

KYRTON AFORETIME

Some pages from the history of
CREDITON
In Devonshire,
with notes on the national background
where appropriate for the better understanding
of local events.

“My aim has been to integrate local and
national history, to make a bridge from
one to the other.”

(A.L. Rowse in the Preface to his “Tudor Cornwall”)

To
the Trustees of
The Hayward Educational Foundation
(Chairman, Sir J.F. Shelley, Bart., C.C., J.P.)
without whose generous aid the
multiplication of copies of these notes
would have proved a far slower and
more tedious business.

CONTENTS

Introduction.

In Pre-historic Times.

In Saxon Times.

The Manor of Crediton.

The Borough of Crediton.

The Woollen Industry.

The Early History of Crediton Church.

The Prayer-book Rebellion of 1549.

Crediton Church in Modern Times.

St. Laurence Chapel.

Education in Crediton: Queen Elizabeth's School;
 Crediton High School;
 Charity Schools;
 Dunn's School;
 Sir John Davie's Gift;
 Education and the State;
 The Hayward Schools;
 Landscore Infants' School.

Communications: Roads; Canals; Railways; Bridges.

The Crediton Improvement Act, 1836.

Crediton Gas Works.

The Town Hall.

Markets and Fairs.

Some Past Trades of Crediton.

The Great Fire of 1743.

Appendix: Our Anglo-Saxon Heritage.

 List of books consulted.

INTRODUCTION

These notes are not intended to represent a complete history of Crediton – that would embrace many topics here left untouched. They comprise material collected over a period of years to provide examples illustrative of the changes and events which have occurred in the social history of England.

In a sense, all history is “local” history, but without some understanding of the background on a far wider scale, the history of one’s own parish must lose a great deal of its significance. Therefore, in dealing with such topics as The Woollen Industry, Education and Communications, I have tried to give as briefly as possible a sketch of conditions in the country as a whole before focussing the spotlight on those of our own locality.

During the search for material, libraries, second-hand bookstalls, and books privately loaned have all yielded their treasures. I am indebted to Mrs Dockett of Park St. for the loan of “Scraps of History, 1852” which Mr A.H. King very kindly had copied; to Miss L. Cornish for Billings’ Directory, 1857, and to Mrs Montague for the Transactions of the Devonshire Association for 1922.

C. Luxton

Hayward Boys’ School,
Crediton.

April, 1949.

THE HISTORY OF CREDITON

In Pre-historic Times

The history of Crediton, based on written documents, begins about A.D. 680 with the birth of Winfrith, afterwards St. Boniface. There are no records, either in writing or in buries remains, of any settlement here before that time.

It has been suggested, however, that the name "Creedy", from which came "Creedy-tun", "the farm by the Creedy", may have been connected with St. Creedan, one of the companions of St. Petrock, the great Celtic Apostle of Devon. Saxon churches and religious houses quite often arose on Celtic foundations, and if this is true of Crediton we may place the beginning of our town as early as the sixth century or as much as a hundred years before Winfrith's birth.

Another suggestion is that there was in the Roman era, a Celtic settlement here named "Caer Eden", which name later became shortened to "Crede". However, these are only suggestions and all that can be said is that in all probability there was a Celtic settlement of some kind in or near Crediton before the arrival of the Saxons in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Although no Celtic remains have been found in Crediton itself, there are several camp sites in the neighbourhood which were occupied long before the invasion by the Roman legions. CADBURY CAMP near the Crediton – Tiverton road is thought to belong to the Early Iron Age. It was occupied by the Roman garrison at Exeter in the fourth century, and Roman coins have been found in a well or pit in the centre. Nearer Crediton are POSBURY CAMP, since destroyed by the quarrying which has yielded good building stone since our present church was commenced about A.D.1150, and BLACKADOWN CAMP, a little farther to the SW, which has two high embankments and a double ditch to the S & SW. The latter was very likely the site of a stockaded village in pre-historic times.

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See "The Beginnings of Crediton" by the Rev. Preb. J.F. Chanter in the Transactions of the Devonshire Association of 1922.

In Saxon Times

At the time the Roman armies left Britain about A.D. 400 to defend the heart of their Empire, this country was still a land of forest, moor and fen. The Saxons who came here from Germany to settle were forest dwellers and they avoided the towns which had grown up during the Roman occupation, making their homes in the wooded valleys. At first, no doubt, they followed the easiest routes, the rivers, the Roman roads and even the ancient British trackways. By the latter half of the seventh century they had already formed a fairly large settlement in or near Crediton, and it seems more likely that they came by way of the Exe estuary than overland from the E. As the native Celtic (Damnonian) population had been decimated by the yellow plague which swept the country early in the seventh century, it is probable that the Saxons encountered little, if any, resistance as they filtered into this district. By the time Winfrith was

born in or about A.D. 680, the district was already under the rule of a chief known as “the King of the English”, although it still formed part of the realm of Geraint, King of Damnonia.

The life of Winfrith, afterwards St. Boniface the Apostle of Germany, is given in full elsewhere so a brief note must suffice here. His parents are thought to have been Saxon though it is possible that his mother was British. The name Winfrith may have been derived from two Anglo-Saxon root words: “wine” (friend) and “frith” (peace) meaning “friendly peace” or “peace of friendship”. Educated in monasteries at Exeter and Nutschelle near Southampton, Winfrith entered the Church and was consecrated a Bishop at Rome in A.D. 723 when he changed his name to Boniface, “a doer of good”. In 732 he was made Archbishop of all Germany and in 754, after 22 years of hard work, he resigned in order to become a missionary. The following year he met his death in East Friesland (Holland) at the hands of the heathen, and later was canonised as a martyr by the Roman Church. He seems to have been a devout Christian and stout upholder of the Faith, even to the extent of denouncing as a heretic one Fergil who had stated that the Earth was round! But then, Fergil was a member of the Celtic Church which Boniface had striven against all his life.

In A.D. 739 a monastery was founded at Crediton and we must assume that Boniface used his influence to have it built here. In A.D. 825, Egbert¹, King of Wessex, passed through Crediton on his way to subdue the Cornish whom he defeated at the Battle of Gafulford, thought to have been Galford near Bridestowe. The Cornish had been defeated ten years earlier and some of their lands given to the Bishop of Sherborne². The road to the Church lands ran along the N boundary of Crediton parish (Creedy Bridge-Poundshill-Georgehill-Barnstaple Cross-Coleford), being an extension of the great Roman arterial road known as the Fosse Way. This was probably an ancient track since it is known that there has been a bridge at or near the site of the present Creedy Bridge since A.D. 739, the spot having been used as a river crossing of some sort since time immemorial. The fact that the road later became part of the parish boundary points to its being older than Crediton itself.

In A.D. 909, Eadulph was appointed the first Bishop of Crediton, being also the first Devon bishop. He commenced a Cathedral Church dedicated to St Mary, but unfortunately no trace of this remains.

In A.D. 933, “nearly 200 years after the grant of the original charter of governance of folcland to Forthere, Bishop of Sherborne, a fresh grant of ownership was made by (king) Athelstan to Eadulph, Forthere’s successor, first Bishop of Crediton. This grant, whereby Eadulph acquired the ownership of the manor and hundred of Crediton, was really a purchase, and it bears the date 933, one year before that bishop’s death. After the usual pompous prelude it continues: ‘Wherefore I, Aedelstan, in consideration of 60 lbs of silver, do grant to bishop Eadulph such a liberty for his bishopric of Crediton church that it shall be for ever free from all secular services, royal tributes, both greater and lesser, and military contributions, to wit taxations of all kinds, excepting only military service and stronghold defence.’”

“This grant was, in fact, emancipation from the heavy burdens to which folcland was subject, and its conversion into bookland” (Trans. D.A.1922 p.149.Reichel)

From about this time until the Norman Conquest the Exeter district suffered greatly from the raids of Danish pirates, particularly in the years 875 and 1003, and no doubt Crediton had its share of alarms. By 1050 Leofric, Bishop of Exeter, however, did not give up ownership of the Crediton manor until some five hundred years later.

¹ Egbert, grandfather of Alfred the Great.

² The Diocese of Sherborne included all the country W of it.

In the early part of the 10th century, Athelstan, King of Wessex, had almost completely removed Celtic influence from Devon. In A.D. 926 he drove the Celts (Damnonians) out of Exeter which then became a completely English city for the first time. This was doubtless an additional reason for the Bishop wishing to make his headquarters in Exeter instead of in Crediton. Throughout the County the British people either died out or became slaves to the English.

A century and a half later, the English themselves knew the bitterness of defeat and slavery, as, in the years following 1066, the country gradually came under the heel of the Norman conqueror. It was particularly hard on the freemen who lost their rights of pasturage, fishing and hunting in the forest and were forced to give labour to their "Lord" on the manor lands in return for a piece of land on which to grow their own food.

Before we leave Crediton in Saxon times let us stop to consider some of the heritage handed down to us over a thousand years from our English ancestors. Most of our place-names and much of our language had its origin in English speech as it was before the Norman Conquest. Our measures of length and area have also been in use, with local variations, quite that length of time, and when, in 1889, we set up our modern system of Local Government, it was patterned on the ancient Saxon model. These things are dealt with more fully in an Appendix at the end of this book. We now turn to look at the Manor of Crediton as it was in Norman times.

THE MANOR OF CREDITON

The Manor of Crediton or Chritetona was held by the Bishop of Exeter and the following is a description of it as given in Domesday Book, A.D. 1086.

“The Bishop (Osbern) has a manor called Chritetona (Crediton), which in Edward the Confessor’s reign paid geld for 15 hides. These 185 ploughs can till. Thereof the bishop has 6 hides and 13 ploughs in demesne, and his knights and villeins have between them 9 hides and 172 ploughs. There the bishop has 264 villeins, 73 bordars, 40 serfs, 30 swineherds paying 150 swine yearly, 4 rounceys, 64 beasts, 57 swine, 400 sheep all but 12, 115 goats, 1 mill paying 30 pence a year, woodland 5 leagues in length and ½ league in breadth, 80 acres of meadow and 200 acres of pasture. It is worth 75 pounds a year. When the bishop first received it, it was paying 21 pounds.”

NOTES:

Geld A tax paid to the king.

Hide In Old English law a hide was a measure of land sufficient to support a family. It varied in area according to the quality of the land. In Domesday Book it was simply a unit of land which paid two shillings towards the king’s geld. A virgate was ¼ of a hide, and a ferling was ¼ of a virgate. A carucate or ploughland was the amount of land that could be cultivated by one plough team of four oxen abreast. In Devon it was from 64 to 80 acres, including roads, fences and waste.

Lord of the Manor The owner of the manor was the “lord”, this being a shortened form of “Hlaford” or “loaf giver”. It was his duty to see that the poor and needy had sufficient for their needs. At best, the lord of a manor acted as a father to the people on his estate, giving them security from famine and robbery in return for service on the land.

Villeins and bordars were peasants who were allowed land to till for their own use in return for labour on the lord’s demesne (land reserved for the lord’s own use).

Serfs had no land and were merely slaves working on the demesne.

League A league was 1½ miles.

Acre An acre represented the width (22 yds) of a strip of land 220 yds long, and so came to mean also the area of a piece of land 220 yds x 22 yds, equal to 4840 sq.yds.

Lord’s Meadow The meadow mentioned in the Domesday record is known as “Lord’s Meadow” to this day. Along the S side of the meadow runs “Cuddymash Lane”, properly named Common Marsh Lane, leading towards the marshy fields bordering the river Creedy.

The lord’s demesne in 1086 A.D. (which 13 ploughs can till) consisted of the bartons of Crediton and Knoll (Knowle), 80 acres of meadow (the lord’s meadow), 200 acres of pasturage of which 100 acres were marsh, one mill and a large area of woodland.

By far the greater part of the manor lands were in the hands of the bishop’s military and farming tenants, some of whom paid only small token rents. The land itself was, and still is, some of the richest farm land in Devon, and the maps given in the Land Utilisation of Devon (ed. Dr Dudley Stamp) clearly show that it supported what was for those days a large population. It was not possible then for food to be transported about the country and each district had to be self-supporting, so it is easy to see the connection between the fertility of the

land and the size of the population living on it. This explains why Crediton was able to produce enough surplus food to support, first, a monastery, later, a collegiate church and later still in its history, the population of a small industrial town whose workers produced only a part, if any, of their own food.

Return of the Hundred Jury, 1275

“True return for Crediton made by William de Esse (of Ash in Crediton); William de Fenne; Michael Trenchard (of Lew Trenchard); Adam de Marisco (of the bishop’s marsh); Order Scruere; Hugh de Copleaston (of Copplestone in Colebrook); Richard de Doderidge (of Dather in Sandford); Elias de la More; Reginald le Hurt (of Horwell in Colebrook); Robert de Stodham (of Stadham in Cheriton Bishop); and Adam Coterel, who say

“The manor of Crediton was erstwhile in the King’s lordship appurtenant to his crown and was given to the bishop in pure and perpetual alms with all the liberties thereto pertaining, how long before the Conquest or by what warranty they know not.

