TIVERTON CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Tiverton Civic Society honours the memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II and welcomes our new king HM King Charles III.

Tiverton Civic Society Newsletter

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Committee Members and Members with Special Responsibilities

Janet Rendle	President
Jeremy Salter	Chairman and Treasurer
Dennis Knowles	Vice Chairman
Fern Clarke	Hon. Secretary & Newsletter Editor
Randall Thane	Membership Secretary
Alison Gordon	Outings Organiser
Anne Davies	Heritage Open Days, Walks and Refreshments
Mike Sanderson	Planning; link to CPRE

Mary Cross, Frank Connock, John Rendle, Andrea Rowe

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Our thanks to Fax and Files for printing this newsletter.

Chairman's Introduction

It is fitting that as a society, we should join a vast number of other organisations and individuals in expressing our sadness at the death of Queen Elizabeth, as well as showing our great appreciation for her life of dedication and service. We wish King Charles III well!

Although it has not been an easy year, with Covid far from extinguished, and the looming threat of punishing increases in inflation and household costs, we are glad to have recently returned to a full programme of meetings in the Mayoralty Room. We are also pleased to have welcomed several new members, and we have continued to challenge, and sometimes to object to, major planning applications, and to engage in consultations with developers and planners. I have also publicized our society by agreeing to talk to other groups about our aims and achievements, including the Merchants' Trail.

It is gratifying to have received another article from Jane Evans, one of our most distinguished long-term members, about her newly published book on George Cumberland, who, although not a Tivertonian, was a distinguished but little-known West Countryman. It is also pleasing that Pippa Griffith has sent us a fascinating article about the former Police Station and Prison in St Andrew's Street, as the saving of the remaining parts of this building was one of the major successes of our society in its early days.

Jeremy Salter

George Cumberland 1754-1848

Our Chairman's article in the newsletter a year ago on Old Blundellian William Buckland, the first professional geologist, provides me with a happy excuse to tell you of George Cumberland, an amateur geologist who corresponded with Buckland and attended the 1836 Bristol meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. In the *Bristol Journal*, Cumberland described the president, Buckland, as 'the Democritus of the Association, [who] stood forward to praise all, most impartially, or sat in his chair with composure, like a Patriarch in the gates of his native city, ready to balance all claims, and award equal justice whenever called on, with cool complacency and inward ease.'

Cumberland, a Londoner, never went to university, that opportunity being conferred only on his elder brother. He left school at fourteen and spent the next fourteen years as a clerk for the Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation, dreaming of having the time to travel and become a connoisseur of the arts. He had the chance to attend the Royal Academy as an honorary student in 1772, where he met with various artists including Tiverton's Richard Cosway. However, he is best known as a lifelong friend of William Blake with whom he exchanged notes on printing techniques. Cumberland was also developing his skills as a writer, an inventor and an amateur artist.

Fortuitously, the companion of an aunt left him a legacy, with which, after disputes, he was able to realise his dreams. He left his job and travelled on the

Continent, establishing contacts and collecting works of art. Amongst these was a painting which he believed was by Leonardo da Vinci. Richard Cosway saw a sketch of it, writing on 27 December 1795 that it was 'one of the most beautiful compositions I ever beheld of that great man'. He suggested that Cumberland ask Blake to make an engraving of it as it would pay him 'very well', and that 'the composition of this picture is so very graceful and pleasing.' The painting, later thought to be the work of a pupil, Bernardo Luini, is now lost.

Cumberland's landlord in London was Benjamin Cooper, an architect or surveyor, who in February 1773 had married a Welsh girl, Elizabeth Price, by whom he had six children. It appears that Benjamin was an abusive husband and in 1787 Cumberland 'rescued' Elizabeth and the youngest three children, aged six and under, carrying them by chaise to Rome. In April 1788 Cumberland met Cooper in Paris and handed over a large sum of money. Cumberland adored his Betsy, referring to her as 'Mrs C' although they never married, and he always treated her children as his own.

The war with France drove the growing family back to England and they lived for two years in Lyndhurst, before moving to Egham near Windsor for almost ten years. By 1800, with a family of eight to provide for and educate, Cumberland's restlessness and money worries prompted him to determine on a life of self-sufficiency as a gentleman farmer. After a search, he bought Axbridge Hill on the Mendips. Within the space of a year, he had moved his

family four times, in June 1801 from Egham to Bath, thence to Clevedon to be by the sea, next to Axbridge to be near his land, and, in May 1802, to Weston-super-Mare, then a remote fishing village with a population of one hundred and eight.

