bideford	Bediforda	52	£16	26	20	10	150	0.5
Westleigh	Weslege	12	£1.5	5	3	2	2	0.12
Eastleigh	W. lei (Terra Willelmi de Chevre)	8	£1.3	5	40	2	1	0.12
Tapeley	Tapelie	7	£2	8	10	3	3	0.37
Instow	Johannestow	11	£0.8	2	60	2	4	0
Landcross	Lanchers	5	£1	3	20	3	20	0.12
Abbotsham	Hame (Terra Eccle De Tavestoch)	31	£5	20	60	6	2	0.25
Northam	Northam (Church of St Stephen of Caen)	37	£12	20	15	15	54	0.25
Appledore	Apledore	4	10s	1.5	0	2	0	0

The population was centred on Bideford and Northam, the two most wooded areas, and also the two most valuable. Of the 180 acres of land in Bideford, some 83% was woodland, most of which has now been lost.

## Bideford's fishery

It is interesting to contrast the value of Bideford's fishery in 1066 (25 shillings, or 300 pence) with that of Northam in 1086, which was significantly less (30 pence). Of the other Devon fisheries, whose value Domesday states, only Axminster came close (at 20 shillings), with Eggbuckland, in Plymouth, third (at 10 shillings) and Bickleigh fourth (at 5 shillings)<sup>75</sup>. Thus the late Saxon fishery in Bideford was the most valuable fishery in Devon, possibly due to the inclusion of salmon in the catch.

<sup>73</sup> Open Domesday; Place: Bideford. Online:<http://opendomesday.org/place/SS4526/bideford/> Accessed: 15 April 2017

<sup>74</sup> Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985. Pg 5

<sup>75</sup> Based the results of searching The Devonshire Association. The Devonshire Domesday and Geld Inquest: Extensions, Translations and Indices. 1884-92. Vols 1 & 2 for references to a fishery or to fisheries.

It has been claimed that the Bideford fishery of this period was the most valuable salmon fishery in the country, but this ought to be verified, such a claim may easily have arisen from a transcription error of country for county and an assumption that the fishery was predominately for Salmon.

## Salt production (and Saltren)

At the time of domesday salt was produced in nearby Northam, where there were two salthouses listed<sup>76</sup>.

The local East-the-Water name “Salterns” may preserve a link with that trade, though possibly for confusion exists because there was both local salt-working and local landowners with the surname SALTREN, that seems to have been used interchangeably with SALTREN. The SALTREN surname, it has been suggested derives originally from the SALTREN family of Treludick, Cornwall, via younger branch, SALTREN of Petticombe, Cornwall<sup>77</sup>. As Treludick was inland, the surname may have nothing to do with salt.

The situation may be more complex yet, as there also appears to be an ancient non-armigerous version of the SALTREN surname extant in Bideford. This is apparent from the case of Prust v Saltren (July 1637), in which Hugh Prust petitioned the court, stating “Jo. Saltren of Bediford in the county of Devon, scrivener, there borne, and his father and grandfather have there lived by the space of 80 yeares, and in all that tyme taken and knowne to be no gent.; neither is there any Coate of Armes found in the Heralds' office to be borne by that name. Yet doth Saltren assume to himselfe a coate of Armes of 3 Castles cutt in a scutcheon on a ringe which he weares; and boasts of his gentility, and hath made divers offensive and disgracefull comparisons with the ancient gent of the country there about in termes of great provocation.” Process was awarded against John SALTREN, for his use of these arms<sup>78</sup>.

## About 1089, Sir Richard de Greenville gains Neath

Around 1089 Iestin, Lord of Glamorgan, solicited the aid of English knight Sir Robert Fitz Haymon in his attempts to regain certain territories in South Wales. Sir Robert took with him 12 other English knights, amongst whom was Sir Richard de Greenville. With the help of Sir Roberts force and an alliance of local supporters, Iestin quickly achieved his objective. Following the victory, it is said that Iestin behaved arrogantly and failed to honour promises, prompting Sir Robert to seize Iestin's properties, including Cardiff castle. Sir Robert then re-partitioned Glamorgan, allocating parts of it amongst his men, including Greenville<sup>79</sup>.

76 Open Domesday; Place: Bideford. Online:<http://opendomesday.org/place/SS4429/northam/> Accessed: 15 April 2017

77 John Burke and John Bernard Burke, “Saltren.” *Encyclopædia of Heraldry, Or General Armory of England, Scotland and Wales*. London: H. G. Bohn, 1844. Np.

78 Richard Cust and Andrew Hopper, '545 Prust v Saltren', in *The Court of Chivalry 1634-1640*, ed. Richard Cust and Andrew Hopper, *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/court-of-chivalry/545-prust-saltren> Accessed 17 April 2017.

79 'The winning of Glamorgan: Documents', in *Cardiff Records: Volume 4*, ed. John Hobson Matthews (Cardiff, 1903), pp. 6-47. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cardiff-records/vol4/pp6-47> Accessed 19 April 2017].

The crown may have granted the manor of Bideford to Sir Richard de Granville in reward for his service in Wales, for it made strategic sense. The Grenville family also held the Manor of Stowe, just over the border in Cornwall, and were thus well placed to defend their stake in the Norman's newly acquired Welsh territories, or perhaps Grenville joined the enterprise because his possession of Bideford and Stowe made it strategically sensible to do so.

The land in Bideford granted to Sir Richard de Granville amounted to three knights fees<sup>80</sup>.

## **c. 1100, Henry I, origin of the Mayor of Shamwickshire?**

Youngest of William I's sons, Henry I came to the throne in 1100 and reigned until 1135.

In a press report on the election of the Mayor of Shamwickshire, from 1863<sup>81</sup> the correspondent claims that this was 'according to annual custom granted by a charter in the reign of Henry 1<sup>st</sup>: – "For ye, inhabitants thys syde ye ryver, havinge donne goode service to ye longe bridge, shall henceforth enjoye ye priviledge of chusin there Mayor yearely to try all disputes".' The correspondent cites no source for this information and the reference to "ye longe bridge" appears anachronistic, the earliest bridge usually being attributed to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> C. Thus, without supporting evidence, one way or the other, this statement needs to be treated with caution. Yet many Anglo-Saxon trade guilds continued into the Norman period, operating under new royal charters and appointing an Alderman and council to run their affairs<sup>82</sup>. At the time of Henry I, Bideford was held by Robert de Caen, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Gloucester and Henry I's natural son, so Bidefordians were well placed to benefit from his father's benevolence. Moreover, the Earl's baliff would have been the prototype for the role of the mayor and usually a freeman (as were many shipwrights). Thus, it is certainly conceivable to imagine that the Mayor of Shamwickshire could be the much-distorted remnant of such an arrangement.

Whilst the "Shipwright's Company" was never established by Royal Charter, it was in the 12<sup>th</sup> C. that Shipwrights first seem to have begun to organise themselves under that banner, providing the basis for the later structure of masters, journeymen, and apprentices that would be seen in East-the-Water's shipyards until the 19<sup>th</sup> C.

## **1102, the church acts against English slavery**

In 1086, at the time of Domesday, about 10% of the country's population were slaves ("servi," who had no rights, and who could be bought and sold)<sup>83</sup>. Thus, Bideford, with 36% of the population being slaves in 1086, is likely to have been a relatively prosperous place.

In Domesday England, slavery would have been an accepted part of life, but not one with which the church was happy, so in 1102 the church council of London decreed "Let no one hereafter presume to engage in that nefarious trade in which hitherto in England men were usually sold like brute animals."<sup>84</sup> Whilst the church could not enact this as law, they could influence the new aristocracy, and, at least on English soil, the use of slaves steadily declined.

80 A Complete Parochial History of the County of Cornwall. Vol. 2. Truro, Cornwall: William Lake, 1868. Pg 369

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

82 "Monkbarns," "Forms of Brotherhood", Pages 56-58 in Charles Hardwick Ed. Country Words, Nov 24, 1866, 57

83 History: The Domesday Book. BBC. Online: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/normans/doomsday\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/normans/doomsday_01.shtml) Accessed 18 Apr 2017

84 Pijper, Frederik (1909). "The Christian Church and Slavery in the Middle Ages". The American Historical Review (American Historical Association) **14** (4): 681.

## **c1127, Sir Richard de Granville founds Neath Abbey**

Following the events of 1087, Sir Richard de Granville had been awarded, amongst other property in Wales, the “Castle and Town of Neath with its Lands and Mannor.” Later in life, returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Sir Richard stopped at Cyprus, where the Lord rebuked him in a dream for taking the Welsh territories. Returning to Jerusalem, a repentant Sir Richard resolved to restore the land to any rightful claimants and to give the unclaimed land to God and his saints forever. He then set about a program of church-building that included the construction of the Abbey at Neath (founded in 1129)<sup>85</sup>.

“After this Sir Richard died in his Abbey of Neath, and the Rights of high Lordship fell to his Brother, who gave the same to God and the Saints forever and went to Bideford in Denshire”<sup>86</sup>.

In later life Sir Richard de Granville had done much to reconcile his family to the natives of South Wales, thereby removing potential barriers to trade, for that region was a natural market for Bideford pottery, whilst Bideford could benefited more readily from Welsh coal and lime (important elements of East-the-Water's later trade).

## **c1127, Sir Richard Grenville re-builds St Mary's?**

At some point a larger Norman construction was built around the existing Saxon church on the site of St Mary's, but the much quoted date of c. 1259 is incorrect (thanks to an antiquarian misreading Bridford, in S. Devon, as Bideford)<sup>87</sup>. The style of the scant physical evidence from that original building point to an early Norman construction, making it is possible that the abbey-building Sir Richard de Granville had a hand in it. The Granvilles certainly had a vested interest in St. Mary's as the advowson was annexed to the manor of Bideford, at least until they sold the manor lands<sup>88</sup>, giving them the right to present a candidate when the benefice came vacant.

## **1160, the manor of Bideford, inheritance of the Grenvilles**

In the reign of Henry II, c. 1160 it is said that the Manor of Bideford, held as of the manor of Gloucester, was the inheritance of the Grenvilles. Moreover, that the heirs, from then till 1295, all bore the name Richard<sup>89</sup>.

85 'The winning of Glamorgan: Documents', in Cardiff Records: Volume 4, ed. John Hobson Matthews (Cardiff, 1903), pp. 6-47. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cardiff-records/vol4/pp6-47> Accessed 19 April 2017; Granville, Granville Family, 1895, pgs 22-23.

86 'The winning of Glamorgan: Documents', in Cardiff Records: Volume 4, ed. John Hobson Matthews (Cardiff, 1903), pp. 6-47. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cardiff-records/vol4/pp6-47> Accessed 19 April 2017].

87 E.g. 1259 is given by Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 59

88 Lysons & Lysons, Magna Britannica, 1822, pg 52

89 A Complete Parochial History of the County of Cornwall. Vol. 2. Truro, Cornwall: William Lake, 1868. Pg 370

## 13<sup>th</sup> Century

### 1217, rights for Bideford

Roger Granville, citing Patent Rolls, 8 John, m. 2, suggested that Richard de Granville, the fourth to bear that name, paid five marks for Bideford's inhabitants to be granted privileges on a par with those of Exeter<sup>90</sup>.

Roger gives the Richard de Grenville, who was granted this charter, as the one whose father died in 1204, and who himself died in 1217<sup>91</sup>.

John Watkins quotes an ancient charter, without date, but which Roger Grenville considers likely to have been granted by the same Richard de Grenville (the fourth in succession). This confirms an earlier charter made by Sir Richard's grandfather, and identifies the criteria through which a man qualified as a burgess, i.e. by holding, within the scope of Richard's lordship, either a messuage, or a garden of six acres. It spelt out the responsibilities of a burgess, but also granted them rights. The rights applied "as well on the east part of the water of Torridge, as on the west part," and "throughout all my lands, town, and waters." These included "freedom from all toll, custom, censary or stallage, to be given to me or any of mine," in relation to markets, and that the burgesses should assemble on the Tuesday after the feast of St Michael and "choose one burgess to be head officer, and the same head officer shall have, throughout the year, toll and censary of the land and water, to the year's end, for ten shillings to me to be paid, saving to me and my heirs the toll of my market on Monday" (which sounds like a tax farming arrangement). This charter also grants "common of pasture with their beasts throughout" though the only common land mentioned is "one on the west part of the Torridge"<sup>92</sup>.

In later documents, the phrase "east part of the water of Torridge" appears in various abbreviated forms, morphing from "east of the water of Torridge," through "east of the water," to the now-familiar East-the-Water.

Adolphus Ballard notes that Roger Grenville's source is that given by Watkins, and comments that he is unsure if the original latin text of the document has survived<sup>93</sup>.

### c. 1272, first royal town charter

Duncan Fielder suggests that Sir Richard Grenville's standing in the court of Henry III (ruled 1207-1272) played a roll in establishing borough status for Bideford<sup>94</sup>.

As owners of Bideford Manor, the Grenvilles had a stake in the town's success. This came to the fore in 56 Henry III (1272), when Richard de Grenville obtained Bideford's first royal charter<sup>95</sup>. Amongst other things this charter granted a market on Monday and a fair for five days at the festival of St. Margaret were granted<sup>96</sup>.

90 Granville, Granville Family, 1895, Pg 32

91 Roger Granville, History of the Granville Family. Exeter: William Pollard, 1895. Pg 32, 34

92 Watkins, Essay, 1993, 12-13

93 Adolphus Ballard. British borough charters, 1042-1216. London: Cambridge University Press, 1913. Pg xxxiii

94 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985. Pg 6

95 Roger Granville, History of the Granville Family. Exeter: William Pollard, 1895. Pg 48

96 Cart. Rot. 56 Hen. III., cited by Lysons & Lysons. Magna Britannica. 1822. Pg 48

There is potential uncertainty in the names and dating, as Lysons & Lysons have the grant being made in 1271, to Richard de Grenville. Henry's 56<sup>th</sup> regnal year ran from 28 October 1271–27 October 1272, so, until the exact date can be found, either 1271 or 1272 could be possible.

In the same year as the market charter, the Hundred of Shastbeare [Shebeare] issued a verdict that Sir Richard de Grenville held *Antiquas Furcas, &c. viz.* Gallows and Assise of Bread and Beer in *Bideford*, and Warren on the East Side the water of *Toryz*”<sup>97</sup> Hundred Rolls, dating from the 1270s confirm that free warren East of Water of Torridge was granted to Richard Greynvile<sup>98</sup>.

The Assize of Bread and Beer was the first British law to regulate the sale of food, in country areas being administered by the Lord of the Manor. Free warren was an Anglo-Norman concept, equating to a hunting licence for a given woodland.

This range of charters is indicative of Bideford becoming an increasingly significant place, yet already having distinct halves on either side of the river.

### c. 1272-1327 Bideford's elective franchise

In the reigns of Edward I (reigned 1272-1307) & Edward II (reigned 1307-1327, Bideford possessed and exercised the elective franchise, but afterwards, by its own desire, ceased to do so<sup>99</sup>.

### Late 13<sup>th</sup> C, the Gurnays and the rolling boulder

By the late 13<sup>th</sup> Century the need for a bridge had become critical. Legend has it that the site of Bideford's Bridge was determined when a parish priest, Sir Richard Gurnay, or Gornard, dreamt of a boulder rolling down to the shore to mark the spot, a boulder that was subsequently found<sup>100</sup>. The original shore-line, on both sides, is now so lost to development as to make conjecture as to where this could have happened fairly meaningless.

Thomas Westcote, in his *View of Devonshire in 1630*, (writing before the later destruction of a significant portion of Bideford's earliest records) states, of Bideford, that “Bartholomaeus de Oketyne had land here near the conquest, and the Gurneys or Gornards.” He gives no further details of where the Gurneys' land lay<sup>101</sup>.

Another story told in connection with Gurnay is that he initially looked to build the bridge at the fording place, but that three times the stones were washed down river to the place where the stones now stand<sup>102</sup>. The story would seem completely fanciful, but for the Folly Field being part of the Bridge Trusts early inventory of land. The name suggests the field was associated with some sort of failed construction, whilst the land lies about where the eastern end of the ford would have reached the shore. One wonders whether there might be some grain of truth in this tale, perhaps a folk-recollection of three earlier bridges that were built on less suitable sites and washed away, before the present site was chosen and the bridge endured?

97 Arthur Collins. A Supplement to the Four Volumes of the Peerage of England. W. Innys, J. and P. Knapton, S. Birt, T. Wotton, R. Manby and H.S. Cox, and E. Withers, 1750. Vol 1, pg 68

98 Gareth Davies. North Devon Wind Farm, Environmental Impact Assessment. Vol 2 – Appendices Part B. West Coast Energy. 2011. Pg 102

99 “Bideford” The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland. 1868

100 Tristram Ridson. “Bideford.” Pages 280-3 in A chorographical description or survey of the county of Devon. With additions. Gives a fuller account of the story on pages 281-2.

101 Thomas Westcote. Edited by George Oliver & Pitman Jones. A View of Devonshire in MDCXXX: With a Pedigree of Most of Its Gentry. Exeter: William Roberts, 1845. 337.

102 Muriel Goaman, Old Bideford and District, Bristol E.M. Cox & A.G. Cox, 1968. Pg 18

Whilst on the subject of folk-legends, it is also said that the bridge was built on wool<sup>103</sup>. Once again, this suggestion is less fanciful than it might at first seem, for the use of wool in the foundations was, in antiquity, a standard technique for adding stability to foundations when building on soft ground. It was used in the foundations of the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, when a marshy construction-site at Ephesus was deliberately selected for its seismic-isolation (i.e. earthquake proofing) properties<sup>104</sup>, and it is still used in the Lake District for constructing paths across soft peat<sup>105</sup>. The remains of any such foundations, however, seem unlikely to have survived the subsequent years of tidal scouring.

## **Late 13<sup>th</sup> C, the first Long Bridge**

That first Long Bridge, a wooden structure, was built in the late 13th C., with work beginning between 1280 and 1291<sup>106</sup>. Initially it operated in parallel with the ford.

The spans of the current Long Bridge are unequal, but preserve within them the layout of the original timber structure<sup>107</sup>. That begs the question, "what determined where those longer spans would lie?" As the wider spans of bridges often coincide with deeper water channels, the structure of the bridge may reflect the former course of the river's main channel.

It is usual to assume that the first wooden bridge stood in the same location as all the subsequent bridges, but there is evidence to suggest that might not have been the case. The possibility of a link with Folly Field has already been mentioned, but the 19<sup>th</sup> C. alignment of thoroughfares within Bideford raises the possibility of a bridge sited south of the current one, but north of Nuttaberry. The curious northward kinks in otherwise-straight Torrington Lane and Meddon Street, just as they approach the river, hints at the possibility that an earlier bridge could have lain at a point where traffic from Torrington Lane could have continued directly across it.

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

### **Late 14<sup>th</sup> C, Bishop of Exeter ensures the bridge gets built**

103 Frank E Whiting & Peter Christie. The Long Bridge of Bideford Through The Centuries. Bideford:Bideford Bridge Trust, 2006, pg 6.

104 B. Carpani. A Survey of Ancient Geotechnical Engineering Techniques in Subfoundation Preparation. In F. Pena & M. Chavez (eds.) SAHC2014 - 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Structural Analysis of Historical Constructions. 2014. Pg 7.

105 "Wool: Aggregate Path on Peat. National Trust Lake District, 2011. Online: [http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/component/option,com\\_docman/Itemid,69/gid,400/task,doc\\_details](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,69/gid,400/task,doc_details) Accessed 21 Sep 2016.

106 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 5

107 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 6

Whilst it may have been a local parish priest who first championed the idea of providing a bridge, the Grenville family, with their holdings astride the Torridge (and possibly lacking control over the ford), had a vested interest in seeing it constructed. Bartholomew de Grenville (d. 1325) actively supported the plans, but, despite this, it took the intervention of a bishop to make it happen. Peter Quivel, the Bishop of Exeter, granted a licence for the sale of indulgences, the proceeds from which were to finance the building and upkeep of the bridge<sup>108</sup>. Indulgences were, a type of purchasable pardon that, despite having lost touch with its theological roots, had become a popular way to raise finance for large civic projects. They generally contained a clause to nullify their effect if the purchaser was not truly penitent, so were not understood then as an unconditional pardon for deeds done or yet to be committed<sup>109</sup>.

### **c. 1325, Bartholomew Grenville, of Bideford**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Edward II (c. 1324/5) Risdon lists “Bartholomew Grenville, of Bideford, knight” as the only Bideford individual on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon<sup>110</sup>.

### **1342, Chapel mentioned at east end of the Long Bridge**

The existence of a chapel dedicated to St Thomas the Martyr, at the eastern end of the Long Bridge, is mentioned in a writ of Edward III, dated 11 Jun 1342<sup>111</sup>. There is no mention of a chapel at the western end in the writ, but eventually a chapel stood at either end of the medieval bridge, to help the church raise the funds needed for the bridge’s continued maintenance<sup>112</sup>. It was not unusual for bridges of that period to have a chapel at one or both ends, thus rendering the bridge itself Holy Ground (thereby helping to ensure that access to such an important community asset could not be restricted for individual gain)<sup>113</sup>. A seal, dating from 1693, suggests, after a later re-building of the bridge both chapels were on the upstream side of the bridge.

### **1348-9, the Black Death sweeps through England**

The impact of the Black Death outbreak of 1348-9 on Bideford is not recorded, but in Devon as a whole it is estimated that a third of the population died<sup>114</sup>.

In the 22<sup>nd</sup> regnal year of Edward III (c. 1348/9) Risdon lists “Theobald Grenville, of Bediford, knight” on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon<sup>115</sup>.

108 Goaman, *Old Bideford and District*, 1968, 19

109 George Oliver, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon*, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 40

110 Risdon, *Notebook 1608-1628*, 1897, Pg 167

111 George Oliver, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon*, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 39

112 Goaman, *Old Bideford and District*, 1968, 19

113 Frank E Whiting & Peter Christie. *The Long Bridge of Bideford Through The Centuries*. Bideford:Bideford Bridge Trust, 2006, pg 6.

114 Fielder, *History of Bideford*, 1985, Pg 7

115 Risdon, *Notebook 1608-1628*, 1897, Pg 169

## **1349, the Ordinance of Labourers is passed**

Following the Black Death plague, labourers would have been in short supply. Within this climate the *Ordinance of Labourers* was passed. This required all men or women under sixty who did not practice a craft to serve anyone that required their labour, thus ensuring that the available workforce were effectively used. The Ordinance effectively divided the working population into those with a trade, who were free men, and those without, who were bound to serve<sup>116</sup>.

The *Ordinance*, as modified in 1495 and 1563, by the *Statute of Artificers*, proved to be the foundation of the later system of indentured servitude<sup>117</sup>, that would prove so lucrative for East-the-Water's merchants. The Ordinance possibly also helped promote the rise of the trade guilds within the 14<sup>th</sup> C.; Guilds whose hierarchy of master, apprentice, and journeyman was still alive and well amongst East-the-Water's 19<sup>th</sup> C. shipyards, and the last vestiges of which may lie in the Mayor of Shamwickshire's appointment.

## **c. 1376, Theobald Grenvill, of Bideford**

In the 49<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Edward III (c. 1375/6), Risdon lists "Theobald Grenvill, of Bideford, knight" as the only Bideford individual on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon<sup>118</sup>.

## **1396, Bishop Stafford supports the Long Bridge**

Bishop Stafford granted an Indulgence to "all true Penitents" who assisted with the construction and repair of the "longi Pontis de Bydeford"<sup>119</sup>.

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

## **c. 1405, John Grenvile, of Bideford, knight**

In the 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Henry IV (c. 1404/5), Risdon lists "John Grenvile, of Bideford, knight" as the only Bideford individual on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon<sup>120</sup>.

116 Brendan Wolfe and Martha McCartney, "Indentured Servants in Colonial Virginia," Encyclopedia Virginia. Virginia Foundation of Humanoties.

Online:[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Indentured\\_Servants\\_in\\_Colonial\\_Virginia#start\\_entry](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Indentured_Servants_in_Colonial_Virginia#start_entry) Accessed:14 July 2017

117 Brendan Wolfe and Martha McCartney, "Indentured Servants in Colonial Virginia," Encyclopedia Virginia. Virginia Foundation of Humanoties.

Online:[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Indentured\\_Servants\\_in\\_Colonial\\_Virginia#start\\_entry](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Indentured_Servants_in_Colonial_Virginia#start_entry) Accessed:14 July 2017

118 Risdon, Notebook 1608-1628, 1897, Pg 170

119 George Oliver, Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 39

120 Risdon, Notebook 1608-1628, 1897, Pg 172

## **1425, a licence granted for St. Anne's chapel**

A licence, granted on 25 April 1425, permitted service “in capella See Anne , ad finem Pontis de Bydeford” (“in the chapel of St Anne, at the end of the bridge of Bydeford”) <sup>121</sup> and, in his *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon*, the Rev. Oliver suggests that, subsequent to the writ of 1342, a number of documents confirm that dedication for the eastern chapel<sup>122</sup>. A change in dedication, by implying that the later chapel was somehow different to the first, is indicative that the chapel, and thus the bridge, may have changed location.

## **1437, an indulgence hints at a new bridge**

On 24 May 1437, and again on 28 Jun 1444, Bishop Lacy granted an indulgence “ad novum constructionem, sustentationem seu reparationem Pontin de Bydeford.” (“the new construction, maintenance or repair of the Pontin Bydeford”) <sup>123</sup>. Hinting that, if not already under-way, the construction of a new bridge was being considered.

## **1446, a new chapel at the eastern end of the bridge**

A licence, granted by Bishop Lacy on 28 Aug 1446, permitted service “in capella see anne , ad finem Pontis de Bydeford” (“in the chapel of St Anne, at the end of the bridge of Bydeford”) <sup>124</sup>.

## **1459, a third wooden bridge**

A Papal letter of 7 April 1459 describes the bridge as being of wood<sup>125</sup>, whilst giving the dedication of its eastern chapel as St Mary the Virgin<sup>126</sup>. It is also worth noting that a chapel dedicated to St Mary the Virgin might be a logical successor to a chapel dedicated to St. Anne, whom tradition understood to be her mother.

Many histories describe this as the second wooden bridge, but this third change of chapel dedication suggest that this was the second time the chapel, and thus the bridge, had been re-built, making this the third wooden bridge to have been built and the one that persisted (in keeping with the folk tradition of the moving construction materials outlined earlier).

It was this wooden bridge that is believed to have provided the template for all the later masonry bridges, and timbers, thought to be relics of the original bridge, rather than aids to the stone bridge's construction, still remain entombed amidst the stonework<sup>127</sup>. The main supporting timbers stood on timber plates, resting upon rough stone.

Some of the widest spans of the Long Bridge are at the eastern end, and later diagrams show that these were subsequently the most strongly buttressed. If one assumes that practical reasons drove the location of the wider spans, this suggests that, in the 15th C., the river's main channel graced the eastern shore. The heavier buttressing may be for a similar reason, but would have been completed at a much later date.