“The bishop holds pleas of replevin, and has gallows and assize of bread and beer in the said manor.

“The bishop has a warren.

“The parsons and vicars claim to have the best beasts of burden as well from freemen as from bondmen. And the official of the bishop of Exeter has done nothing to enforce the prohibition of our lord the King which was served on him by Sir Michael Trenchard. They also say that the citizens of Exeter hinder the Gascons from selling wines in Exeter as they were wont to do.

“They say that Roger Pridias, when he was under-sheriff of Devon, caused a certain approver to implead Richard de Langsford, a trusty man, and to plunder and imprison him until he got 20 shillings by way of pledge to release him. Also that Robert de Trus (or Crus), coroner, took an ox worth half a mark for executing his office at the instance of Walter de Pidemfleg (or Pidenesley) before he would view his wife that had been slain.”

This return gives an interesting snapshot of the manor in the 13th century. Points to note are:

1. The bishop, as lord of the manor, was responsible to the king for settling disputes and dealing out justice to offenders, having power of life and death over people on the estate.
2. The fact that the bishop’s possession of a warren was deemed worthy of special mention reminds us that the right to keep an enclosure for wild animals such as rabbits was a privilege of considerable value in an age when fresh meat was scarce during the winter months. (Rabbit warrens on Dartmoor are “farmed” even to this day.)
3. It is hardly surprising to read that, in the century which saw the signing of Magna Carta, there lived Englishmen who were not afraid to speak out against evil and injustice and to stand up for the under-dog.
4. The names of some of the jurymen have been handed down in the district through many generations to the present time. (Other names will be found in “Records of the Church and Parish of Crediton)

possession of the Bishops. The Letters Patent making the grant to Sir Wm. Killigrew are in the possession of the present Lord of the Manor.

In 1598 a “terrier” of the land with plans and description of every part of the Manor was made, engrossed in vellum, and the names of the fields written on them in the plans are the same as they bear today. The original was unfortunately burnt at Creedy some years ago, but Mr Sillifant of Combe presented a paper copy he had to the Governors of Crediton Church.

From time to time since 1595 parts of the Manor have been sold. One part, acquired by Mr Samuel Strode, “a citizen of London” was eventually purchased by local buyers including the Davies, Harrises, Lanes, Popes, Lees, Gorwyns, Norrishes, Madges, Mortimers, Tucketts and Tremletts, the Manor itself, or what remained of it, passing to Mary Parnell in 1802. It was purchased by Mr James Wentworth Buller in 1828, since when it has remained in the Buller family.

THE BOROUGH OF CREDITON

England at the time of the Norman Conquest was a land of manorial villages. The Romans, indeed, had built many towns in Britain, but these had been neglected or destroyed by the English. Domesday Book mentions about eighty towns but most of these were very small (even York contained only 1600 houses). London was even then the greatest English town but we know nothing of its size or population for Domesday has no record of it.

The reasons why some villages grew into towns while others did not are not always clear today, but reasons must have existed in each case. Some towns like York or Gloucester grew up because they were suitable spots at which to station soldiers. Others, like Glasgow, Bury St Edmunds and Durham grew up around the wells of a monastery or the burial place of a saint, but the greatest reason of all which led to the growth of a town was its suitability for trade. Trade grew out of the need for such things as salt and iron which few villages could produce for themselves, and for which the majority would barter their surplus corn, meat, hides and wool. Trade gradually increased during the Middle Ages in spite of bad tracks and roads and of the bands of robbers infesting the still extensive woodlands. Wherever trade routes met, at cross-roads or where rivers could most easily be crossed by ford or bridge, there free men found it more and more profitable to spend their time in trade rather than in farming (although many for a time did both), and so there grew up a class of wealthy merchants and the use of money increasingly took the place of barter.

The reasons for the growth of Crediton from a village into a town are not far to seek. They appear to be

1. Its situation in the midst of a fertile strip of "Red Devon" soil which, as Domesday Book shows, was capable of supporting a comparatively large population.
2. The existence of, first the Monastery, and later the Collegiate Church and the Bishop's See which had made it a place of some importance in Saxon England.
3. Its situation on one of the main tracks into Cornwall (via a river crossing where Creedy Bridge now stands, Longstone Wall, Barnstaple Cross and Bow) where it was crossed by the most direct route between two ancient ports, Exeter and Barnstaple.

At the end of the 11th century many of the "towns" such as Crediton differed from manorial villages only in point of size. The inhabitants were still largely cultivators of the soil, tilling the fields that lay around the town. Crediton and many other small towns have farmsteads in their midst to this day. Even London was such an one in the days of King Alfred for at one time the King camped with his army near the town to enable the Londoners to reap their crops undisturbed by the Danes. Now, as many of the towns had begun as manorial villages, they were still completely under the control of the Lord of the Manor on whose estate they were built. The inhabitants had either to render him all the dues of manorial tenants or to agree to pay a fixed sum yearly; but all their activities could be controlled by him: they had to attend his court; he appointed their officers, made rules for their trade and levied tolls. As towns grew the townspeople naturally became impatient of these restraints. They wished to choose their own officials, to make their own bye-laws and to be judged in their own law courts, in fact, to become a borough. To gain these privileges it was necessary to obtain a charter from the King, usually with the consent of the Lord of the Manor who, of course, required satisfactory compensation in money.

Many boroughs were set up in Devon in the 12th and early part of the 13th century, when lords of manors found a borough a more profitable possession than a village community. Amongst others, Okehampton became a borough between 1219 and 1242, Honiton a little earlier and Newton Abbot a little later. Crediton, it is thought, may have become a borough about the year 1200. It is described in a deed of Bishop Briwere, dated 3rd Dec., 1242, as “our new borough”. In that deed, the Bishop granted “the land known as Joscelin’s Mount within the Manor of Crediton for the support of a hermitage founded and dedicated by himself in honour of the glorious Virgin Mary, adjoining the Chapel of St Laurence within our new borough of Crediton, and of its first hermit, Brother Nicholas, and all his successors there serving God”. The portion of the town which was then assigned to the Borough was afterwards known as the West Town.

In A.D. 1307 two citizens of the borough, Stephen le Layleur and Pagan le Carpenter, were summoned to the Parliament of Edward I at Carlisle, but the expense proved such a burden that, in common with many other boroughs, Crediton soon afterwards petitioned to be relieved of the obligation to send representatives to Parliament.

In 1569 a fine bronze seal was in use, bearing the legend “The Selle of the Borowe Towne of Credyton”, the device being a bishop in vestments and mitre, standing facing, raising his right hand in benediction and holding a pastoral staff, the date 1569 across the field. It has been stated that the seal was granted in 1469, but in that case the date would have been written in Roman notation as Arabic numerals were not then in use in this country. (Hugh Deane, Clerk to Crediton Church Governors, 1551-1583, used Roman numerals in the Church Accounts down to the year 1573.)

Today, Crediton Borough is but a matter of history and the powers of local government are vested in the Urban District Council and the Devon County Council, created by the Local Government Act of Parliament, 1889.

THE WOOLLEN INDUSTRY

The Woollen Industry was so important in Crediton during the Middle Ages and down to the 19th century that it deserves a chapter to itself.

Today, when we speak of “manufactured goods” we think of factory or machine-made goods, but the word “manufacture” really means “made by hand” and it was in use centuries before factories or power-driven machines were even dreamt of. The oldest, the greatest and the most widely distributed manufacturing industry of this country was the making of woollen cloth which was carried on here as early as the 12th century: but it was a very coarse cloth, and although for many centuries no land in Europe produced so much wool as England, we could not compete with the Flemings in the manufacture of fine woollen cloth. During the Middle Ages much of our wool was exported to Flanders, from which country we bought fine cloth until Edward III introduced Flemish weavers into London and the Eastern Counties.

The wool trade enriched many people, and many old manor houses and fine churches up and down the country are evidence of the prosperity it brought. Even to this day the seat of the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords is known as “The Woolsack”. It seems quite probable that the people of Crediton who, between 1415 and 1545, gave so generously to the rebuilding of the nave of the Parish Church had made their fortunes in the wool trade. This surmise is given weight by the fact that the scarcity of labour following the Black Death of 1348-9 had compelled many landowners to turn much of their tillage land into sheep-run.

In the 13th century Crediton was already an important market for the wool trade, a position it held until, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the serge market was transferred to Exeter about the time when the Bishops of Exeter finally parted with the Manor of Crediton. During the 14th and 15th centuries the industry steadily grew and two very important changes occurred. The first was that those who made the cloth ceased, by degrees, to sell it to those who used it, but sold it to dealers who bought large quantities to sell again. Thus there arose a class of “middlemen” as they are called today. These dealers were known as “drapers”.

The other change that came about very gradually during the 15th century was more important still. The method in which the woollen industry was carried on changed from the guild system to the domestic system. Under the guild system goods were made by the master-man with the help of one or two apprentices and journeymen. The masters bought the materials, made the goods and sold them, taking the profits. Thus the tools and the materials employed were their own and the work was done in their own homes. Under the domestic system the work was still done in the homes of the workers; there might still be masters, apprentices and journeymen; but the master men were no longer really independent for they did not own the materials they worked upon. A wholesale dealer bought the raw material, supplied it to the workers, received the finished article and paid the workers for their labour. He took all the risks that the goods might not sell well (as indeed they did not towards the end of the 18th century), but he also took the profits. In the case of the wool industry under the guild system, the spinner bought the wool and spun it into thread or yarn which he sold to the weaver who wove cloth and sold it to the cloth-finishers. These, after all the processes were complete, sold it to the consumer or draper. Under the domestic system, a “clothier” bought wool and gave it

out in turn to spinners, weavers, fullers and dyers, receiving the cloth produced and paying the craftsmen for their work. Thus the artisans or craftsmen became wage-earners in the employ of the dealers.

From “Glimpses of the Past” we learn that, in Crediton, “serge-making was, down to the early years of the 19th century, an exceedingly important industry, and many operatives were employed in making the yarn in the ‘chain linhays’ and in weaving it, and hand looms were to be found in nearly every cottage, at which the cottager and his wife utilised every moment of their spare time in weaving so as to add to the scanty income of the family”. Amongst the woolstaplers and sergemakers with capital, who found the buying of the wool and getting it woven into woollen goods and selling them a very profitable business, were the Tuckfields, Fulfords, Vicarys, Eamses, Yellands and Madges. The author of “Glimpses of the Past” (the late Mr Wm. Pope) had in his possession an order from the Buying Committee of the East India Co. to Mr Thomas Madge of Landscore, Crediton, for 7,500 Green Ferril Long Ells of good quality serge for export to China, showing that Crediton was one of the most important centres for the manufacture and supply of these goods.

Thomas Westcote in “A View of Devonshire” written in 1630 says of the people of Crediton that “their market for kersies hath been very great, especially of the finer sort; for the aptness and diligent industry of the inhabitants (for making such cloth) did purchase it a super-eminent name above all other towns, whereby grew this common proverb – as fine as Kirton spinning; which spinning was very fine indeed: ... it is very true that 140 threads of woollen yarn spun in that town were drawn together through the eye of a tailer’s needle; which needle and threads were, for many years together, to be seen in Watling Street in London, in the shop of one Mr Dunscombe, at the sign of the golden bottle.”

According to “Scraps of History” published in 1852 on the occasion of the Fancy Fair, “at the time of the great fire (1743), fourteen or fifteen hundred serges were made every week in Crediton: but in the beginning of the present (i.e. the 19th century) it is likely that the trade was more than doubled, as it is a well-known fact that one of the largest manufacturers in the town – and there were many established there – often made 500 pieces of serge weekly. The names of Shute, Brown, Fulford, Madge, Bury, Langdon, Prickman, Emes, Yelland, Reed and many others will long be remembered in connection with this once prosperous manufacture, which has so declined, that there are now but two manufacturers who employ weavers at Crediton, and they have only branch establishments there. The Messrs. Maunder of Exeter and Gilbert Doke Vicary Esq., of Northtawton, ... now alone give employ to the greatly diminished number of weavers at Crediton.”

Today, all that is left to remind us in Crediton of this once flourishing industry are certain Weavers’ Charity monies and the memory, lingering among some of the older inhabitants, of former names of parts of the town. What is now “People’s Park” was once known as “The Racks” where the serges were spread to dry after having been dyed, and the lower part of Park St. (near Butts Park) was known as “Spinning Path” because in fine weather the inhabitants would bring their spinning wheels outside to work in the open air.

The decline of the industry here during the Industrial Revolution was undoubtedly mainly due to the more favoured position of the Yorkshire manufacturers

in respect of coal, communications and ports, but the following passage from Vancouver's "Survey of Devon" written in 1808 suggests an additional reason of some importance: "These woollens, as formerly manufactured (i.e. long ells made in Devon), were often rejected in the markets of India: and many thousand pieces were returned to Europe, and thrown upon the tradesmen's hands. ... Would it not, therefore, be advisable for the East India Co. to regulate their purchases in such a manner, that each piece should consist of a specific number of bars, each bar to be forty threads, to be full 29 yards in length, and to be subject to the same regulations and inspection as in Yorkshire, both with respect to the fineness and closeness of the web?" It is clear that the Yorkshire manufacturers not only adopted new methods and new machinery ahead of their competitors in other parts of the country, but that by their insistence on quality in their goods they managed to maintain and even improve their position in the world market during the Napoleonic Wars and after. Such woollen mills as have survived in this part of the country owe their existence to some special character or quality of their goods.