This is where I took up his story over forty years ago, when I was curator at Weston's museum. What could induce a gentleman to settle in such a remote spot? For an answer, I started mining the huge corpus of his correspondence in the British Library's Manuscripts Room.

Cumberland was no farmer and he kept asking advice from his elder brother, a successful vicar, rector and farmer near Cirencester. He explained how he was trying to breed Ryeland sheep for their wool but the neighbour's scabby sheep kept getting in through gaps in the wall. After two years of frustration, he let the land. He remained in Weston a little longer but by 1806 had settled in Bristol where he was soon looked up to as a senior member of the Bristol School of Artists. But his life became dominated by the mysterious, indeed alarming, condition of his eldest daughter, his beloved Lavinia. I now believe her diagnosis today would be bipolar hypersexuality. How could Cumberland be expected to cope with such a condition? He sought the help of Dr Fox of Brislington asylum, meanwhile distracting himself in collecting fossils and a study of the new science of geology.

Cumberland mentions Devon a few times, notably in the 1820s when his youngest daughter, Eliza Martha, made annual visits to Exeter and Dawlish to

stay with Mrs Johnes, the widow of his friend Thomas Johnes, the builder of 'Hafod' in mid Wales. In one letter written in August 1826 to 'Mrs C' he described in graphic detail a visit to the Rev^{d} John Eagles, a fellow member of the Bristol School of Artists, who had moved in 1822 to be rector of Halberton. At one stage Eagles wrote: 'I know you always like to have the last word'. However, he remembered how Cumberland enjoyed eating game and three years later wrote: 'I sent Mrs E[agles] yesterday to Tiverton to try & get you a couple of woodcocks. They were gone, & had been but few at 6/6 a couple. By what I can learn, they are about a shilling or eighteen pence a couple dearer with us than with you. This is not the part of Devonshire for them. I am happy however to send you a fine pheasant.'

My book *George Cumberland, Farming – Fossils – Family: Aspects of a Somerset life in letters 1800-35,* an occasional publication by Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, was launched on 29 June at Weston Museum, precisely two hundred and twenty years ago after Cumberland came to live there. It is illustrated with nearly seventy pictures. Cumberland's own watercolours today are scattered in many institutions and private collections across the globe. I have assembled no fewer than twenty-three of these from places as far away as Canada and the States to complement the text.

Jane Evans

Figures from Cricket's Golden Age

The period from 1890 to 1914 has long been referred to as 'Cricket's Golden Age'. Not everyone agrees with this description, which largely resulted from the intense nostalgia after the brutal impact of the Great War. However, those years were undoubtedly replete with dashing amateurs ('Gentlemen') who did not depend on the game for a living, as well as many remarkable professionals ('Players'). There was a great class divide in the game, and a consensus amongst most of the game's administrators that, whatever their qualities as players, the professionals did not possess the necessary qualities or temperaments for captaincy. Most of the first-class county teams, and the England team, were led by amateurs, mainly from privileged backgrounds. Although Len Hutton was appointed as England's first professional captain in 1951, amateur leadership of the 17 county sides continued until as late as 1962, when 14 of them were captained by amateurs, the final Gentlemen v Players match was played, and the distinction between amateurs and professionals was abolished.

The Foster Family

For much of my life until the age of 16 I lived in a boarding house, No. 6, at Malvern College, where my father was the Housemaster, and, during the long summer holidays I, my brothers and friends, played our own form of cricket on the large lawn in front of the house. On several occasions I was told that this lawn was hallowed turf, because it was there that the seven Foster

brothers, as well as their three sisters, had learnt their cricket. The brothers were the sons of a previous housemaster, Rev. Henry Foster, all were intensely talented sportsmen, and all played first-class cricket for Worcestershire, which was often jokingly called 'Fostershire' at the time. The most famous of them, R.E.Foster, nicknamed Tip, was a phenomenal sportsman who broke many records. He made 287 runs against Australia in his first Test match for England at Sydney in 1903, still an international record for a debutant, and he helped to set another unsurpassed record when both he and his brother Wilfrid scored centuries in each innings for Worcestershire against Hampshire in 1900. He captained England against both Australia and South Africa, and he is the only Englishman to have captained both the England cricket and football teams, winning six caps, and scoring two goals for the full international football team, while he also played once for the England Amateur X1, scoring six goals in their 12-1 defeat of Germany. Unfortunately, Tip's sporting career was cut short by business commitments, and sadly, he died of diabetes in 1914 at the age of 36.