121 Whiting & Christie, *Long Bridge*, 2006, pg 24-5.

122 George Oliver, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon*, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 39

123 George Oliver, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon*, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 39

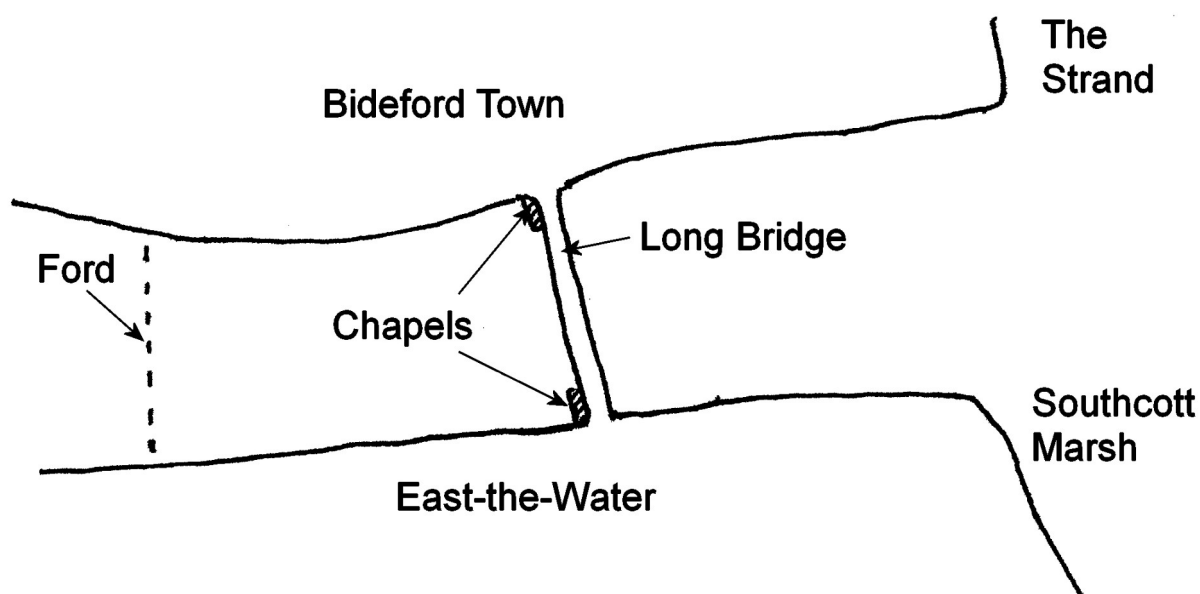
124 George Oliver, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon*, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 39

125 Department of National Heritage, 19/04/1993, *Bideford*, 22 (List of Blds of Arch or Historic Interest). SDV338459.

126 Whiting & Christie, *Long Bridge*, 2006, pg 24-5.

127 Whiting & Christie, *Long Bridge*, 2006, pg 7.

In later diagrams and pictures the chapel in East-the-Water is shown immediately beside the bridge and upstream of it. In a plan of c. 1717 there is a similarly positioned building shown on the western bank, with no building on the downstream side of the bridge.



Ascott notes that the bridge was originally slightly convex down the river to resist the force of the incoming tide<sup>128</sup>.

It has been suggested that there was once an additional arch on the eastern end of the bridge (together with another on the west). Ascott notes that “excavations at each end of the bridge have not revealed any traces of such”<sup>129</sup>. The wharves have, however, been built out significantly since the 18<sup>th</sup> C. and possibly enough for an additional arch to have been blocked off by the changes.

### **c. 1483/4, Thomas Grenville I, of Bideford, knight**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> regnal year of Richard III (c. 1483/4), Risdon lists “Thomas Grenvill, of Bideford, knight” as the only Bideford individual on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon<sup>130</sup>.

### **c. 1485/6, Thomas Grenville II, of Bideford appointed Esquire**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> regnal year of Henry VII (c. 1485/6), Risdon lists “Thomas Grenvill, of Bideford, knight” as one of two Bideford individuals on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon for that reign, the other being his son, of the same name<sup>131</sup>.

128 Ascott, Random Notes, 1953, pg 7

129 Ascott, Random Notes, 1953, pg 7

130 Risdon, Notebook 1608-1628, 1897, 175

131 Risdon, Notebook 1608-1628, 1897, 176

## **c. 1489, Thomas Grenville's house and quay in East-the-Water**

On 1 September, 4 Henry VII (c. 1488/9) an indenture was granted “by John Mylward of Chepyngtoriton, tucker, son and heir of John Mylward, to William Person of his tenement in Bydeford, on the east side of the water called ‘Torigge,’ between the tenement of Thomas Greynfyld esquire, etc. with a house called a ‘dryhouse’ and a quay to the south of it, and a way to the well there, for 60 years; rent, 4d. All repairs to be done by the tenant. Witness:--John Passer, provost of Bydeford, and others (named)”

The designation “esquire,” applied to this Thomas Grynfyld, marks him out as a man of high status, and , at this period, its uses would have included e.g. the eldest born of a baron peer of the realm or a knight<sup>132</sup>. As it appears, from ‘esquire, etc.’ that esquire is here being used as an abbreviation for a longer title, this would appear to be Sir Thomas Grenville II, who was appointed one of the Esquires of the Body to Henry VII in 1 Henry VII (1485), and later knighted in 17 Henry VII. His father, Sir Thomas Grenville, being already dead by this date.

A ‘dryhouse’ was typically one that was open at the sides so that the draught could dry whatever was hung inside, usually cloth. The ‘south of’ would seem to have to be in relation to the dry-house rather than the tenement, to make sense.

Chipping Torrington was the name of the Medieval borough that developed into Great Torrington.

## **1494, Thomas Grenville**

From 1494, when Thomas Grenfeld, Esq. Is named as Patron of Robert Cornwall, the Grenville family took a renewed interest in the church in Bideford, consistently admitting the clergy until the Buck family took over that role in the later 18<sup>th</sup> C. <sup>133</sup>.

## **1497, John Cabot claims Newfoundland**

There is evidence that even before Columbus discovered the New World in 1492, West-country fishermen had been visiting its waters. It seems that they knew of the bountiful fishing grounds on the Grand Banks, the location of which they kept jealously as a trade secret. In 1497, to secure English interests in these fishing grounds, John Cabot claimed Newfoundland for the English crown, but it would be well over a hundred years before the area was finally settled with any permanence by Europeans.

In the early 1500s, Bideford would be one of the first communities to exploit the new opportunities presented by Cabot's claim<sup>134</sup>.

132 “Esquire” Wikipedia. Online:[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esquire#cite\\_note-11](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esquire#cite_note-11) Accessed 29/11/2020. Citing "Esquires." Debretts. Archived from the original. Retrieved 2017-06-05.

133 George Oliver, Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 41-2

134 “Newfoundland's Connections to the West Country of England” Pages 3-22 in Decks Awash. Vol. 2 No. 2 March-April 1992, pg 6.

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

### **c. 1502, Thomas Grenville II, of Bideford, knight**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Henry VII (c.1501/2), Risdon lists “Thomas Grenville, of Bideford, knight, sonne of Sir Thomas, at the creacion of Princ Arthur, 17 Henry VII.” as one of two Bideford individuals on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon for that reign, the other being his father, of the same name<sup>135</sup>. This refers to Thomas Grenville II, as his father had died c. 1483.

### **1505, Bishop Arundell grants an indulgence for bridge repair**

On 12 Jan 1503 Bishop Arundell granted an indulgence to fund repair of the bridge<sup>136</sup>.

### **1513, death of sir Thomas Grenville II**

This individual has an impressive chest tomb in the lady chapel of St Mary’s Bideford<sup>137</sup>.

### **1523, disputed alms at the St Anne’s (eastern) bridge chapel**

The Bridge Trust claimed a right to the alms given at St Anne’s Chapel, which was disputed by the rector of Bideford, Master Richard Gilbert, Doctor of Degrees and a Canon of Exeter Cathedral<sup>138</sup>. Bishop Veysey ultimately had to rule on the dispute.

### **1525, Viscount Lisle appointed Vice-Admiral of England**

Viscount Lisle (formerly Arthur Plantagenet), who married Honor, daughter of Thomas Grenville II, was appointed Vice Admiral of England in 1525. For a time his wife’s nephew Sir Richard Grenville would serve under him in his role as Lord Deputy of the town and marches of Calais, but in 1540 the Viscount fell from favour, for his sympathies toward ‘Gospellers’<sup>139</sup>

### **c. 1533, Richard Grenville, of Bideford, knight, sherif**

In the 24<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Henry VIII (c. 1532/3), Risdon lists “Richard Grenville, of Bideford, knight, sherif” as the only Bideford individual on his list of knights and distinguished people of Devon for that reign<sup>140</sup>. This would have been the grandson of Sir Thomas Grenville II

135 Tristram Risdon. The Notebook of Tristram Risdon 1608-1628. Transcribed by James Dallas and Henry Porter. London: Elliot Stock. 1897. Pg 176

136 George Oliver, Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 40

137 Roger Granville, History of the Granville Family. Exeter: William Pollard, 1895. Pgs 66-7

138 Roger Granville. “A History of the Church at Bideford and Some of its Rectors” Pages 201-22 in Reports & Transactions of the Devonshire Association, Vol 34, 1902, pg 209.

139 Roger Granville, History of the Granville Family. Exeter: William Pollard, 1895. Pgs 65-6

140 Tristram Risdon. The Notebook of Tristram Risdon 1608-1628. Transcribed by James Dallas and Henry Porter. London: Elliot Stock. 1897. Pg 176]

## **1541, Buckland Abbey granted to Sir Richard Grenville**

In 1541/2 Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries saw Buckland Abbey granted to Sir Richard Greynfeld. In 1580 Queen Elizabeth then licensed Greynfeld and his wife Mary to alienate the property to John Hele and Christopher Harrys, who, a year later, sold the property to Sir Frances Drake<sup>141</sup>

## **1542, John Leland reports shipbuilding in Barnstaple Street**

In 1542 Henry VIII's official antiquary, John Leland, visited the West-country<sup>142</sup>. On visiting Bideford, he noted that in Barnstaple Street, East-the-Water, there was "a praty quick [meaning lively] streate of Smithes and other occupiers for shipp crafte." Leland was also the first to describe Bideford's Long Bridge as built of stone. He describes Appledore at that time as a "good village"<sup>143</sup>.

## **1545, Sir Roger Granville dies on the Mary Rose**

19 June 1645, Sir Roger Grenville, great grandson of Sir Thomas Granville II, and son of the naval hero, Sir Richard Grenville, and captain of the Mary Rose, was lost with his ship when she sank<sup>144</sup>.

## **1550, growth begins to outstrip tax income**

According to Joyce Youings, the tax records after 1550 suggest that North Devon's economy was growing more slowly than it actually was<sup>145</sup>

## **1565, a significant centre for shipbuilding**

The Exeter Records demonstrate that Bideford's shipyards could already produce a ship of 250 tons, one having been built there in 1565<sup>146</sup>. Rogers cites the entry as follows<sup>147</sup> "that one J. W. of the citie of Exeter, Merchante, hath at these presents buylded and fynished within the haven of Bidefford one ship of the portage and burden of two hundredth fiftye tonnes."

141 George Oliver, *Monasticon Dioecesis Exoniensis, Being a Collection of Records and Instruments Illustrating the Ancient Foundations, in the Counties of Cornwall and Devon*, Exeter:Hannaford, 1846, 381

142 John Chandler. "John Leland in the West Country" pgs 34 to 49 in Mark Brayshay Ed. *Topographical Writers in South-West England*. University of Exeter Press, 1996. 44

143 Leland, *Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, 1907, Part 2, Pg 171-2

144 Roger Granville, *History of the Granville Family*. Exeter: William Pollard, 1895. Pg 82

145 Joyce Youings and P. W. Cornford. 'Seafaring and Maritime Trade in Sixteenth Century Devon' pp. 98-107 in M Duffy, S. Fisher, B. Greenhill, D. J. Starkey and J. Youings eds., *The New Maritime History of Devon* (Exeter, 1992), Pg 104 cited in Duncan Taylor. "The Maritime Trade of the Smaller Bristol Channel Ports in the Sixteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Bristol. 2009, Pg 45

146 "North Devon Maritime Enterprise 1560-1640." *Tudor and Stuart Devon: The Common Estate and Government : Essays Presented to Joyce Youings*. Todd Gray, Margery M. Rowe, Audrey M. Erskine. University of Exeter Press, 1992. Page 121. Pearce Chope (North Devon Journal 05 July 1928 p7 c5) gives the date of construction as 1566.

147 Rogers, *Concise History of Bideford*, 1938, pg 10, citing *Calendar of State Papers*, British Museum.

To set this size of 250 tons in context, consider that Drake circumnavigated the globe in the Pelican/Golden Hind, a vessel of about 150 tons<sup>148</sup>, whilst, of the 139 vessels operating as privateers between 1589 and 1591 (and therefore available to the crown as a navy), only 16 were over 200 tons<sup>149</sup>. Henry VIII's flagship, Mary Rose, ordered in 1510, was large for its time at 400 tons<sup>150</sup>.

Rogers suggested that the ability to produce a 250 ton ship made Bideford one of the most significant ship-building centres in the west, it having received a certificate for building ships from "the Lord Highe Admyral of England"<sup>151</sup>.

Coming so relatively soon after Leland's account, of 1542, mentioned shipbuilding only in East-the-Water<sup>152</sup>, it is likely that the Barnstaple Street yards were responsible for the 250 ton ship.

Most of the merchant ships active from Bideford at this period were smaller. Six or seven traded overseas, and they totalled 143 tons. Barnstaple had but three ships (totalling 76 tons), though it appears that some Barnstaple ships were hired to Bristol merchants. Ship ownership was centred on the parish of Northam, where eight vessels were active, the largest being the *Jesus* (80 tons)<sup>153</sup>.

## 1565, the Westleigh bridge, figment or fact?

There is a popular conception that access up the Torridge to Bideford, at least for larger ships, was, at the time of the Armada, completely prevented by a bridge from Tapley to Northam. This probably stems from the appearance of a bridge symbol (indicating a crossing point, though not necessarily a bridge), on some (but not all) early maps. The idea of such a bridge was roundly refuted by Pearce Chope (former president of the Devonshire Association) in 1928<sup>154</sup>, the construction of a 250 ton boat at Bideford in 1565 formed part of his evidence, but there he gave the date as 1566. It is also notable that John Leland, describing this shore in 1542, failed to mention any such bridge.<sup>155</sup>

## 1566, a 500 ton vessel built at Bideford?

Rogers mentions a boat of 500 tons being built in 1566 at Bideford, but gives no indication of his original source, and it has not been possible to trace it<sup>156</sup>.

148 Glyndwr Williams. *The Great South Sea: English Voyages and Encounters, 1570-1750*. Yale University Press, 1997. Pg 23.

149 Richard Bruce Wernham. *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1558-1603*. University of California Press, 1980. Pg 61.

150 "The History of the Mary Rose – 1511-1545" Mary Rose Museum. Online:<http://www.maryrose.org> Accessed: 29 Apr 2017.

151 Rogers, *Concise History of Bideford*, 1938, pg 11

152 Leland, *Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, 1907, Part 2, Pg 171-2

153 "North Devon Maritime Enterprise 1560-1640." *Tudor and Stuart Devon: The Common Estate and Government : Essays Presented to Joyce Youings*. Todd Gray, Margery M. Rowe, Audrey M. Erskine. University of Exeter Press, 1992. Page 121.

154 "Mr Pearce Chope's View." *North Devon Journal* 5 July 1928 p7 c5

155 Leland, *Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, 1907

156 Rogers, *Concise History of Bideford*, 1938, pg 11

## 1572 St. Bartholomew's day massacre

The St. Bartholomew's day massacre of 1572 saw a surge of Huguenot religious refugees arriving in England. Some of these, especially weavers, settled and set up trade in Bideford, attracted no-doubt by Bideford's trade in wool, but the Huguenots also traded in silken and cotton goods<sup>157</sup>.

## 1570-71,

In 1570-71 a commission of enquiry suggested that there was a considerable illicit trade. Duncan Taylor, analysing the port books for Barnstaple (of which Bideford formed part), concluded that exports of cloth were possibly at three to five times the level declared<sup>158</sup>.

## 1574, Grenville secures an Elizabethan charter

In 1574, Sir Richard Grenville(1541?-1591) procured a charter from Queen Elizabeth, confirming Bideford's status as a free borough, a partial transcript of which is given by Watkins<sup>159</sup>. Gaining free borough status generally involved special privileges being given, a reduction in the degree of servitude that burgesses owed to their lord, and/or an increased corporate autonomy from external authorities<sup>160</sup>. In this case the charter confirmed the town's existing market and fair, whilst granting two additional fairs. The market was on Tuesday and the fairs February 4-7, July 8-11, & November 3-6<sup>161</sup>. "Bedyford" was incorporated and given powers for rebuilding the decayed town, and for the better maintenance of the bridge<sup>162</sup>. Royal assent was given on 10 December 1574<sup>163</sup>.

Locals will occasionally claim (usually in the pub) that this charter grants concessions relating to mooring on the East-the-Water shore. Watkins notes that it does declare the town "to be free from all tollage, stallage, pittance, customage, fines, and amerciaments," but only "from the said markets and fairs."<sup>164</sup>

Sir Richard is known to have had a town house in Bideford, and Ascott<sup>165</sup>, who, in 1953, documented various local traditions passed down to him, states that 'The Church Lad's Brigade Hall adjoining the Bridge Buildings was Sir Richard Grenville's town house with a garden extending down to the beach. Later it became a pub called "The Castle," after which it was purchased for the C.L.B.'

More recent research has confirmed that Sir Richard was also born in the town<sup>166</sup>.

157 Goaman, 1968, 39

158 Duncan Taylor. "The Maritime Trade of the Smaller Bristol Channel Ports in the Sixteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Bristol. 2009. Pg 44

159 Watkins, Essay, 1792, 18-21

160 Stephen Alsford. Medieval English Towns – Glossary. 2017.

Online:<http://users.trytel.com/~tristan/towns/glossary.html> Accessed: 28 Apr 2017

161 Watkins, Essay, 1792, 19

162 Lysons & Lysons. Magna Britannica. 1822. Pg 48

163 Watkins, Essay, 1792, 21

164 Watkins, Essay, 1792, 20

165 Ascott, Random Notes, 1953, pg 18

166 Carter & Carter, Grenville Research, 2017, n.p.

## **1574, Grenville's plan to circumnavigate the world**

1574 saw Richard Grenville produced a scheme, together with Humphrey Gilbert, for 'an enterprise for the discovery of sundry rich and unknown lands,' the existence of which was revealed after the capture, in Panama, of John Oxenham and two other Englishmen. Elizabeth, at that time keen to preserve amicable relations with Spain, refused to license it<sup>167</sup>. In 1577 Sir Francis Drake resurrected the scheme with Elizabeth's blessing, causing friction between Drake and Grenville, such that Grenville refused to ever sail with Drake again<sup>168</sup>.

## **1577, Richard Grenville, of Bideford, knighted**

In the time of Elizabeth I, Risdon notes that "Richard Grenville, of Bideford" was knighted in 1577<sup>169</sup>.

## **1583, Sir Humphry Gilbert founds a colony in Newfoundland**

Having obtained permission from Elizabeth in 1578 to found a colony in Newfoundland, Sir Humphry Gilbert's first attempt failed. In 1583 he finally reached, and claimed, St Johns, but again failed to establish a colony. Neither Gilbert nor his chosen vessel survived the return journey, the Golden Hind, master Edward Hayes, being the sole vessel from his fleet to survive. After Gilbert's father's death his father's widow married the father of Sir Walter Raleigh<sup>170</sup>. Both Sir Walter Raleigh and his half-brother Humphrey Gilbert<sup>171</sup> were cousins of Sir Richard Grenville, so one wonders how this Golden Hind might relate to the one that, five years later, Grenville dispatched from Bideford (as the Bark Fleming) to served against the Spanish Armada.

## **1584, Amadas and Barlowe sail for North America**

No doubt inspired by Gilbert's discoveries Sir Walter Raleigh promoted further trans-atlantic exploration. On 27 April 1584, acting for Raleigh, Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe set sail to explore the east coast of North America. Landing at Roanoke Island on 13<sup>th</sup> July, they established relations with the local tribes. They returned with two native Americans, Manteo and Wanchese, who were probably of the Hatteras Indians<sup>172</sup>. These natives learnt English and were able to provide Raleigh with political and geographical intelligence on their homeland, as well as helping to create publicity for Raleigh's proposed colony<sup>173</sup>.

167 Ben Simpson. "Sir Richard Grenville" Online: <https://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/~ben/grenv2.htm> Accessed 11 Sep 2016

168 "Richard Grenville" <http://alchetron.com/Richard-Grenville-1061990-W> Accessed 12 Sep 2016

169 Tristram Risdon. The Notebook of Tristram Risdon 1608-1628. Transcribed by James Dallas and Henry Porter. London: Elliot Stock. 1897. Pg 179

170 Edward Hayes. Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Voyage to Newfoundland. 2006.

Online:<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3338/3338-h/3338-h.htm> Accessed 17 Apr 2017

171 "Newfoundland's Connections to the West Country of England" Pages 3-22 in Decks Awash. Vol. 2 No. 2 March-April 1992, pg 5

172 Andy Powell. "Raleigh, a Wyngantoditoian" Native Heritage Project. 2 Jul 2012. Online: <https://nativeheritageproject.com/2012/07/02/raleigh-a-wynganditoian> Accessed 11 Sep 2016

173 <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/learning/educators/timelines/sixteenth-century-north-carolina-timeline> Accessed 12 Sep 2016

## 1585, the charter to colonize Virginia

In March 1584/5 the Queen gave the newly knighted Sir Walter Raleigh a charter to colonize the new found area, which she called Virginia<sup>174</sup>.

## 1585, Grenville establishes a military colony on Roanoke

In the same year, Raleigh, being required to attend Queen Elizabeth I, placed his cousin Sir Richard Grenville in charge of establishing his military colony in the New World<sup>175</sup>.

On August 17, 1585, some years before the Mayflower, Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition set sail, under the command of Sir Richard Grenville, and accompanied by Phillip Amadayas, to established a colony in Virginia (in that area now included in North Carolina).

*The Tyger*, of 140 tons, accompanied Grenville on this voyage<sup>176</sup>. With that ship sailed another, the *Roebuck*<sup>177</sup>.

Major W. Ascott records the local tradition, concerning the shipyard which formerly stood on Brunswick Wharf, "Two ships are said to have been built here for Sir Richard Grenville for his Virginian venture"<sup>178</sup>.

Grenville settled the colonists on the island of Roanoke, leaving Ralph Lane in charge, and Amadayas with him, he then departed. In parting, he promised to send the colonists a relief fleet the following year, little knowing that circumstances would prevent him returning quite as soon as he might have wished<sup>179</sup>.

## 1585, Raleigh proposes a relief fleet

Sir Walter Raleigh proposed an expedition to Virginia to relieve the colony, which God willing, would be with them the following summer (i.e. 1587)<sup>180</sup>. The original source of this information is given by Powell, as Plymouth Muniments Widey Court Book 1585<sup>181</sup>, from whence he cites that Raleigh "did presently resolve upon another voyage, to supply Ralfe Lane and his company that were left with him in Virginia, the next Spring following", i.e. in 1586.

Snell, citing an unreferenced passage in Hakluyt, claims that a "pinnace and fleet were accordingly prepared in the West country at Bideford, under the charge of Sir Richard Grenvil."<sup>182</sup>.

## 1585, tensions with Spain disrupt Newfoundland fishing

Queen Elizabeth ordered Bernard Drake, concerning Newfoundland, "...to proceed thither to warn all English vessels about the seizures in Spain, and prevent them making sale of their fish there, and to take all Spanish ships and subjects, and to bring them into some of the Western ports of England, without disposing of the lading until further orders."<sup>183</sup> It is likely that Bideford's Newfoundland

174 "Richard Grenville." 1586, <http://alchetron.com/Richard-Grenville-1061990-W> Accessed 12 Sep 2016

175 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 13

176 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 112

177 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 15

178 W. Ascott, Random Notes on Old Bideford and District. Bideford: Gazette, 1953. Pg 27

179 "Richard Grenville." 1586, <http://alchetron.com/Richard-Grenville-1061990-W> Accessed 12 Sep 2016

180 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 108, citing an unreferenced passage in Hakluyt

181 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 14

182 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 108

183 D. W. Prowse's 1895 history of Newfoundland, quoted in "The Placentia Area" Pages 3-76 in Decks Awash. Vol. 2

merchants would have been amongst those intending to sell their fish in Spain.

## 1585, a Spanish prize

It is possible that Grenville received orders, similar to those given to Bernard Drake, with respect to Spanish vessels, for it appears to have been after his voyage of 1585, that Grenville returned with a handsome Spanish prize, the *Santa Maria de Vincente*, of some 300 tons<sup>184</sup>.

The ships Spanish cannons would have been useless, as they took a different gauge of shot to English cannons, and the *Santa Maria de Vincente*, would have been a likely source for the Spanish guns which, dating from this period, were recovered from their ignoble use as mooring posts, and set up in Victoria Park as “Spanish Armada cannons”<sup>185</sup>.

The *Santa Maria de Vincente* appears to have been renamed as *The Galleon Dudley*<sup>186</sup>. Snell suggests that “as Raleigh was courting the favour of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the vessel may have been renamed thus as a compliment to that nobleman”<sup>187</sup>.

Duncan Taylor notes the significant role of privateering in the 16<sup>th</sup> C. maritime economy of North Devon and that it was common practice for the value of prizes to be significantly underestimated for customs purposes<sup>188</sup>.

## 1585, the building of New Place

Grenville's prize provided him with both wealth and a workforce, in the form of captured Spanish prisoners<sup>189</sup>. He employed both constructing a grand mansion for himself (believed to be that later known as New Place). Forcing the prisoners to labour and even requiring the ship's captain to carry stone for the construction, his treatment of these captives caused outrage in Spain<sup>190</sup>.

The contemporary and near contemporary accounts mention several features of New Place:

- it used stone, at least in part, for its construction;
- it was considerably larger than the previous manor house, for it paid twice as much in church rates<sup>191</sup>;
- it was still standing in 1672, for they were paid in that year;
- it was on a quayside, for the church record indicates as such;
- its grounds possibly included fish-ponds, for one of Bernard Grenville's letters mentions that he is sending carp from his ponds at Bideford to stock those at Stowe<sup>192</sup>.

No. 2 March-April 1992, pg 3

184 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. pg 14

185 “Richard Grenville.” 1586, <http://alchetron.com/Richard-Grenville-1061990-W> Accessed 12 Sep 2016

186 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. pg 14

187 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 112

188 Duncan Taylor. “The Maritime Trade of the Smaller Bristol Channel Ports in the Sixteenth Century” (PhD diss., University of Bristol. 2009. Pg 41-42

189 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. pg 14

190 Carter & Carter, Grenville Research, 2017, n.p.

191 Carter & Carter, Grenville Research, 2017, n.p.

192 Roger Granville, The History of the Granville Family, Exeter: privately, 1895,147

Pearce Chope suggested that the original Place House was ‘the first house in “Churchyard,” on or near the site of the present Town-hall<sup>193</sup>, a view reinforced by modern scholarship<sup>194</sup>. That being the case, it lay almost opposite the “The Key” on the East, which, as that quay formed part of the manor lands, presumably belonged to the Grenville’s (who held the manor). There being no quay or buildings to the east of it at that time, old Place House would have provided an ideal vantage point from which to supervise activities there.