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY IN CREDITON

The story of the Church in Crediton has been told at length in “The Records of the Church and Parish of Crediton” (Barnes & Co.) and elsewhere so that, here, a summary of the facts will suffice.

A.D.

- 680 Birth of Winfrith, later St. Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz and Apostle of Germany, martyred 5 June, 755.
- 739 A monastery founded at Crediton.
- 909 Consecration of the first Bishop of Crediton, in charge of the Church in Devonshire.
- 1050 Leofric, Bishop of Crediton, removed to Exeter to become the first Bishop of Exeter.
- 1150 The present church, dedicated to the Holy Cross, was commenced about the middle of the 12th century. By
- 1334 the nave had become ruinous and in 1413 was said to be “nearly levelled to the ground”. In 1511 the church was still in a bad state and in 1523 “advancing towards desolation”. When Leland visited it in
- 1545 the restoration had been lately completed and the building must have appeared much as it is today.

The oldest part is the interior of the tower, built of stone from the quarries of Posbury and Knowle. The interior of the nave and choir is of Thorverton stone, the capitals of the pillars and the string course in the nave are of Beer stone from a quarry near Seaton, the steps leading to the chancel from under the tower came from the Forest of Dean, and the step under the altar rail is of Plymouth marble.

A previous church, on or near the site of Holy Cross, was dedicated to St Mary and was known as “St. Mary’s Minster”. No trace of it has ever been discovered, not even the foundations, and it is possible that, like most Saxon churches, it was constructed of wood.

About the time of the Norman Conquest, and perhaps as a consequence of Bishop Leofric’s removal to Exeter, the monastery was changed into a College of Ecclesiastical Corporation of eighteen Canons and eighteen Vicars headed by a Precentor. The numbers were later on reduced to twelve of each and their income was derived from twelve Prebends, all being lands within the boundary of the Parish of Crediton, namely: Woolsgrove, Poole (a farmhouse and land immediately adjoining the west end of the churchyard), Henstyle, Stawforde, Aller, Ryge (or Rudge), Woodlonde, Carswylle (Kerswell), Pryscombe (Priestcombe), Crosse, West Sandford and Crede. Rudge and Kerswell are now part of Creedy Park.

1547 At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries by the order of King Henry VIII, the College of Canons at Crediton was dissolved and the parishioners had to pay what was in those days the very considerable sum of £200 to save their church from destruction. However, by a charter, dated the 2nd of April in the first year of the reign of King Edward VI (i.e. 1547) the hereditaments and goods of the Church of England (in Crediton), the fabric itself, with all its appearances, the tythes of the parish with those of Exminster and the Chapelry of Sandford, were vested in 12 Governors, who should have perpetual succession, when the following inhabitants of the parish (three of whom are always to be of Sandford) were named as the first members of this new body corporate – Gilbert Gale, John Bodlygh, Robert Trobridge, Robert Davy, John Holcombe, William Shilstone, Thomas Harrys, John Wele, John Helyer, James Mortymer, John Attwill, and William Moxey. The charter is very particular in enumerating the

various parts of the property thus surrendered to the 12 Governors “in consideration of 200 Pounds of lawful money of England to the hands of our most dear father, Henry the Eighth, late King of England”. The words of the charter are – “The church and burying ground and belfry of the late College of Crediton, and all that house and edifice called the ‘Vestry and the Chapter House’ and the chapel, called ‘Our Lady’s Chapel’, to the same church adjoining, and all the lead, and all the bells, stones, organs, and glass of the same church, vestry, chapter house and chapel; and also all those our messuages, tenements, houses and edifices, called the ‘Vycar’s House’, otherwise, called the ‘Comen Hall, and the Ploume House and Scolehouse’, and all our gardens to the same belonging, etc.”

By this same charter of 1547, later to be confirmed by Queen Elizabeth, the 12 Governors of Crediton Church were to appoint the vicar and two chaplains, and to maintain the Grammar School which was conducted in the Lady Chapel down to the year 1860.

The foundations of some of the buildings mentioned in the Charter were revealed in January, 1903, when a deep trench was cut from east to west through the lower part of the vicarage garden. An account of the discovery was given in the Parish Magazine for May, 1903 and reprinted in “Records of the Parish and Church of Crediton” pp.25 – 27 inclusive.

With but few breaks, the Accounts of the Governors have been preserved from 1551 to the present day. The Accounts of 1558 give us a list of the officials of the Church when Elizabeth came under the throne. Sir John Nichols was parson; under him were Sir Richard, parson’s priest, and a curate “Sir John Hall”. Hugh Deane was “chapel clarke”, Richard Doddridge sexton, Edward Roland was “clarke to the Governors” and there was another “clarke”, Edward Allyn. Gilbert Attwyll was paid 13s/4d for “wrytyng the Corporacion owte of Latyn into Englysshe”.

Hugh Deane served as clerk from 1551 to 1583, and, until 1573, used Roman numerals in the Accounts. One of his annual responsibilities was to go to Exeter and pay £100 to the Queen’s receiver for the fee farm-rent due from Crediton. It took him three days to attend the audit, for which he charged the Corporation 2s/4d with 1s for horse hire. An entry in the Accounts reads “Pd Hugh Deane for his charges and hors hyre 3 several times to Exeter abowte ye church business”. As “chapel clarke” his duty was to “read, sing, teach the choir and play the organs”. For a fuller account of this Crediton Worthy see Miss Cresswell’s paper which was read to the Dev. Assn. at Crediton in 1922.

THE REBELLION OF 1549

On Whitsunday of this year the prayers of the Church of England were to be said for the first time in English instead of Latin as formerly. The change was the cause of a rebellion among country folk in the west and the following account is taken from "Scraps of History, 1852".

"According to Hooker, the people of Sampford Courtenay, (a small place about fourteen miles to the west of Crediton), on Whitsunday, the 9th June, 1549, the day appointed by act of parliament for abolishing the Roman Catholic mass and ritual, and for reading the newly established liturgy in the English tongue, loudly murmured during the time of divine service, and the parishioners assembling the next day, compelled their parish priest to reassume his Popish vestments, and to read the mass as formerly. While this ferment was increasing, a gentleman named Hellions, (a Fleming by birth), who had for some years resided at Sampford Courtenay, endeavoured to restrain the people from further acts of lawlessness, and to persuade them to return to their homes, which so exasperated them, that one Githbridge dispatched him at once with a bill-hook. The rebels then proceeded to Crediton, where they were joined by great numbers, and assumed a very formidable aspect. By this time the Protector and council, hearing that the insurrection was fast spreading, dispatched Sir Peter Carew, with his brother Sir Gawen Carew, into Devonshire, to examine the cause of these commotions, and to endeavour to appease the people; they were met at Exeter by the principal gentlemen of the county, who proceeded with them to Crediton, the headquarters of the rebels, who had fortified the town, particularly the road which led to Exeter. At the town's end were some barns, which commanded the road; these were so strengthened by barriers, that the entrance into the town was completely blocked up. The gentlemen being thus prevented from entering, endeavoured to persuade the malcontents to yield obedience to the laws, and retire to their homes, until finding all persuasion useless, they attempted to force an entrance, but were received with such a volley of shot and arrows that they were compelled to retreat; in this extremity, a servant of Sir Hugh Pollard set the barns on fire, on which a panic seized the rebels, who fled from the town. Notwithstanding the first success of the government, the rebellion in Devonshire continued to increase, until the rebels, now assisted by many leading gentlemen of the county, were strong enough to lay siege to Exeter in regular form, which was so closely invested, that the besieged were driven to subsist on horse-flesh, bran, and other coarse fare. In this extremity, the government sent Lord Russell with a small body of forces, composed in great part of Germans and Italians, who probably had been inured to war under the emperor Charles V, and whose high discipline proved more than a match for the headstrong courage of the rebels, who, in a series of encounters, the last of which took place at Sampford Courtenay, were nearly exterminated. Lord Russell, on his return to Exeter, "finding that the insurgents were still persisting in their evil intentions", sent parties of soldiers to spoil the country around, who executed his orders with such relentless cruelty, that they burnt the houses, and seized and destroyed the property of royalist as well as rebel, so that the country for miles around exhibited one universal scene of desolation, and did not recover its former state for many years".

CREDITON CHURCH IN MODERN TIMES

1721 At his death, the library of Thomas Ley, Vicar since 1689, was bequeathed to the Church Governors for the use of the Vicar and Chaplain, and it is now housed in the little room over the south porch, approached by a stairway in the wall behind the font. The chained Bibles are an interesting reminder of the days when books were scarcer and therefore more valuable than they are today. One of the Bibles is known as the "Vinegar Bible" by reason of a misprint in the passage relating to the Parable of the Vineyard.

1774 The peal of bells, with the exception of the tenor, 4ft. 6in. across, which is dated 1814, was cast in 1774. The treble is inscribed, "I call, all ye follow me".

1887 On the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Celebration, the whole of the hideous box pews, which had been erected of every possible size, and facing in every direction, were swept away, and replaced by oak seats with carved ends, whilst the old flooring was entirely removed, and replaced by Italian mosaic work in the chancel, and tile or wood paving elsewhere. The disfiguring galleries were removed, and the beauty of the interior, long hidden by plaster and whitewash, was once more disclosed. The choir stalls were placed under the central tower, and the chancel raised four steps above the nave. The pulpit, of Mansfield stone, was also erected at this time.

1894 The beautiful oak lectern, representing an eagle, was carved and presented to the church by Mr John Mortimer, a Governor of the Church.

1896 During alterations to an apartment beneath the Governors' Room, a workman discovered a bag of coins between the joists in the ceiling. In all, there were 1,884 coins of a weight of 19¾ lb, ranging in date from 1551 to 1683. (See "Records of the Church" p.31 and "Glimpses" p.28.)

1897 In commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the East window over the High Altar was filled with handsome stained glass.

1904 The very ornate font cover of Devonshire oak was presented to the church in memory of Mr William Dart.

1908 The church was the scene of the funeral of General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., who was interred in the family vault with full military honours before a vast crowd of people.

1909 On a brass near the lectern is recorded the Millenary Service held on June 9th to commemorate the consecration of the first Bishop of Crediton. Eight Bishops, including His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, attended this service.

1911 The Buller Memorial over the West tower arch in the nave was unveiled by Earl Fortescue, Lord Lieutenant of Devon, on June 3rd.

During this year, also, the old thatched cottages and the Ring o' Bells Inn on the south-east corner of the churchyard were removed as a memorial of the Coronation of King George V.

1921 The present organ was installed at a cost of nearly £5,000 as a memorial to Kyrtonians who gave their lives in the Great War, 1914-18. It should not be confused with a former instrument, which, according to the account of 1852, the Governors had made, "by their great expenditure, one of the finest in the West of England".

1924 The reredos above the High Altar was erected in memory of the Rev. W.M. Smith-Dorrien, Vicar since 1901.

1942 On 27th April the church was damaged by a bomb which fell in Palace Meadow. Much glass was broken, especially on the north side, and the clock face on the tower was displaced.

The rails before the High Altar are a memorial to Mr John Symes, for 42 years Clerk to the Governors, and the Lady Chapel altar rails are the gift of a Governor, Mr. S.B. Francis. A carved oak coffer which stands in the church is considered to have been made by Flemish or French craftsmen in the 16th century.

Ancient monuments in the church include that of Sir John Sully and his lady at the east end of the south choir aisle. Sir John, who fought at Crecy and Poitiers under the Black Prince, died in 1387 at the great age of 105. Not long before his death he was called on to give evidence in a lawsuit as an eye-witness of events which had taken place many years earlier.

The Peryam and Tuckfield tombs are on the north side of the chancel. Sir William Peryam of Fulford (now Shobrooke Park) was Baron of the Exchequer in 1592 and sat as one of the judges at the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots, at Fotheringay. After his death in 1605, Fulford came into the possession of the Tuckfield family.

Opposite these monuments are the sadly battered sedilia, which are backed by a canopied recess, possibly an Easter Sepulchre, in the south choir aisle.

The Governors' Room, part of the 13th century Chapter House, contains some interesting antiquities, including armour, some leather trappings of the Cromwellian period, and a very old clamped chest.

ST. LAURENCE CHAPEL

The following article, by the Rev. G.T. Llewellyn, vicar of Sandford, is taken from the Parish Magazine for May, 1902.