Robert Porch

I do not remember meeting any of the surviving members of the Foster family, but I met Robert 'Judy' Porch on many occasions, he being a near neighbour, and a former teaching colleague of my father's. He was born at Edgarley Hall, Glastonbury, and was educated at Malvern College and Oxford University, being an accomplished amateur batsman and fine fielder. He did

not appear in first-class cricket for Oxford University but became a regular player for Somerset in the second half of the 1895 season. In his third first-class match, against Essex at Taunton, he fielded while Essex scored 692, their highest total until 1990, but, despite a heavy defeat, he made Somerset's top score of 85 not out. Even that Essex record was upstaged in his next match for Somerset at Taunton, when Lancashire made 801, with Archie McLaren setting a world record for the highest first-class score by making 424. Robert later stated that he was 'a great believer in the importance of fielding', and that his maxim was: 'Save six fours when the other side is batting, and you have 24 to your name before you get off the mark, though it's not in the score-book!'.

He continued to play occasional matches for Somerset, including two matches against Oxford University, but, after he was employed to teach at his old school, Malvern College, in 1904, his availability was greatly curtailed, and he played his final match for the county in 1910. In 1933 a remark that his large nose appeared identical to the 'enhanced' nose of Judy Garland in ''The Wizard of Oz', led to the nickname 'Judy', which Robert endured for the remainder of his life. I attended a party at his house to celebrate his 85th birthday, and he remained very active as President of the Malvernian Society until his death at the age of 87 in 1962.

Edward English

I first came to work in Tiverton in 1962, but moved to Bickleigh a few months later, where I played cricket for the village club, soon becoming the secretary. It was at our ground behind the Trout Inn that my second encounter with a survivor from Cricket's Golden Age took place. An elderly, but spritely, man occasionally came to watch our matches, and he introduced himself as Edward English, the former Surrey and Hampshire batsman. Edward had played for Surrey's youth teams, but subsequently joined Hampshire as an amateur, making his first- class debut against Lancashire at Old Trafford in 1898 when he was 34, and it was later in the same season that he played his finest innings for the county against Surrey at The Oval when he scored 98, being caught attempting to score the two runs needed to reach his century off the very last ball of the match. Edward played a further sixteen matches for his county, retiring in 1901, and, living at Alton in Hampshire, he continued to be a very active sportsman until well into his nineties. He subsequently moved to Higher Ball Farm, the home of his two daughters, which is close to Bickleigh's ground, and, almost every day, he took a long walk in the countryside, sometimes having to be rescued from a remote location!

When Edward's death occurred in November 1966, he was, at the age of 102, the oldest surviving county cricketer, and the oldest former first-class cricketer in the world. This received some media attention, and his daughters asked me to 'field' a team of pall bearers for his funeral from Bickleigh Cricket

Club. Although it was mid-week, all those I asked were very glad to do so, and, after some brief training, we performed our duties at St Bartholomew's Church, Cadeleigh, bearing his coffin down the aisle dressed in our cricket whites and blazers: a very apt cricketing farewell!

Everard Radcliffe

Sir Everard Joseph Reginald Henry Radcliffe

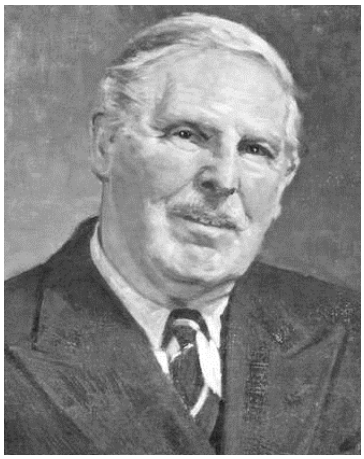
How did an average club cricketer from Tiverton become captain of the finest cricket team in England?