Tradition places the new Place House on the west of the river, i.e. on the side of the ‘Established Key,’ but, even if one assumes the fishponds were on adjacent estates rather than at Place House, an eastern location, near the site later known as The Grange, might have been more desirable, still overlooking the Key, but also providing convenient access to the Grenville’s considerable holdings on the east of the river.

## 1586, Grenville's relief mission undone by Bideford Bar

On 16 April 1586, Philip Wyot, local chronicler, and Town Clerk of Barnstaple at the latter end of the sixteenth century, recorded “Sir Richard Greynvyll sailed over the barr with his flee boat [*flea boat, his smallest*] and friget, but for want of suffic<sup>t</sup> water on the barr, being neare upon neape, he left his ship [*grounded his ship, or left it in the harbour, unable to get out*]. This Sir Richard Greynvyll pretended [*‘intended’ is the ancient sense of this word*] his goiuge to Wyngandecora, where he was last year.”<sup>195</sup> (text in *italics* added for clarification). Thus Sir Richard appears to have set out to fulfil his promise, but to have been prevented from doing so by the treachery of Bideford Bar (the shoals at the mouth of the estuary that have time and again caught out even experienced mariners).

It is from one of Grenville's captives, Pedro Diaz, commander of the *Santa Maria*, that we have further details of this episode. Diaz states that, after his voyage of 1585, Grenville “returned to the river at Bideford, which is at the mouth of Barnstaple [Water], and there he fitted out six ships, one of 150 tons and the rest 100 down to 60 tons. With them and 400 soldiers and sailors and provisions for a year he put to sea on 2 May 1586.”<sup>196</sup>

Thus Grenville’s first attempt to relieve Roanoke was delayed somewhat.

## 1586, Drake evacuates the Roanoke settlers

As May passed into June, Sir Richard's failure to arrive with their much-needed supplies caused increasing distress amongst the settlers.

In 1586 the *White Lion*, captain James Erisey, accompanied Sir Francis Drake on a West Indian voyage and, calling at Roanoke, they evacuated most of Ralph Lane's military colony<sup>197</sup>.

193 “Mr. Pearce Chope’s Views” North Devon Journal 5 July 1928 p7 c5

194 Carter & Carter, Grenville Research, 2017, n.p.

195 Richard William Cotton. “The Part Taken by North Devon in the Earliest English Enterprises for the Purpose of Colonizing America.” Pages 279 to 282 in Report and Transactions of The Devonshire Association. (Vol 2, Part 1). London: Taylor & Francis, 1867-8. Page 281

196 ‘The relation of Pedro Diaz’, in D. B. Quinn (ed.), New American World, 1979, iii. 327

197 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 16

Drake, arrived about the beginning of June, and at first proposed equipping the colonists to remain further on their station. He was forced to abandon that plan, however, by the arrival of stormy weather. So, instead of leaving certain vessels and experienced mariners with the colonists, Drake's fleet set sail, with the colonists aboard. They departed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, arriving in Plymouth on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1586<sup>198</sup>

Drake's motivation for taking the colonists appears to have been a shortage of supplies, not having enough on board to supply the colony through another winter. The returning Roanoke colonists introduced Europe to tobacco, maize, and potatoes<sup>199</sup>.

The Tobacco monopoly would later provide a foundation for the wealth of Bideford's merchants and leave its legacy in East-the-Water.

## 1586, Grenville arrives at Roanoke

Powell notes that Grenville returned in 1586 with the *Roebuck* and the *Tyger*, and finding the colony deserted, left 15 of his own men to secure the Queen's claim<sup>200</sup>.

## 1586, North Devon braces itself for a Spanish invasion

The diary extracts of local chronicler Philip Wyot suggest that prices of staples like corn were rising, and that about Witsunday (around June) orders had gone out “that the beacons sh<sup>d</sup> be reedified and diligently watched day and night, and that post horses sh<sup>d</sup> be p.vided in ev<sup>y</sup> towne, and that ev<sup>y</sup> pson s sh<sup>d</sup> p.vide in rediness his armour”<sup>201</sup>.

## 1586, Grenville returns from Roanoke

The diary extracts of local chronicler Philip Wyot, which start in 1586, record “In December this year [1586] Sir Richard Greynfild came home bringing a prise with him, laden with sugar, ginger & hyds.”<sup>202</sup>. Thus it appears that Sir Richard picked up a prize on his return journey.

198 Richard William Cotton. “The Part Taken by North Devon in the Earliest English Enterprises for the Purpose of Colonizing America.” Pages 279 to 282 in Report and Transactions of The Devonshire Association. (Vol 2, Part 1). London:Taylor & Francis, 1867-8. Page 59

199 Julian Alvin Carroll Chandler editor. The South in the Building of the Nation: History of the States. 12 Volumes. The Southern historical publication society. Louisiana: Pelican, 1909. Vol 1. Pg 5.

200 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 15

201 “The Diary of Philip Wyot, Town Clerk of Barnstaple From 1586 to 1608.” Pages 88-120 in John Robert Chanter. Sketches of the literary history of Barnstaple; being the substance of a series of papers read at The Literary Institution, Barnstaple. To which is appended the diary of Philip Wyot, town clerk of Barnstaple, from 1586 to 1608. Barnstaple: Arnold, c. 1866. Pg 92

202 “The Diary of Philip Wyot.” Op. Cit. Page 91

## 1586, William Camden's Britannia is published

Camden's work contained one of the very early maps of Devonshire<sup>203</sup>. This map marks only the more significant roads, and is interesting in showing none between Bideford and Barnstaple, there being two routes southward from Ilfracombe, one to Barnstaple, the other through Braunton and terminating at St Anne's Chapel (formerly the SW point of Braunton Burrows, but now washed away), its direction thence resumed at Appledore, through Northam, to cross the Towridge at Bediford, before running southward to Torrington. Camden's map is also one of those which suggest a bridge over the Torridge at Westleigh, but without showing any roads connected to it.

Camden's work has little to say on Bideford, simply stating that it was "pretty famous, for the resort of People to it, and for an arched stone bridge."

## 1587, the conflict with Spain is beggaring the common people

In 1587, ongoing hostility between the English and the Spanish continued their inexorable descent into full blown war, though there was never a formal declaration of war as such.

The drain of the war effort was increasingly being felt by the region. At the lent assize, in Barnstaple, one judge commented that, despite the dearth of corn and the inflated price of wheat, "this countrey is dailey further charged with ammunition and harness, expecting and providing for invasions and warrs which maketh the common sort fall into poverty for want of trade, so that div<sup>s</sup> fall to robberyng, and stealinge, the like hath never been seen."<sup>204</sup>

## 1587, the gift of a quay (and evidence for an earlier one)

In 1587 the Lord of the Manor, Richard Grenville (1542? – 1591), gave the newly established Borough, of Bideford, the property 'whereof certain limekilns sometimes stood and where a quay or wharf is latterly built; and also of all streets, lanes and ways within the said manor borough, and town of Bideford'<sup>205</sup>. We are not told on which side of the river this quay was, but a plan from c. 1717 provides a big clue. It shows the corporation's extensions to an earlier quay labelled as *Established Key*. This earlier quay was therefore one gifted or settled upon (this being an early meaning of 'established') the Borough. The only record of such an establishment of a quay upon the borough was as part of this gift of land by Richard Grenville.

The plan of c. 1717 labels a series of the quays. The document is likely to have been produced to support the official recognition of the extension to the western quay and to include it as part of the port of Bideford. One of the quays is shown as simply *The Key*. The lack of a need to qualify its name on such a document implies that it pre-dated the other quays.

Later evidence identifies that the site of *The Key* still formed part of the manor lands. Not only would this place this quay, at this time, in the ownership of the Grenvilles, but it also supports the notion that this would have been the community's primary quay at an early time. The evidence, from 1542, that Bideford's earliest recorded shipwrights were based on the eastern side of the Torridge is also consistent with Bideford's original quay being on that side.

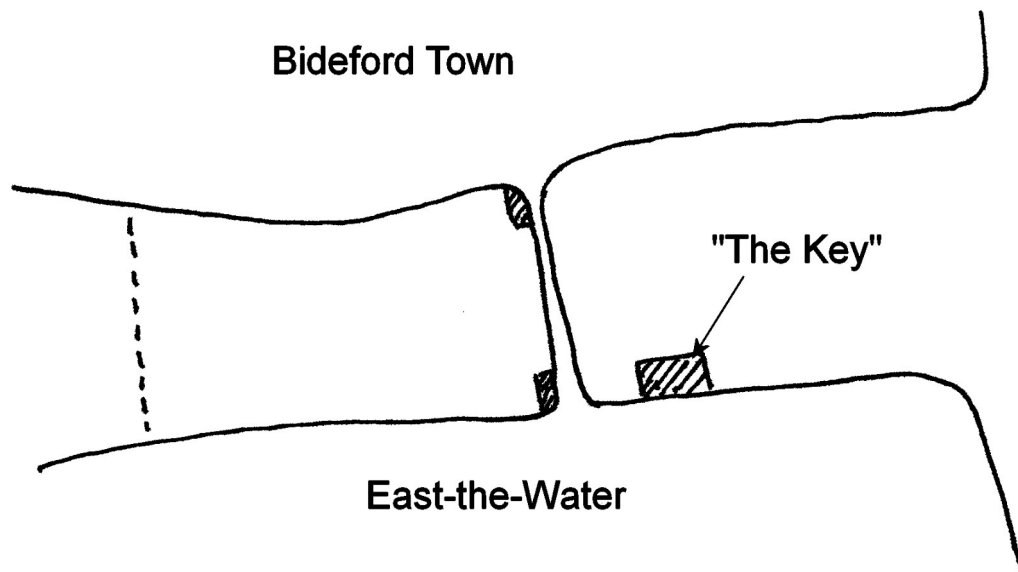
203 "Devonshire" in William Camden. *Britannia, or a Chorographical Description of Great Britain, Ireland and the Adjacent Islands*, 1856, revised by Edmund Gibson, 1722.

Online: <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/camden/william/britannia-gibson-1722/part35.html> Accessed 24 Aug 2017

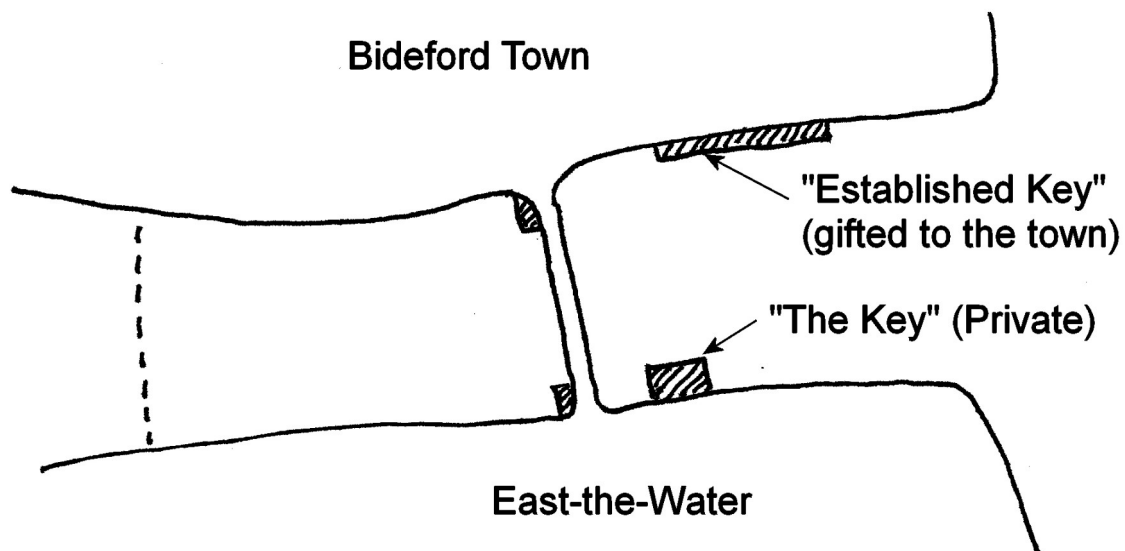
204 "The Diary of Philip Wyot." Op. Cit., Page 93

205 Fielder, *History of Bideford*, 1985, 19

So, at some point prior to 1587 the situation probably looked like this



Then by 1587 it had changed to looked like this



## 1587, the preparation of a further colonial fleet

Available evidence suggests that, in 1587, Grenville divided his time between London and Bideford as he sought people for a second attempt at establishing Raleigh's colony<sup>206</sup>.

206 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 15

In 1587 Raleigh sent another group of 100 colonist to Roanoke, under John White, the first to include women and children<sup>207</sup>. Landing in July of that year, he found no sign of Grenville's fifteen men, except the bones of one who had died earlier.

## **1588, Grenville's Roanoke fleet held in Bideford**

In the spring of 1588, Hakluyt suggests that Grenville's fleet lay ready, simply waiting on favourable conditions to put to sea, when rumours spread of the armada Spain was preparing. Consequently, "most of the ships of war then in readiness in any haven in England were stayed for service at home"<sup>208</sup>.

## **1588, Privy council call for ships to join Drake's force**

Barnstaple and Torrington were requested by the Queen's Privy Council to provide two ships and a pinnace, but the town's officials declined to do so, blaming the heavy losses sustained on previous such adventures<sup>209</sup>. As Bideford was not mentioned in the request, Snell suggests Torrington is used in error for Bideford<sup>210</sup>. A possible reason is that as, at that period, Bideford came under the port of Barnstaple for tax collection, it also did for administrative purposes<sup>211</sup>. Indeed, old maps of the area know the combined Taw/Torridge estuary as Barnstaple Water<sup>212</sup>. This was perhaps because, at this period, it appears to have been usual for Barnstaple's merchants' to berth their larger vessels at the mouth of the Taw (the Aber Taw in Celtic), in the area now known as the pool of Appledore, to avoid the navigational difficulties of working them upstream to Barnstaple (their goods presumably being brought up to Barnstaple's quay in smaller vessels, or offloaded at Instow). Thus, any official naval command issued to Barnstaple was effectively a command to Taw/Torridge estuary (i.e. Appledore, Bideford, and Barnstaple). This maritime amalgamation of Bideford as a part of Barnstaple Water could, presumably, also be responsible for Bideford's ships being later reported to have fought the Spanish Armada under the command of the Lord Admiral of Barnstaple.

## **1588, Bideford ships join Drake's force**

The Spanish Armada of August 1588 brought the local area to arms. Snell notes that Wyot's diary records that between March and August "5 ships went over the bar to join S<sup>r</sup> F. D. at plym"<sup>213</sup>.

207 John White, "John White's Attempt to Rescue the Roanoke Colonists" excerpts transcribed. National Humanities Centre. Online:nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/exploration/text6/white.pdf Accessed: 8 Oct 2016

208 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 108, citing an unreferenced passage in Hakluyt

209 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 112-3

210 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 113

211 Benjamin Don's plan of 1765 labels this area as simply "A bar harbour," suggesting that it was already known for its bar. A historical meaning of "staple" is "a town or place appointed by royal authority as the seat of a body of merchants having the exclusive right of purchase of certain classes of goods for export." ("Staple" Online:http://www.dictionary.com/browse/staple Accessed 30 Sep 2016). So one must wonder whether the town we know as Barnstaple gained its name by virtue of some ancient administrative right, that once made it the bar-staple, i.e. the staple approached via its troublesome bar.

212 Richard W. Cotton. Barnstaple and the northern part of Devonshire during the great civil war, 1642-1646. London:Unwin Brothers, 1889. Pg 298

213 "The Diary of Philip Wyot." Op. Cit. Page 94

For some years, it was argued that, in the Elizabethan period, a bridge near Westleigh precluded the use of Bideford as a port. It was therefore argued that all five of the ships must have come from Barnstaple. However, the evidence of a significant ship built at Bideford in 1565, invalidates that argument by demonstrating that the town was perfectly accessible. Furthermore, contemporary testimony suggests that the situation was quite the reverse. The difficulty of navigating the Taw meant that, at this period, Barnstaple's larger vessels moored off Appledore and Instow, presumably transshipping their goods into lighters to convey them to the docks, as happened in later periods. When Bideford later applied for independent status, Barnstaple officials were concerned that, the navigation of larger ships to Bideford being so much easier, Barnstaple's trade would be entirely ruined.

In 1953 Major Ascott bemoaned the existence of a plaque in Barnstaple that continued to propagate the message that all five ships had come from Barnstaple<sup>214</sup> and even today the internet declares that Barnstaple sent five ships to join the fleet. In a sense the ships did come from Barnstaple, at least in that they sailed from the area under the jurisdiction of the Port of Barnstaple. However, it is far more likely that they sailed from the quays of Bideford creek (which was part of the Port of Barnstaple) than from those of Barnstaple itself.

Kingsley and Cotton, in their accounts of local involvement, made no use of national records, but the later historian, Mr Pearce Chope, a former president of the Devonshire Association, working with a wider range of sources, identified that four of the five ships from the Taw and Torridge, that joined the initial force, certainly came from Bideford. Another, that sailed a little later and from Barnstaple, was owned by a Bideford merchant<sup>215</sup>.

In 2011, Powell, noting the century-long debate over which port the Armada fleet sailed from, and claiming to have fully researched the matter himself, concludes that Bideford sent the following:

- *Dudley*, c. 300 tons, owned by Sir Richard Grenville;
- *Virgin God Save Her*, c. 200 tons, owned by Sir Richard Grenville and captained by his second son, Sir John;
- *Tyger*, between 140-200 tons, owned by Sir Richard Grenville, and his flagship;
- *Golden Hind* (as *Bark Fleming*), a pinnace of c. 50 tons;
- *Bark St Ledger*, c. 50 tons, captained by John St. Ledger's son John (Sir Richard Grenville's brother-in-law)

But Barnstaple did not remain without representation, for, from that town, their eventually sailed two privateers<sup>216</sup>:

- *Bark Sellinger*, 50 tons, captained by its eponymous owner;
- *John*, c. 40 tons.

Thus, around five-sixths of the tonnage of the naval fire-power contributed from the Taw/Torridge was in the form of ships owing some allegiance to Sir Richard Grenville.

214 Ascott, pg 31

215 #####needs ref###

216 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 14

Powell notes that whilst the *Bark St Ledger* appears on a tapestry of 1739, hung in the House of Lords to commemorate the engagements of 1588, she does not appear in other records<sup>217</sup>. The involvement of the St Ledger family is of note, as Sir Richard Grenville had, in 1565, married Mary, the daughter of Sir John St Ledger, and had subsequently been active alongside that family in Ireland. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the *Bark's* captain was Grenville's brother-in-law. Clearly, Grenville and his relations were heavily invested in North Devon's contribution to the fleet.

In March 1588, when the “5 ships went over the bar to join Sr F. D. at plymo”<sup>218</sup>. It is likely that these ships, which must surely have been those initial five provided from Bideford, were drawn from the seven that Grenville had prepared for his Roanoke voyage.

Once Grenville delivered his ships to Plymouth, he played no further part in the fleet, having refused to sail with Drake ever again (because Drake had effectively hi-jacked Grenville's earlier plans for a circumnavigation of the globe). The inclusion of the diminutive *Golden Hind*, namesake of Drake's ship, may be interpreted as an intentional reminder of that slight.

## 1588, the fight against the Armada

Snell cites Stow's description of the North Devon ships present in the English Channel on May 16<sup>th</sup>. "From Quinborough toward Plimmouth, the 16 of May, under the L. Admiral of Barnstaple, *The Galeon Dudley*, *The God save her*, *The Tyger*."<sup>219</sup>. Snell suggests these were ships from Barnstaple, but at that time the port of Barnstaple comprised the entire of Barnstaple Water (Taw/Torridge estuary), hence ships from Barnstaple, Bideford Creek, and Appledore, all came under the Lord Admiral of Barnstaple, all being from the port of Barnstaple.

Snell also notes that the involvement of the *John*, a privateer manned by a crew of sixty-five, is mentioned in a state paper dated August 1588<sup>220</sup>.

## 1588, Bideford becomes a free port

Fielder recounts the much-rehearsed local belief that out of gratitude for their support against the Armada, both Bideford and Appledore were declared free ports in perpetuity<sup>221</sup> (though they would have inherited that status as creeks within the Port of Barnstaple, as neither had independent port status until the next century). Free port status was a way of facilitating trade by allowing goods to be landed, stored, handled, and possibly manufactured, then re-exported without incurring duty, provided, of course, that they stayed within the port until they left again by sea.

Free port status, does not appear to affect the ability of the foreshore owners to charge fees for mooring. Indeed, at a time when that side provided more convenient moorings, 1d. per ton was the usual keelage charged by Mr. Heard (owner of Queen's Wharf), when ½ d. was the usual at the corporation's moorings. A test case, involving the failure to pay the full 1d., upheld the quay owner's right to charge the higher rate<sup>222</sup>.

217 Powell pg 17

218 “The Diary of Philip Wyot.” Op. Cit. Page 94

219 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 110

220 F. J. Snell. North Devon. Adam and Charles Black. 1906. Pg 110

221 Duncan Fielder. A History of Bideford. Phillemore, 1985. Pg 22

222 “Keelage Dues” Bideford Gazette 04 September 1894 p5 c2

## **1588, Grenville sends his relief mission to Roanoke**

Powell cites two proofs that Grenville was in Bideford at the time White's expedition to Roanoke set sail: fragment of a note written from Bideford, just 5 days before the ships left, and the later deposition of a Spanish prisoner who stated, in the context of Roanoke, that in 1588 the commander prepared two small vessels there<sup>223</sup>. These two small vessels are thought to be the two of his intended fleet that were too small for active service against the Spanish Armada.

## **1589, the death of Raleigh, a Wynganditoian**

Grenville had brought back with him the Native American Rawley (aka Raleigh), who had been keen to make the journey and to provide information about his native land. The registers of St Mary's, Bideford, record that "Raleigh a Wynganditoian" was christened on 26 March 1588/89, then, potentially as little as a month later, the burial of "Rawly a man of Wynganditoia following of the day 2nd April 1589" Powell suggests that "the cause of his death was probably the same epidemic of Influenza that was to strike tragedy at the heart of the Grenville family when Sir Richard's 16 year old daughter Rebecca also died from it only a few weeks later."<sup>224</sup>.

## **1589, a fleet heads for with Rochelle**

Barnstaple based diarist Philip Wyot<sup>225</sup> mentions that a fleet of eight vessels crossed the bar in July of 1589, giving their intended destination as Rochelle.

## **1589, Sir Richard Grenville acquires an estate in Cork**

Together with Sir Wareham St. Leger (sir W. St. Leger in the text), Sir Richard Grenville (Sir R. Grnyfield in the text) undertook for 12,000 acres of land in Cork at 1d. per acre<sup>226</sup>. Sir Wareham and Sir Richard's wife were fairly close cousins. The move may have helped to forge links between the protestants of the Torridge area and those in southern Ireland.

## **1590, Roanoke found deserted**

On the 20 March 1590 John White set sail from Plymouth, returning from collecting supplies in England. He arrived in August to find the colony unaccountably deserted<sup>227</sup>. What happened to the colonists remains a mystery. Some evidence suggests that a portion of the colonists might have integrated, willingly or otherwise, with Native American tribes.

223 Andrew Thomas Powell, Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Troubadour, 2011. Pg 18

224 Andy Powell. "Raleigh, a Wyngantoditoian" Native Heritage Project. 2 Jul 2012. Online: <https://nativeheritageproject.com/2012/07/02/raleigh-a-wynganditoian> Accessed 11 Sep 2016

225 "The Diary of Philip Wyot." *Op. Cit.* 95

226 Edmind Hogan. The Description of Ireland: and the State Thereof as it is at This Present in Anno 1598. From a Manuscript Preserved in Clongowes-Wood Colleg. Dublin: M. H. Gill 1878 Hogan's footnote on pg 189

227 John White, "John White's Attempt to Rescue the Roanoke Colonists" excerpts transcribed. National Humanities Centre. Online: [nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/exploration/text6/white.pdf](http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/exploration/text6/white.pdf) Accessed: 8 Oct 2016

## 1590, the *Prudence* brings her prize into Barnstaple

Perhaps inspired by the prizes brought back by Grenville, Barnstaple merchant Richard Dodderidge also equipped himself for privateering. In 1590 the *Prudence*, part owned by Dodderidge, brought in the richly laden 70 ton *Spiritu Sancto* of Lisbon, as a prize. She carried £16,000 in Gold alone, besides other valuable cargo, such as 72 hundredweight of ivory and 183 hundredweight of cochineal. Other valuable prizes would follow<sup>228</sup>.

## 1591, Grenville killed in 'the greatest sea fight'

Sir Richard Grenville met his end in 1591, whilst fighting overwhelming odds at the Battle of Flores. At the time, his refusal to surrender his ship was hailed by many as a model of naval courage. Ridson, writing about 1632, called it “the greatest sea fight that ever was made by Englishmen”<sup>229</sup>, whilst Alfred Lord Tennyson immortalised Grenville’s heroics in his “The Revenge.”

On 12<sup>th</sup> October 1591 the grim news reached Barnstaple, that “her Majesty’s ship at sea S<sup>r</sup> Richard Greynfild Capitaine was taken by the Spaniards after encountring the whole Spanish Fleet for 2 daies”<sup>230</sup>.

By an indenture dated, 6 Feb 1591/2, Bernard Grenville, Sir Richard’s heir, acquired those Grenville lands that had not already transferred to him by a deed of 1586<sup>231</sup>.

## 1593, the Torridge freezes over in September

The Barnstaple-based diarist Philip Wyot reported that “later end of September the river at Bradiford was frozen over”<sup>232</sup>, Bradiford being, one of the earlier names for Bideford.

## 1595, Newfoundland fishery stopped

It appears that, each Spring, fleets would cross the bar, bound for Newfoundland and Rochelle (as Philip Wyot reports that in 1594 they were delayed by “rain and violent winds every day in March.”<sup>233</sup>). In 1595, however, Wyot reported “Newfoundland Fishery stopped by order of the High Admiral”<sup>234</sup>.

228 Alison Grant, “Breaking the Mould: North Devon Maritime Enterprise 1560-1640,” Pages 119-140 in Tudor and Stuart Devon: The Common Estate and Government 127

229 Tristram Ridson. “Bideford.” Pages 280-3 in A chorographical description or survey of the county of Devon. With additions.

230 “The Diary of Philip Wyot.” Op. Cit. 98

231 R. G. C. “Member Biographies: GRENVILLE, Bernard (1567-1636), of Stowe, Cornw.” The History of Parliament. Online: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/grenville-bernard-1567-1636> Accessed: 14 July 2017.