“It is not recorded when St. Laurence Chapel was built. It could not have been much before or after the year A.D. 1200 – about 50 years after the oldest part of Crediton Church was built – and 200 years before its present chancel and nave. Certain it is, the chapel was complete in 1242 when Bishop Brewer founded a “recluserium” or residence for one recluse or anchorite, a monk or notably pious man, who would live a solitary life in his cell, adding sanctity to the chapel, spending his time in devotion, and giving spiritual counsel to any who sought it from him. Bishop Brewer endowed the recluserium with certain lands on Mount Josceline, probably the ancient name for the slope on the north side of Crediton town.

On April 19th, 1278, Bishop Bronescombe granted a license to Sir Laurence Richardson giving him the right to be buried in the chapel, and he and his lady were in due time buried there, probably under the altar beneath the east window.

It is not unlikely that a house for leprous people stood near by, and that the chaplain of St. Laurence Chapel tended them.

At the beginning of the 15th century there was a great outcry in the town. John Matthews, the chaplain of St. Laurence, had complained to the Bishop, that certain iniquitous persons, whose names he did not know, had broken into the chapel, and had carried off charters and muniments of great value, vestments also, and oblations and gifts of the faithful. The Dean of Crediton, and the Rural Dean of Cadbury, were forthwith commanded by Bishop Stafford, publicly to denounce the offenders in the accustomed manner; that is, to pronounce them excommunicated with all the lawful forms and anathemas of “bell, book and candle”. The result is unknown to us.

St. Laurence Chapel was originally well endowed with land in Crediton, Kennerleigh and Tedburn parishes. It was “relieved” of these, as well as of its valuables and its roof, by Henry VIII, and was probably in ruins for many years, let alone and preserved, owing to the new owner’s wholesome dread of the fate of sacrilege.

A burying ground surrounded it, which 3½ centuries of tilth and building have destroyed the memory of. But the latest builders near it know the fact well enough.

St. Laurence Green preserves its name and origin to this day; and, until Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, it was the scene of three days town revel and fair, for probably 700 years. It is to be noted that the town, to this day (1902), keeps St. Laurence Fair as its chief one.

Public spirit and good taste have won a victory here at last, and, as a memorial of the great Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, an unsightly piece of barren waste land has been transformed into an attractive public garden, a pleasure to the eye, and a vast improvement to everything surrounding it. But it is still, and must not be forgotten to be, the old historic St. Laurence Green.

EDUCATION IN CREDITON

In 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople, the capital of the European Empire, scattering refugees all over western Europe, and, with them, a flood of ancient Greek learning. To this movement we owe the beginnings of Western Literature and Art, the early development of the Sciences, and, in this country, the foundation of many Grammar Schools in Tudor times. It was quite natural that, after King Henry VIII had destroyed the monasteries and the schools which formed part of the work of the Church, there was felt the need to provide schools where boys could be taught the grammar of the languages (Latin and Greek) which were the key to the "New Learning". Such a school was provided in Crediton in the first year of the reign of King Edward VI, 1547, probably in accordance with his late father's wishes, and the instructions for its creation were embodied in the Charter granted to the 12 Governors of Crediton Church. Very little is known of any school in Crediton prior to this, but there can be no doubt that the clergy and monks of the monastery and the college had laid on them the duty of educating certain boys to become priests and ministers of the church. The tradition of education in this place must therefore extend back into the past at least to the year A.D.739 when the monastery was founded.

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, founded 1547

The quaint inaccuracy of this title will become apparent in the course of this chapter. The following account of the foundation of the School is obtained from the Report of the Charity Commissioners published in 1830 in which are quoted the letters patent of King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth authorising and confirming the creation of the Church Corporation Trust, including the Grammar School.

"And his said Majesty (Edward VI), instigated by the affection which he bore toward the children within the County of Devon, that they might therefore be endued with more polished learning that was formerly usual, thereby erected and founded, for ever, a free grammar school in the said parish, to be called "the King's New Grammar School of Crediton".

"Queen Elizabeth, by letters patent, bearing date 5th July, in the second year of her reign, reciting the aforesaid letters patent of King Edward VI, confirmed the same;" and further decreed that the School was thenceforth to be called "Queen Elizabeth's Free Grammar School at Crediton, ... and that the governors should distribute £8 yearly amongst four poor boys of the parish of Crediton, appointed by them to be scholars of the said school of Crediton, of the best disposition and capacity for grammatical learning, and who should most stand in need of exhibition and maintenance, equally to be divided for their help and support, such boys to be called Queen Elizabeth's Grammar Scholars at Crediton".

"By a decree, made in the court of Exchequer, 12th June, 22nd (year of) James I," the Governors were ordered to pay yearly to "ten poor scholars of Crediton school, whereof Queen Elizabeth scholars should be four, equally to be divided, £20; towards maintenance in the universities of three that should have been poor scholars of that school, to each, £6-13s-4d yearly for five years after they should come to the university and no longer; to the master of Crediton school for his stipend, out of which he should allow £10 per annum to an usher, for teaching poor children of Crediton to read and write, £40".

Down to the year 1808 this order, in so far as it concerns the appointment of an usher to teach poor children to read and write, had not been obeyed, the master having been paid only

£30 p.a. From Michaelmas, 1809, the master's salary was to be £30 p.a. plus £5 p.a. for each day scholar from Crediton or Sandford. In May, 1823, the number of such boys was about 20 to 25. One guinea was also paid to the master as a gratuity by the parents or friends of each day boy. At this time, also, there were 20 to 30 boarders. "All the boys of the school receive a classical education".

The Commissioners also note that "the sum of £8 only is now given amongst four poor boys in the grammar school, appointed by the governors, called Choristers; and no trace is found of this allowance having been extended to a larger number, in pursuance of the directions of that decree" (of James I).

In 1572 the Lady Chapel of the Parish Church was bricked off to be used as the Grammar School until 1860 when a "new building in the Tudor style" was erected at the west end of the town. This has since been remodelled as the main Boarding House. The Church Governors managed the affairs of the School until the year 1880 when its own Governing Body was created. The members provided by the Church Governors had a majority of one in the new Governing Body.

Under the Education Act of 1902, the Devon County Council as Local Education Authority, was enabled to make grants in aid of the School. The grant in 1912 was £300, but ten years later it had risen to nearly £4,000, clear proof that the endowments and income from school fees were no longer sufficient to maintain the School. In 1923 the Governors agreed to alter the status of the School and to allow it to become "fully maintained" by the L.E.A., subject to the understanding that the endowments would be left in their hands for the provision of special scholarships at the School and Universities and for other needs. The decision was a wise one for in June 1936 were opened the new teaching buildings at the back of the Boarding House, buildings which the Governors could not have provided but which were well within the powers of the L.E.A. The amenities of this finely equipped School were augmented still further in 1940 when a swimming pool with filtration plant were sited between the new buildings and St. Martin's House, a boarding house for juniors.

By the Education Act of 1944 tuition fees were abolished and the School might be considered to have become once more "Queen Elizabeth's Free Grammar School at Crediton" were it not recognised that the rate-payers of Devon and tax-payers in general are now privileged to bear the burdens once borne by the Church Governors with the assistance, later on, of the scholars' parents. Entry to the School is now governed by the Selection Tests conducted by an Examiner on behalf of the L.E.A.

These bare bones of the School's history cannot convey much idea of the fine traditions of scholarship and character-building which have inspired both teachers and taught throughout the centuries of its existence, but they do at least show that, with a wise Governing Body to administer its affairs, the School has moved with the times and survived, full of life and vigour, in an age which has seen the disappearance of similar schools of equally ancient foundations.

(A more detailed account is to be found in the Programme of Celebrations held to commemorate the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the granting of the Charter by King Edward VI.

Crediton High School for Girls was built in 1911 to provide an education for girls similar to that received by boys at a Grammar School. The cost of the building was met in part by the County Council and partly by the Trustees of Sir John Hayward's Charity. Previous to 1911,

secondary education for Crediton girls was provided in private schools like that kept by the Misses Row at 136 High St.

Charity Schools: (17th, 18th & 19th Centuries)

From the numbers given it will be realised that Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School catered for less than ten per cent of the children of the district and entirely ignored the educational needs of girls, very few of whose parents could have afforded private tuition for them. There was, in fact, little or nothing done to educate the great majority of children in the country as a whole until the 19th century. Here and there a dame's school could be found where an old woman took care of her neighbours' children and taught them their letters, and there were some fortunate children who received a fair education in the charity schools which were set up from time to time, but the greater number either ran about the streets idle and ignorant or were apprenticed at a very early age to do work which was often beyond their strength.

Of charity schools Crediton certainly seems to have had its share, for, although the Church Governors ignored the command of James I that they should appoint an usher "to teach the poor children of Crediton to write and read", we find that quite early in the 17th century local benefactors were leaving money for the upkeep of "the English School".

The following notes are culled from the Report of the Charity Commissioners, 1822:

Two Charity Schools, the English School and the Blue School, were united in the year 1814 under one master in the building erected in 1806 under Sir John Hayward's Charity in the fields known as "Paignton (Penton?) Field" and "The Golden Joy".

The English School was originally established in a house at Bowdon Hill at a date unknown. Inscriptions on tablets in the Church state that "Geo. Trobridge, in 1630, gave £20 towards the maintenance of the English School; John Cole, in 1640, gave £20 which was bestowed in lands, for the maintenance of an English School for the poor children of Crediton; and that Roger Tuckfield, in 1683, gave £20 to be kept in stock, the profit to be applied towards teaching poor children to read English within the West Town." The permanent funds of the School consisted of:- "the rent of two fields in this parish, containing about 7½ acres, called Charity School meadows; an investment of £200 in 3% consols, purchased in 1782; and a yearly rent charge on a field called Thomas's close at the end of Turnagain-lane, to be paid to the schoolmaster of the English School on Bowdon Hill, and his successors, in augmentation of his and their salary, for teaching poor children to read."

"The Blue School was established near the church-yard, and the following were its permanent funds: A rent of £4 charged by the will of Mrs Mary Trenchard, 13th Sept 1728, upon her demesne lands in Shobrooke and Crediton; Ten shillings per annum out of a field called Dickersham, in respect of Thomas Colliton's gift, 1734; other monies, including bequests from Mrs Elizabeth Tuckfield, (1807), George Bodley, (1817), and William Elston, (1821), also subscriptions and collections after sermons."

The United Charity Schools, as the English and Blue schools were styled after their amalgamation in 1814, also received "£20 per annum as a donation from the governors of Crediton, out of the tithes, etc., held by them", while subscriptions and collections amounted to about £95 per annum. The average expenditure was as follows:

| | £ | s | d |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|
| Clothing 55 boys and girls | 105 | 0 | 0 |
| Schoolmaster's salary | 65 | 0 | 0 |
| Schoolmistress's do | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Rewards to the children | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Books, stationery, coals & sundries | <u>28</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| | <u>230</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |

“The schoolmaster, besides the above-mentioned salary, receives £7 per annum from the governors of Crediton, which is given to him in addition to their annual donation of £20 paid to the treasurer of the charity.”

“A committee of subscribers meets every month for the admission of children, and the general management of the charity. Visitors of the school are also appointed, and two general meetings are held in the year; at one of which an annual treasurer is chosen, by whom the income is received, and disposed of under the direction of the committee. The number of children in the school at the time of our inquiry was 142 boys and 89 girls, residing in the parish of Crediton, admitted on the recommendation of subscribers, and instructed on the Madras system. The girls are taught knitting and sewing; and some of them are instructed in glove-making, under Sir John Hayward's charity. The children who are clothed are selected at the general meetings, as being the most deserving. The accounts for the year are audited at one of the general meetings.”

Dunn's School

Samuel Dunn, “teacher of the mathematics, and master for the longitude at sea”, in 1794 left money to be invested to produce £30 per annum to pay a master at the school at the foot of Bowdon Hill (where he had formerly taught), “residing therein, of the Church of England but not in holy orders, an able teacher of writing, navigation, the lunar method of taking the longitude at sea, planning, drawing and surveying, with all mathematical science ... to the intent that he should faithfully instruct at least six boys of the Church of England, descendants of the above Dunn, Harris or others residing at Crediton, for one whole year, gratis, and so on from year to year.”

The school mentioned was the English School, previous to its union with the Blue School.

At the time of the Charity Commissioners' inquiry, the dividends on the stock were received by the clerk of the governors and paid to a schoolmaster appointed by them who resided in the school house at the foot of Bowdon Hill. He instructed twelve boys in reading, writing and arithmetic, in a few instances adding mensuration and land surveying. “He states himself to be competent to teach navigation, but no application has been made to him for that purpose, during the time that he has been master of the school. No particular age is fixed for the boys admission into or quitting the school.”