Everard Radcliffe, or to give his full name, Everard Joseph Reginald Henry Radcliffe, was born at Hensleigh House, Tiverton, he was a member of a leading Roman Catholic family who owned extensive properties in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and he was the heir to the Radcliffe baronetcy. He was educated at Downside and Oxford University, and he was an enthusiastic amateur cricketer, playing many matches for the university's second team, the Authentics. When he moved to Yorkshire, he became a regular member of the Yorkshire Gentlemen, and he played once for the Yorkshire 2nd X1 against Surrey at the Oval in 1907, becoming well known to the county captain, Lord Hawke, who viewed him as a possible successor. Although not strictly qualified to play for Yorkshire because of his birth outside the county, he was one of only five players who, until rules were relaxed in 1992, were permitted to appear because of residency in the county.

Without a doubt, Yorkshire were the finest team of the period. Although he was still an undergraduate at Cambridge, Lord Hawke was formally appointed county captain for the 1883 season, and he held the post until 1910, when he was nearly 50, also being appointed club President in 1898. He remains the most successful county captain ever, transforming the team into the most formidable force of cricket's golden age, Yorkshire winning the County Championship a record eight times during his tenure. Much of this success was due to the performances of three of the greatest professional cricketers of the period, Schofield Haigh, George Hirst, and Wilfred Rhodes, all of them all-rounders, inseparable friends, and England players, who were known as 'The Triumvirate'. They would play more than 500 matches together for the county, taking 9,000 wickets, and scoring 77,000 runs. Although himself a past England batsman, Hawke's own contributions were modest, but the team were happy under his autocratic captaincy, Haigh stating that he was 'worth a place in the side for his generalship alone'.

In 1909 Lord Hawke was absent for many matches, Everard Radcliffe usually standing in for him, and he finally resigned as captain at the end of the year, and Everard was appointed as captain for the whole of the following season, continuing in that role for much of 1911. A recently published book, '*Last of the Summer Wine'* by Harry Pearson, discusses his experiences and it was obviously not a happy time, not only both because his own performances were, at best, mediocre, but also because the team struggled to maintain

their previous level of success. Lord Hawke, still Yorkshire President, criticised him, not so much for losing matches, but by doing so, playing dull, negative cricket, and Wilfred Rhodes concluded that he was a nervous man whose edginess prevented him from making the best of himself. He felt himself to be a friendless man in a hostile world, and he resigned at the end of the 1911 season. He played no further county cricket, concentrating on the management of family estates, his large family, and a career as a stockbroker in Newcastle on Tyne. For the record, he played 64 matches for Yorkshire, scoring 826 runs at an average of 10.86.



Sir John Amory

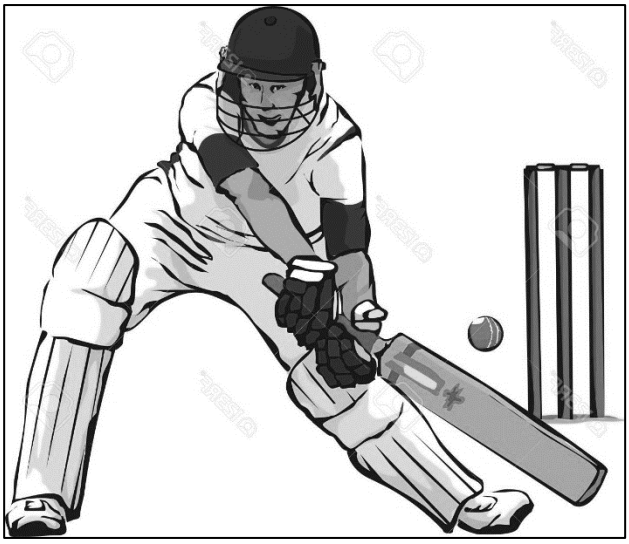
Sir John Heathcoat-Amory

I never met Everard Radcliffe, who became the 5th Radcliffe baronet in 1949, and died at St Trinian's Hall, near Richmond, in 1969, but I met Sir John Amory, on several occasions, although cricket was not discussed! A forceful batsman and fast-medium bowler, he was educated at Eton, playing in the Eton v Harrow matches at Lords in 2012 and 2013, the second as captain. His initial first-class match was for Oxford University against Middlesex in 1914, when he made 50 runs, and he played two further matches for the university during that summer, as well as his first Minor Counties match for Devon, in which he took ten wickets against Berkshire. After war service in the army, during which he attained the rank of Captain, he did not resume his place at Oxford, thereby losing the