232 “The Diary of Philip Wyot.” Op. Cit. 99

233 “The Diary of Philip Wyot.” Op. Cit. 99

234 “The Diary of Philip Wyot.” Op. Cit. 101

## 1595/6, a third of local trade is with La Rochelle

At this point Bideford was still considered a creek of the port of Barnstaple. Duncan Taylor's analysis of the that port's books show that "Barnstaple was seen to have developed a niche trading relationship with the port of La Rochelle which accounted for over a third of its declared trade in 1595/96<sup>235</sup>.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Century

John Watkins suggests that the practice of liming the land was introduced to Devon early in the 17<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>236</sup> Limekilns mentioned prior to this may have been for the production of lime for building purposes. Once liming the land had been found to be effective, many larger local landowners established their own kilns

## 1604, plague rife in Torrington

In Nov 1604 the plague killed many people in Torrington. A few casualties were also recorded in Barnstaple<sup>237</sup>. Such news must have unsettled East-the-Water, as the main road from Bideford to Torrington ran through the community.

## 1606, a "tsunami" sweeps over the bar

Significant flooding and damage is reported in January of this year from many places alongside the Bristol Channel and the Seven Estuary. Experts are divided whether this was a storm surge or a tsunami. In 2010 Chris Frisby sought to answer that question, by the examination of Taw/Torridge land-forms and sediments. Unfortunately his findings remained equivocal<sup>238</sup>.

Whatever the caused the abnormal rise in the water, rise it did, on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1607 (20 Jan 1606, according to the old calendar, then still used in some parts)<sup>239</sup>.

In his pamphlet *God's Warning to his People Wherein is Related Most Wonderfull and Miraculous Works, by the Late Overflowing of the Waters, in the Countreys of Somerset and Gloucester, the Counties of Munmoth, Glamorgan, Carmarthen and Cardigan with Divers Other Places in South Wales*, printed in 1607, William Jones of Usk, Monmouthshire, speaks of the impact along the Severn shore, where "mighty hills of water tumbled over one another" and "so violent and swift were the outrageous waves that in less than five hours' space most parts of those countries (especially the places that lay low) were all overflown." Thousands lost their lives. Nor was this the first time such a thing had happened. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles report a similar widespread event on 28 September 1014.

235 Duncan Taylor. "The Maritime Trade of the Smaller Bristol Channel Ports in the Sixteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Bristol. 2009Pg 44

236 Watkins, History of Bideford, 4

237 "The Diary of Philip Wyot." Op. Cit. 113

238 Chris Frisby "Is there significant evidence that the January 1607 flooding event in the Bristol Channel was caused by a Tsunami?" Dissertation submitted in part for BSc Single Honours Degree in Physical Geography, University of Aberystwyth, 16 Feb 2010

239 Mike Hall. The Severn Tsunami? The Story of Britain's Greatest Natural Disaster. The History Press, 2013, chapter 2 (no page nos.)

The impact of the 1606 event was less around the Bristol Channel, but still significant. The experience of Barnstaple is particularly well documented, and the flood is likely to have had a similar impact in Bideford. Extracts from Philip Wyot's diary report that the Taw rose five or six feet higher than anyone could ever remember, completely submerging the tombstone on the quay. The damage was assessed at £1000 pounds as quays were disrupted, walls swept away, whilst lives were lost as houses collapsed<sup>240</sup>. The ravages of 1606 may well account for the discrepancy noted by Gribble, a Barnstaple historian who, writing in 1830, notes 'We look in vain for the "wharff or key, conteynynge in length fyve hundred yardes and more," alledged in 1555 to have been built' . . . 'the present quays, as will be seen, occupy but a small portion of this space.'<sup>241</sup>.

Mike Hall cites a contemporary pamphlet suggesting that, at Instow, "a ship of some three score tons, being ready to hoist sail and being well-laden, was driven by this tempest beyond all water-mark and is never likely to be brought back again." He also states that the Instow jetty was destroyed, and had to be rebuilt<sup>242</sup>. The impact on seafront cottages can only be imagined, and it is unlikely that Bideford would have been spared the surging waters.

Thomas Westcote, writing in 1632, says "in the memory of man, at a place called Appledore, (lying at the confluence of the Taw and Torridge, half a league within the bar where the ships commonly stop and lie safe on shore when the tide is out,) stood but two poor houses ; and now for fair buildings and multiplicity of inhabitants, and houses, it doth equal divers market towns, and is furnished with many good and skilful mariners." Westcote's observations c. 1632 are difficult to reconcile with Leland's evidence from 1542, that Appledore was a "good village." But, when Thomas Westcote published, "the memory of man" would have been of Appledore following the 1606 event. Was Appledore, a "good village," thus overnight reduced to "two poor houses" in 1606? Did the event so frighten the inhabitants that they subsequently deserted the place for years? Or was it, perhaps, hit by the same plague that ravished Torrington in 1604? More research is certainly called for in this case.

## **1606, founding of the Virginia Company (whose trade would flow across the wharves)**

The year 1606 saw the founding of the Virginia Company to promote the exploitation of that new American territory.<sup>243</sup>

## **1606-7, severe frosts trouble the region**

A sever frost hit the region, straddling Christmas and lasted for five weeks, "victuals brought into market was so frozen it would take no salt" and "cold meat after it was dressed and kept one night was so hard it could not be cut to be eaten."<sup>244</sup>

240 "The Diary of Philip Wyot." Op. Cit. Page 115

241 John Besly Gribble, *Memorials of Barnstaple*, Barnstaple: Avery, 1830, pg 555

242 Mike Hall. *The Severn Tsunami? The Story of Britain's Greatest Natural Disaster*. The History Press, 2013, chapter 4 (no page no.)

243 David A. Price, "Jamestown Colony," *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Online: Accessed:14 July 2017

244 "The Diary of Philip Wyot." Op. Cit. 116

## **1607, Jamestown established**

On May 14, 1607 Jamestown was established, and proved to be the first English colony in the New World to persist<sup>245</sup>.

## **1609, a new quay for Bideford**

Rogers, in his notes on Bideford<sup>246</sup>, suggests that a section of quay was “contrived, begun, and perfected” in 1609, whilst John Swans was mayor.

That Bideford felt the need to construct a new quay, so soon after the tsunami-like events of 1606, argues for the original one having been damaged in that event, the town itself having to recover somewhat before the work could be undertaken. This quay-building could equally have been provoked by anticipation of an expansion of the Virginia trade.

## **1609, a new Charter for Bideford?**

In 1609 the Borough of Bideford may have gained more than simply a new quay. The Rev. George Oliver, in his *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Devon*, challenged the prevailing wisdom of Lyson’s account to suggest that Bideford was governed by a provost until 1573, and that James I granted a new charter to the Borough on 20 Dec 1609. Thus constituting a Mayor, seven Aldermen, and 10 capital burgesses, and several other offices<sup>247</sup>.

## **1610, Speede's map and the Westleigh 'bridge'**

Speede's map of 1610 shows "Bediford," straddling the river, with "Westley" a little downstream to the east and "Were" upstream on the same side. Speede marks locations for various out-of-town river crossing points, most of which, such as the Tamar crossing marked just south of Barnstaple and a bridge over the Yeo, seem to have modern counterparts. The details recorded are not necessarily reliable, but he uses a bridge symbol to mark a crossing point on the Torridge that is some way downstream of Bideford. It looks to run from somewhere a little downstream of Westleigh to a point on the Northam shore, possible near Windmill Lane or Bidna House. Contemporary evidence suggests that by the mid 17<sup>th</sup> C. there was certainly not a bridge in this position, but could Speede's symbol reflect a much earlier location for a ford, a bydna-ford that later succumbed to the fickle changes in estuary conditions, or the gradual sinking of North Devon, forcing travellers to cross further up-stream?

Ogilby's Travellers Guide of 1699 shows no evidence of a bridge at Westleigh. There is nothing shown in the rough vicinity of Speede's crossing except a route from Northam marked "To ye Ground."<sup>248</sup>

245 David A. Price, “Jamestown Colony,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Online: Accessed:14 July 2017

246 Rogers, Notes on Bideford, Vol. 2 Pg. 96

247 George Oliver, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities in Devon*, Exeter:Featherstone, 1842. Vol III, pg 45

248 Reproduced as Fig. 10 in Fielder, *History of Bideford*, 1985, 37

## **1614, the Virginia tobacco trade takes off**

The marriage of Pocahontas with John Rolfe ushered in a period of stability in relations between the Virginia colonists and the native Americans. Rolfe used this time to re-stock his plantations with West Indian tobacco, which was more acceptable to the British palette than Virginia's native stock. Other colonists followed his lucrative lead<sup>249</sup>. Following the establishment of the Virginia colonies Tobacco from America began to pass through the port and with it came examples of Native American clay pipes, the local pipe-clay proving ideal for replicating these. A return trade in housewares began to flourish.

Following the slaughter of around a quarter of the Virginia colonists by Native Americans in 1622, and a commission in 1623, the Virginia Company was found wanting and, on May 24, 1624, the colony came under the government of the crown<sup>250</sup>.

Yet the growth of the Virginia colony was hampered by a lack of manpower. In 1619 the first slaves, captured from a Portuguese slave ship, were put to work in the colony, but possibly as indentured servants, rather than hereditary slaves<sup>251</sup>.

## **1618, the headright system encourages migrant labour**

In 1618 the Virginia Company instituted the headright system to provide the promise of land as an incentive to planters to bear the cost of transporting labourers<sup>252</sup>.

Manpower would continue to be an issue in the Virginia, so its Governor asked King James I to send over all those in prison and sentenced to die, that they might be put to work instead. The Privy Council, though slow to act, eventually established forced labour in the colonies as punishment for idleness or misdemeanours. Whilst not quite what had been asked for, this still established the principle of penal transportation, a system that would contribute significantly to the growth of Virginia, and in turn to the wealth of their trading partners in Bideford.

## **1619, earliest evidence of African labourers on Virginia's plantations**

On 20 August 1619, a diarist, John Rolfe, recorded 'There came a Dutch man-of-warre that sold us 20 negars.' These individuals, fifteen of which were destined for the tobacco plantation of colony-governor Sir George Yeardley, arrived as five year indentured servants, on the same terms granted to many European labourers. In principle these indentured servants became free after they worked off their debts, whatever their ethnic origin. Plantation Owners often loaded the system against individuals, entrapping them in further servitude through debt, but that was not always the case and some indentured servants, regardless of race, gained their freedom. Those gaining their freedom in this fashion often became tenant farmers<sup>253</sup>.

249 David A. Price, "Jamestown Colony," Encyclopædia Britannica. Online: Accessed:14 July 2017

250 David A. Price, "Jamestown Colony," Encyclopædia Britannica. Online: Accessed:14 July 2017

251 David A. Price, "Jamestown Colony," Encyclopædia Britannica. Online: Accessed:14 July 2017

252 Brendan Wolfe and Martha McCartney, "Indentured Servants in Colonial Virginia," Encyclopedia Virginia. Virginia Foundation of Humanities.

Online:[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Indentured\\_Servants\\_in\\_Colonial\\_Virginia#start\\_entry](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Indentured_Servants_in_Colonial_Virginia#start_entry) Accessed:14 July 2017

253 Paul Johnson, A History of the American People, United Kingdom:Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997. Pg 28

## 1619, Repairs to the quay adjacent to the bridge

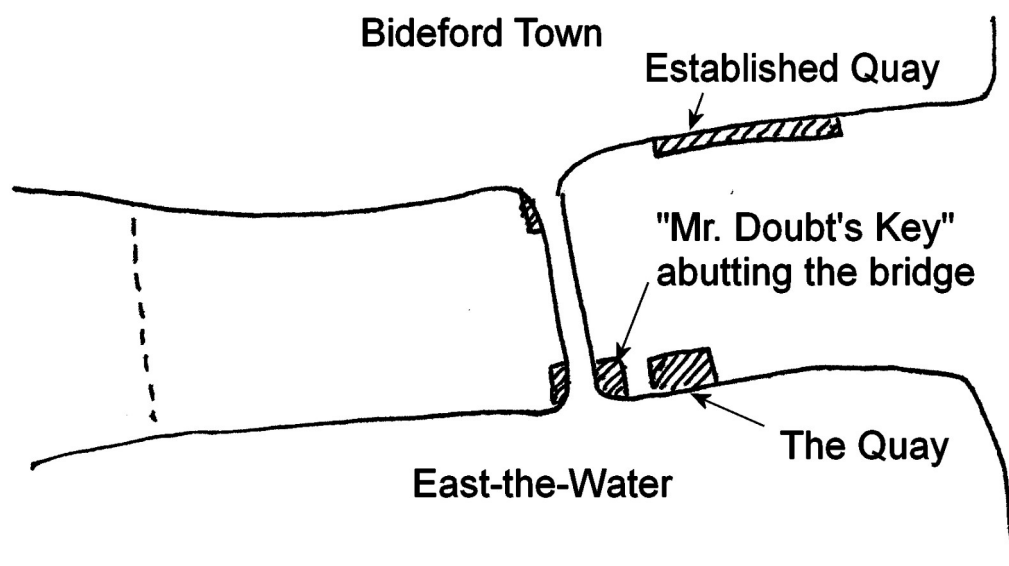
In 1619 a chancery case was brought against the receiver of the bridge rents, alleging that he had not contributed toward the development and upkeep of a quay, but “did detain (the sum) in his hands, and refuse to deliver and pay any part thereof towards the repaying, enlarging, and building of the Key at Bydeford, adjoyning to the said Long Bridge, and for the strengthening of the same, being a work very chargeable, and for the genrall good of the Town and Parish of Bydeford aforesaid, and of the whole county.”<sup>254</sup>

Rogers observed that, for some years, the Minute Book of the Quarter Sessions differentiated between an old quay and a new quay<sup>255</sup>. He conjectured that the section wanting for repair was the quay begun in 1609, and that this 'old quay' must have lain northward from the western end of the bridge, as the established quay terminated at Conduit Street. This, however, seems unlikely, as, on the plan of 1717, the only quay that might be described as adjoining the bridge was *Mr Doubt's Key*, for the western quay had yet to be extended that far south. Doubt's quay was immediately north of the eastern end of the bridge, on land that in 1745 was owned by the Bridge Trust.

The layout being like this (with north to the right)

<sup>254</sup> Goaman, *Old Bideford and District*, 1968, 47

<sup>255</sup> Rogers, *Notes on Bideford*, Vol 2 Pg 9



In a plan of Bridge trust lands from 1745 the land on which Doubt's quay lay is shown as Bridge Trust property. Thus, by 1745, the Bridge Trust had responsibility for the only quay adjacent to the bridge. It remains to be proven that it was already their land by 1619, but that might explain why it is the bridge trust, rather than the town, that is held responsible for the upkeep of the quay in question.

## 1620, West Country fishermen in Newfoundland

John Guy, a Bristol man, had tried to establish a colony in Newfoundland in 1610, his aim being to secure Cabot's claim to the territory. As a result, by 1620, West-country fishermen controlled the island's eastern coast.

## 1629, founding of Biddeford, Maine

Richard Vines, born near Biddeford, Devon, was dispatched, with others, in 1609. Their task was to explore the country of Maine and effect a settlement. The settlement took shape in 1616-17 and in 1629 Vines received a patent for the lands now occupied by Biddeford, Maine. Until the arrival, in 1635, of William Gorges, he was the principle superintendent of the plantation. Gorges, though Vines' superior, left matters of Government in his hands. Vines continued to hold a prominent post in the colony until his resignation in 1645, following trouble over a rival claim<sup>256</sup>.

## 1631, Sir Richard Grenville (1600-1658) sells his estates

In 1631, Sir Richard Grenville (1600-1658), second son of Sir Bernard Grenville, saw his finances broken by a combination of Star Chamber fines and a costly divorce settlement<sup>257</sup>.

Of that period, he stated "I was necessitated, to sell my own estate, and to empawn my goods, which by it were quite lost"<sup>258</sup>.

256 "Vines, Richard" in James Grant Wilson, John Fiske Eds. Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography, 6 vols. New York:D. Appleton, 1889. Volume 6

257 Charles Harding Firth, Grenville, Richard (1600-1658), Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 23

258 Works of George Grenville, Lord Lansdowne, 1732, i. 547

## 1633, Sir Bevill Grenville gains Barton Grange

In 1633 Sir Bevill Grenville expanded the Grenville's holdings by acquiring the 'Barton Grange or farme of Bydeford' and its lands, from one Anthonie Hill. The Barton Grange is likely to be the property also known on maps as Grange Farm and situated in East-the-Water, near modern Barton Tors. The grange itself was just behind the present site of the Royal Hotel. This transaction included fishing rights on the Torridge and in the 'Bridge Poole at Bydeford,' together with provisions for the parties and their heirs to share the profits from recently discovered coal that Hill had begun to work from that land. The presence of coal on the property suggests that it included the grange lands, as later defined, and, therefore, comprised an area that included much of modern East-the-Water<sup>259</sup>.

## 1638, thorough repair of the bridge

The Penny Cyclopædia of 1835, mentions a thorough repair of the bridge in 1638.<sup>260</sup>

## 1642-3 - Civil war, canons over the quay, the Grenvilles in disarray

With the outbreak of civil war in 1642, staunchly protestant Bideford sided with the Parliamentarians<sup>261</sup>. Thus the royalist Sir Bevill Granville (1595-1643), who still had a house in Bideford, found himself at odds with the parliamentarian town's-folk of Bideford<sup>262</sup>. His brother, Sir Richard Grenville (1600-1658), having been committed to the Fleet for non-payment of fines (which he considered unjust), escaped to Ireland and sought to restore his fortunes. The outbreak of an Irish rebellion in 1642 gave him the chance he was looking for, an opportunity to prove himself on the battle-field<sup>263</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Bideford-based Sir Bevill Grenville (1595-1643)<sup>264</sup> led royalist forces against his former neighbours in various skirmishes. He also formulated an unsuccessful plot against them, following the failure of which he withdrew to Stowe. Understandably, the town of Bideford's relationship with the Granville family must have been strained.

The Parliamentarians, under Sergeant -Major-General James Chudleigh, secured Bideford by building two forts, West-of-the-Water and East-of-the-Water (a further fort on Staddon Hill, in Appledore, was built to protect Northam)<sup>265</sup>. The East-of-the-Water fort, which oversaw both the quays and many of Grenville's properties in Bideford, was the more significant one, being equipped with eight cannons. It served as Chudleigh's command centre and now bears his name, as Chudleigh Fort<sup>266</sup>.

259 Grant of Annuity for Surrender of land at Bideford (1633), Grafton Collection, Northamptonshire Record Office ref: G 3002

260 "Bideford." Pages 387-388 in Volume 4 of The Penny Cyclopædia of The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. London: Charles Knight, 1835. Page 387.

261 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 55

262 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 5

263 Edward Hyde, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Clarendon. The History of The Rebellion and Civil Wars in England by Edward Lord Clarendon. Oxford: University Press, 1843, Pg 502. This is a later transcript from the manuscript for Hyde's 3 volume *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England: Begun in the Year 1641* of 1702-1704.

264 Various spelt Bevil, Bevill, or Beville. The latter appears on his monument, but the former seems the more widely accepted.

265 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 55

266 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 55

The 5 Jul 1643 saw a change in the Grenville's fortunes, as the war claimed the life of Sir Bevill at the Battle of Lansdown<sup>267</sup>. A huge monument now marks the field, near Bath, where he fell. The sudden death of Sir Bevill created a crisis within the Grenville family. His brother Richard was in Ireland, but his son John (1628–1701) was on the spot, as he served in his father's regiment<sup>268</sup>. It is said that Cornish soldiers, responding to events, promptly mounted John upon his father's horse and declared their allegiance to him as the new head of the Grenville family<sup>269</sup>. On 3 August 1643 John was knighted at Bristol<sup>270</sup>.

Scarcely a month after the Battle of Lansdown, the fate of Chudleigh was about to be decided by a battle near Great Torrington. Hearing of a Royalist attack on Exeter, Parliamentary forces had been marshalled from Barnstaple and Bideford to march to the relief of that town. The Royalists, however, gaining intelligence of the Parliamentary plan, dispatched a force under Colonel Digby to impede the Roundhead's progress. Digby, his force now likely to be swelled by the Cornish, determined to lay in wait for his foe in Torrington, with his six or seven hundred men and three hundred horse. Hearing word of the Roundhead's plans to attack early in the morning, he deployed his forces to best advantage north of the town, only for the Parliamentary forces to so tarry in their preparation that Digby gave up on their arrival and returned to quarters with most of his men, leaving just a hundred and fifty horse as a guard. When, shortly after this, word came that the Roundheads were within half an hour of the town, confusion ensued and Digby, leaving his foot-soldiers in the town to get organised, returned to the guarding horsemen, split them into groups, and attempted to gain the rear of their enemy. His hopes of doing so were foiled when he encountered a troop of fifty musket attempting to gain a hedge. Forced by the expedient need to prevent these men securing their objective, Digby so soundly routed them, that the remainder fled, spreading such fear among their Parliamentary comrades that they panicked and were in full retreat by the time Digby's footsoldiers arrived<sup>271</sup>.

267 Thomas Moule. *The English Counties Delineated*: Cornwall, 1836; Cornovia, 2007, 104

268 "Sir John Grenville, 1st Earl of Bath, 1628-1701" BCW Project. Online:<http://bcw-project.org/biography/sir-john-grenville> Accessed: 6 Jun 2017. n.p.

269 Goaman, *Old Bideford and District*, 1968, 53

270 "Sir John Grenville, 1st Earl of Bath, 1628-1701" BCW Project. Online:<http://bcw-project.org/biography/sir-john-grenville> Accessed: 6 Jun 2017. n.p.

271 Watkins, John. *An Essay Towards a History of Bideford in the County of Devon*. 1792. Bideford, Devon:Lazarus, 1993. Pgs 40-41; *The History of The Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* by Edward Lord Clarendon. Oxford: University Press, 1843. Pg 425

Edward, Lord Clarendon (1609-1674) in his magnum opus on the Civil War, says that, as a result of the action near Torrington, 'the swords of the Royalists were blunt with slaughter, and that they were overburdened with prisoners.'<sup>272</sup> Over two hundred were killed and as many captured, prompting despondency to spread within the local Parliamentary ranks and the subsequent surrender of the key maritime towns skirting the Taw/Torridge estuary<sup>273</sup>. Quite how long Bideford held out against Digby is uncertain. Clarendon states that Appledore surrendered first, followed, <sup>274</sup> a few days later, and after news of Prince Maurice's arrival at Exeter, by Barnstaple and Bideford<sup>275</sup>. John Watkins, suggests that such was the consternation that Bideford surrendered on the very next day, 3 Sep 1643, on condition of pardon<sup>276</sup>. Parry suggests that neither are accurate, but that the troops from Barnstaple and Bideford assembled in East-the-Water, then marched south to engage Digby on 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> of August<sup>277</sup>. He points to a disbursement made in Barnstaple at about that time for £200, "for money, corn, and powder, sent to Bytheford to encourage them to hold out the siege against Colonel Digby."<sup>278</sup> Parry also dates the surrender to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> of September. Following the surrender Chudleigh Fort received a garrison of Royalist forces<sup>279</sup>. It is possibly that, though the disbursement was made, the defenders at Bideford never made use of it.

Watkins suggests that, much to his credit, Digby kept his forces in order after the surrender and that the transition in Bideford was free from violence or plundering<sup>280</sup>.

The same month, Sir John Grenville's uncle, Sir Richard, returned from Ireland, immediately to be arrested by a Parliamentary commander. Later, cleared of unfaithfulness by the House of Commons, he was paid his arrears for service in Ireland and placed in charge of a Parliamentary regiment, only then to defect to the Royalist cause. Hence-forth known by Parliamentarians as "Skellum Grenville," he went on to become a prominent royalist leader and rallied the Cornish behind the crown.

## 1642, John Strange's portrait shows the river bank

Having escaped three earlier brushes with death, Bideford merchant John Strange (or Strang) had a reputation as a survivor. John rose to the position of town Mayor and, when his portrait was painted in c. 1642, it portrayed all three incidents in its background. In the process it captured a 17th C. view of the Long Bridge and the town beyond, though it is far from certain which bank is shown.

272 Edward Hyde, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Clarendon. *The History of The Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* by Edward Lord Clarendon. Oxford: University Press, 1843, Pg 425

273 Watkins, John. *An Essay Towards a History of Bideford in the County of Devon*. 1792. Bideford, Devon:Lazarus, 1993. Pg 41

274 Kelly's *Directory of Devonshire & Cornwall*. London: Kelly, 1893. Pg. 58

275 Edward Hyde, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Clarendon. *The History of The Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* by Edward Lord Clarendon. Oxford: University Press, 1843, Pg 425

276 Watkins, John. *An Essay Towards a History of Bideford in the County of Devon*. 1792. Bideford, Devon:Lazarus, 1993. Pgs 40-41

277 Kelly's *Directory of Devonshire & Cornwall*. London: Kelly, 1893. Pg. 58

278 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 406

279 Kelly's *Directory of Devonshire & Cornwall*. London: Kelly, 1893. Pg. 58

280 Watkins, John. *An Essay Towards a History of Bideford in the County of Devon*. 1792. Bideford, Devon:Lazarus, 1993. Pg 41

At the time of the plague John Strange is said to have dwelt at Ford House<sup>281</sup>, but the gifts to the poor stipulated in John's will, suggest he had a particular affinity with the parishes of Northam and Littleham, and also with that part of Bideford to the east of the bridge, i.e. East-the-Water. In about 1717 and also 1745 John's descendants occupied a quay on Barnstaple Street<sup>282</sup>, so the family, at least in that period, were firmly connected with the East-the-Water shore.

## **1644, French and Irish attempt to take Barnstaple**

In July 1644, five or six hundred horse and foot, a mix of French, Irish, and English, sought to put Barnstaple to the sword, having been invited by conspiratorial "neighbours," but were repulsed, the defenders having gained two days notice of the plot<sup>283</sup>.

## **1646, Bideford becomes a town in quarantine**

Large quantities of wool from Spain were imported through the port during the reign of Charles I (1625-49)<sup>284</sup>, but 1646 marked the beginning of the largest Spanish plague of the 17th C.<sup>285</sup>, the Great Plague of Seville (which was at its peak from 1646 to 1652). The bubonic plague broke out in the city of Seville, and, with quarantine non-existent or ineffective, this pestilence then spread northward, carried by coastal shipping<sup>286</sup>. In the same year, bubonic plague also hit Bideford, having arrived, it is said, with a consignment of wool from Spain. At least 299 townsfolk died, but the town was perhaps better able to contain the outbreak than Seville, not least because of the actions of John Strange. When the elected mayor fled, John, at the cost of his own life, stayed to organise the quarantining of the town and ensure an administration for its beleaguered folk<sup>287</sup>.

## **1646, Sir Richard Grenville flees to France**

Sir Richard Grenville (1600-1658), despite his efforts on the Royalist behalf, fell from favour within their ranks, and, in Jan 1646, fled to the continent. There, he endeavoured to serve Charles II, the king in exile, but once again he fell from grace, never to return to England<sup>288</sup>.