The very close connection between religion and education during the period of the charity schools is well brought out in these quotations from the Charity Commissioners' report of

Sir John Davie's Gift (to Sandford)

“Sir John Davie, baronet, by his will bearing date 1st Jan, 1677, gave to the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of Sandford, and their successors, a yearly rent charge of £16 ... to be bestowed by them for the benefit of poor people's children of the said parish, viz., to some understanding and honest man, fit to keep an English school, £10 yearly, for which sum the said schoolmaster was to teach twenty poor children of the said parish, whose parents received pay monthly, and should be willing to keep them constantly at school; and for want of twenty such children, the number to be made up of others whose parents were least able to pay for their schooling, and most willing to send them there, where the said schoolmaster should teach them to read the Bible, and say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Church Catechism, for two years; and in case the said scholars should not then, in the judgment of the minister of the parish, be competently perfect, that then the schoolmaster, at his own cost, should teach such imperfect scholars till they should be perfect, but his stipend to go on for twenty new scholars, ...; and he further directed, the said churchwardens and overseers, out of the remaining £6 of the said annuity, to bestow £5-10s in blue cloth caps and coats for ten of the poorest children of the said twenty, on their first admission to the school, and the remaining 10s in books for them; and that in the next year, the remaining £6 should be bestowed by the officers aforesaid, with the advice of the chaplain, in twenty Bibles for the said twenty scholars at their dismissal from the school, to keep and carry with them for their use and benefit.”

Education & the State: 1833 to 1944

In 1833 the State for the first time gave positive help to the cause of education when the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury began to make annual grants towards funds for the erection of schools. (£20,000 in that year, increased to £30,000 by 1839) In England, this money was applied in aiding local effort through the British and Foreign Schools Society (Non-conformist, founded 1808) and the National Society for the Education of Children according to the Principles of the Church of England (founded 1811).

In 1839 Inspectors of Schools were appointed and in 1861 was evolved the system known as “payment by results” whereby the Treasury grant was with-held in proportion to the number of children failing to pass “standards” of attainment considered suitable for their age.

In 1870 the first of a long series of Education Acts of Parliament was passed. This Act made every parent responsible for seeing that his or her child received instruction in Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic (the three r's). School boards were to be elected in areas where the provision of schools was deemed to be insufficient for the needs of the district, and they were empowered to build schools out of rates and taxes. In due course the School Boards appointed Attendance Officers (“Board men”) to enforce the School Attendance Bye-laws. (The Attendance Officer is first mentioned in the Hayward Boys' School Log in May, 1879.) Meanwhile the children were still obliged to bring their “school pence” each Monday morning, until in 1891 the Abolition of Fees Act removed a burden which bore heavily on the poorest

families. (From the same Log-book, May, 1889: "The H---s absent because the parents have not the pence for their schooling".)

In 1902 the School Boards were abolished and their powers absorbed by the Local Education Authorities (chiefly Borough or County Councils). Later Acts, culminating in the Education Act of 1944, have sought to provide a comprehensive scheme of education for the whole nation, child and adult. To-day, every parent must cause his or her child to receive an education suitable to the child's "Age, Ability and Aptitude" (the three A's). The age at which children have been permitted to leave school has been progressively raised, and, on April 1st 1947 school attendance became compulsory for all children between the ages of five and fifteen.

(For greater detail, see Clarke's *The Local Government of the United Kingdom*.)

Crediton Schools: 1857 to the Present Day

From Billings' Directory of Devonshire, 1857:

"There are several schools with large endowments; the following are a few of the principal. On an eminence a short distance from town is HAYWARD'S CHARITY SCHOOL, for educating and clothing 120 children. This establishment is supported out of funds arising from property in the county of Kent, which has latterly been recovered out of Chancery, in which Court it had been for a great number of years. Mr James Bradford, Master; Susan Amery, Mistress.

The FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL is held in a room forming part of the Church. Rev John Manley, Head Master; Mr John L. Capper, Second Master; Mr Alfred Edwards, Third Master.

There is a CHARITY SCHOOL on St. Lawrence's Green, partly supported by the Vicar, and the children's pence. Number of scholars, 40. Fanny Welsford, Mistress. On St. Lawrence's Green is a CHARITY SCHOOL supported by the Vicar, and the payments of the children. Number of children, 40. Eliza Westcott, Mistress. There is a MIXED SCHOOL on the British system, supported by contributions and the payments of the children, of whom there are about 50. Esther Davey, Mistress. At the bottom of Church Lane, adjoining the Churchyard, is the INFANT SCHOOL for boys and girls. Average of both sexes, 60. Mr R. Norris, Master; Eliza Booth, Mistress. There is a small school at KNOWLE, supported by Miss Sillifant. Number of children, 50. Ann Avery, Mistress."

Note: The Hayward Charity School mentioned by Billings probably succeeded the United Charity Schools described in the Report of the Charity Commissioners of 1823, occupying the building at Penton in fields formerly known as "the Paignton field and the Golden Joy". Neither this, nor the school mentioned in the account of Dunn's School and marked in the margin should be confused with:

The Hayward Schools, East St.

Sir John Hayward, knight, of Rochester, Kent, died in 1636, leaving property to be applied for "the erection of workhouses to set the poor on work, and otherwise for the relief of the poor" in such wise as the trustees (of whom two were members of the Buller family) should think fit, "so as the parish of St Nicholas, Rochester," should be one of the parishes to benefit. The property remained under the control of the Court of Chancery until nearly two centuries

later when Mr James Buller of Downes, a descendent of one of the original trustees, secured a part of it for the erection of the above-mentioned buildings at Penton. Later on this had to be sold and the money repaid to the Court of Chancery, which, however, soon afterwards approved a scheme for the erection of the present Hayward School buildings in East Street in 1858.

The first Headmaster, Mr James Bradford, opened the new school in 1860, retiring two years later when he was succeeded by Mr R.E, Hall, (1862-1899). Under Mr and Mrs Hall the Schools carried on the tradition of the charity schools, ability to read the Scriptures being among the foremost aims of the teaching as the following Log-book entry for 24th May, 1870 shows:

“I am pleased to find, on inquiry, that most of the lads are in the habit of reading portions of the Scriptures to their mothers, principally on Sunday evenings. The Bible is the text-book in reading with the poor. ‘My boy can read the Bible or the Testament’, and it is the height of ambition with some of the mothers to add ‘Yes, like a parson, too’”.

In that year there were about 400 children in the Schools, and other items of interest recorded during the year included the admission of boys from Dame Schools; East Town Cattle Fair in the streets (11 May); a parade of Yeomanry Cavalry at Downes; an outbreak of Typhus Fever; the emigration of a whole family to the United States; boys collecting acorns for feeding pigs at 1s/2d per bushel; the opening of the new Masonic Lodge in Union Road; and a death from Scarlet Fever.

Teaching in the three departments, Boys’, Girls’, and Infants’, was given under the “monitorial” system. A number of classes, each in charge of a monitor or pupil-teacher, occupied one large room under the general supervision of a master or mistress. In one room can still be seen the heads of brass pins driven into the floor to mark a semi-circular line on which the children grouped themselves around a monitor. Supplies of books and equipment were poor, but probably improved as time went on, for in 1888 slates were “no longer allowed in working questions in arithmetic”.

On March 15th, 1889 an Inspector of Factories called to ask about the attendance of children who worked half time and were under the age of 18 years. On the 18th it is recorded that “S.W. will work as a ‘half-timer’ at Messrs. Gimblett, Son, & Co. Ltd. (Boot and Shoe Makers), he having reached Standard 4.” This boy was one of several who had been working full time for six or seven months.

The following year, all unknowingly, Mr Hall had the privilege of enrolling a future Cabinet Minister when, on 2nd Sept, 1890, he admitted Ernest Bevin, aged nine years, who later became Secretary of the Transport & General Workers’ Union, Minister of Labour in Mr Churchill’s war-time Coalition Government, and Foreign Minister in the Labour Government of 1945 - ? Ernest left school for work in March, 1892, nine months after he had reached Std.4 and could claim a “Labour Certificate”.

In August, 1893, Mr E. Titcombe commenced duties as an Assistant Master, and when Mr Hall retired at the end of 1899, he succeeded to the Headmastership. In spite of the limits imposed by the law as it then stood, the curriculum had gradually broadened during the 19th century until, at the beginning of the 20th, it included Geography (mainly Physical Features), History (mainly dates) and Object Lessons, the aim being to give the child a background of general knowledge in addition to a thorough grounding in the three R’s. Mr Titcombe soon introduced Gardening, and, later, Woodwork, with excellent results. The Woodwork classes were taken in an ordinary class-room with the desks pushed to one side, and the work benches were “home-made” from the wood of old desks. In time the Object Lessons gave way to more

comprehensive schemes of work in Nature Study and General Science, and the Geography and History studies became humanised, and so the foundations of the modern curriculum were laid.

When Mr Titcombe retired in 1933, the Schools were on the brink of re-organisation into Junior and Senior Schools, and in 1937 the new Junior School buildings were put up, partly on the boys' playground and partly on an adjoining orchard, with a new entrance from Dean St. which took off a strip of the School gardens. Pending provision of suitable accommodation for the older children, the new premises were occupied by the Girls' and Infants' Department. (There were originally three Departments, but the Girls' and Infants' were merged under one Headmistress some twenty years ago.) During the war of 1939-45 a Central Kitchen was installed in the former Infants' School to provide school meals over a wide district, while the Civil Defence organizations occupied the vacant rooms of the former Girls' Dept. When these were vacated at the end of hostilities they were taken over by the Boys' Dept. for practical workrooms and dining hall. During the 'thirties, the County Education Committee made a substantial grant towards the cost of levelling a playing pitch in Newcombe's Meadow on the understanding that the Hayward Schools would have first claim on the use of it.

The latest development in this year of grace, 1948, is the erection of two huts in the boys' playground. One will provide two classrooms for the G.& I. Dept. and the other is to be a Woodwork & Metalwork Instruction Room for the boys. This provision forms part of the Government's emergency plans to meet the shortage of accommodation which is a direct consequence of the raising of the school-leaving age. An adjoining drill hall is already occupied by the Girls' Dept. for the time being.

In 1934 the Hayward Trustees handed over the fabric of the Schools to the Local Education Authority, but they continued to be represented on the Body of Managers, and by the terms of their Trust are able to provide equipment and amenities for the Schools which, although desirable, might not be considered essential by the L.E.A. The Schools have been well served by their chairmen, outstanding among whom have been General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C. and the present holder of the office, Sir John Shelley, Bart., who is also chairman of the Devon County Council.

Landscore Infants' School, alias "Barnschool" was built in 1880 by the School Board at a cost of £700, and was supposed to accommodate 120 children. There are two Private Schools for juniors and infants, both in Searle St., St Boniface School and Crediton Prep. School.

COMMUNICATION: ROADS

General: For more than 1300 years after the Romans left Britain (A.D.410), the roads of this country generally were badly neglected, and the majority of them were mere pack-horse tracks. In summer, and at all seasons in the chalk and limestone country, they were rough but passable. In winter, however, and especially where the land was chiefly heavy clay, it was often impossible for wheeled traffic of any kind to get through. During, and for some time after, the Middle Ages, the traveller had also to run the gauntlet of wandering bands of robbers and solitary highwaymen who infested the still well-wooded countryside. These conditions did not matter so much during the Middle Ages when there was comparatively little commerce, but when during the 16th and 17th centuries commerce became large and increasing, the improvement of the roads became a matter of great urgency. This improvement could hardly have been brought about under the old system of management which placed responsibility for the upkeep of the highway on the people of the parishes through which it passed. These had neither the skill nor the will to act as unpaid road-menders for the strangers passing through their district, and it was not until Turnpike Companies were formed under Acts of Parliament³ during the 17th and 18th centuries that attempts were made to suit the roads to the traffic. For some time efforts had been made to suit the vehicles to the bad state of the roads with the result that heavily built waggons and coaches, without springs of any kind and with huge wheels, churned the highways into a worse state than ever.

Under the Turnpike Acts, Trustees were made responsible of sections of the highway, new as well as old, and were allowed to recover the cost by charging tolls on all horses, cattle and vehicles at toll-gates placed across the roads. Some of the toll-gate keepers' houses have survived and can be recognised by the position of the windows which give views of the road in both directions. At first improvement was slow, but towards the end of the 18th century such men as Blind Jack Metcalf, Thomas Telford and John Macadam came to the fore as great road and bridge builders. In 1827 Macadam was appointed General Surveyor of Roads, and his cheap but effective method of forming a surface of broken stones which the traffic would weld into a hard mass was adopted by many of the Turnpike Trusts with good results. "By 1840 there were 22,000 miles of good turnpike roads in England, with nearly 8,000 toll gates and side bars." (G.M. Trevelyan)

The building of railways in the middle of the 19th century dealt the Turnpike Trusts a severe blow, and by 1888, when the newly formed County Councils were given charge of the main roads, most of the Trusts had gone out of business.

During the latter half of the 19th century most of the heavy traffic was being carried by rail or water, and the roads met the demands of horse traffic very fairly, especially after steam rollers came into use. With the coming of the motor age in the 20th century, other problems developed. Not since the railways had "killed" the stage coach had the roads had to stand such fast traffic, even though a speed limit of 20 m.p.h. was imposed by law. Motorists of those early days went muffled in heavy veils or goggles as a protection from the clouds of dust which rose from the broken surface of the roads. The nuisance was overcome for a time by tar-spraying during the summer months, but, as vehicles increased in weight and number during the 1920's and 30's, tarmacadam was evolved to give a harder-wearing non-skid surface.