chance of obtaining a cricket blue, but he played several other first-class matches. These included games for the Minor Counties against the touring Indian team and for the West of England against New Zealand, and his highest score was 67 not out for the Free Foresters against Oxford University. He was appointed captain of Devon in 1921, leading them for seven seasons, and he played his last game for them in 1935, having scored two centuries. Sir John was an enormously enthusiastic cricketer, and his legacy to Tiverton included the further development of the magnificently situated cricket club at Knightshayes Court where the Heathcoat club at present appears to be enjoying its own Golden Age!

(Note. A first-class match is one lasting three or more days in which the players are deemed to be of sufficient quality.)

Jeremy Salter



Collipriest Part VII:

The Winslow Phillips family and the enigma of James Hay

In 1776, there was an unsuccessful attempt to elect Thomas Winslow Mayor of Tiverton, but in 1778 he was appointed Sheriff of Devon. Collipriest House was definitely his family home at this time, but it is doubtful whether it continued to be. An advertisement in *The Exeter Flying Post* in 1788 described the property 'to be let furnished, with or without 20 acres. Apply Thomas Winslow, Twickenham.' However, a family connection remained. Thomas' son, John Elliot, born in 1771, was certainly living there in 1790, and possibly his grandson, another Thomas, into the 1800s.

In 1791, a small acreage of land on either side of the river Exe, part lying in the Ashley estate and part in the marshes of Collipriest, was transferred by Thomas Winslow to Richard Blundell (probably the brother of Philip, the last member of the Blundell family to live in Collipriest House) in 'fee simple'. This type of transfer of part of a landed estate had evolved from the feudal system of land tenure under which all land ultimately belonged to the crown. The term 'fee' is derived from 'fief', a feudal landholding in which a lord could sublet part of his land to a tenant, often one of his household knights, in return for military service. After 1290, the Statute of *Quia Emptores* abolished the earlier feudal system of subletting, known as subinfeudation, and instead allowed a form of subletting of tenanted land as fee simple estates in which the estate was purchased. It was the way in which tenants holding large

estates after 1290 sublet parts of their land. Such sublet parts belonged to the tenant and his heirs absolutely, and could be conveyed to whoever he chose, could be mortgaged, put up as security or left in his Will to a named person. It evolved over time through precedent established by common law (ie. preceding judicial decisions) to become a form of freehold. The acreage of land in Collipriest and Ashley that Thomas Winslow sold to Richard Blundell was held by John Smale, initially from Thomas Winslow, and after the sale in 1794, from Richard Blundell.

In 1798, Thomas Winslow inherited the estate of Sir Jonathan Phillips, briefly MP for the [rotten] borough of Camelford for three months of 1784. A Directory for 1791 lists Sir Jonathan Phillips as Recorder of Camelford. A judgement of 1796 gave the right to vote in Camelford to the 'free burgesses', those who were resident householders paying 'scot and lot' [ie. paying local taxes]. Free burgesses in Camelford were only created by the nomination of a 'patron' who owned all the houses in the borough, at this time the Duke of Bedford, who bought up all the property so that he could control who was returned as MP for Camelford. Members of the Phillips family, the Dinham family (descendants of a cadet line of the Dynhams of Hartland) and a cadet line of Penhallow were among these 'free burgesses'. The number of voters was probably no more than thirty. The constituency was abolished in 1832.

Winslow adopted the name Phillips and moved away from Collipriest. Nevertheless, Sir Thomas Phillips as he became known, continued to be

shown in land tax assessments as the owner of the Collipriest estate, with John Smale as the occupier of Collipriest Barton from 1792. William Berry took over the tenancy of the Barton in 1803 but it is not known for certain whether Collipriest House was occupied, and if it was, by whom.

In 1803, Collipriest House was advertised as 'to let furnished or unfurnished with 40 acres, large garden with fruit trees and elegant bridge to link with the Turnpike to Exeter'. After the death of Thomas Winslow/Phillips in 1805, it was advertised again 'to let, 3, 5 or 7 years with 20 acres plus greater quantity if desired.'