281 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 58

282 Bowering, Maps of the Several lands belonging to the Long Bridge of Bideford, 1745. North Devon Records Office Ref. 4274-1/1. Folio 7.

283 "The North Devon Journals, From 1596, to 1666" Pages 176-182 in North Devon Magazine. Barnstaple:Dec 1824 Vol 2 Pg 181

284 Whites Directory of Devon, 1850

285 "Great Plague of Seville" Online:[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Plague\\_of\\_Seville](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Plague_of_Seville) Accessed: 30 Apr 2017.

286 "Great Plague of Seville" World Heritage Encyclopedia.

Online:[http://ipod-library.net/articles/eng/Great\\_Plague\\_of\\_Seville](http://ipod-library.net/articles/eng/Great_Plague_of_Seville) Accessed:30 Apr 2017. At one point this article gives the start date as 1647, but later in the text as 1646.

287 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 58

288 "Grenville, Richard (1600-1658)" Charles Harding Firth, Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 23

## 1650, sequestration of assets tangles the Genville affairs

On the 12 March 1650 “Wm. Morice and other surviving feoffes of Bevill Grenville, complained [to the Committee For Compounding, &c.] that the manors and lands in Devon and Cornwall, conveyed to them for payment of Beville Grenville’s debts, are sequestered as belonging to Sir John Grenville, delinquent [his son], and that the tenants, who pay little rent, cut down the timber thereon.”<sup>289</sup> On 23 Jan 1651 the Committee for Compounding ruled that, as the estate was in the name of Sir Beville Grenville and his heir, it did fall within the scope of the ordinance of sequestration, and was forfeited for Sir Bevill’s delinquency. Sir Bevill had borrowed £20,000 twelve years previously, securing it by mortgages. He had since died and in his will dated 9<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> April 1639, he settled his lands on Wm. Morice, and other feoffees, in trust for the payment of his debts. They had paid £3,000, but then the land, being held by Sir Bevill and his heir, had been sequestered.

Through Aug 1650 and May 1651 a series of further presentments set out the nature of the lands involved and the debts. These may be summarised as follows:

On 22 Aug 1650 Margaret, widow of Sir Richard Cholmley, and daughter of John, Lord Paulet, of Hinton St George, wished to compound for Bideford Borough, sold in 1639 by Bevill Grenville, for £3,000, to John, Lord Paulet, and sir John Paulet, his son, on trust for Margaret and bought with her money, “the sale having the power of redemption long since past. Grenville is a delinquent exempted from composition, and the manor will not pay the debt, being only of the value of 100l. A year old rents.” “On 29 Jan 1651 Mary Modyford, of Exeter, widow, sought the benefit of her lease for 1000 years of the Barton of Northleigh, which Sir Bevill Genville, deceased, demised to her 12 Nov. 1641 for 1,000l. Neither principal nor interest has been paid. Being informed that he had conveyed diverse manors to trustees for payment of debts, she commenced her suit in Chancery against them, but they excused themselves because his estate was sequestered for delinquency.” On 8 May 1651, John Waldron and George Prestwood, acting for John Fownes, infant, sought allowance of a conveyance, in 1640, of “Kilhampton Manor, and Stow barton, Cornwall, to John Fownes, for a debt of 2,000l. Lent him in his great necessity, with proviso of redemption on payment of the 3,000l. and 240l. yearly interest. Fownes died in 1644, having served Parliament as a foot captain, and had received nothing but 1 year’s interest and nothing had been paid since. Sir Beville conveyed Bideford Manor and other lands to Wm. Morice and others, for the payment of debts to Fownes and others; they obtained discharge from sequestration, but now this conveyance is said not to be valid, so that the petitioners have no relief but by addressing the Committee for Compounding.” On the 2 Apr 1652 the case was dismissed “Sir B. Grenville’s estate being discharged from sequestration on Scilly Articles, and being come to [Sir] John Grenville, his son.”<sup>290</sup>

289 Mary A. E. Green Ed. Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee For Compounding, &c., 1643-1660, Cases, 1647-June 1650. London: HMSO, 1891. Pg 2214

290 Mary A. E. Green Ed. Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee For Compounding, &c., 1643-1660, Cases, 1647-June 1650. London: HMSO, 1891. Page 2214-5

## **1651, the end of the English civil war**

### **1651, the first Navigation Act passed into law**

This act, and subsequent ones to renew and improve the acts powers, prohibited British colonies from trading directly with anywhere other than Britain, and using any ships other than those controlled by British mariners. The colonists, now forced to deal with other markets via British ports, provided a boost to trade, whilst the English merchant fleet gained a significant competitive advantage over the fleets of its colonial counterparts<sup>291</sup>. It seems likely that, for continental merchants dealing in British colonial goods, the use of free ports now became a particularly attractive option.

### **1652, the Granville family mortgage Bydeford**

A transaction from 1652 suggests that John Granville mortgaged the Borough, Barton, and Manor of Bideford with Dame Margaret Cholmeley<sup>292</sup>.

### **1660, John Grenville and the restoration of the monarchy**

In 1660, Sir John Grenville played a significant role in the restoration of the Monarchy (his mother's half-sister being the mother of the prominent parliamentarian General George Monk). He then took the family's power to a second zenith under Charles II, earning the title Earl of Bath, before another fall from grace left the family embroiled in legal wrangles and debt.

### **1661, Grenville becomes Granville**

Following the granting of the titles Baron Granville and Earl of Bath the family changed their name from Grenville to Granville<sup>293</sup>.

### **c. 1661-1670?, A Quaker preacher passes through**

The 1650s and 1660s saw the rise of the Society of Friends. It was in this period that the English Quaker preacher Barbara Blaugdone recounts travelling to “Molton, and Bastable, and Bediford,” being put in prison in each. During her visit to Bideford she called upon the Earl of Bath, where she had formerly “spent much time in vanity.” Asking for the lady, she was directed to the garden where she was greeted by an unfriendly wolf hound, but ‘the power of the Lord smote the dog lame,’ and, after being entertained outdoors, she continued to Great Torrington<sup>294</sup>. This section of her travels seems to have taken place no earlier than 1661 and probably at some point in the 1660s.

291 “Navigation Acts” Online <https://www.landofthebrave.info/navigation-acts.htm> Accessed 15 May 2017

292 David Carter, “Assignment Burrough, Barton, Manor at Bideford (1652)” Transcription of Northamptonshire Record Office. Grafton Collection. Ref: G 2892. Online: <http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/Bideford/GrenvilleDocuments/Assignment1652.html> Accessed:30 Apr 2017

293 J. Horace Round, Family Origins and Other Studies, ed. Page, William, 1930, p.164, The Granvilles and the Monks, p.130

294 An Account Of the Travels Sufferings & Persecutions OF Barbara Blaugdone. Given forth as a Testimony to the Lord's Power, and for the Encouragement of Friends. Printed, and Sold by T. S. at the Crooked-Billet in Holywell-Lane, Shoreditch, 1691. Early English Books Online. Text Creation Partnership. Online: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/> Accessed 23 Jan 2021

## c. 1662, closure of Ross impeding Irish wool imports

On 26 Feb, 12 William III, the Merchants and Traders of Bideford and adjacent places petitioned Parliament, bemoaning that “the shutting up the Port of *Rosse* in *Ireland*, from exporting Wool for England, has been of ill Consequence to the Wool-Trade” and seeking that it be opened again to the wool trade<sup>295</sup>.

## 1663, building of a new quay

The *Magna Britannica* (published in 1822) reported that “the Quay, which was constructed in 1663, belongs to the corporation,” thus providing a date that has found its way into other later publications (e.g. White’s Directory for 1850). More properly, it seems that 1663 was the year in which the building of a new quay was ordered, the finance to come from gifts, but supplemented by a fine on the bridge and town lands<sup>296</sup>. This new quay appears to be an extension to the *Established Quay*. At what point the building got under way, and when the new quay was first used remains uncertain.

Borough documents of 1671 mention two quays *The Kaye* (easily assumed to be the *Established Quay*) and *Strand Kaye* (which might easily be assumed to be a quay on that part of Potters Pill where boats were stranded at low tide, an area still known as *The Strand*). Yet alternative possibilities cannot be ruled out, *The Kaye* may referred to *The Key* on the west whilst *Strand Kaye* could refer to the *Established Key* (there is evidence from 1717 that one benefit of the later southward extension of the *Established Quay* was the access to deeper water that it provided, so boats moored at the older part of the *Established Quay* may well have been stranded at low tide). It is also quite possible that the Borough were only concerned with the quay's that lay under their control, and which were, at that time, on the western side of the river.

## 1672, potters active on Barnstaple Street and Torrington Lane

As the colonies expanded, Bideford’s potteries found a ready market for their pots. In the 17<sup>th</sup> C. this pottery was produced rapidly and in large volumes, so as to keep the cost down<sup>297</sup>. In particularly great demand were vessels used to ship butter, it having been salted to preserve it.

Most of the early potteries were west of the water, on the southern side of Potter's Pill, but in 1672 two of Bideford’s seven master potters were based in East-the-Water<sup>298</sup>. By 1681, the Bideford potteries peak year, there were 337,000 parcels of pottery shipped from the town, with perhaps another 60,000 or so used locally<sup>299</sup>.

295 “Lunae, 26 die Februarii; 12 Guielmi Tetii.” Journals of the House of Commons, Volume 13. Pg 227 c2

296 Goaman, *Old Bideford and District*, 1968, 47

297 Grant, *North Devon Pottery*, 2005, 22

298 Grant, *North Devon Pottery*, 2005, 21

299 Grant, *North Devon Pottery*, 2005, 21

One of East-the-Water's potteries, flanked by buildings and running to the shore, stood on Barnstaple Street, near the later site of the Ship-on-Launch Inn, and was probably operated by the potter Hugh Yeo (1611-)<sup>300</sup>. In 1671 Yeo employed his two sons and another hand. At a later date he was presented at quarter sessions for having 'inmates,' lodgers from outside the town who could become chargeable to the parish. These were possibly jobbing potters<sup>301</sup>. Yeo appears to have lived in East-the-Water, as well as basing his business there, as Thomas Beale (probably the potter T Beale III) paid taxes on a house in East-the-Water, occupied by Hugh Yeo, potter<sup>302</sup>.

In 1672 a 1½d rate was paid to Sarah Wadland on a property described as "Wilbraham's house, Courtilage and potters' kill," which lay at the opposite end of East-the-Water to Yeo's establishment<sup>303</sup>. It is not clear who operated this pottery at the time.

The North Devon Archaeological Society had a watching brief on a development at the Jamestan Engineering works site on Kynochs Industrial Estate, at Nuttaberry, East-the-Water. They reported "Much of the site appeared to have been re-contoured and none of the finds had stratified contexts. Previously, fragments of eighteenth century sgraffito ware had been found on site and further fragments were recovered in this evaluation. Also found were shards of post-medieval North Devon gravel-tempered ware and non-tempered ware. Fragments of saggers and wasters were also found, suggesting that some of the waste deposited on site had come from a kiln dump. The site lies some 750 metres S of known pottery kilns in Torrington Lane, East-the-Water."<sup>304</sup>

## **1673, public rubbish collections initiated**

Eight empty tobacco hogsheads found a different purpose, for in 1673 Bideford began to use them for public rubbish collection, two of them being sited in 'East the bridge.'

## **1674, Bideford has stolen Barnstaple's trade away**

On visiting Barnstaple in 1674, James Yonge noted that "lying on a fyne River of late somewhat choaked. Its one of the pleasant's towns I ever saw being round on a plaine fayr, streight broad streets and many good houses of old fashion. It was lately a place of very great Trade and hath now many men In It, but Bideford hath stoln It all away since the river hath grown shallow, yt great ships cannot well come up."<sup>305</sup>.

## **1675, cod boats rival those from London and Topsham**

Sir John Berry's census of 1675<sup>306</sup> lists 25 Bideford boats fishing for Cod off Newfoundland. The largest number of boats came from Dartmouth (42), with sizable numbers from other west country ports such as e.g. Topsham (19), Tynmouth (8), Jersey (4), Bristol (9), Brixham (2), Barnstaple (5) and Plymouth (23). Twenty-one came from London and a number from Dorset ports such as Weymouth and Poole.

300 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 44

301 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 44

302 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 41

303 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 44

304 Reports Covering Torridge District Council 2014. North Devon Archaeological Society.<http://ndas.org.uk/page25.html> Accessed 13 Apr 2016

305 Cited by Michael Nix, A Maritime History of the Ports of Bideford and Barnstaple 1786-1941. Thesis, University of Leicester. 1991. Pg 3

306 Lorraine Allen transcriber, revised Don Tate 2003. "1675 Census Of Newfoundland" Online: <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Articles/1675-census-art.shtml> Accessed 19 Nov 2020

In 1678 there were some 25 Bideford vessels.

## **1676, Davie shipping pottery to Antigua**

In 1676, John Davie, then still building the fortune that would later build Colonial House, shipped pottery to Antigua. He may have had shares or owned the Antego [sic] Merchant which operated to which operated to the island<sup>307</sup>.

## **1678, port boundaries defined**

By commission returned into the Court of Exchequer, in Easter Term, 29 Charles [II] (i.e. 1678) the respective boundaries of the ports of Bideford and Barnstaple were defined, with Appledore considered part of the port of Barnstaple<sup>308</sup>. The residents of Appledore complained about the inconvenience of their village being part of the port of Barnstaple.

## **1682, coal and culm imported**

Despite the local resources, the port books of 1682 report 4,085 tons coal and 4,002 of culm (anthracite) into Bideford<sup>309</sup>.

## **1686, Earl of Bath's enquiry into dragoons behaviour**

Parry notes that, whilst the Royalists were well-behaved in the immediate aftermath of Bideford's Civil War surrender, their behaviour later deteriorated. The conduct of the dragoons sent to Bideford being so "disorderly and monstrous" that in January 1686 the Earl of Bath was commissioned to enquire into it.<sup>310</sup>

307 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 165

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

309 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 10

310 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 407

## 1688, John Davie, tobacco merchant, and Colonial House

The tobacco trade was also flourishing, and, at times during the 17th C, Bideford's tobacco imports were nationally significant (with only really large ports such as London, Bristol, and Liverpool exceeding Bideford's trade)<sup>311</sup>. In 1676 *Bideford Merchant* landed 135,000 lbs (61,200 Kg) of tobacco for just three merchants, Abraham Heiman, Anthony Hopkins and John Davie. In the period 1722-31 nearly four million kilos of tobacco were landed, with a substantial part of this then being re-exported, chiefly to Amsterdam's warehouses. With all this trade came wealth and, by 1688, the tobacco merchant John Davie had acquired sufficient to build himself a mansion. This was Colonial House, in East-the-Water, parts of which may survive in the fabric of the Royal Hotel. As hogsheads (i.e. barrels) of tobacco arrived, most were stored in warehouses known as Colonial Buildings<sup>312</sup>. These were presumably near Colonial House, if not Colonial House itself, as in Pigot's Directory of 1930 the home of Mary Wilcock is given as Colonial Buildings<sup>313</sup>.

After John Davie's death, in 1710, his monument at Buckland Brewer claimed "By his example thus he benefited his fellow Bidefordians, to the extent that it almost seemed commerce of that place seemed both to have flourished and to have fallen with him."<sup>314</sup>. Others involved in the tobacco trade were John Buck and John Strange. A plan of c1717<sup>315</sup> suggests that the Strange family also had a quay on the East-the-Water shore.

It has been suggested that John Davie had accompanied Sir Richard Grenville to Virginia and had acquired land there<sup>316</sup>. In practice, however, Sir Richard Grenville's voyages to Virginia in the 1580s significantly preceded John Davie's birth in 1640. One John Davy has been identified in Virginia in "1648, &c."<sup>317</sup>, but this is too early to have been the John Davie who built Colonial House. Nor, at the time of writing (Dec 2020), has it proved possible to find any evidence that Davie held property in Virginia.

311 John Watkins suggests that, at times, only London's trade exceeded that of Bideford, but Peter Christie has called attention to an article by Prof. W. G. Hoskins in the Bideford Gazette of December 1935, which appears to refute this position. In it Hoskins concludes that "Great though the tobacco trade of Taw and Torridge was [exceeding all other Devon ports by 1720, and amounting to 8.5 million pounds in the years 1722-31], however, it was far less than that of London, which imported twenty to thirty million pounds annually, while both Bristol and Liverpool exceeded Bideford also."

312 Inkerman Rogers. *A Record of Wooden Sailing Ships and Warships Built in the Port of Bideford from the Year 1568 to 1938: With a Brief Account of the Shipbuilding Industry in the Town*. Newfoundland and Labrador: Gazette Printing Service, 1947. Pg 11

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

314 The latin on the monument is barely legible. The text has been placed online by Buckland Brewer History Group - "St. Mary and St. Benedict Graveyard Memorial Inscriptions" Online:  
<https://bucklandbrewerhistorygroup.wordpress.com/data/buried-in-buckland/st-mary-and-st-benedict-graveyard-memorial-inscriptions/> Accessed 30 April 2017. This translation is from "John Davie" Wikipedia. Online:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Davie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Davie) Accessed:30 Apr 2017

315 See section discussing approval of the extension to the established quay, under 1717

316 E.g. see Pauline Smith. "The Tobacco Trade." Bideford 500.

Online:<http://www.bidefordheritage.co.uk/tobacco.html> Accessed 10 Dec 2020

317 W. G. Stanard. *Some Emigrants to Virginia*. Richmond, Virginia, c. 1911. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Richmond, 1925, Reprinted Baltimore Maryland: Ckearfield, 2003. Pg 29

## **1692, work commenced on extending the town quay**

In December of 1692 the Feoffees of the Long Bridge appointed several of their number "to contract for the building of a Key for Ships to lay at the East end of the New Street"<sup>318</sup>. They appointed the builder Nathaniel Gascoyne to undertake the work. This was to the next phase in development of the town quay.

## **1693, a seal provides a snapshot of the bridge.**

A seal, dated at 1693, shows the bridge, with a chapel at either end, and a cross in the centre.

## **1694, Bidefords merchants losses in St Johns, Newfoundland**

Several merchants petitioned for £25,000 restitution for losses when St Johns was sacked by the French<sup>319</sup>.

## **1697, the wool trade with Ireland booms**

About this period Bideford seems to have seen a surge in Irish wool imports. Becoming the major English port for that trade, in 1697 Bideford shipped in 108,718 stone, compared to the next highest totals, 56,923 through Liverpool and 21,023 through Minehead (whilst Barnstaple handled 4,121). The following year the figures were even higher, 126,267 stone at Bideford, 48,156 at Liverpool, 85,777 at Minehead, and 18,469 at Barnstaple. The trade seems to have declined again with Queen Anne's war, with only 69,824 stone imported in 1702<sup>320</sup>.

## **c. 1698, Garden laid out opposite Torridge House**

It is suggested that the *parterre* over the way from the house was laid out, about the time William of Orange took the throne, by a gardener who came over from Holland<sup>321</sup>.

## **1699, East-the-Water goes missing from a map**

Ogilby's Traveller's Guide of 1699 shows *Bediford* with nothing on it's East-the-Water shore<sup>322</sup>. This is somewhat inexplicable, and probably just a case of artistic-licence, as John Davie's Colonial Buildings, at least, were already there, and barely seventeen years later a plan shows a shoreline well populated with houses..

318 Duncan, "Long Bridge," 1902, 225

319 Nix, Maritime History of the Ports of Bideford and Barnstaple 1786-1841, 1991, pg 81

320 British Museum, Sloane MSS 2902.293; Manuscripts of the House of Lords, New Series. Vol. 5., p. 334., cited in C. Armour's Thesis. The Trade of Chester and the State of the Dee Navigation 1600 – 1800. University of London. 1956. Pg. 274

321 "The Late Admiral Glynn's House" North Devon Journal 15 April 1858 p5 c5

322 Reproduced as Fig. 10 in Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 37

## 1699, the South West's largest Newfoundland fishing fleet

In 1699 Bideford, it is claimed, had so much of the Newfoundland fishing trade that only two English ports surpassed it, those ports were London and Topsham<sup>323</sup>, Bideford having 28 sac ships, supported by 146 smaller boats<sup>324</sup>.

Peter Christie records that 'bye' boats did the Newfoundland fishing, whilst 'sac' boats carried the fish they caught<sup>325</sup>.

It is important to be clear that Bideford's dominance of the Newfoundland trade was restricted to certain commodities, fish being one of them. For example, in 1699, London exported "10 Bushels and 2,116 *lb*.Cwt" of flour to Newfoundland, whilst Bideford exported none<sup>326</sup>.

Although Bideford had a larger fleet than in earlier years a change was becoming apparent. Bideford's part in the Newfoundland fishing trade had reached its zenith and was now set to decline.

## 1699, the third port in the kingdom?

In the 1930's a local guide to Bideford, in its description of Bideford, proudly headlined "Third Port in the Kingdom," going on to state "At the close of the seventeenth centenary Bideford ranked as the third or fourth port in the kingdom,"<sup>327</sup>. But it could do with some considered validation, as no comparative evidence was provided to substantiate the claim, and it could easily have arisen through over-zealous abbreviation removing a caveat.

Whilst Bideford was certainly a prosperous port at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> C., and evidence suggests that Bideford could claim a podium place for specific types of commerce, London was in a much grander league altogether, and both Liverpool and Bristol, almost certainly handled larger volumes of trade. Daniel Defoe visited Liverpool in 1680, 1690, and the early 1700s, each time seeing spectacular growth<sup>328</sup>. "*Liverpoole*" he suggested, "is one of the Wonders of *Britain*, because of its prodigious Increase of Trade and Buildings, within the Compass of a very few Years ; rivaling *Bristol* in Trade to *Virginia*, and the *English Colonies in America* They trade also round the whole Island, send Ships to *Norway*, to *Hamburg*, and to the *Baltic*, as also to *Holland* and *Flanders* ; so that they are almost become, like the *Londoners*, universal Merchants."<sup>329</sup> He also noted how the bulk of westward maritime trade seemed to be evenly divided between Liverpool and Bristol, thus inferring that Bideford's trade was significantly less than that of either. Whilst Liverpool was clearly growing, it still had barely more than 100 vessels visit the port in 1700<sup>330</sup>. Bideford's Newfoundland fleet's sac boats alone would equal a quarter of that, without taking into account the diversity of Bideford's other trade.

323 "Bideford," Whites Directory of Devon, 1850

324 Peter Christie. *Secret Bideford*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley, 2015. Pg 62

325 Peter Christie. *Secret Bideford*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley, 2015. Pg 62

326 "The aforesaid ACCOUNT of all Corn and Grain , exported from the Port of London." Journals of the House of Commons, Volume 13. Pg 234. A. 1699.

327 M. F. Lee, Ed. *Kingsley's Country; Official Guide to Bideford, Westward Ho! And District*. Bideford:Bideford, Northam and District Joint Advertising Committee, no date (c. 1936), page 23. Text states copyright of this publication was retained by Bideford Gazette Ltd, of Bideford.

328 Daniel Defoe. "Letter 10: Lancashire, Westmorland and Cumberland" *A Vision of Britain Through time*. Online: <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/travellers/Defoe/34> Accessed 4 Sep 2018

329 Daniel Defoe. *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain: Divided Into Circuits Or Journeys*. Volume 3 of 4. London: S. Birt, T. Osborne, D. Browne, J. Hodges, J. Osborn, A. Millar, and J. Robinson., 1748 (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Pages 235-6.

330 Colum Giles & Bob Hawkins. *Storehouses of Empire: Liverpool's historic warehouses*. Swindon: Historic England, 2015 (eBook), page 5

London, Liverpool, and Bristol, were the big three, but there were also rising stars, such as Falmouth, which was growing rapidly on the back of trade with India, the West Indies and America, and by 1700 had, on the back of its maritime trade, built a population approaching 1,500 people and some 350 houses<sup>331</sup>

Topsham (on the Exe in South Devon) was also a major player in the 17<sup>th</sup> C., when the towns wealthy merchants were building Dutch-gabled mansions in the town<sup>332</sup>. But in 1699 the improved Exeter to Topsham navigation was completed, effectively diverting a considerable portion of Topsham's trade into Exeter<sup>333</sup>.

Not all of Bideford's potential competitors were doing so well. Glasgow's growth at this time was hampered by the Navigation Acts<sup>334</sup>; Chester's commerce had shrunk in the face of competition from Liverpool, and their trade was mainly dependent on the export of lead<sup>335</sup>; by the 17<sup>th</sup> C. Southampton had declined and was languishing as a port, with a mostly coastal trade<sup>336</sup>.

Whitehaven, Yarmouth, Sunderland, Newcastle, Hull, and Baumaris, would all go on to significantly out-perform Bideford as ports, but their status at the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> C. has still to be investigated. So, at present, it looks possible that Bideford might have achieved third port status, but that it had some strong competition for that spot, and, if it ever did so, it could only have been for a very brief period.

## 18<sup>th</sup> Century

### 1700, transportation profits and indentured servants

Bideford was not one of those ports renown for its involvement in the slave trade (though individual merchants may have invested in the trade abroad, or through other English ports). Between them Liverpool, London and Bristol accounted for 90% of the British slave trade, with Plymouth, Exeter, Bridport, Chester, and Poulton, each contributing to the remaining 10%<sup>337</sup>. Yet the outward cargo to the plantations of Virginia and Maryland was often, at least in part, a human one. The legal basis for the transport of convicts had been established in 1615 and Bideford merchants clearly saw the potential to make handsome profits from it.

331 Ian Mortimer. *The Time Traveller's Guide to Restoration Britain: Life in the Age of Samuel Pepys, Isaac Newton and The Great Fire of London*. Random House, 2017. No page numbers.

332 Topsham - a short history. Exeter Memories, 3 Jul 2013. Online: <http://www.exetermemories.co.uk/em/topsham.php> Accessed 5 Sep 2018

333 George Oliver. *The History of Exeter*. Exeter: R. Cullum, 1821. Page 105

334 James McGrath. *The Rising Burgh: 1560 to 1770s. The Glasgow Story*. Online: <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/story/?id=TGSBD> Accessed: 29 Jan 2018.

335 'Early modern Chester 1550-1762: Economy and society, 1662-1762', in *A History of the County of Chester: Volume 5 Part 1, the City of Chester: General History and Topography*, ed. C P Lewis and A T Thacker (London, 2003), pp. 137-145. British History Online. Online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/ches/vol5/pt1/pp137-145> Accessed 29 January 2018.

336 Lambert, Tim. "A Brief History of Southampton". Online: <http://www.localhistories.org/southampton.html> Accessed 18 November 2010.

337 Anthony Tibbles. *Ports of the Transatlantic slave trade*. Conference paper given at the TextPorts conference, Liverpool Hope University College, April 2000. International Slavery Museum. Online: [http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/slave\\_trade\\_ports.aspx](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/slave_trade_ports.aspx) Accessed: 29 Jan 2018

In 1700 John Smith of Bideford had petitioned the king for £5,000 owed to him for assisting his majesty by using his vessels for transportation and engaging others to do likewise<sup>338</sup>. Such convict ships could return with a cargo of tobacco and Bideford tobacco merchant John Buck, a plantation owner himself, was involved in transporting convicts for almost twenty years.