³ "Between 1700 and 1750 as many as four hundred Road Acts were passed; between 1751 and 1790 sixteen hundred!" (G.M. Trevelyan)

Experiments were also carried out in the laying of concrete roads whilst road- and bridge-widening went steadily on until the outbreak of war called a halt in 1939.

Local: The following account of the Turnpike Roads in the Crediton district and around is gleaned from “A Turnpike Key: An Account of the Proceedings of the Exeter Turnpike Trustees from 12th June 1753 to 1st Nov 1884” by Mr W. Buckingham, Clerk to the Trustees for nearly twenty-five years.

“The first Toll Gates or Turnpikes erected in England are supposed to have been established in 1663 ... within the Counties of Hertford and Cambridge and Huntingdon.”

“The first town in the West of England that applied for a Turnpike Act was Taunton ... in 1752, one year before the Exeter Turnpike Act. ... It was well supported by Mr Thomas Prowse, who put the House into a roar of laughter by undertaking to prove that the roads were then in so bad a state that it would be no more expense to make them navigable than to make them fit for carriages, and that it was necessary to break the ice with a long staff for nine miles out of ten.”

“The earliest Turnpike Acts for Devon appear to have been those for the Exeter, the Honiton and the Axminster Trusts in 1753 ... Ashburton 1754, Plymouth and Tiverton 1757, and Plympton, Modbury and Bideford in 1758.”

“It is not easy for us in the present day (1885) to realise the state of things which brought about these legislative efforts at improvement. Until the middle of the last (18th) century, the condition of the Devonshire Highways had remained almost without change from Medieval times. Wheeled vehicles of any kind were extremely rare. Many inhabitants of the Country Districts passed their lives without having seen one. Even at this day (1885) elderly Devonshire farmers may be found who can remember the first appearance of a Wheeled Cart in their Parishes. It was the rapid increase in the number of vehicles that at length brought forcible to the minds of our Ancestors the necessity for amending their ways.”

“William Chapple (commenting on Risdon’s Survey) compares it (Risdon’s account of Devon roads) with the condition of Devonshire roads in 1785, nearly thirty years after the passing of the earlier Local Turnpike Acts. After enumerating their advantages, he tells us that “These Turnpike roads were at first, by the most ignorant of our farmers, deem’d insupportable Grievances, as charging them with Tolls to which they had been unaccustomed, and which they tho’t altogether needless; having no Idea or Foresight of the Advantages arising from Them to themselves and the Public; but experience has since taught them better, and they have also learnt to improve their private roads, not deepening the track into a ditch as formerly, but by raising the Middle of the Way, and making proper Drains and Ditches on each side.””

“A generation later, we obtain another view of the condition of Devonshire roads in the Report prepared in 1808 by Mr Charles Vancouver for the Board of Agriculture. By this time the duties of the Turnpike Trustees had been so well performed that Mr Vancouver was able to report (on p.370) that “the public roads round Exeter, Axminster, Honiton, and many other large towns in the County cannot be excelled for goodness in any part of England; but the Parish Roads generally, and particularly through the red loamy district, are very indifferent, nay, bad indeed.” After instancing some exceptional improvements, he adds that “the height of the hedge banks, often covered with a rank growth of coppice wood, uniting and interlocking with each other overhead, completes the idea of exploring a labyrinth rather than that of passing through a much frequented country. This first impression will, however, at once be removed on the traveller’s meeting with, or being overtaken by a gang of pack-horses. The rapidity with

which these animals descend the hills, when not loaded, and the utter impossibility of passing loaded ones, require that the utmost caution should be used in keeping out of the way of the one, and exertion in keeping ahead of the other. A cross-way fork in the road, or a Gateway, is eagerly looked for as a retiring spot to the traveller, until the pursuing squadron or heavily loaded brigade may have passed by.””

The Exeter Turnpike Acts

In 1753 Parliament passed “an Act for amending several roads leading from the City of Exeter”. Among the nineteen roads comprised in the Act, “being all the main roads out of Exeter and some important cross roads, altogether about 150 miles”, were:

(The road) “from the bottom of the causeway nearest Northgate, in St David’s, Exeter, to the town on Crediton, and from thence to Bow, otherwise Nymet Tracey”. (Higher Rd.)

“From Crediton to New Building, and from thence to Morchard.”

“From Pyne’s Bridge in Upton Pyne, to Pollard Oak, otherwise Starved Oak, in Upton Pyne.”

“From New Bridge in Newton St. Cyres to Radden Cross in Shobrooke.”

“Before 1773 it was only compulsory, by the General Law, on the Authorities that Highways to a Market Town should not be less than 8 feet wide, and that no Horseway should be less than 3 feet wide!” ... “By the above Act, power was given to widen roads to the extent of 30 feet.”

The roads were divided into eight divisions with a Surveyor or Foreman in charge who was paid from 1s/6d to 1s/10d a day during the working season, March to November. The workmen were paid 7d a day. During the rest of the year the Foreman, with one or two men only, was expected “to fill up the ruts and keep the roads in a passable condition, his wages being then 5s a week.”

“On 11th May, 1754, Inspectors of Tolls were appointed to watch from 4.0 a.m. to 11.0 p.m. for a fortnight at 2s a day and report to the Committee of the road and enable the Committee to judge the rent each gate was worth.”

“Old coins were still occasionally either in use, or the name used to indicate an amount of money, as on the 14th October, 1756, an order was made for the payment of a “moydore” (value 27s) to Mr Richard Towhill for his loss of ground.”

A new Act in 1773 authorised the making (among others) of the following roads:

“The road branching off from the Turnpike Road, leading from Barnstaple Cross ... to Copplesstone Stone.”

“The road from a gate near Broadway in the Parish of Sandford, through Sandford, Kennerley, Washford Pyne, Woolfardisworthy, Welleridge (Witheridge?), Thelbridge and East Worlington, to Drayford Bridge where the South Molton Turnpike ends.”

“This Act included the Countess Wear and Exe Bridge Trusts.”

“The General Turnpike Act of 1773 regulated the weights which might be drawn on the roads in Summer and in Winter, the number of Horses etc. which might be used in drawing ... and empowered the Trustees to allow an additional number to be used when the Hills rose more than 4 inches in a yard,” ... but “not exceeding 10 for Waggon with 9 inch wheels, or 7 for 6 inch wheels.” Carriages with flat surfaced wheels 16 inches wide could be drawn by any number.

“The first local Act to mention the Stage Coach was passed in 1803. It imposed a separate toll for the stage coach, “3s on Sunday and 2s/6d on other days if drawn by six Horses etc. etc.” It must not be supposed however that Stage Coaches were not in use long before this, as in 1727 a Bath and Bristol Stage Coach was advertised in Exeter, and in 1728 the “Flying Stage Coach” was advertised to run from Dorchester to London in two days.”

The centre arch of Cowley Bridge was washed away by floods in 1809 and 1810. A dispute between the County and City Authorities was not settled until August, 1812. “The Foundation Stone of the new bridge was laid by Mr James Buller and Mr John Quicke on 22nd June, 1813” and it was ready for use some fifteen months later.

“Compositions on a reduced scale had been very generally taken from the Parishes instead of Statute labour (i.e. work required by the Law for the repair of the roads), and in 1810 this amounted altogether to £1,005 – 17 – 11.”

“In 1810 it was reported that ten Stage Coaches passed daily over the roads (of the Exeter Trust as a whole); that the tolls on the Mail Coaches, if they had not been exempted, would have given £401 a year; that the Mails had formerly been conveyed either on foot, or on horseback, or in one-horse carts with two wheels...”

By an Act of 1815, tolls for carriages drawing timber were regulated according to the width of the wheels – the narrower the wheels the higher the tolls because of the greater damage done to the roads. About this time much thought was being given to road-making methods. In 1808 Vancouver writes: “To prevent, in future, the inconvenience arising from the roads being covered with too coarse a material, the Rev. Mr Clay, as way-warden in the parish of East Worlington, supplies the men working upon the highways with iron rings, about four inches in diameter, and through which ... the stones must be broke(n) small enough to pass ... The roads which have been made or repaired under this regulation, sufficiently show the propriety of it.”

“In October 1819, Mr McAdam’s system was adopted in the road from Larkbear to Topsham, and subsequently a Contract was made with Mr Wm. McAdam (son of J.L.McAdam) for 2½ years, at £40 per mile per annum.”

“In 1820 Mr Wm. McAdam was consulted on all the Trust Roads ... and appointed General Surveyor. He resided near Wilton in Wiltshire, and in his letter of 1st May, 1820 he says the Mail Coach passed his door every morning at nine o’clock, and that he would be set down at Exeter at 9’ o’clock the same evening!” Under his management the cost of repairing the roads was greatly reduced, partly by the placing of Contracts for repairs and partly by the use of the system recommended by Mr J.L. McAdam.

“In January, 1823, it was resolved that, owing to the depressed state of agriculture, the demand of Composition of Statute Duty (see top paragraph, this page) should be suspended, the Income of the Trust admitting it. It was never again demanded.”

“On the 5th July, 1825, a Survey was ordered for a new line of road from Cowley Bridge to Crediton, and from thence to a point abreast of Chawleigh, about 18 miles from Exeter,” and by the important Act of 22nd March, 1826, the Trustees were authorised to alter or make the following roads (among others):

“The road from Crediton Forches to Barnstaple Cross.”

“A new road, or divert the present road, from the Three Horseshoes ... to the Spinning Path at the entrance to the Town of Crediton, and passing through Crediton to Narrow Street.”

“A new road, or divert the road, by this Act intended to be made Turnpike, from Narrow Street in Crediton, to or near to Barnstaple Cross aforesaid.”

“A new road, or divert the present road, from Barnstaple Cross to or near to Eggesford Bridge, in the Parish of Chawleigh, so as to join an intended new road from Barnstaple.”

“The road from Crediton Forches aforesaid, through Morchard, to the Turnpike Road near Chawleigh.”

“This Act also directed that, after the completing of the said roads or deviations, the Trustees should be discharged from the repair of the old roads, for which the new should be substituted, viz.: (among others)

“The road from Crediton Forches to Barnstaple Cross.”

“The road from Creedy Lodge gate to Chawleigh.”

“On the 22nd Sept., 1830, a Report was made of the roads, showing that the Draught power had, owing to the improvements made, decreased one-fourth, but in many cases one-third, and in some one-half, less than before the roads were altered.”

“In 1831 an Act was obtained to make certain lines of road, and to permit deviations in existing lines of road, viz.: (among others)

“A road from Barnstaple Cross to the White Hart Inn in Crediton.”

“In the early part of 1831 the new road (from Copplesstone) to Eggesford was opened.”

“On 6th March, 1844, the sum of £2,400 was voted for an improvement at Spencecombe between Crediton and Copplesstone Cross.”

“On the 30th June, 1852, was obtained the last of the Exeter Turnpike Acts. Included in this Act were:

“The roads from the Crown & Sceptre Inn, and near the place where the North Gate formerly stood, in St David’s, Exeter, over St David’s Hill, by way of Cowley Bridge, to the White Hart Inn in Crediton, called the Crediton Road, and from thence to a place called Crediton Forches in the Parish of Crediton, and from Barnstaple Cross in the said Parish to Copplesstone Stone, and also to Bow.”

“The road from Copplesstone Stone to the County Bridge Bound Stone at Eggesford Bridge, in the Parish of Chawleigh, so as to join the Turnpike Road from Barnstaple.”

“The road from Crediton Forches aforesaid, by Creedy Gate, through Sandford, to the bounds of Drayford Bridge in Sandford”.

“The road from the Crediton Road over Pynes Bridge in Upton Pyne to the Great or Starved Oak in Upton Pyne aforesaid, and also the road from the same Crediton Road and commencing from the north side of a bridge called the New Bridge in Newton St. Cyres, to Raddon Cross in Shobrooke.”

“The road from the New London Inn in St. David, by the eastern side of Elmfield House, to Duryard Lodge Gate into the road to Crediton.”

“Also for altering, widening and maintaining the following road (among others):

“A certain portion of Highway, commencing at or near the West Pier of the Entrance gateway of the Crediton Union Workhouse, and terminating at or near Barnstaple Cross Turnpike Gate.”

“A power was also given to relinquish the road between Barnstaple Cross and Forches.”

“This Act also enacted that no Tolls should be taken at the Three Horse Shoes Gate, or the Upton Pyne Gate. This was the first Act that imposed a Toll on a Dog Cart.”

“In September 1862 the Tolls of the Trust were reduced 25%” and on 1st November 1884 the Exeter Turnpike Trust came to an end.

To sum up, the Turnpike System “created in a comparatively short period such a total revolution in the Country as no other system would have been likely to effect. Land-locked

Towns and Districts were made easily accessible, and, as a consequence, innumerable outlets were given for the development of trade, and the number of Conveyances and Coaches of every description rapidly increased.”