Collipriest is recorded as having been sold to James Hay, but there is confusion over the date of the sale, whether or not a mortgage had to be raised for its purchase, and who the occupants of Collipriest House were for the ensuing years. Thomas Winslow had certainly been 'assigned the lease' of Collipriest by Phillip Blundell in 1770, but the Blundells had only acquired ¾ of the estate, the remaining ¼ still being in the name of the Carews as the Lords of Tiverton Manor of which Collipriest was a part. The name of Thomas Winslow or his attorney appears several times when the estate, or part of it, was offered to let on various short tenancies, and the names of Thomas Winslow Junior, Thomas Phillips or the executor of Thomas Phillips, were listed in land tax assessments at different time between 1788 and 1803.

Land tax assessments in 1808 show James Hay as the owner and William Berry continuing temporarily as occupier of the Barton, so it can be assumed that

James Hay had purchased the lease before this date. The *Exeter Flying Post* describes him in 1810 as 'Farmer of Collipriest Barton'. Later land tax assessments show that William Berry had departed and James Hay was then occupier as well as owner.

A deed dated 4th May 1807 records an agreement by Sir James Kennaway of Escott House (near Ottery St. Mary) to convey Collipriest House to James Hay of Drumcar, who had married Lady Mary, the youngest sister of the Earl of Dalhousie (near Dalkeith, Midlothian), and may relate to a mortgage. Hay was appointed Sheriff of Devon in 1812 and was possibly resident at Collipriest House at the time, but it is not known whether he occupied the house continuously. However, the death of two Hay children, Lucy in 1813 and James in 1818, are recorded on a memorial in the churchyard of St. Peter's, Tiverton.

There are occasional references which suggest that John Elliot Phillips (son of Sir Thomas Winslow/Phillips) may have continued to live in part of Collipriest House after it was sold to Hay – a notice of 1820 'to let furnished' shows Thomas Phillips (a grandson aged 22 years at the time).

Throughout the period 1808 to 1820 land tax assessments show James Hay as owner of Collipriest Barton, marshes etc, Dairy House and field, but unfortunately, they are not always accurate. In 1818, he is recorded as having sold a plot of land at the bottom of St. Andrew Street near the Lowman Bridge. Four derelict houses which had stood there were demolished and the

site sold for £50 to make way for housing for John Heathcoat who had recently moved his lace-making business to Tiverton from Loughborough.

Early in 1820, Hay seems to have contemplated retirement for *The Flying Post* of 24th February 1820 published an advance notice of a sale by auction at Garraway's Coffee House, London. Collipriest was variously described as 'the late residence of James Hay Esq. comprising offices, coach houses, stables, large walled garden with fruit trees plus as much land as desired, a circular temple and seats in different parts. Also Barton and Farm with good farmhouse, yard, barns, stables and cattle sheds, threshing machine, all necessary outbuildings, 330 acres in a high state of cultivation including 100 acres of rich watered meadow. Coaches pass to and from London daily.' The Barton is undoubtedly the derelict farmstead know today as Collipriest Dairy. Collipriest House itself was advertised in great detail in 1821 but appears to have remained unsold and unoccupied for several years.

On 6th April 1820, all the livestock were sold, Hay having retired. He left Collipriest and went to Oakford. Another advertisement appeared in *The Flying Post* of 20th June 'To let. Gentleman's residence for one year from Midsummer Day. Apply Mr. How, Solicitor, Tiverton.' Collipriest House was unoccupied at the time and had probably been so since the date of Hay's retirement in 1820. He died on 12th October 1822, but on 29th September 1823, there is a further reference in the Records Office (961M/T113 1823) to the contract between Sir John Kennaway of Escott House and others, and

James Hay of Stuckeridge House, Oakford, involving 'Collipriest House and outbuildings, gardens and about 20 acres of land, occupied lately by Sir James Cockburn, Bart., and at time of contract occupied by William Berry'. This evidently refers back to the contract of 4th May 1807 and possibly the redemption of a mortgage from Hay's estate. Did Sir John Cockburn occupy the 'Gentleman's residence' for one year from Midsummer's Day 1822? Land tax assessments of 1823 show the owner of Collipriest Barton to be the 'executors of Mr. Phillips' and occupiers as 'various'. Had the holding reverted to the Winslow/Phillips family?