Merchants such as Smith not only transported convicts, but also indentured servants, poor folk who sought to buy into the hope of a new life across the Atlantic. By binding themselves to serve a merchant for a set period, in return for their passage, they could afford the fare. An indenture was drawn up to prove the merchants claim, which, together with the promised service, could then be sold on to a plantation owner.

Indentures for servitude have sometimes survived, for example, in the case of Dorothy Manley of Newton Bushnell, Devon. Manley was nineteen, and still apparently unmarried, when, on 16 September, 1700, she bound herself to serve John Smith of Biddeford, Devon, for four years in Maryland or Virginia<sup>339</sup>.

Whilst Indentured servitude could be open to terrible abuse, in the hands of a reasonably humane plantation owner (and there were some out there), it could prove the means to a new and prosperous life.

## **1701, report of a fine harbour on the east**

In 1701 John Prince (1643-1723) published his *Worthies of Devon*, in which he states, concerning the *Long Bridge* - "On the east side of this bridge is a very fine harbor for ships of good burthen; where they lie and unload in the very bosom of the town, at a stately key, well paved and of a great length." John Watkins thinks Prince had erroneously confused west for east, but, at the time of publication the town quay had only recently been extended to the bridge and, moreover, the better quay for larger ships would historically have been on the east, where the deeper water lay. Thus the possibility exists that Prince composited his description from multiple sources, with one describing the original eastern location of the quay used by larger vessels, and one the size and condition of the newly constructed western quay.

## **1701, concern that the use of Rock-salt might be prohibited**

Philip Doubt, John Adams, and Robert Wren, all inhabitants of Bideford, petitioned Parliament urging that they be allowed to continue using Rock-salt, it being suitable for preserving flesh and fish and much cheaper, and previous Acts having encouraged them to invest heavily "in erecting Houses and providing Utensils, to refine Salt from Rock"<sup>340</sup>

## **1702–1713, Queen Anne's War and the Golden Bay**

Queen Anne's War, as it is known here, was the second in a series of wars fought between Great Britain and France in North America for control of the continent. For the French, the use of privateers to disrupt British trade, especially with their American colonies, was of significant strategic importance.

338 Nix, *Maritime History of the Ports of Bideford and Barnstaple 1786-1841*, 1991, pg 89

339 Robert W. Barnes. *Colonial Families of Maryland; Bound and Determined to Succeed*, Baltimore, Maryland: Clearfield, 2007. pg 162

340 Journals of the House of Commons, Volume 13. Veneris, 6 die Junii; 13 Willielmi; Anno 1701. Pg 599 c1-2

In the SW the activities of privateers around ports were keenly observed and would sometimes prompt changes to even the most regular of sailings. In the earlier part of this century, the Post-office even allowed their Packet Service's contractors to sail from Bideford as an alternative to Falmouth, "once or twice (under a strong representation of the danger of Privateers watching a known point of departure)"<sup>341</sup>.

In 1755, with the benefit of hind-sight, the Gentleman's Magazine published an account of Bideford in which it commented on the fortunes of Bideford's merchant fleet at this period: "If to this natural fortification [on Lundy] a small fort had been added, the petty French privateers who lurked there in Queen Anne's war, to our great loss, might have been driven away. They took so many of our vessels, for which they lay in wait in this place, that they called it Golden Bay"<sup>342</sup>.

An earlier statement in the same article, that "the merchants of Bideford lost almost all their vessels in the late French war"<sup>343</sup> would seem to apply to this period, as the article also mentions a relative lack of losses in "the last war," presumably the war of Austrian Succession, when better security arrangements were in place. This would seem to be confirmed by John Watkins, when, citing the Magna Britannica's similar comments, published in 1720, he inserts a clarification "the merchants here were great losers by the late wars, [*those in the reign of Queen Anne*] yet they still keep up a thriving trade"<sup>344</sup> (comment in italics is mine).

## 1703, the Great Storm

In mid November the wind started rising and continued to do so until, "on the 26th, business was totally suspended, and few persons had courage to leave their dwellings"<sup>345</sup>. The following year Daniel Defoe published an account of the storm, in which he called it "the tempest that destroyed woods and forests all over England."<sup>346</sup> Riding through Kent, Defoe gave up counting when he reached his 17,000<sup>th</sup> felled tree, though he supposed that in counties, such as Devon, with large and fine orchards the devastation would have been still greater.

During the storm Defoe, in London, watched fearfully as tiles were hurled thirty or forty feet, then embedded eight inches into the ground. Coastal towns such as Portsmouth, he suggested, "looked as if the enemy had sackt them and were most miserably torn to pieces." In London, "about 500 buildings were lain in ruins, and few of those that resisted escaped from being unroofed, a fact that receives additional confirmation from the circumstance that house tiles, which had recently been selling at 21s per thousand, rose to 61"<sup>347</sup>.

341 Arthur H. Norway. History of the Post Office Packet Service Between the Years 1793-1815. London: Macmillan, 1895. Pg 16

342 The Gentleman's Magazine. 1755, pp. 445-448, cited in "Bideford." The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. Part 3. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, p136

343 1The Gentleman's Magazine. 1755, pp. 445-448, cited in "Bideford." The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. Part 3. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, p134

344 John Watkins. Essay Towards the History of Bideford, 1792, 1993 Ed. pg 66

345 "Anniversary of the Great Storm" Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser 05 December 1838 p6 c3

346 Defoe, Storm, 1704, n.p.

347 Defoe, Storm, 1704, n.p.

The protracted gales that preceded the storm had crammed English ports with ships, the storm then broke these loose and threw them one against another. On the Thames “only four vessels remained moored between London bridge and Limehouse, the rest being driven below, and mostly destroyed by beating against each other”<sup>348</sup>. In the pool of London, Defoe saw some 700 vessels heaped into piles and he estimated that the storm cost some 8,000 lives, through losses at sea and from flood<sup>349</sup>. Later authors have sometimes suggested that 8,000 seamen might have perished in that single night, but Defoe's original estimate included losses through flooding of adjacent coastland.

The same night the entire of the Navy's channel fleet were destroyed, leaving the maritime defence of England crippled, presumably opening the way for foreign privateers to harry English merchantmen.<sup>350</sup>

The West Country seems to have fared no less severely, for a convoy of 130 merchant ships that sheltered in the excellent harbour of Milford Haven lost thirty of their vessels outright and three went missing. Defoe reported that afterwards “almost all the shipping in England was more or less out of repair”<sup>351</sup>. So perhaps it was somewhat more than simply French privateers that led to the rapid decline in Bideford's trading fleet during Queen Anne's war. From the devastation on the Thames shores one may imagine what Bideford might have looked like on the morning of the 27th.

Defoe's correspondents reported that the storm drove a tidal surge up the Bristol Channel, rising tides in the Severn by up to eight feet (2.4 m) higher than in living memory<sup>352</sup>.

Defoe gives no specific report for Bideford, but in Barnstaple harbour he says “a merchant ship outward bound was over-set, and the Express advice boat very much shattered, and the key of the town very much shattered.” He then goes on to reflect that “no place was free either by land or sea, everything that was capable felt the fury of the storm”<sup>353</sup>.

## 1712-1718, eastern toll-house on the bridge

From 1712, 1717 and 1718 there are bridge records inferring that tolls were collected at this time. It has been suggested that the collection might have been “leased out to the Bridge Wardens, or keeper of the toll house and chapel standing at the east end”<sup>354</sup>.

## 1713, an early lease involves the merchant John Marks

A lease, dated 20 July 1713 12 Anne, was drawn up between 1) Samuel Phillips of Mear, Poughill, Cornwall, gent., and Abraham Barnfield of Mambery, East Putford, gent. and 2) John Marks of Bideford, merchant, for 99 years or the lives of his sons William, John, and Thomas Marks. It involved of a fifth of a third of several properties and identified adjoining properties<sup>355</sup>.

### *A messuage, dwelling house, curtilage and garden*

	Bridge lands on the N	
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348 “Anniversary of the Great Storm” Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser 05 December 1838 p6 c3

349 Defoe, Storm, 1704, n.p.

350 Defoe, Storm, 1704, n.p.

351 Defoe, Storm, 1704, n.p.

352 Defoe, Storm, 1704, n.p.

353 Defoe, Storm, 1704, n.p.

354 “Bideford Long Bridge” Bideford Weekly Gazette 5 August 1902 p7 c3

355 Devon Archives and Local Studies Service (South West Heritage Trust) Ref. Z16/1/10/4

Street leading to Barnstaple Lane on W	In possession of William Rock	Lands of the late Earl of Bath on E
	Lands of Henry Bellew, gent. on S,	

***Dwelling houses with appurtenances***

	Bridge lands on the N	
The "Turridge" on the W	in the possession of Robert Hill, John Smale and Henry Perin	Street leading to Barnstaple Lane on E
	Lands of Henry Bellew on S,	

***Dwelling houses and curtilages with the appurtenances known as the Stare Houses***

	Lands of Henry Bellew on N	
The "Turridge" on the W	Possession of John Marks	Land of Evan Peeke, deceased on E
	Land of Evan Peeke, deceased on S	

A 17<sup>th</sup> C. poem described the storage of liquors in "Vaults, Stare-houses, Cellars and Arches"<sup>356</sup>, so some sort of store-houses would be consistent with them being appurtenances.

## 1715ish, the Granville's begin leasing their properties out

Commencing around 1715 the Countess Granville began to lease out a portfolio of other property in, or adjacent to, East-the-Water. The transactions give some indication of the Granvilles' extensive holdings to the east of the Torridge. One set of leases is of particular interest. In 1715, 1728 and 1755 the Countess leased out property at Roper's Path Fields, comprising two closes in the East Land, in 1727 she also leased out Roper's Path in Putshole Tenement. The 1715 transaction had been to a Bideford rope-maker, suggesting that the fields derived their name from rope making activity. Roper's Path Fields formed a wedge, with its narrow point just south of the gasworks, bounded on the north by Folly Field (west of the present Pollyfield Centre), on the east, by Bunny Place and Putshole (Chubb Churchill area), and on the south by the marshy ground in the valley bottom.

356 The bacchanalian sessions, or, The contention of liquors with a farewell to wine / by the author of the Search after claret, &c. ; to which is added, a satyrical poem on one who had injur'd his memory, by a friend. Ames, Richard, d. 1693. London: Printed for E. Hawkins, 1693. Online: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A25256.0001.001/1:4> Accessed 15 Dec 2020

## 1715, a meeting with the Town's chief merchants

In 1715 John Fontaine, a Huguenot, sailed from Bideford, bound for Virginia aboard the Virginia Dove. Before leaving he was introduced to Mr Buck, Mr Strange and Mr Pauly, three gents whom he described as the towns chief merchants<sup>357</sup>. The Virginia Dove had been built for Thomas Smith, another Bideford merchant, in 1699, and operated a regular trade with Virginia<sup>358</sup>. The Buck and Strange he mentions were probably George Strange (1692-1747) and George Buck (-1743) the brothers-in-law, as they were both merchants with an interest in the Virginia trade, and able to offer passage to that colony.

## 1715, Torridge House and “the greatest rouge in Europe”

The parish register for 1715 records the marriage of, “Richard Handsley and Ann Prust,” The former being Richard Annesley, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Anglesey, and the latter the heiress to the demesne of Annery, along with other local property. Annesley, who is said to have resided in Torridge House following the marriage, Squandered the ladies fortune until she failed to release more. After that Richard imprisoned her in Torridge House, to pursue other relationships. When incidents such as this, and Annesley’s infamous kidnap of his nephew, became known, his trial became a sensation, with him being referred to, by one of his peers, as the greatest rouge in Europe. Annesley is particularly associated with Bideford in the period 1715-1724<sup>359</sup>.

## 1716, Bideford outstripping Barnstaple as a port

In a letter to the North Devon Journal, Mr. Pearce Chope, at one time president of the Devonshire Association, offers the relative salaries of the port officials as evidence for the volume of business done in Bideford and Barnstaple respectively<sup>360</sup>. He cites the following from a randomly picked copy of Chamberlayne's “Present State of Great Britain” for 1716:

Officers of the customs of the out-ports

<i>Biddiford.</i>	<i>Salary.</i>
Charles Jones, collector, for himself and clerk	100 00 00
Twenty-five other officers	580 00 00

*Barnstaple*

Robert Rowe, collector, for himself and clerk	60 00 00
---	----------

Whilst it remains conceivable that the 25 “other officers” covered an area that included Barnstaple, the higher salary of the collector at Bideford, together with the control of these officers through that office, certainly suggests the pre-eminence of Bideford at this time.

357 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 149

358 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 149

359 “The Late Admiral Glynn’s House” North Devon Journal 15 April 1858 p5 c5

360 “Mr Pearce Chope's Views” North Devon Journal 5 July 1928 p7 c5

Further evidence, for this change in the relative volumes of trade through Bideford and Barnstaple, comes from the Treasury Warrant Books, which contain an entry, for July 19, 1709, requiring Bideford to follow similar reporting procedures to those in place for Barnstaple, for “although Bideford is (according to the present establishment and settlement of the ports) a creek belonging to Barnstable[sic] which is a member of Exeter port but the receipt of Bideford and the business there is now become far more considerable than that of Barnstable.”<sup>361</sup>

It is possible that Bideford suffered less in the storm of 1703, thus prompting merchants to switch their attention to the town.

## 1716-17, approval for the extended town quay

It is not sure how long the work, commenced in 1692, took, but on 27 Jul 1716 the Commissioners for Customs reported to the Treasury concerning a petition from Robert Willis, Mayor, George Buck and Thomas Smith, merchants of Bideford, on their own behalf and that of other traders. The commissioners represented that “a new key was some time since built in that port but it not being made a lawful quay the petitioners applied to the Exchequer Court for a commission to have it made so but it could not be obtained without order from the Treasury Lords. The Customs Commissioners report that two years since the merchants and other chief inhabitants of Bideford petitioned them concerning this additional quay and on reference the officers of that port reported that there was no objection to making that key lawful, the whole being in a direct line and to be seen at once from any part and that the same was very commodious for trade, having on the south part more water than at the old key.” From this it is clear that the new, southern, extension of the *Established Quay* had already been completed, but also that it provided access to deeper water than an earlier quay had.

## 1717, town quay extension recognised as lawful

Amidst the Reports of the Commissioners of Customs to the Lords of the Treasury is a minute dated 5 Nov 1717 containing the official recognition that the *Established Quay* had been extended - “As to a commission from the Court of Exchequer, making the New Key, built in the port of Biddeford, lawful.” “Prepare a war<sup>t</sup> in the usuall forme.”

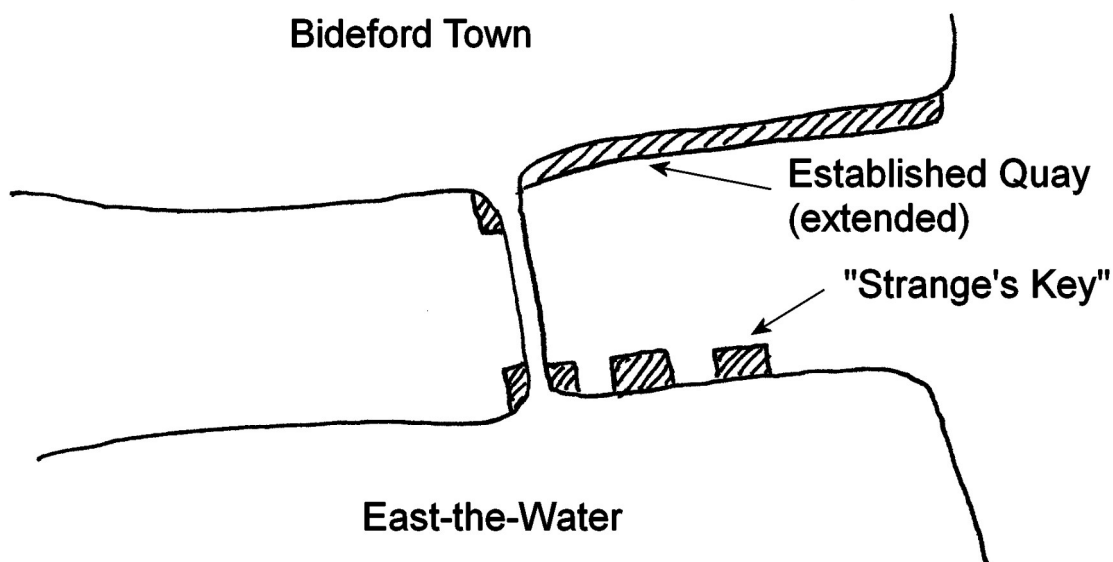
It is thought to be thanks to these endeavours that we have an early plan of the area downstream of the bridge<sup>362</sup>. Dating from c 1717, this plan shows, as the most significant building, a structure in the location now occupied by part of the Royal Hotel, and interpreted as John Davie’s Colonial House, in front of which runs the Barnstaple road. Across the road from it are a range of non-standard buildings and a waterfront area marked as “The Key.” This is the only area in which such a diversity of building styles is shown and it may reflect a predominance of manufacturing or storage facilities in this area. A further two quays are marked, both ascribed to named individuals (one to Mr Strange and one to Mr Doubt). Three shipyards are shown, of which two are in East-the-Water, the largest being just north of “The Key.” On the eastern shore, and immediately south of the bridge, is an ecclesiastical-looking property with an arched doorway, which is presumably the St Anne’s bridge chapel.

361 'Warrant Books: July 1709, 16-20', in *Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 23, 1709*, ed. William A Shaw (London, 1949), pp. 253-268. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol23/pp253-268> [Accessed 26 August 2018].

362 Fielder, *History of Bideford*, 1985, 8-9 (Fig. 4) [though Fielder suggests an earlier date]

## 1717, Newfoundland fishing fleet fear pirates

On 26 Mar 1717 Bideford merchants petitioned the Admiralty for a man-of-war, to protect them from pirates in Newfoundland, and for the convoying of the fleet on their return trip to Portugal and the Mediterranean<sup>363</sup>.



## 1718, transportation and indentured servitude

The 1718 Transportation Act made transportation for a set period (usually seven years, fourteen years, or life) a formal sentencing alternative, allowing far more prisoners to be transported. Crimes that once carried the death penalty could now be pardoned on condition that the convict accepted transportation. Vagrants, who were problematic because they fell outside the system of parish support, could also be transported. Two or three times a year the prisons of Britain were emptied to provide the plantations with workers. Between 1716 and 1776, at least 400 ships, operating out of London, Bristol, Liverpool, and Bideford, carried 50,000 convicts to the American colonies. These people came to be known as “His Majesty’s Seven-Year Passengers.”<sup>364</sup> In the period 1746 to 1775 London and Bristol increased their domination of this trade, with Barnstaple, Bideford, Liverpool, Newcastle, and Plymouth, who together picked up 20% of the trade (431 felons) in 1746-55, picking up only 2.9% (131 felons) in 1766-75<sup>365</sup>.

363 Public Records Office Ref. SP 42/16/36

364 Shirley Elro Hornbeck. *This and That Genealogy Tips*. Genealogical Publishing, 2000, 47-48

365 A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America – the Transportation System of British Convicts to the Colonies 1718-1775*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. Pg. 73

Even before the transportation of felons Bideford ships had provided passage for many indentured servants<sup>366</sup>. Indentured servitude was a way for the poor to buy into the promise of the colonies. In return for their passage, they contracted to give a set period of service once they arrived, the ship owner could then sell their service to a plantation owner. After the set term was fulfilled, then they would be free to build a new life for themselves in the colony. It therefore no surprise that the first contract under the 1718 act went to a Bideford Merchant<sup>367</sup>.

From 1719 the Buck family of Bideford began to invest in Kent County, Maryland (on the east of Chesapeake Bay). In 1720 John Buck, George Buck, and George Strange, all of Bideford, and the latter the occupant of a private wharf on Bridge Trust land in East-the-Water, appointed an attorney there.<sup>368</sup>

## 1720, the Newfoundland fishing trade in decline

The *Magna Britannia*, published in 1720, describes Bideford as “one of the best trading towns in England, sending every year great fleets to Newfoundland and the West-Indies<sup>369</sup> and particularly Virginia. It has almost drawn away the trade of Barnstaple to itself.”<sup>370</sup> Yet even as these words went to print it appears the writing was already on the wall.

John Watkins cites a sermon preached on Mar 17 1719-20 by John Coplestone, Minister of Chumleigh, “How much,” says the preacher, “has the Newfoundland trade fail'd of late years? Han't you been almost able many times to say with Peter to our blessed Saviour, we have toil'd all night and have taken nothing? How little fish have you catch'd from some voyages back”<sup>371</sup>. Watkins, writing in 1792, mentions the repeated failure of later schemes to revive the trade, and cautions against speculative investment in anything of that kind<sup>372</sup>.

## 1720, Bideford's tobacco trade outstrips other western ports

John Watkins account of the volume of Bideford's tobacco trade is striking, claiming, as it does, “For a little more than half a century, that is, from the year 1700, till about 1755, Bideford imported more tobacco than any other port in England except London; and, as I have been very creditably informed, in some years its imports of that article were superior to those of the port of London itself”<sup>373</sup>.

366 G.wenda Morgan & Peter Rushton,. *Eighteenth Century-Criminal Transportation. The Formation of the Criminal Atlantic*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 21

367 G.wenda Morgan & Peter Rushton,. *Eighteenth Century-Criminal Transportation. The Formation of the Criminal Atlantic*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 21

368 G.wenda Morgan & Peter Rushton,. *Eighteenth Century-Criminal Transportation. The Formation of the Criminal Atlantic*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 31

369 At this time the American seaboard of the USA was also called the “West-Indies,” as Watkins observed.

370 *Magna Britannia*, 1720, Vol 1, 489

371 Watkins, *Essay*, 1792, 1993 Ed. 67

372 Watkins, *Essay*, 1792, 1993 Ed. 68

373 Watkins, *Essay*, 1792, 1993 Ed. 65

Peter Christie has called attention to an article by Prof. W. G. Hoskins in the Bideford Gazette of December 1935, in which Hoskins, citing Treasury papers, states that “by 1720 Bideford had out-distanced all other tobacco ports in Devon and Cornwall, with nearly 8.5 million pounds landed in the years 1722-31, all but 1.5 million pounds of which was re-exported. This was still dwarfed by London though, where twenty to thirty million pounds were imported annually, while both Bristol and Liverpool also exceeded Bideford.”<sup>374</sup> One factor, however, cast doubt on the veracity of Hoskins analysis, for Watkins, having stated that duty was paid on 3629 hogsheads in 1742, observed, “Many full cargoes were purchased by foreign merchants, chiefly those of Holland and France, and therefore these are not taken into the above accounts, as no duty was paid on them, or rather, a drawback was allowed upon them.”<sup>375</sup> Hence, Watkins seems to be suggesting that tobacco imported by foreign merchants effectively by-passed the exchequer accounts (possibly by taking advantage of Bideford's free port status). Thus, the re-export shown within the exchequer accounts may be only that carried out by British merchants. This factor, if taken into consideration, might go some way to restoring Watkins' credibility as a witness to the volume of Bideford's tobacco imports.

## 1722, a new quay on Bridge Trust land

In 1722 a dispute arose between the Feoffes of the *Long Bridge* and the lord of the manor, concerning rights to a section of the East-the-Water foreshore<sup>376</sup> on which their tenant wanted to construct a quay.

## 1722, the Torridge undoes the plans of men

About this time a significant row was erupting, between Bideford and Barnstaple, concerning responsibility for trade through Appledore. In the Commissioners For Customs report to the Treasury is found Barnstaple's petition, accompanying which, as evidence, is ‘a copy of certificate of the Inhabitants in, and near, the port of Bideford.’ The report, minuted on 7 Feb 1722-23 provides a graphic picture of the state of the river, together with evidence that the course of the Torridge could prove fickle. Citing a “copy of certificate of the Inhabitants in, and near, the port of Bideford” it summarizes their observations. At this point the report is worth quoting in some detail “the ‘Lyer’ before the Key in the West side of the s<sup>d</sup> River is choaked up with sand, mudd, & stones, that ships of eighty tons & upwards, laden with goods, cannot come near the Key, unless on the heighth of a spring tide; and even then are in great danger of damaging both ships & goods by the sands washing away from under their bottoms, as has been often found by experience; and that no part of the ground, near the same key is so safe for any ships, as the ground on the East side of the said River. That for several years last past the river has alter'd its course, and now runs on the East side, as it formerly did on the West side, which has scoured off the sand & mud, and made the ground on the East side, free & safe for ships or galleys of burthen to lie upon with safety, without danger of taking any damage.” They further “certifie that on low tides, the boats from Apledore [sic], with passengers, are forced to land them on the East side, not having water to come near the key on the West side.”<sup>377</sup>

<sup>374</sup> Christie, *Secret Bideford*, 2015, 68

<sup>375</sup> Watkins, *Essay*, 1792, 1993 Ed. 66

<sup>376</sup> A plan of the Bridge Trust lands from 1745 (Bowering, *Maps of the Several lands belonging to the Long Bridge of Bideford*, 1745. North Devon Records Office Ref. 4274-1/1. Folio 7.) suggests that this must have been either on the site of Strange's Quay, the site of Doubt's Quay, or immediately south of the bridge. As both Strange's Quay and Doubt's Quay are already marked on a plan of c1717, the site south of the bridge seems likely.

<sup>377</sup> 'Volume 241: 1722. Classified Part I', in *Calendar of Treasury Papers*, Volume 6, 1720-1728, ed. Joseph Redington (London, 1889), pp. 177-182. British History Online

In the petition of 1716, to have the extension to the Established Quay approved, it is suggested that, as a result of the extension, the southern end of the new quay [i.e. the Established Quay] now had more water than the “old key.” That statement, taken together with the above report (which implies that c. 1717 the western key had more water than the eastern one) suggests that the key on the eastern side was older than that on the western.

## **1724, Defoe’s account of fishing fleets and a narrow bridge**

Published in 1724, Daniel Defoe's account of his visit to the SW peninsular reported "The trade in this town being very much fish, as it is also all the towns on this coast, I observed here, that several ships were employed to go to Liverpool, and up the River Mersey to Warrington, to fetch rock salt, which is found in that county, which rock salt they bring to Bideford."<sup>378</sup>

Defoe also noted "There is indeed, a very fine Stone Bridge over the River here, but the Passage over it is so narrow, and they are so chary of it, that few Carriages go over it; but as the Water ebbs quite out of the river every low water, the Carts and Waggons go over the sand with great Ease and Safety"<sup>379</sup>.

Defoe draws an interesting contrast when he compares the trade of Bideford with that of Barnstaple: "These two rival Towns are really very considerable; both of them have a large Share in the Trade to Ireland, and in the Herring Fishery, and in Trade to the British Colonies in America; if Biddiford cures more Fish, Barnstaple imports more Wine, and other Merchendize;" . . . "If Biddiford has a greater Number of Merchants, Barnstaple has greater Commerce within Land, by its great Market for Irish Wooll, and Yarn, &c."<sup>380</sup>.