COMMUNICATIONS: CANALS

The increase in trade which led to the improvement of roads by the formation of Turnpike Trusts also resulted in the construction of canals for the easier conveyance of such heavy, bulky commodities as coal. James Brindley commenced the Worsley – Manchester Canal for the Duke of Bridgewater in 1759, and, from that date until the dawn of the railway age, many canals were made or planned throughout the country, although not all of them were completed. One of the unfinished projects was

The Exeter – Crediton Canal

which was originally planned as part of a network to cover Mid- and North Devon, connecting Exeter with Bude, Barnstaple, Tavistock and Torrington. The Exeter Guide published about 1835 says

“A meeting was held at Crediton in 1793 for the purpose of making a canal from that town to Exeter and Topsham. The first day’s subscription amounted to £67,600. An Act of Parliament was obtained, lands were bought, but in a year or two it was abandoned.”

By 1808, Vancouver (p.381) was able to write:

“The canal now carrying into execution, from the quay at Exeter to Cowley Bridge, proceeds from the latter point, east of the church, through the parish of Newton St Cyres; and terminates at the four mills, in the parish of Crediton. This work is now completed as far as Exweek; but under the present arrangement, no very sanguine expectations are generally entertained of its being shortly accomplished with a favourable issue.” – Prophetic words indeed! (See facing p.372 of Vancouver’s Report for a map of the canal.)

COMMUNICATIONS: RAILWAYS

General: In 1735 Abraham Darby made coke from coal, and it was found that coke could be used instead of charcoal for smelting iron. During the century that followed, mining for coal increased enormously, especially after 1769, the year in which James Watt patented his steam engine. Much of the coal was hauled from the mines along railways of wood or iron, the power being supplied by human beings, horses or a stationary steam engine. A steam locomotive was invented by a Frenchman named Cugnot in 1763, and another was made by Richard Trevithick in 1802, both to run on the roads, but it was not until George Stephenson, after many experiments, had perfected his "Rocket" in 1829 that the "Railway Age" really came in.

At first, small Railway Companies, running local lines, were formed up and down the country, the majority of them during the periods 1836-7 and 1844-8. "In 1843 there were 200 miles of railway in Great Britain; by 1848 there were 5000." (Trevelyan) At the outset there was no intention of linking up the various lines; there was indeed no standard width between the rails. In the north, Stephenson had adopted a width or "gauge" of 4ft. 8½ins. which already existed in the Newcastle colliery tramroads, while the Great Western was laid with a gauge of 7ft. After years of argument, the narrow gauge won, and was adopted by Parliament in 1846. In 1892 the last of the broad gauge sections of the G.W.R. was converted to a narrow gauge.

In 1844 an Act was passed compelling all Railway Companies to run at least one train each way daily along their lines, passengers to be carried for one penny a mile in covered coaches. For a long time these were known as "Parliamentary Trains".

The great number of small companies gradually merged into a few large ones, and in 1922, as a result of increasing competition by petrol-driven vehicles on the roads, these were re-organised into four: Southern, Great Western, London Midland and Scottish, London & North-eastern. In 1947 the whole of the British Railways were nationalised and unified into one system under that title.

Local: Vancouver is very brief on the subject of railways. Writing in 1808 he states (p.371): "There are no iron rail-roads in any part of this county."

The following account is taken from "The Handbook of North Devon" published by Henry Besley in the mid 1860's: "In 1831 an act was obtained for making a railway, or rather tramway, from Exeter Canal Basin to the site of the present Railway Station at Four Mills, Crediton, under the superintendence of the late Mr James Green. From Pynes bridge to its Crediton Terminus this line followed almost the identical course since occupied by the present railway, but the works were not even commenced; and in 1834 an attempt ... to revive it proved unsuccessful."

"The scheme which at length resulted in supplying the required accommodation was originated in 1844, and strongly supported by J.W.Buller, Esq., M.P., of Downes, and other gentlemen interested in the prosperity of Exeter and Crediton. In the following year, an Act incorporating the Company was obtained with but slight opposition; and in December, 1846, the works were commenced from the plans and under the direction of Robert Dymond Esq., Engineer, of Exeter. In rather less than eighteen months after the first sod had been turned, the railway was completed with a double broad gauge line, at a cost of about £15,000 per mile. For four years, however, it was destined to remain idle and unproductive, whilst two great companies, the Bristol & Exeter, and the London & South Western, struggled for its possession." (Both companies wanted it in order to secure their future extensions to North and

West Devon and Cornwall.) “The shares of the Exeter & Crediton Company were eagerly bought up by both parties; but the South Western Company, by greater activity and liberality, managed to secure the majority. So far as the public were concerned, this state of things was most inconvenient, for the South Western Company having no railway at that time nearer than Dorchester could make no use of this short line, which consequently lay covered with weeds, desolate and untraversed, until in the year 1851, it was finally arranged that the Bristol & Exeter Company, whose line it joined, should take a lease and work it as a branch of their own railway. The opening took place in May, 1851, and was duly celebrated by a public dinner and holiday at Crediton; all the shops being closed, the streets and houses decorated with flags and flowers, and enlivened with music and the usual amusements appertaining to a country fair. Great was the rejoicing in old “Kyrton” on the day which witnessed the long desired approach of the railway train. At length, in July, 1860, the South Western Company after struggling for nearly twenty years, opened their narrow gauge line to Exeter. Immediately after this, preparations were made to join their own property by laying down a mixed gauge to Crediton, and in February, 1862, it was opened; thus affording unbroken communication to the Queen Street Station at Exeter, and the Waterloo Station in London.”

The line from Crediton to Bideford was known in the 1860’s as “The North Devon Railway” as far as Fremington, with the “Bideford Extension” as a separate Company, but being worked under the same name. “The first line was laid out in 1845, as the Taw Vale Railway Extension, and the continuation to Bideford, in 1853, by Mr W.R. Neale, who was formerly engaged under Mr Brunel, during the construction of the Great Western, Bristol & Exeter, and South Devon lines. The works have since been completed under his direction, by Messrs. Brassey & Ogilvie, the eminent Contractors, and principally made for a single line of railway, with the electric telegraph throughout. The original Taw Vale Railway, for which an act was obtained as far back as 1838, extended from Barnstaple to Fremington Pill only ... The works, however, for this short line were not commenced until the Bill for the Extension was brought before Parliament.”

“In 1845 ... the old Taw Vale Company ... projected the extension to Crediton, which after the most determined opposition from the Bristol & Exeter, and other interests ... passed the committees and received the Royal Assent, August 7th, 1846 ... Few lines during their progress have met with greater difficulties and delays, owing to the vexed question of the broad and narrow gauge, of which this and the Crediton formed the battle ground. The South Western Railway Company, in 1846 and succeeding years, contemplating extensions to Salisbury and Exeter over the direct line of the old coach road, were desirous of getting possession of the Exeter and Crediton and Taw Vale, as the key to the western district ... During the costly struggle between the great rival Companies for the dominion of the West, the Taw Vale Company allied themselves to the South Western cause; and the works for about nine miles at the Barnstaple end were commenced and partly constructed for a double narrow gauge line. The ultimate decision of the Board of Trade, however, consigned the territory to the broad gauge, and this (among other reasons) compelled a suspension of operations ... Sufficient means were at last obtained to enable the Company to proceed. They accordingly applied to Parliament, in 1851, for powers to vary their line, reducing the expense of construction, and adopting the name of North Devon Railway ... They resumed their works in February, 1852; the first turf being cut at Coplestone on the 2nd of that month by the late Honorable Newton Fellowes.”

ROAD BRIDGES OF THE CREDITON DISTRICT

For an account of the road bridges of the Crediton district, see “Old Devon Bridges” (by C. Henderson and E. Jervoise), pages 56 to 61 inclusive. A correction should be made on page 57 where the phrase “now by-passed by a concrete bridge” applies in fact to Codshead Bridge and not to Fordton Bridge.

Most of the bridges mentioned appear to have been widened since 1809, and two, Gunstone Bridge and Yeoton (Uton) Bridge were built after that date. Yeoton Bridge was previously a timber bridge carried on stone abutments.

In the late 17th century a number of these bridges were noticed as “being in decay”.

THE CREDITON IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1836

The rapid increase in the population of this country during the 18th and 19th centuries was due very largely to a falling death-rate as medical science increased its power to grapple with disease and to point the way to healthier living conditions. Nevertheless the first Public Health Act did not appear on the Statute Book until 1848, and twenty years passed before it was properly put into effect in the large cities and industrial areas.

In his "English Social History (p.528), G.M. Trevelyan tells how "throughout the (eighteen-) 'forties nothing was done to control the slum-landlords and jerry-builders, those pioneers of "progress" who ... saved space by crowding families into single rooms or thrusting them underground into cellars, and saved money by the use of cheap and insufficient building material, and by providing no drains – or, worse still, by providing drains that oozed into the water-supply."

With such a background in the country at large, Crediton was indeed fortunate that it numbered among its citizens influential and enlightened people whose idea of "progress", so different from that described by Trevelyan, was to improve the town and make it a healthy place to live in. Such ideas, in 1836, must have appeared to many people as very advanced and even revolutionary. Here is an account of the measure which they managed to put through Parliament, as it is recorded in "Scraps of History" 1852.

"In 1836, an Act (though it was strongly opposed before Committees of Parliament) was obtained for paving, lighting, cleansing and otherwise improving the town of Crediton, and the Commissioners (one-third of whom retire from office annually) first appointed for putting the Act into execution were: The Lord of the Manor (who, by the Act, is a permanent Commissioner), J.W. Buller, Esq., E. Adams, Saml. Brown, Peter Blagdon, B. Cleave, Sir H. Davie, Bart., Isaac Davy, W. Drake, sen., Edwin Empson, Giled Edwards, John Fulford, John Francis, (West Town), J. Francis (East Town), Thomas Hugo, C. Holman, C. Hainworth, S. Hugo. John Hall, B. Luxmoore, Wm. Madge, Robert Medland, John Mann, Thomas Pring, William Searle, J.G. Smith, R.H. Tuckfield, George Tanner, John Traies, A. Wreford, John Yolland and E. Yarde." (The John Hann mentioned was a grandfather of Mr John Mann now, in 1949, living in the High St. He opened the first draper's shop in Crediton in 1817.)

"The Commissioners have laid out £7,100 (borrowed on the credit of the Improvement Rates), in making new sewers, a direct road between the East and West Town, and in the widening of the Narrow Street, improving the footways, &c.; and though they have not yet removed every nuisance from the back streets, it must be confessed that they have done so in nearly all the principal thoroughfares, to the great benefit of the public health."

"The same Act also regulates the Market Tolls of the Lord of the Manor, who contemporaneously, with the improvements before mentioned, removed the old shambles, and erected a new market, on the ground behind the Half Moon and Globe Inns, at an immense expense. Mr Buller has also partly built a new street, called Market Street, in which are several fine houses."

"An attempt has also been made to bore an Artesian Well, in the Green, but though water has been obtained, it will not rise to the surface, though, by means of an adit, it is carried through the High St. – and if proper reservoirs were made, it would be of the greatest service on the breaking out of fires, and in watering the Macadamised streets. This spring, however, nearly fails at the close of the very dry summers."

GAS WORKS

(from Scraps of History, 1852)

“Gas works were established (in Crediton) in 1843, by a company, with a capital of £2,000 in £5 shares, which has proved a good investment. Mr Wm. Madge ... is their efficient Secretary. Capt. Holman is the Chairman of the Directors.” (This Capt. Holman is reputed to have fought at the Battle of Waterloo.)

THE TOWN HALL

In 1832, the year of the first Reform Act, the Mechanics' Institution or Literary Society was founded in Crediton, but, owing to the religious or political differences among the townspeople, it did not prosper as it should have done until the year 1850. In that year, R. Otway Esq., of London, gave two readings from Shakespeare in the Infant Schoolroom which was packed with people on each occasion. As a result of the enthusiasm aroused, it was decided to build "Public Rooms" by the issue of £2 – 10s shares, and by donations, to provide a suitable place for the meetings of the Society. The outcome was the building we know as the "Town Hall", lately taken over as the headquarters of the Crediton Branch of the British Legion. It was designed by a Barnstaple man, Mr. R.D. Gould, who was also chosen as the architect. The membership of the Literary Society in 1852 was about 160, with B.W. Cleave Esq. as President, Mr John Bickford, Secretary, and Mr Philip Wood, Librarian.

MARKETS & FAIRS

(from Billings' Directory, 1857)

“Crediton had a market granted to Bishop Stapledon, to be held on a Tuesday, about the year 1309; it is now (1857) held on a Saturday and is generally well attended and supplied by the neighbouring farmers and villagers. There are great markets held monthly, and fairs on 11th May, 21st Aug and 21st Sept. A new market house was erected in 1837 at the expense of the lord of the manor, J.W. Buller Esq.”

Crediton and South Molton were noted places for fairs at which draught oxen were sold.