There is very little positive information available about the Hay period. If Thomas Winslow had bought a long lease of the property from the Blundells in 1770, his family would have been, to all intents and purposes, freeholders, and may have leased the estate to Hay for a somewhat shorter period. Hay may have intended to develop his farming interests and eventually take over the estate from the Winslow/Phillips family, meantime sharing Collipriest House with the younger Phillips. James Hay may have divided his time between England and Scotland, which could explain why Collipriest House seems not to have been continuously occupied by him. He was the owner for only fifteen years during which two of his children are known to have died, and his own death may have been premature.

Finally, Thomas Winslow/Phillips grandson John Elliot Phillips was reported in the Gentlemen's magazine of 1842 as 'late of Collipriest'. In view of all this, it

seems possible that the Winslow/Phillips family retained an interest in the long lease for the whole period from when Collipriest was purchased from the Blundells until it was finally sold to a branch of the Carew family in 1823.

Mary Toft

Crime and Punishment

Staff and volunteers at Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life are preparing for our busy programme of walks and talks this autumn. This year we are rebuilding our programme and re-engaging with our visitors and local community as we recover from the effects that the pandemic and the lockdowns had on the museum.

This summer we ran a very successful walk exploring the history of some of Tiverton's pubs, which sold out straightaway as did the subsequent two dates we offered! We are delighted to be offering more talks and walks, including a Behind the Scenes at the Museum tour, a talk on West Exe in old photographs, and walks on Heathcoat's Tiverton and Crime and Punishment.

Part of the Crime and Punishment walk will look at the history of the old gaol building on St Andrew Street. This striking building was built in 1846 and was designed by Tiverton architect Gideon Acland Boyce. When new, the building contained wings for men, women and debtors which could house 35 people serving short sentences, as well as a house for the Governor. In 1855 the cells were described as containing 'a bright metal wash basin, tap for the supply of

water, water closet, hammock, mattress and bedding, bible and prayer book'. The cells also had a bell which, when rung, caused a small iron plate with the cell number to project into the passageway to alert the officer on duty. One of these plates and a cell door are on display in the museum today. Apparently, there were also four cells in the basement, one for 'dark punishment' and three for vagrants who were committed for short periods.

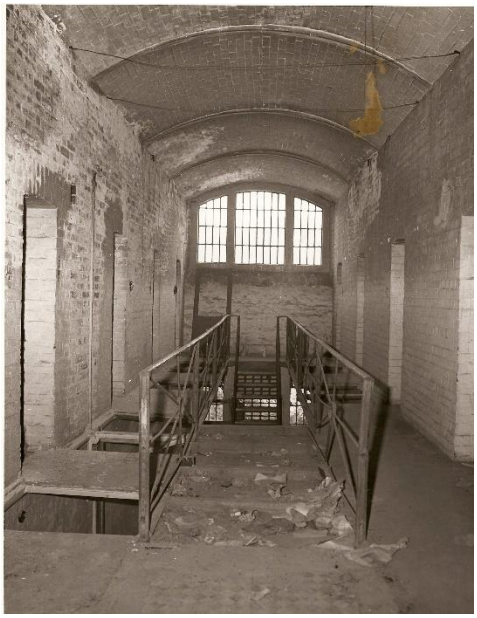
The wing of the building that had been used as the Governor's House became the town's police station, probably in the 1860s when the new Town Hall was built. The gaol itself closed in 1878, after which all prisoners were sent to Exeter.

The Police Station remained until 1956 when it relocated to Beechwood on The Avenue. The old gaol building had various uses, including a public baths with a small swimming pool in the gaol yard, a Civil Defence store, a youth centre and Dr Nicholson's surgery. The gaol was demolished in the 1970s, and the police station has been converted into housing.

The museum has a wonderful collection of photographs of the gaol building taken right before demolition, which can be seen on the following page.

Booking for all museum events is available through the Events page on the museum's website www.tivertonmuseum.org.uk

Pippa Griffith



Left: The landing of the gaol leading to the cells.

Right: A cell door with the alert mechanism in place

Left: Entrance to the debtors' wing

Doors from gaol into the yard

Left: The Police Station in 1876