By the time of Defoe’s account, deep sea fishing was already in decline, American enterprise, piracy, and international conflicts all having taken their toll. Bideford’s ship-masters ceased fishing themselves and became middlemen, providing transport of prepared fish, much of which ended up in the Mediterranean, from whence the ships could return with spices, wine, and dried fruit. The changing pattern of business also saw shipbuilding become more prominent as a local industry, as merchants sought to expand their fleets<sup>381</sup>.

## **1724, Bideford suffers losses in Virginian**

In September 1724 news arrived, from Virginia, that on 12 August a violent storm, having raised the water level ten feet higher than usual “destroyed the Fort at Hampton, drove two Ships belonging to Bideford ashore, wash’d away most of the Tobacco Houses, and did other great Damages”<sup>382</sup>.

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-papers/vol6/pp177-182> Accessed 30 May 2018.

378 Defoe, *Curious and Diverting Journies*, 1734, n.p.

379 Defoe, *Curious and Diverting Journies*, 1734, n.p.

380 Defoe, *Curious and Diverting Journies*, 1734, n.p.

381 Fielder, *History of Bideford*, 1985, 42

382 “From Mr. W —y’s Letter, London, Sept. 22.” *Newcastle Courant* 26 September 1724 p9 c1– p10 c1

## 1732, a change of hands and rope-making in the East Land.

In about 1732 William Cleveland, Commissioner of his Majesty's Navy, sensing that he had found the perfect place to retire and focus his thoughts on religion, bought the Tapley estate. William had married into the Davie family of Orleigh, owners of the great house by *The Key*. William died in 1734 and Tapley passed to his son John (-1763), who, in about 1750, purchased the Manor of Bideford from some descendants of William Granville, 3rd Earl of Bath, possibly consolidating their waterfront holding<sup>383</sup>. A year later John Cleveland became sole Secretary to the Admiralty, a position he held until his death. The era of Granville dominance in the affairs of East-the-Water had finally come to an end.

In 1733, perhaps emboldened by Cleveland's new position, the "Mayor, Aldermen, Capital Burgesses and Merchants" of Bideford petitioned their representatives in Parliament, "desiring them to oppose any Attempt that shall be made to extend the Laws relating to Excise."<sup>384</sup>

## 1739, the capture of Porta Bello

One early naval success, which may have left its mark locally was the capture of Spanish-held Porta Bello, in Panama (in Nov 1739)<sup>385</sup>. The name Portabello, usually contracted to Port, being found on a local farmstead just east of the grange lands. One wonders if new found wealth, through prize money had funded purchase of the farm.

## 1740-1748, War of the Austrian Succession

The War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) saw a pan-European conflict, in which the British and Dutch faced off against the French and Spanish, and in which naval activity "was remarkable for the prominence of privateering on both sides." . . . "The total number of captures by French and Spanish corsairs was in all probability larger than the list of British—partly for the reason given by Voltaire, namely, that more British merchants were taken because there were many more British merchant ships to take, but partly also because the British government had not yet begun to enforce the use of convoy so strictly as it did in later times."<sup>386</sup>

In May of 1740 letters were written from Plymouth proposing that the Navy procure culm from Bideford<sup>387</sup>. On 25 May 1740, Charles Davie, junr., at Bideford, responded to John Cleveland, Clerk of the Cheque, at Plymouth, advising that fear of Spanish privateers in the channel left few interested in the culm trade<sup>388</sup>.

The Gentleman's Magazine, reported retrospectively, concerning this period, that "though no fort is yet built [on Lundy], yet the Bristol privateers so effectually protected the trade in this place during the last war that not a single vessel was taken."<sup>389</sup>

383 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 17

384 Stamford Mercury 15 February 1733 p2 c2

385 Paul Kléber Monod. Imperial Island: A History of Britain and Its Empire, 1660-1837. John Wiley & Sons, 2009. Pg. 157

386 "AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION, WAR OF THE" Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edition, Volume 3, 2008, p45]

387 National Archives, ADM 106/947/79

388 National Archives, ADM 106/947/83

389 The Gentleman's Magazine. 1755, pp. 445-448, cited in George Laurence Gomme Editor. "Bideford." The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. London:Elliot Stock, 1893. Pg 137

## 1742, Watkins' snapshot of Tobacco imports

John Watkins gives us some figures that suggest, at least initially, the tobacco trade did not suffer too adversely from the war, but continuing at about its pre-war level. Bear in mind that the following figures should, thanks to Bideford's free-port status, exclude tobacco passing through the port, for re-exported to the continent<sup>390</sup>

Year	Number of cargoes/ships	Hogsheads	Duty paid
1735	13	3337	£15,101 15s 7d
1736	15	3286	£18,348 7s 9d
1742	17	3629	£22,679 13s 9d

## 1744, Bideford's loyal address

Commencing in 1688 a series of uprisings (the Jacobite Rebellions) sought to restore Catholic rule in England. By 1744 the French had masterminded a surprise attack, with the aim of landing in Essex, invading England, and placing Charles Edward Stuart (aka Bonnie Prince Charlie) on the throne, only to have their plans thwarted by a terrible storm, before the troop transports even left France. Following the failure of the French plans war was finally declared between France and Britain.

The “Mayor, Aldermen, Capital Burgesses, and Merchants of Bideford” were quick to send a loyal declaration to King George II, proclaiming their “astonishment and indignation, at the vain attempt of the French, with a despicable fleet of ships, to make a descent upon your Majesty’s dominions, in order to set a pretender here.”<sup>391</sup> To protect the realm from this “Popish pretender,” they assured his Majesty of their “readiness, to act with the utmost vigour, with the hazard of our lives and fortunes.”

One may ask why an unsuccessful French attempt to invade the shore of Essex and a formal acknowledgement of the de-facto state of war should prompt such a stout response from Bideford? Bideford's real concern was probably not so much the threat of a direct invasion from France, but that French belligerence would embolden Irish rebellion, thereby prompting a French-sponsored attack from that quarter, a compass point from which the Torridge shores had previously suffered just such an invasion in the past (in the attempt to restore the throne to Harold's heirs). This Loyal declaration must have been as much a show of strength directed toward Ireland as on intended for France.

390 Watkins, Essay, 1792, 65-66

391 “The Bideford Address” The Scots Magazine 01 March 1744 p140 c2

## 1745, the Bridge Trust map their lands

Following concern that the Bridge Trust had failed to keep an adequate record of their property portfolio, plans were drawn up of all the Trust's lands in Bideford<sup>392</sup>. These are a valuable source of information for this period, as they identify the occupants of the land and the owners of adjacent lands. In East-the-Water the Trust owned: a Quay on Barnstaple Street, with the property adjoining it to the east of the road; a cluster of property, including a limekiln, around the eastern end of the bridge; two burgage plots near Nutterberry (the more southerly of which was later the northern edge of the Gasworks site); a field further inland.

## 1749, the salt trade and East-the-Water

In view of the impact of the War of the Austrian Succession, the Universal Magazine for April 1749 is possibly regurgitating some, already somewhat dated, information when it states: "The town frequently employs fifty sail of ships in the *Newfoundland* fishery, and others are sent to *Liverpool* and *Warrington* to fetch rock salt, which is here dissolved by the sea-water into brine, and then boiled up into a *new salt*, which is properly called *salt upon salt* ; with which they cure their herrings, in which trade it out-does Barnstaple"<sup>393</sup>. Evidence that the account is probably second-hand may be seen in its suggestion that "Biddiford" lies on the river "Towbridge"<sup>394</sup>. The *Magna Britannica* of 1822, citing Brice's dictionary of 1759, confirms, however, that rock salt, used for making Salt-upon-salt, was imported from Liverpool<sup>395</sup>.

The salt was presumably being shipped round the coast of Wales, as the canal network had yet to be constructed. (see entry for 1772 below).

The pans used for producing this salt upon salt were called salterns. The survival of that name (some older documents have Saltren or Saltrn) in East-the-Water, near a source of culm, has led some to suggest the practice might have been carried out on this side of the river<sup>396</sup>. If that were the case, the salt would logically have been landed on the eastern wharves. As the surname Saltren is extant in Bideford, however, sites bearing that name are not necessarily associated with salt manufacture, though the family's roots may have lain in that trade.

Maggie Curtis suggests that, prior to the Liverpool trade, salt was imported from France, but when wars got in the way the British got supplies from Aveiro in Portugal instead, the British Government protecting Portuguese ships from the French in return.<sup>397</sup>

In the 1800s there is still some slight evidence of salt trading on Barnstaple Street, as a trade directory lists one salt merchant based there.

According to a history of Newfoundland, published in 1755, Newfoundland boats went out from Bideford with nothing on board but provisions, salt, and fishing tackle, timing their arrival for the early spring, whilst others travelled later, with trading goods to barter for already salted cod.<sup>398</sup>

392 John Bowering, surveyor. Maps of the Several lands belonging to the Long Bridge of Bideford,; survey'd and drawn by order of the Feoffees of the said lands. 1745. North Devon Records Office Ref. 4274-1/1. Folio 7.

393 "The account of Devonshire (Page 108, Vol. IV.) continued." The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure. Vol IV. London: John Hinton, 1749 p161

394 Hinton. 1749, *ibid.*, p160

395 Lysons & Lysons, *Magna Britannica*, 1822, Pg 49.

396 Gareth Davies. North Devon Wind Farm, Environmental Impact Assessment. Vol 2 – Appendices Part B. West Coast Energy. 2011. Pg 102.

397 Maggie Curtis "The Making of the Bideford Port Memorial Ceramic Trade Maps" Online:  
<http://www.maggiecurtis.co.uk/trade-maps> Accessed 24 Sept 2017

398 "A new history of Newfoundland" The Scots Magazine 05 May 1755 p228 c2-p229 c1

## 1750, Whatley's Gazette

Stephen Whatley's Gazetteer of England published an account of Bediford, or Biddiford “so called from its situation, viz. By the Ford.”<sup>399</sup> Some the statements in Whatley's account would be corrected in 1755 in the Gentleman's Magazine. For example: Where Whatley states, of the Long Bridge, “though the foundation is so firm, yet it seems to shake at the slightest step of a horse,” the Gentleman's Magazine contradicts this - “Some authors have asserted, that tho' the foundation of the bridge is firm, yet it will shake at the lightest tread of a horse ; but this is also a mistake, for the foundation is immoveable, the arch indeed not being covered with a sufficient weight is so elastic, that it yields and springs up again under the rapid motion of a coach.”

## 1750, the Manor of Bideford changes hands

In 1750 the Manor, and with it *The Key*, changed hands, passing from the descendants of the Granville family to John Cleveland of Tapley, the grandson of John Davie<sup>400</sup>.

## 1752, transport vessel catches fire at sea

Several individuals with links to East-the-Water were involved in the transportation of felons. The following incident, whilst unattributed, serves to illustrate one of the dangers of transporting large numbers of individuals by sea. “On Saturday last came an Account from Biddeford, that a Vessel having on board the [prisoner] Transports from Exeter, Dorchester, &c. which sailed from thence about ten Days before, took Fire at Sea; and had not another Vessel came by when this Accident happened, all of them must inevitably have perish'd. They are all brought back to Biddeford again.”<sup>401</sup>

## 1753, free trade in Irish wool

By act of parliament of 26 George II (1753), the restrictions on the import of wool from Ireland were lifted, enabling any Irish port to trade with any port of Great Britain<sup>402</sup>. Whilst Barnstaple, which had dominated in its wool trade with Ireland, was probably impacted by this, Bideford also had its connection with wool. Much later on, Fulford's, having grown up in 19<sup>th</sup> C. East-the-Water, would end up as a conglomerate that handled a significant proportion of England's home grown wool.

399 Stephen Whatley. Gazetteer of England. 1750. Transcribed by Mel Lockie. 2011. Online: <http://www.melockie.org.uk/whatley/Devon.html> Accessed 12 May 2017

400 Daniel Lysons, Magna Britannia: Being a Concise Topographical Account of the Several Counties of Great Britain. T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1822, Pg 166

401 “Country News” Derby Mercury 14 August 1752 p4 c1

402 An Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce, from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time. Vol 2 of 2. London: A. Miller, 1764. Pg 402

## 1753-55, diarist Angerstein visits Bideford

At some point between 1753 and 1755 Reinhold Rucker Angerstein visited Devon, leaving a note on Bideford accompanied by a sketch of the town from east of the Barnstaple Road. The sketch is too stylistic to trust the detail, but it does give a general impression that many of the buildings on Barnstaple Street were large<sup>403</sup>. He noted that “Fishing is their main business, and a number of the ships voyage to America and the Mediterranean. There is an anchor-forge here that uses 50-60 tons of iron yearly, mostly from Bilbao and Bristol”<sup>404</sup>. He also mentions that ships are left sitting on “a light-coloured clay”<sup>405</sup> when the tide is out. He summarises the process and advantages of lime-burning. Near Barnstaple coal and limestone have to be sourced from Wales, a sack of burnt-lime cost 7d and there were two sacks to a barrel. Four sacks would fertilise land sufficient for a bushel of seed corn. Generally heaped in layers in May, with two parts of clay or soil to one of lime, it was then left till August before use<sup>406</sup>.

## 1754, the London Magazine publishes a plan

In their December issue for 1754 the London Magazine published a plan of the Torridge downstream of the Bridge, in which the main channel of the river is shown veering eastward as it passes under the bridge to flow near *The Key* and *Mr Strange's Key*, leaving the *Established Key* bounded by shallower water. This suggests that the river's main channel was still following the eastern course it adopted at some point between 1717 and 1722<sup>407</sup>. The stream from Pillhead is shown opening via a wide mouth, just north of Salterns Rock.

## 1755, the Gentleman's Magazine account

Building upon earlier accounts, this description provides useful insights on conditions in Bideford, whilst seeking to correct earlier misconceptions.

### herring fishery failing

In 1755 the Gentleman's Magazine reported that “It is a place of considerable trade, but the herring fishery has failed for some years, and so has the manufacturing rock salt into what is called salt upon salt, by first dissolving it in sea water and then boiling it up again. Great quantities of potter's ware are made and exported to Wales, Ireland and Bristol.”<sup>408</sup>

403 R R Angerstein's Illustrated Travel Diary 1753-1755, Industry in England and Wales from a Swedish perspective. Torsten & Peter Berg Trans. London: Science Museum, 2001. Pgs 120

404 R R Angerstein's Illustrated Travel Diary 1753-1755, Industry in England and Wales from a Swedish perspective. Torsten & Peter Berg Trans. London: Science Museum, 2001. Pgs 120-21

405 R R Angerstein's Illustrated Travel Diary 1753-1755, Industry in England and Wales from a Swedish perspective. Torsten & Peter Berg Trans. London: Science Museum, 2001. Pgs 121

406 R R Angerstein's Illustrated Travel Diary 1753-1755, Industry in England and Wales from a Swedish perspective. Torsten & Peter Berg Trans. London: Science Museum, 2001. Pgs 122

407 In some places this is stated to be from the Gentleman's Magazine of 1754, but, having spent some time attempted to find the original, that does not seem to be the case. The contents list for the London Magazine and Gentleman's Intelligencer of November 1754, however, carries the following “Thro' some accidental mistake the plan of Biddiford, which we intended, could not be got ready for this month,” . . . “and shall insert the said plan in our next.” It is therefore likely that this plan was issued by the London Magazine as a separate sheet, sent out with the next months issue

408 George Laurence Gomme Ed., The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. Part III. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, p134]

## **press-gangs impact Bideford's maritime trade**

In 1755 the Gentleman's Magazine reported that “The merchants of Bideford lost almost all their vessels in the late French War<sup>409</sup>, but by buying and building, have again maid up their number near 100, most of which now lie by, as the hands that should have navigated them were swept away by the press, and others cannot be procured”<sup>410</sup>.

## **correcting misconceptions**

“Over this river is a bridge, and many errors have been propagated concerning both.

It has been said that the arches of the bridge are so wide and lofty, that vessels of 50 tons may sail thro' them but tho' ships of much less burthen can not sail thro', yet ships of much greater may go thro' without masts. It has also been said that the water runs quite out of the river at ebb, and that cart not being permitted to come on the bridge, take this opportunity to pass over on the sands ; but this is wholly false, for at the lowest water there is a channel in the middle sufficient to float pleasure boats ; and not only carts, but waggons of three tons weight are permitted to cross the bridge, upon paying an acknowledgement to the bridge warden. Some authors have asserted, that tho' the foundation of the bridge is firm, yet it will shake at the lightest tread of a horse ; but this is also a mistake, for the foundation is immoveable, the arch indeed not being covered with a sufficient weight is so elastic, that it yields and springs up again under the rapid motion of a coach.”<sup>411</sup>

## **traffic on the river**

The Gentleman's Magazine notes that “The boats used on the river for hire are passage boats, ballast boats, and lighters ; in the passage boat a passenger is carried from Biddeford to Appledore, three miles, for a penny, and the hire of a lighter that will carry 10 tons, for a whole tide, is 5/.”<sup>412</sup>

## **the nature of manure**

The plan from c1717 shows the hinterland of the quays contained many market gardens, furthermore, until the 19<sup>th</sup> C., farmland crowded the shore-line community. The Gentleman's Magazine article reports that the main local crops were “wheat, barley, peas, and beans.”

Local soils are heavy and benefit from fertilizers. The Gentleman's Magazine account notes that the “principal manure is lime, ashes, dung, and sea sand, that in colour resembles unburnt umber, but is lighter and more yellow ; sea weed called oar weed, is also sometimes used, but principally for gardens. The ashes are made by spading the turf from the surface of the ground and then burning it in heaps”<sup>413</sup>. In later years the trade in both lime and various agricultural manures would come to be important for the wharves trade, as would the import of seed.

409 The 'late French war' referred to here was likely to be Queen Anne's, as, during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) Bideford is reported not to have lost a vessel. The first skirmishes of the Seven Years War (1756-1763), which began in 1753 preceded the war itself, were almost certainly too recent for the Bideford fleet to have been lost and already recovered.

410 George Laurence Gomme Ed., The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. Part III. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, p134]

411 George Laurence Gomme Editor. The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, pg 445

412 George Laurence Gomme Editor. The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, pg 445

413 George Laurence Gomme Editor. The Gentleman's Magazine 1755 “Bideford.” The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. Part 3. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, p136

## **the working of culm**

The Gentleman's Magazine account also mentions that Biddeford had “a culm pit, which was worked for fuel a few years ago, when coal, which is usually sold for one shilling per bushel, double Winchester, was very dear.”<sup>414</sup>.

## **1756, onset of the Seven Years war (1756-1763)**

In 1753, competition over trade between Britain, France, and Spain had erupted into the conflict, that would eventually, in 1756, escalate into the Seven Year's War (1756-63)<sup>415</sup>, which spread overseas in the form of colonial struggles between the French and British in North America and India.

## **1757, a privateer re-taken**

The onset of open hostilities would have prompted many a merchant to equip vessels as privateers. John Ford, of Biddeford, was amongst those who chose this option, operating the 200 ton, 60 gun, Tygress in such a manner<sup>416</sup>. The Tygress was taken by the French, but then re-taken in January 1857 by HMS Otter, sloop of war. Capt. Harrison of the Otter, having insufficient men for a prize crew, and having confined the French, manned the ship with the released Biddeford crew and put an officer over them. The crew thereupon promptly confined the officer and sailed the vessel back to Biddeford, leaving Harrison to send “an Express to secure them all,” and to acquaint “their Lordships therewith.”<sup>417</sup> The Tygress brought with her a complement of French prisoners, thus illustrating one way in which Biddeford came to have a prison camp full of French captives. In July of that year the Tygress went on to demonstrate the contribution a successful privateer could make to the economy of a coastal port, bringing in seven prizes, four to Bristol, three to Biddeford, in total estimated to be worth over £35,000 (nearly three million pounds in modern terms<sup>418</sup>).

## **1758, prisoner's of war moved to East-the-Water**

As the Seven Year's War dragged on, French prisoners of war accumulated in camps around the country, including at Biddeford. The French officers were reasonably accommodated, often with their families, in private lodgings, but the remainder were held in close confinement. Initially the camp was on the west of the Torridge, near the Pill, that is until, in October 1758, when the squalid conditions of their detention triggered a riot and the camp was promptly transferred across the river to East-the-Water<sup>419</sup>.

The prisoners were housed in a secure compound at Folly Field (aka Prison Field), by Nuttaberry Hill (later to become the gasworks site<sup>420</sup>).

414 George Laurence Gomme Editor. The Gentleman's Magazine Library, 1731-1868. Part 3. London: Elliot Stock, 1893, p136

415 Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. “Seven Years’ War.” Encyclopædia Britannica, 29 Jan 2016, Online:<https://www.britannica.com/event/Seven-Years-War> Accessed: 2 May 2017

416 “British Privateer 'Tigress' (1756)” Three Decks Forum. Online: [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_ship&id=26895](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_ship&id=26895) Accessed: 26 Nov 2017

417 “Letter from Captain Thomas Harrison” . . . &c. Oxford Journal 22 January 1757 p3 c1

418 “Currency converter” The National Archives. Online:<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid> Accessed: 26 Nov 2017

419 Fielder, History of Biddeford, 1985, 46

420 Fielder, History of Biddeford, 1985, 98

In 1759 there were estimated to be as many as a thousand prisoners, all kept in check by one half of the Somerset Militia. An Admiralty inspection of the new camp, undertaken at that time, found it inadequate for such numbers, as had been the earlier camps<sup>421</sup>.

## 1758, extension of the quay

The war did not seem to dent the Newfoundland salt-cod trade, for around 1759 there were still about 40 to 50 ships engaged in it. Nor did it seem to quench the local appetite for investment in maritime trade as from 1758 there is a record that the Lord of the Manor (John Cleveland) extend the quay southward toward the bridge<sup>422</sup>. It has usually been assumed that this record refers to the western town quay<sup>423</sup>, and provides evidence for it being in the hands of the Lord of the Manor<sup>424</sup>, but the extension of that to the bridge had already been completed by 1716. A more pragmatic explanation would be that this reference is to an extension of *The Key* that stood in front of Davie's house, extending it southward to link, or merge, it with *Mr Doubt's Key*. That area, as part Restarick's shipyard, was part of the Manor lands specifically excluded from the sale of those lands to the Corporation.

The widening of the western quay is also said to date from this period<sup>425</sup>, and there seems no reason to doubt that, especially if the river's deep-water channel had indeed reverted to its former eastern course. The building out of a riverside quay being a likely response to any such loss of water depth at the existing quayside.

As prisoners of war were sometimes used for construction projects, so it is possible that the move of the French prisoner's of War in 1758 may have some connection to the quay widening and extensions.

A forum posting suggests this could be a topic worthy of further research "Apparently the POWs were employed in a number construction projections including a rebuilding of a retaining wall on the riverbank and aiding in the construction of an ornamental drive, called Hobby Drive, on the road to Clovelly." As another posting on the same forum suggests that prisoners were not used in this way during Napoleonic times, it seems likely that the comments, if there is any veracity to them, relate to this period<sup>426</sup>.

Local tradition suggests that the banks used to reclaim marshland west of Westleigh were built by prisoners of war<sup>427</sup>.

## 1759, Howell Harris and the Breconshire Militia

In a report, on manuscripts relating to the Brecknockshire Militia in the period 1759-62, these manuscripts are said to mention that the garrison was stationed at Brecon, Bideford, and Torrington and to contain a great deal of interesting information. The writer comments "It is curious that many of the words used for paroles were words more in keeping with the religious revival than with army parlance—Glorification, Resurrection, Repentance, Forgiveness, Justification, and others of a similar nature"<sup>428</sup>.

421 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 46

422 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 47

423 E.g. see Ascott, Random Notes, 1953, 8

424 Goaman, Old Bideford and District, 1968, 47

425 Ascott, Random Notes, 1953, pg 8

426 <http://www.napoleonicwarsforum.com/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=1137> Accessed 13 April 2016

427 Personal correspondence, Derek Barnes, 2016

428 Davies, "Archives of the Calvinistic Methodist or Presbyterian Church of Wales," 1947, Pg 40.

The report also notes that “There are a number of orders relating to the treatment of French prisoners while the battalion was stationed at Bideford. It was an offence for any non-commissioned officer or private to drink any liquor offered them by the prisoners, a private man of the Brecknockshire Battalion being Confined and Reported for this Mean and Un-pardoned Offence'. Those prisoners who were allowed to lodge outside the main prison had to be in after the sounding of the Retreat at five o'clock, and they had to be counted each morning. There are detailed instructions to be observed if any of the prisoners broke out of prison<sup>429</sup>.

A number of entries in the volume read, Officer for to-morrow Capt. Lieut Harris.”<sup>430</sup> The use of spiritual language may have something to do with the fact that the Lieut Harris spoken of was , Howell Harris, who had been heavily involved in a Welsh revival and is considered to be one of the founding fathers of Welsh Methodism.<sup>431</sup>

They manuscripts relating to the Breconshire Militia also describe how the Militia were turned out - “The Breconshire gives ye Guards to-morrow When ordered on parade they are usually told to be Clean drest in Regimental Stockings and Black Garters”<sup>432</sup>

## **1759, 40-50 newfoundland ships, and salt from Liverpool**

Brice, whose Dictionary was published in 1759, says that then about 40 or 50 ships were employed in fetching cod from Newfoundland, and that there was a great export of herrings from this place; that rock-salt was imported from Liverpool, which was dissolved with sea-water, from which a brine was made for curing the herrings, called “salt upon salt.”<sup>433</sup>

## **1760, trade with America drying up**

John Watkins notes that the trade with Maryland and Virginia ceased about 1760<sup>434</sup>.

## **1763, peace with France**

The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, saw an end to the war, but not before Britain had enlarged its territorial assets and provided maritime merchants with an even greater trading base. The problem now was one of distributing goods inland.

## **1763, advent of the turnpikes**

After significant rainfall, the heavy local soils made travel on unimproved roads a nightmare. The introduction of the turnpike network proved a significant step toward providing a more reliable road infrastructure. Trusts maintained networks of roads and farmed out the collection of the tolls for their use, thus providing funds for their upkeep. In 1763 the Barnstaple Turnpike Trust was established. Its responsibilities included provision of turnpike routes from Barnstaple to Bideford as well as a turnpike from East-the-Water to Great Torrington, via the traditional Wear Gifford and Huntshaw route (at that time the road on the western bank had yet to be constructed). There was a toll house at Pottery Corner, on Torrington Lane, and one on the Old Barnstaple Road.

429 Davies, “Archives of the Calvinistic Methodist or Presbyterian Church of Wales,” 1947, Pg 40.

430 Davies, “Archives of the Calvinistic Methodist or Presbyterian Church of Wales,” 1947, Pg 41.

431 Davies, “Archives of the Calvinistic Methodist or Presbyterian Church of Wales,” 1947, Pg 13.

432 Davies, “Archives of the Calvinistic Methodist or Presbyterian Church of Wales,” 1947, Pg 41.

433 Brice's comments are mentioned in Lysons & Lysons, Magna Brittanica, 1822, Pg 49

434 Watkins, Essay, 1792, Pg 69

## 1765, start of the American Revolution

For ten years, prior to the outbreak of military hostilities, there had already been a political and ideological revolution in progress. At the outset of this

## 1765, last throes of the tobacco trade

Bideford's land tax had been calculated on the basis of their earlier wealth. By 1765 this was so decayed that the town sought mitigation from the tax. As an example of their decline they referred to just "one small vessel" importing tobacco<sup>435</sup>.