SOME PAST TRADES OF CREDITON

The fate of the once-flourishing woollen industry in Crediton has been described in an earlier chapter. The impact of the Industrial Revolution and subsequent developments has been equally disastrous for some other local industries, principally the following:

Boot & Shoe Making: This largely took the place of the declining woollen industry here. As in turn, competition from towns more favourably situated with regard to power and ports (notably Northampton) reduced the demand for the Kyrton-made article, this trade also declined. Billing's Directory (1857) mentions 32 Boot & Shoe Makers, some of them, doubtless, employing many hands. By the end of the century only one factory was still running, Messrs Gimblett's next to the Town Hall. Other premises formerly used for this manufacture are, Messrs Jacksons' factory in Union Rd., the Fire Station, Crediton Motor Works and Belle Court.

Leather: Tanners & Curriers: At one time these were important trades in the town and they existed down to the end of the 19th century to supply the demand for leather from local boot and shoe makers, saddlers and harness makers. The decline of the boot and shoe trade, the reduction in the number of horses, and the rise of big tanneries at the ports where imported hides are treated have resulted in the closing of all the tanneries save one, belonging to Mr B. Adams which has survived by reason of the special quality of its product. Sites of former tanneries are at the Hayward Schools and the Urban Council Yard.

Rope & Sail Cloth: Rope and sail cloth were manufactured at Fordton in the 18th and early 19th centuries from hemp and flax grown in the Tedburn district. The demand dried up, of course, when steam power superseded the use of sails.

Malting: The maltster's business was a thriving one in the days when many people and nearly all inn- and hotel-keepers brewed their own ales and beer. Its decline is directly associated with the improvements in transport during the 19th century. These made possible the growth of large breweries where conditions (water-supply, etc.) were especially favourable, and the genuine home-brewed beer became more and more of a rarity. In the same way cider has now been almost entirely a factory product, whereas formerly, the apples were pounded on the farm.

Some of the maltsters carried on as seedsmen and general agricultural merchants, for it happened that as malting declined, trade in seeds and artificial manures increased, and what had at first been undoubtedly a side-line, became, in course of time, the maltster's main business.

Flour Milling: Down to the 1870's much of Britain's bread was made from home-grown wheats, ground at the local corn mill, and, in country districts at least, baked at home. Cheap imports of Empire and foreign wheat from that time onward resulted not only in a reduction of the amount of wheat grown in this country, and especially so in the West, but it also put many a country miller out of business, the imported wheat being milled by the great combines at the ports. In the Crediton district there were flour mills at Four Mills (destroyed by fire), Gunstone, Fordton and Downes, and, of these, only the last-named still operates as a flour mill.

FIRE! FIRE!

The dearth of old and historic houses in Crediton is chiefly due to the disastrous fires which, at one time or another, have obliterated parts of the town. By far the worst of these was that which, on 14th August, 1743, destroyed the greater part of the West Town. The following account is a summary of that written and published the same year.

“This Western Town, ½ mile in length, furnished with spacious and convenient market houses, had a great number of courtleges and alleys branching from it, filled with many families of the industrious poor.”

About the middle of this street, on the S side, fire broke out on Sunday, Aug 14th, about 11 a.m. by the side of a chimney in the thatch. Pumps afforded the only water supply and there had been several weeks drought. A little past noon, the wind veered S (from N.E.) and fire spread to the N side of the street. All houses W of the outbreak fell in a few hours “a prey to the raging element”. Neither engines nor blowing up nor any other means could stop its dreadful progress, and it continued until about 8 p.m. The whole W town, except only a small part was destroyed. Nineteen people perished in the desolation.

In the widest part of the street, 19 yards in breadth, five persons were unawares hemmed in by the flames. Two escaped over the embers of burning houses, the others perished.

At the W end of the town was a large and open field, the Green, over 100 yds long and over 43 wide, surrounded thick with houses. Goods dumped there were later almost entirely lost by the spreading of the fire.

450 families lost their homes and for a long time had no lodging but the open field. A low estimate of the loss put it at £40,000 apart from that covered by insurance. For ½ mile on one side of the street not one house was standing and but a very small spot on the other. 2000 poor people were thrown on the compassion of the public. EXETER collected £600 in a few days for the relief of distress. (Nearly 200 years later, after the “blitz” Crediton repaid, in part, the debt.)

APPENDIX

Our Anglo-Saxon Heritage:

Language

Land Measurement

Local Government

Place Names

List of Books Consulted.

OUR ANGLO-SAXON HERITAGE

Language: For centuries after the Conquest, Norman-French became the language of the ruling classes of this country, whilst English continued to be spoken by the Saxons. When finally the two languages became blended in one it was English that contributed the greater share, although, naturally, a great many Norman-French words passed into English. One interesting result of this merging it to reveal the subject condition of the Saxons by a comparison of our present words for animals dead and alive. The Saxon serf tended the living animal and knew it by its English name, but when it became meat at the Norman lord's table its name had been translated into French, thus:

| <u>Saxon</u> | <u>Norman</u> | <u>Saxon</u> | <u>Norman</u> |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| ox, steer, cow | beef | swine | pork |
| calf | veal | deer | venison |
| sheep | mutton | fowl | pullet |

(The modern English spelling of the Norman word is given.)

Bacon, the single exception, is perhaps the only meat that came within reach of the Saxon.

Land Measurement: Our English furlong was originally a "furrow long", the middle syllable "row" being dropped in course of time. 220 yards was doubtless a convenient length for a furrow ploughed by a team of oxen before the need for a brief rest would give an opportunity to clean and turn the plough. When a width of 22 yards had been ploughed, the area (but sometimes only the width) 220 x 22 equals 4840 sq. yds. was called an acre. Nowadays the word "acre" is used only for area, and 22 yds. is called a "chain". A quarter of a chain, i.e. the width of a ¼ acre, is 5½ yds. and is known as "rod, pole or perch" according to the part of the country or the trade in which it is used. In Devon the older country folk know it as a "land yard", a term which has sometimes caused confusion in the minds of strangers. (Poser: Can an acre be square?)

Local Government: When the Saxon conquerors of Britain settled down in their village communities, grouped for purposes of government and defence in Hundreds and Shires, they created a pattern for the organisation of Local Government in modern times. The Saxon Village Moot was the forerunner of our Parish Council, and the Folk Moot, where each village had a voice in matters of common concern, has its counterpart in our Rural District Council. Higher still was the Shireage Moot, the modern County Council, while the Council of the Witan in the Witanagemot was the precursor of the King's Privy Council. As Saxon England was almost entirely a land of villages with few towns of any size, it affords no comparison with the City, Borough and Urban District Councils of our time.

Shire, Hundred and Village government went on developing under Saxon rule until the march of events demanded strong central government, and the time came when many of the powers of local government passed to the central authority. The Norman Conquest marks very strongly the date of this surrender.

Under Norman rule the Sheriff of the County, appointed by and responsible to the King, wielded by far the greatest authority in local affairs. After about 1300, while the status and rights of the Sheriff declined, those of the Justices of the Peace increased until the growth of their influence enabled the Parish, as in Saxon times, to take its place in what could hardly as yet be called a “system” of Local Government. Where the Parish proved an unsuitable unit the Justices were able to deal with matters on a wider basis at their Quarter Sessions, as, for instance, in the appointment of county officials for the repair of county highways and bridges, and thus they initiated the system of County Government as we have it today.

By the late 19th century the time was ripe for a complete revision and unification of Local Government in a coherent system, and it was by the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1929 that the present organisation was brought into operation.

For a more comprehensive survey of this subject, the reader is referred to the chapter on the History of Local Government contained in pages 25 – 67 of “The Local Government of the United Kingdom” by J.J. Clarke, M.A., F.S.S.

Place Names: Although Devon and Cornwall formed the ancient Celtic kingdom of Dumnonia, the scarcity of Celtic place-names which have survived to the present day suggests that Devon was sparsely inhabited by the Celts, and that Saxon penetration and settlement during the late 7th and 8th centuries was carried out with little disturbance. The place-names of the Crediton district, like those of the rest of the County, are practically all of English or Mediaeval origin.

Overleaf are given some of the English place-name elements to be found in this district, with some examples of their use.

The following is the explanation of the name “Crediton” as given in “The Placenames of Devon”. Figures refer to the dates of documents which contain the names spelt as given:

CREDITON: Cridie, 739; Cridiantune, 930; Crydiatun, 974; Cridiantun(e), 977; Cridian tun, 980-8; crydian tune, 1008-12; Cridiensis ecclesiae, 933; Chritetona, Chrietona, 1086; Crytton, 1322; Cridentun, 1150; Criditon, 1231; Crideton, 1231; Cridington, 1238; Crydyton, Cridington, 1295; Cridyngton, 1332; Credington, 1274; Crediton, 1284; Kyrtone, 1380; Kirton, 1550; Curton, 1601; Crediton al. Kirton, 1637; Crediton vulgo Kerton, 1675.

‘Farm on the river Creedy’. Originally the place took its name from the river alone (Cridie, 739).

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| COLEBROOKE | “Cool brook” or “Cola’s brook”. |
| COPPLESTONE | Possibly OE “copel”, unsteady, rocking, or may be derived from a word meaning peaked, rounded. Probably a boundary stone. |
| CHERITON FITZPAINE | cyric(e) tun, “Church farm”. Belonged to “Phezpayn” in 16 th century. |
| POUGHILL | “Pohha’s hill”. |
| SHOBROOKE | OE sceoca broc, “goblin brook”. |
| STOCKLEIGH ENGLISH | stocc leah “the clearing with the stumps”. Gilebertus Anglicus held the manor, 1242. |
| STOCKLEIGH POMEROY | Henry de la Pumerai held the manor, 1200. |
| UPTON HELLIONS | tun. “Up” may refer to it being upstream from Crediton. LOWER CREEDY was known as Crydihelyhun, 1242. The manor was held by Wm. de Helihun, a Breton name. |
| NEWTON ST. CYRES | niwan tune, 1050-73, Niwentona, 1086 DB. Niwe tun, “New farm”. The Church is dedicated to St. Ciricius. |
| SANDFORD | “Sandy ford”. |
| THELBRIDGE | “Plank bridge”. |
| HOLLACOMBE | holh cumb. “Hollow valley”. |
| JEW’S do. | Associated with Nicholas le Jeu (1333). |
| POSBURY | “Possa’s”(?) camp or fortified place. |
| TROBRIDGE | “Tree bridge”. TREW “At the tree”. |
| UTON, YEOTON | “Farm by the river Yeo”. |
| VENNY TEDBURN | “Tetta’s stream”. “Fenny”, i.e. marshy, to distinguish it from T. St. Mary. |
| HOLWELL | holh wielle. “Spring in the hollow”. |
| HOOKWAY | Hokeweeye, 1210-12, referring probably to the curving road here. |
| KERSFORD | “Cress ford”. |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| VINNICOMBE | “Fenny (marshy) combe”. |
| RADDON | “Red hill”. ROCKBEARE “Rook wood”. |
| HASKE | OE hassuc, “coarse grass”. |
| SMALL BROOK | smael broc. “Narrow brook”. |
| BRIMLEY | “Broom clearing”. ALLER “At the alder”. |

SOME PLACE-NAME ELEMENTS OCCURRING IN THE CREDITON DISTRICT

| Old English | Meaning | Place-name examples |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| alor | alder | Aller |
| bearu | grove, wood. | Welsbere |
| brom | broom | Brimley |
| broc | brook | Shobrooke, Smallbrook. |
| burh | fortified place | Posbury |
| burna | stream, burn. | Tedburn St. Mary |
| cot(e) | cot, cottage. | Westacott, Eastacott. |
| cumb | combe, valley. | Spencecombe |
| dun | down, hill. (Often used of a very slight slope) | Raddon |
| fearn | fern | Farley |
| fennig | fenny, muddy. | Venny Tedburn, Vinnicombe. |
| feld | field, unenclosed land. | Washfield |
| ford | ford | Fordton |
| (ge)haeg | 1. hedge 2. enclosure | |
| ham(m) | farm larger than a "tun" or enclosed possession, fold. | Broxham |
| hassuc | coarse grass, hassock. | Haske |
| holh | hole, hollow. | Hollacombe, Holwell. |
| hoc | hook, sharp bend. | Hookway |
| leah | clearing in woodland | Brimley, Farleigh |
| raw: raew | row | Rewe |
| smael | small, narrow. | Smallbrook |
| stocc | stump, trunk, stock. | Stockleigh |
| stoc | place (sometimes confused with stocc) | |
| stigel | stile | Henstil |
| swan | herd, especially "swineherd" | Swannaton |
| thelbrycg | plank of wooden bridge | Thelbridge |
| treo(w) | tree | Trew, Trobridge |
| tun | 1. enclosed piece of ground 2. farm or even manor, cluster of houses, township, farmstead. | Crediton, Uton. |
| wic | dwelling-place, sometimes dairy farm | Wyke |
| wielle | spring, well. | Goldwell |
| weg | way, path. | Hookway |
| withig | withy (willow) | Withywind |

For more detailed information consult “The Place Names of Devon” (English Place-Name Society/Cambridge University Press) in the Hayward Boys’ School Library, or to be obtained from the Devon County Library, Barley House, Exeter.

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