## 1765, Donne's map and the Folly Field

In 1765, Benjamin Donne, son of local inhabitant George Donne, produced a one inch to the mile survey, on which East-the-Water still shows as little more than a ribbon of development along Torridge Street. Where the word Folly appears, another strip of development runs northward from the bridge for around twice the distance of its southern counterpart. The Grange is marked, as also is a farmstead on the Barnstaple Road called Salterns

Standing alone, upstream of the Long Bridge and on the western bank, is a house marked as *Ford*. On the eastern shore, the development extends southward to a point due east of Ford, at which point a street, with accompanying development, runs directly inland for a short distance. Adjacent to this short spur is marked *Folly*. The name probably relates to the prison camp, and its memory lived on in 1904 in the name of *Folly Field* (aka *Prison Field*) at Nuttaberry. That, together with its marked location, suggests it gave its name to the modern *Pollyfield*. Half way along Torrington Street a relatively undeveloped Torrington Lane runs eastward, but with some property marked. Another strip of development (Barnstaple Street) runs northward from the bridge for around twice the distance of its southern counterpart. The *Grange* is marked, as also is the farmstead on the Barnstaple Road known as *Salterns* (shown as *Saltrns*). South of the community, half way to Tennacott Farm, is marked a property called *Lodge*.<sup>436</sup>

## 1767, Bideford cures more fish than Barnstaple

The General Principles of Commerce, which survives without its title page, tends to re-iterate earlier descriptions of Bideford's trade, mentioning "Biddeford is, like Barnstaple, an established port for the receipt of wool from Ireland, to which place, and to the West-Indies [(which, at that time, was a general description for the Caribbean and the western seaboard of the United States)], but more especially to Virginia and to Newfoundland, it's wealthy merchants, of which there are many, send fleets of ships every year: others are sent to Liverpool and Warrington for rock salt, which is here dissolved in sea-water, and then boiled up into a new salt, rightly enough called salt upon salt. It is with this that they cure their herrings."<sup>437</sup>

435 Rogers, Op. cit. Vol. I pg.187, cited by Nix

436 Fielder, History of Bideford, 1985, 49 & fig. 14

437 The General Principles of Commerce, 1767. Goldsmiths'-Kress library of economic literature ; no. 10273. (title page missing) Pg 242

“Barnstaple is an established port for the landing of wool from Ireland, with which kingdom, and America, it carries on a good trade, principally with the serges of Taunton, Tiverton, and Exeter, which it, in return, furnishes with shad-fish, wool, yarn, &c. It's rival, Biddeford, cures the greatest quantity of fish, but this imports the most wine and other foreign merchandize.”<sup>438</sup>

## 1774, war with America

On 31 March 1774 Britain ordered the closure of the port of Boston, thus setting the scene for the American War of Independence (1775-81). The war curtailed Bideford's foreign trade, forcing a greater reliance on the local trades of shipbuilding and pottery.

Watkins reports that the Bideford ships once used for trade with America were instead used as transports for troops and munitions<sup>439</sup>.

Around this period a meeting was held to dissolve the Bideford Newfoundland Fishery Co.<sup>440</sup>

The war may also have had a sudden and dramatic impact on some of Bideford's wealthy traders, as, on 2 May 1774 the *Sherborne* and *Yeovil Mercury* carried a series of advertisements for the sale of property in Bideford:

- James Horwood offered *Somers Bibery*;
- Elizabeth Kimber offered *Dunscombe*;
- George Sage offered *Gammaton*.

The first two of these were former Granville East-the-Water properties and the latter lay in the east land. It remains unclear what might have prompted such a sudden and widespread urge to sell, but the timing suggests it could have been events on the other side of the Atlantic.

## 1775, the potters have a preferred ridge

Notes in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1775 indicated that Bideford's potters got their gravel from from a particular ridge of gravel, just above the bridge, there being no other ridges within the bar that were of the same peculiar quality<sup>441</sup>.

## 1775, Jeffreys route plan

In 1775 Robert Sayer posthumously published a corpus of work by the surveyor and engraver Thomas Jeffreys (1719-1771), including plans of the significant roads from “Exeter to Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and Torrington” Whilst it is not clear exactly when this work was compiled, Jeffreys engraved Benjamin Donn's acclaimed 1765 map of Devon, so it is likely to relate to that period. This current work is significant in that it again (like Donn's map) marks “Folly” and “Grange.” Whilst it omits the riverside premises shown by Donn, “Folly” is shown in about the location of modern Pollyfield, and “Grange,” appears further east, on the turn of the road about where the modern school now sits.

438 The General Principles of Commerce, 1767. Goldsmiths'-Kress library of economic literature ; no. 10273. (title page missing) Pg 241

439 Watkins, Essay, 1792, pg 69

440 Devon Record Office, 3865M-0/E/1-10

441 Anonymous author. “Supplement to the Account of Biddeford,” *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, 1755, vol. 25, p. 564.

## **1784, the lordship of Bideford Manor change hands**

Upon the death of John Cleveland of Tapley (1745-1784), Augustus Saltren Willett (1781–1849) inherited the Lordship of the Manor of Bideford from his great uncle, taking the name Cleveland.

## **1786, introduction of ship registration**

From 1786, every ship belonging to a British owner and of over 15 tons had to be registered in a port<sup>442</sup>.

## **1791, William Heard listed as a shipbuilder in Bideford**

William Heard occupied the Cross Park shipyard prior to William Brooks<sup>443</sup>.

## **c. 1792, the Universal British Directory of Trade is published**

This directory, published in 5 volumes, between 1790 and 1798, represented one of the earlier attempts to produce such a directory covering the trading centres across the whole country.

Besides recounting various re-cycled historical details, the directory's background paragraphs for Bideford (in Vol 2) note<sup>444</sup>:

- “For about a century it enjoyed a very considerable foreign trade, principally to Virginia and Newfoundland. Since 1760 its commercial consequence has been reduced very low, but at present there is good prospect of its rising again.”
- “Timber is exceeding plenty and cheap, as also are labour and provisions of all kinds.”
- “Large quantities of coarse earthenware are manufactured here, and carried to various parts of England and Wales. Many cargoes of oak bark are annually exported from hence to Ireland and Scotland.”
- “This town formerly exported large quantities of herrings to different parts of the Mediterranean, but that trade ceased many years ago.”

Summarising the main facilities for the “conveyance of goods and passengers,” it mentions:

- A daily coach service from London, leaving at four in the morning;
- A “diligence” for Exeter, departing on Wednesday and returning on Thursday;
- A waggon departed for Exeter every morning, but a similar service from Exeter, departing on Friday and arriving in Bideford on Tuesday
- “A vessel from Stanton’s, Cotton’s, Hayes’s, Griffin’s, and Pickle Herring, wharfs [in London]; there are four regular traders from hence to Bristol.”

442 Michael Nix, A Maritime History of the Ports of Bideford and Barnstaple 1786-1941. Thesis, University of Leicester. 1991. Pg 3

443 “Ship Building in North Devon” by Grahame Farr. Maritime monographs and reports No. 22. 1976., cited in Bideford Buzz, Jul, 2016. Online: <http://bidefordbuzz.org.uk/2016/07/two-bideford-built-schooners-of-the-nineteenth-century/> Accessed 28 Sep 2016

444 The Universal British directory of trade, commerce, and manufacture comprehending lists of the inhabitants of London, Westminster, and borough of Southwark. Vol 2 of 5 Vols. London : printed for the patentees, and sold by C. Stalker; and Messrs. Brideoake and Fell, 1790-1798. Pg 436-8

The list of inhabitants and traders does not identify the locations from which each individual traded, but various of them were associated with East-the-Water. Of particular interest are those with trades traditionally linked with the eastern shore:

- ship-builders – William Heard, John Hore, Henry Tucker (all with yards on the East-the-Water shore)
- Potters – Henry Cadd (both a potter and a shoemaker), Mary Carder, John Jewell, George Spry, — Tallin, John Tucket (none of which have, as yet, been linked to East-the-Water)
- Stone-masons – John Roode, Thomas Taylor (where Roode may be the John Rodd in whose garden Culm was later found)
- Limeburners – Pridham and Drew (a Pridham later owned property adjacent to some of East-the-Water's main limekilns)

The entry for Bristol also sheds some interesting light on the situation in North Devon. It lists coach and waggon services to Devon<sup>445</sup>. Viz.:

- From the Bush Tavern, "*For Exeter* – A post-coach every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday morning, at 6 o'clock"
- From the Rummer Tavern, "*For Exeter* – A coach every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, mornings at 6"
- From the White-Lion, "*For Exeter* – Frost and Shepherd's waggon, goes out every Tuesday, comes in every Monday"
- From the White-Lion, "*For Exeter*" . . . "E. and J. Seoigle's fly waggon, goes out every Thursday, comes in the same day"
- From the Bear, "*For Exeter, Taunton, Tiverton, Plymouth, Bridgewater, and Wellington*–Waggons, in Tuesday, and out Wednesday. By William Prickham." N.B. Prickham here may be Pridham.
- From the Bell Inn, "*For Taunton, Wellington, Exeter, and all parts of Devon*–Parson's waggon, in Tuesday, out Wednesdays"
- From the Three Queens, "*For Taunton, Exeter, and Plymouth, and all parts West*–Thomas Webber's Wagon, in Tuesdays and Thursdays, out Wednesdays and Saturdays"

From the above, it appears that regular overland services between Bristol and Bideford/Barnstaple did not exist. The list may, however, contain a reference to Pridham, a name later associated with Bideford carriage, but listed as "Prickham"

What was true for Bristol, however, would also be true for smaller ports, such as Bideford, that also had access to the Severn. The directory states "By means of the Severn, the manufacturers of Bristol have an opportunity of conveying their goods to every Navigable Canal that has formed a junction with the Severn, which are many. There is also a Navigation opened from Bristol, through Oxford, to London, which has lately been completed"<sup>446</sup>, it also identifies that the following coasting services operated as "CONSTANT COASTERS, on the Back.":

- "*For Barnstaple, at the Barnstaple Slip*–The Active, John Day master; Dispatch, William Tucker master; and Sprightly, John Leworthy master"

445 The Universal British directory of trade, commerce, and manufacture . Vol 2 of 5 Vols. London , 1790-1798. Pgs 187-190

446 The Universal British directory of trade, commerce, and manufacture. Vol 2 of 5 Vols. London , 1790-1798. Pg 191

- “*For Biddeford, at the Barnstaple Slip*—The Thomas, William Heay master; Dispatch, Richard Watkins master; Polly, William May master; and Ann, William White master”

Note that the directory appears to mention specific slips for departure for some destinations (e.g. it mentions the Dial Slip for some). The above were the only services using the *Barnstaple Slip*, so Bideford and Barnstaple shared a dedicated slip.

Coasting vessels to destinations beyond Bideford Bay were numerous and many may have used the port in poor weather. Some thirty-two services from Bristol would have passed offshore each week, bound south and west for points further afield<sup>447</sup>.

## **1792, a pack of hounds succumb to rabies**

In September 1792 rabies struck, destroying the whole pack of hounds kept by one of Bideford's more illustrious residents, John Bickford Jackson<sup>448</sup>. Jackson had made his fortune as a Newfoundland Merchant, operating out of Topsham, Devon, then married a Bideford woman.

## **1792, John Watkins published his essay**

In his *Essay Towards a History of Bideford*, John Watkins provided much historical data, but he also contrasted this with the current situation. Watkin's work, though thought by some to be pulling information out of thin air, was probably leaning on a much earlier work by one Dr. Donne, a local teacher. A copy of this was held by George Buck of Daddon, Watkin's primary sponsor, but the work has subsequently been lost<sup>449</sup>.

## **1792, the Lord of the Manor still owns a quay**

Watkins mentions that in 1792 the Lord of the Manor was flouting the quay regulations, thus confirming that he still had a quay in his possession.

## **1792, concern that the bark trade is deforesting North Devon**

Watkins noted the link between Bideford's flourishing shipbuilding and the volume of cheap timber available locally. The bark trade was flourishing, but it killed the trees, the dead trees then provided cheap wood for ship-building, but oak was not a quickly renewable resource. The practice was becoming so extensive that, soon, Watkins suggested, North Devon's shipbuilders would suffer a shortage of wood<sup>450</sup>. The export trade in Bark had flourished ever since duties had been imposed on leather, stemming the flow of raw hides from Ireland into England, the aim now being to add the value in Ireland first. It is interesting to reflect that North Devon's open scenery may be, at least in part, due to the volume of bark that passed across East-the-Water's wharves.

447 The Universal British directory of trade, commerce, and manufacture comprehending lists of the inhabitants of London, Westminster, and borough of Southwark. Vol 2 of 5 Vols. London : printed for the patentees, and sold by C. Stalker; and Messrs. Brideoake and Fell, 1790-1798. Pg 191-4.

448 Derby Mercury 27 September 1792 p1 c1

449 Peter Christie, "A Biographical Sketch" in Watkins, A History of Bideford, 1993 ed.

450 Watkins 1792, 1993 Ed. Pg 70-71

## **1792, some signs of a recovering trade with America**

Watkins, writing in 1792, noted that “At the present time, Bideford enjoys no foreign commercial consequence, at least not worth mentioning.” He then proceeds to mention that within the last two or three years the trade with America had shown slight signs of recovery, with a few occasional cargoes of timber and tar being shipped<sup>451</sup>. Despite that nearly 100 vessels belonged to the port, mostly involved in the coasting trade (at that time trade with Ireland was not considered foreign trade, but part of the coasting trade). Their cargoes mostly coal and culm from Wales, destined for the south of Devonshire. There was also much bark shipped to Ireland and Scotland.

## **1792, onset of the French Revolutionary Wars**

Lasting from 1792 until 1802, these saw Britain, Austria, and others, fighting the French First Republic, and the rise of Napoleon from obscure general to charismatic leader.

## **1794, the Glamorganshire Militia come to town**

In April 1793 the Hereford Journal reported that the Glamorganshire Militia had arrived in Somerset, on route to Barnstaple and Bideford.<sup>452</sup> One wonders, as they marched through East-the-Water, how real concern was of a French invasion?

## **1796, Instead Marshall sees sand dug and lime-kilns operating**

In 1796 Instead Marshall published an account of Bideford in his Rural Economy of the West Country.

Even before Marshall reached Bideford, approaching from the south, he made some interesting observations. After admiring the view from Padstow Hill, which Choep suggests might be Petrockstow, Marshall noted “Passed a cart: drawn in the Cleveland manner! Three horses; one in the shafts, the other two abreast, and guided by reins: loaded with bark, for the port of Bideford; to be there shipped for Ireland.” “Cross a well timbered hollow. Much valuable ship timber in this district. Close woody-lanes. – how tantalizing to a traveller!”<sup>453</sup>. Near Winscot he notes “Met a string of lime horses from Bideford; eight or ten miles. Lime here a prevailing manure. Instance of a cropt hedge. What a loss to the traveller that the practice is not prevalent.”<sup>454</sup>. In passing through Torrington he notes the Oke (the Torridge). Then descending from Gammerton to ward Bideford he notes “Meet strings of lime horses, with pack-saddles and bags of lime. Also two-horse carts, with lime and sea sand”<sup>455</sup>.

451 Watkins 1792, 1993 Ed. Pg 69

452 “Hereford, Wednesday, April 17.” Hereford Journal 17 April 1793 p3 c4

453 The Rural Economy of England By William Marshall 1796. Pages 278-97 in R. Pearce Choep Ed. Early Tours in Devon And Cornwall. Exeter:James G. Common, 1918. Pg 289

454 The Rural Economy of England By William Marshall 1796. Pages 278-97 in R. Pearce Choep Ed. Early Tours in Devon And Cornwall. Exeter:James G. Common, 1918. Pg 290

455 The Rural Economy of England By William Marshall 1796. Pages 278-97 in R. Pearce Choep Ed. Early Tours in Devon And Cornwall. Exeter:James G. Common, 1918. Pg 290

The war with America had apparently taken its toll, for he suggests the town was "remarkably forbidding," by virtue of its narrow streets and cheaply built houses. In the open spaces furze faggots were piled into house shaped ricks. Marshall states - "These dangerous piles of fuel are for the use of the pottery for which only, I believe, this town is celebrated; chiefly or wholly, the coarser kinds of wear."<sup>456</sup> The traditional way to fire the pottery kilns was with culm, usually imported from South Wales, but furze or bramble faggots would then be used to 'flash' the glaze at high temperatures<sup>457</sup>.

Marshall witnessed one unusual activity, with low tide seeing "many men employed in loading pack-horses with sand, left in the bed of the river"<sup>458</sup>. What Marshall witnessed could have been the digging of grit for use in the potteries. Grit, known as gravel, was incorporated in coarse-ware to improve the firing characteristics and the durability of the finished product, so was in demand amongst local potters. Grit from Bideford was considered superior to that from Barnstaple because it was lime free, with one Barnstaple coarse-ware maker even sending to Bideford for their gravel.

<sup>459</sup>.

Another reason why sand was sometimes dug was for fertilizing the land, though this was unlikely at Bideford, because of the low lime content. Marshall notes that "Shell sand is said to be plentiful on the coast; but little, if any of it, is brought up this river"<sup>460</sup>. This sand's removal, however, may also have served a secondary purpose. A map showing Bideford in the 1820s suggests that the depth of water beside the western quay might have been enhanced by a channel dug to divert the Potter's Pill southward alongside it.

Marshall notes that there were several lime kilns operating on the East-the-Water shore, with carts and pack-horses waiting for loads; much of the limestone and all of the coal coming by sea from South Wales<sup>461</sup>. The output from these kilns was delivered chiefly by packhorse within a radius of fifteen miles, providing lime for fertilizing the land and building work.

## 1794, the press-gang active in Bideford

Whilst certain classes of Bideford's mariners were exempt from the press, the shadow of the press-gang still hung over others in the town. In August 1794 it was reported that, in a desperate attempt to escape a naval life, "a man at Bideford, being impressed, cut off part of his tongue and fingers."<sup>462</sup>

456 The Rural Economy of England By William Marshall 1796. Pages 278-97 in R. Pearce Chope Ed. Early Tours in Devon And Cornwall. Exeter:James G. Common, 1918. Pg 291

457 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 10

458 The Rural Economy of England By William Marshall 1796. Pages 278-97 in R. Pearce Chope Ed. Early Tours in Devon And Cornwall. Exeter:James G. Common, 1918. Pg 291

459 Grant, North Devon Pottery, 2005, 6

460 The Rural Economy of England By William Marshall 1796. Pages 278-97 in R. Pearce Chope Ed. Early Tours in Devon And Cornwall. Exeter:James G. Common, 1918. Pg 291

461 The Rural Economy of England By William Marshall 1796. Pages 278-97 in R. Pearce Chope Ed. Early Tours in Devon And Cornwall. Exeter:James G. Common, 1918. Pg 291

462 "London. August 1." Oxford Journal 02 August 1794 p3 c1

## 1794-6, Maton's patched up bridge and lead in the cider

In addition to recounting material from earlier authors, Maton, who visited Bideford himself in either 1794 or 1796, makes some interesting observations that appear unique to him and potentially first hand. He describes ad-hoc repair of the bridge - "The bridge consists of twenty-four arches, which were originally all Gothic, but some having been in need of repair are now circular."<sup>463</sup>.

He describes the business of the port as consisting "principally in the landing of wool from Ireland, fish from Newfoundland, and rock-salt (by a preparation of which they cure their herrings) from Liverpool and Warrington. Lime-burning is a considerable article of trade at Biddeford, one hundred tons of Welsh limestone often being burned in a day. And here also is a large pottery, the clay of which is brought from Fremington, near Barnstaple. A *stratum* of a fine reddish sort has been worked to a depth of more than twenty feet. It is procured at as easy a price as half-a-crown *per* ton."<sup>464</sup>.

He goes on to observe that he "could not help shudder at the effects" of the practice of lead-glazing the inside of earthen ware, which was common in Devonshire. The dreadful Devonshire colic he attributed if not to the lead leached into cider, then the practice of adding lead to cider as a sweetner and flavouring agent<sup>465</sup>..

## 1795, bridge lighting, widening, and approach improvements

In 1793 tenders were invited for widening the central three arches of the bridge, but after various false starts it was 1795 before an agreement was in place for the work. In that same year land was purchased at the Bridge's eastern end, to "render the access to the bridge more commodious," and lamps were installed on the bridge for the first time<sup>466</sup>. The widening was not completed throughout until 1810, when parapets of Penarth Ashlar stone were installed<sup>467</sup>.

## 1795, work started on a bridge widening

Between 1795 and 1810 the bridge was widened to add a two foot wide footpath on either side<sup>468</sup>.

On 30<sup>th</sup> August 1796 James Ley, of Bideford, merchant, gave up part of his stable, belonging to a house and garden situated near the east end of the Long Bridge, Bideford East-the-Water, so that the road to the bridge could be widened<sup>469</sup>.

463 William George Maton. Observations Relative Chiefly to the Natural History, Picturesque Scenery, and Antiquities, of the Western Counties of England, Made in the Years 1794 and 1796. Salisbury: J. Easton, 1797. Vol 2, pg 58

464 William George Maton. Observations Relative Chiefly to the Natural History, Picturesque Scenery, and Antiquities, of the Western Counties of England, Made in the Years 1794 and 1796. Salisbury: J. Easton, 1797. Vol 2, pg 59-60

465 William George Maton. Observations Relative Chiefly to the Natural History, Picturesque Scenery, and Antiquities, of the Western Counties of England, Made in the Years 1794 and 1796. Salisbury: J. Easton, 1797. Vol 2, pg 59-60

466 "Bideford Long Bridge" Bideford Weekly Gazette 05 August 1902 p7 c3

467 "Bideford Long Bridge" Bideford Weekly Gazette 05 August 1902 p7 c3

468 Frank E Whiting & Peter Christie. The Long Bridge of Bideford Through The Centuries. Bideford:Bideford Bridge Trust, 2006, pg 12

469 North Devon Records Office, B127-6/57

## **1796, Bideford now a minor port**

In 1796 London had 13,400 vessels arrive, two thirds of then being coasters, the remainder foreign<sup>470</sup>. By comparison, about half that number, 6,538 vessels, entered the ports of the Bristol Channel, of which 2,271 visited the minor English ports, amongst which Bideford would have been numbered<sup>471</sup>.

## **1797, the invasion of Britain & reinforcing Bideford**

In later years of the fighting with France, Bideford was not a Parole Depot<sup>472</sup>, but it appears, despite some emphatic statements online to the contrary, that it was still a Depot for the rank and file prisoners, as an account of the events of February 1797 suggests, for it mentions that “Within a day of the sighting, by a coastguard cutter, of a squadron of French warships off Lundy, Colonel Orchard’s companies of North Devon Volunteers had assembled in Bideford to reinforce the guard on the French prisoners of war that were quartered in the town.” Such a company of prisoners, if once released by a French landing party would have soon aided their countrymen to overthrow the town. Within days of the warship sighting, the news arrived of the defeat of a French landing near Fishguard, leaving North Devon feeling vulnerable until reinforcements began to arrive in other towns<sup>473</sup>.

## **1798, the Irish Rebellion gives Vinegar Hill its name?**

Overlooking the Torridge, and now vaulting across the Tarka Trail by a stone-built pedestrian bridge, lies the cul-de-sac known as Vinegar Hill. There was a maltster named Henry Tucker based near the hill at about the time it was built, so the name could be linked to vinegar production, but there is a curious local tradition that suggests we have the Irish Rebellion of 1798, rather than the local maltsters, to thank for this unusual name.

Fuelled by the revolutionary fervour in France, and also America's bid for independence, a French-aided armed uprising had been gathering momentum in Ireland since the spring of 1798. Volunteers were sought to bolster the forces available to counter this new threat of an Irish facilitated French invasion.

It has been suggested that many troops bound for such conflicts in Ireland would have passed through Bideford. In support of Bideford acting as a point of embarkation for the 1798 force, one may cite the following note that appeared The Times of 4 April 1798 “The 2d, 25th, and 29th regiments of foot, have received orders to march from Plymouth to Barnstaple and Bideford, in course of the present week, from whence it is supposed they will embark for Ireland”<sup>474</sup>.

470 William Vaughn. A Letter to a Friend on Commerce and Free Ports, and London-docks. Pg 2

471 Nix, Op. cit., pg 124

472 <http://www.napoleonicwarsforum.com/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=1137> Accessed 13 April 2016

473 John Rowe's The North Devon Yeomanry 1794-1924 cited at

<http://www.napoleonicwarsforum.com/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=1137> Accessed 13 Apr 2016

474 The Times, 4 April 1798, p4 c2

The rebellion was at its strongest in County Wexford, until, on 21 June 1798, an English force secured victory in the pivotal battle of Chnoc Fhíodh na gCaor, near Enniscorthy<sup>475</sup>. The English won the battle, but failed to get their tongues round the Irish name. Chnoc they translated as Hill, but Fhíodh na gCaor (fee-na-gare phonetically, and meaning "the wood of the berries"<sup>476</sup>) was corrupted to Vinegar<sup>477</sup>. The battle, and its decisive victory became thereafter known as Vinegar Hill.

On their return to Exeter from Ireland, the officers of the South Devon Militia, commanded by Lord Rolle, were granted the freedom of Bideford, "as a mark of esteem for their patriotic services in Ireland,"<sup>478</sup> a sure indication of how relieved Bideford were at this victory.

Henry Tucker also traded in bark, much of which was exported to Ireland. The boats that once conveyed his bark may well have been commissioned to convey troops to Ireland and the victory removed the threat of a conflict with Ireland with all its potential repercussions for Bideford's merchants. So Vinegar Hill, it is said, was named as a memorial to this English victory, though whether by men of Bideford who fought there, or by returning troops who passed through is uncertain (the author has heard locals mention both versions). A third, but somewhat less likely, option is possible, that the hill's builder gave it that name to curry favour with Lord Rolle.

475 “#OTD in 1798 – United Irish Rebellion: The Battle of Vinegar Hill (Cath Chnoc Fhíodh na gCaor).” Stair na hÉireann/History of Ireland. Online: <https://stairnaheireann.net/2017/06/21/otd-in-1798-united-irish-rebellion-the-battle-of-vinegar-hill-cath-chnoc-fhiodh-na-gcaor> Accessed:8 Dec 2017

476 “Vinegar Hill, Enniscorthy, 'who fears to speak of 98'” Pictures of Ireland.

Online:<http://www.irelandinpicture.net/2010/03/vinegar-hill-enniscorthy-who-fears-to.html> Accessed:9 Dec 2017

477 E.g. the report in the Kentish Chronicle of 8 June 1798, p2 c3, illustrates the use of this corrupted name

478 Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette 08 August 1799 p1 c1