

# TIVERTON CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Stable Farm, Collipriest, 2019

# Tiverton Civic Society Newsletter

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## Committee Members and Members with Special Responsibilities

Janet Rendle	President
Jeremy Salter	Chairman
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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**Contact for membership enquiries:** [randallthane@gmail.com](mailto:randallthane@gmail.com) /01884 258389

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During the Covid epidemic, our newsletter is being distributed by email. We hope to return to printed editions for those who prefer these after the epidemic is over. Some copies of the 2020 editions will be printed by Fax and Files for those requesting them at a future date.

# Tiverton Civic Society Newsletter

## Chairman's Introduction

I hope that you all continue to survive the difficulties and uncertainties of the various Covid 19 restrictions and that everything will be back to normal soon. As previously indicated, I have needed to postpone several meetings booked for the Mayoralty Room, but, living in hope, I am arranging a full programme for the autumn, details of which are on our website. In the meantime, I am glad that Annabel Venning, author of the much-acclaimed book 'To War with the Walkers' will, thanks to Dennis Knowles' assistance, be speaking to us via Zoom on Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm. I will send full application and joining instructions details well before the meeting. and, if this is popular and well-attended, we will certainly consider repeating this experiment. We also hope to hold a short AGM by Zoom in April and, if you express a wish to attend, I will forward the details.

Thanks to your continuing support the great majority of members have paid their subscriptions for this year, and we have welcomed some newcomers, including several life Members. Despite some difficulties early last year our financial situation remains extremely healthy, which means that we can contemplate an excellent programme for 2022!

Several of our committee members have been busy in recent months, both in responding to planning applications and in joining online meetings and webinars, largely on planning matters. Mike Sanderson and I have been involved in the Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan, and he continues to lead Mid

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Devon CPRE very effectively, while Fern Clarke has continued to support our planning comments, and to produce our Newsletters. We hope, if sufficient material becomes available, to complete a further extra edition later in the summer.

The team putting together the Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan have recently been working to finalise the draft document, and all those living in the town and parish of Tiverton should soon receive a pamphlet by post, hopefully before April 13<sup>th</sup>, which outlines our objectives, provides a link to the full Pre-Submission version of the plan, and charts the ensuing stages, which will hopefully lead to full adoption. I have contributed the bulk of the photographs in this pamphlet, several of which you may recognise from the Tiverton Civic Society website, but both the pamphlet and the full draft plan are the result of a strongly collaborative effort. We hope you will find time to read the pamphlet and it would be extremely helpful if you would submit your comments on the Pre-Submission version of the Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan during the consultation period which runs from April 13<sup>th</sup> to June 11<sup>th</sup>.

After a delay of nearly seven years, it is now very probable that the initial construction stages of development in the large Area A of the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension will soon begin, two detailed 'Reserved Matters' Planning Applications having recently been submitted, one to provide the long-awaited road link between the A361 North Devon Link Road and Blundell's Road, and the other to build 166 new houses with associated

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infrastructure. We very much hope that this new development will conform with the stated objectives in both the TEUE Masterplan, and the TEUE Design Guide, and that it will become an attractively designed garden neighbourhood with a strong local character, plentiful green infrastructure, and a real sense of community. However, much depends on the power of the developers to wring concessions, and the ability of the local planning department to resist major changes!

Since the last Newsletter I have been involved in consultations planning responses to two major government reforms. The first of these, **'Planning Reform- Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Services Infrastructure'**, would allow developers to change buildings which fall under Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to change use to Class C3 (Residential) in town centres without planning permission, and there is considerable concern that this could mean that shops could be changed to residential uses in a random and potentially counterproductive manner, leading to poor quality housing and damage to historic environments, particularly in conservation areas. It is accepted that town centres are facing considerable challenges and are likely to contract and change, but we, and many others, believe that this needs to be achieved in a planned and controlled way by local communities through our local planning policies.

The second proposal and consultation, which runs until March 27<sup>th</sup>, **'National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code,'** proposes that

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all new substantial developments must include design codes to inform development proposals, to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, and to reflect local character and preferences. They should provide a framework for creating high-quality places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design to inform development proposals. It is also emphasised that The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that design policies should be developed with local communities, so that they reflect local aspirations, and that 'development that is not well designed should be refused planning permission'. Mid Devon is already well ahead with effective Design Guides having been written and approved for both Mid Devon as a whole, and the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension, and, with some provisos, we strongly support these proposals, and, as a Society, are very willing to become more involved in the planning process.

In order to meet ambitious Government and District Council net zero emission targets many new sources of green energy are being developed, including solar and wind power, and energy from waste, and, despite their benefits, all of these have resulted in undesirable impacts on our rural landscapes, a particular problem having been the proliferation of anaerobic digesters, including the Willand and Red Linhay plants locally, which are resulting in a rapid growth of extra road movements, usually involving very heavy and wide tractors, trailers and tankers. Neil Parish, our MP, has recognised the public concerns about such developments and has called for much greater

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regulation, while Paul Elstone, who lives in Blundell's Road, has carried out an impressive audit, highlighting the many problems. Further information is available on our website.

The success of our fairly basic website last year was very gratifying. There were 7563 views from 3877 visitors in 2020, and, in comparison to 2019's previous record, there was a 38% greater number of visits. These large increases may reflect the widely reported increase in internet usage during the current pandemic, and the greater usage has certainly continued into 2021. In 2020 the most popular months were August and December, both holiday months and both months during which controversial local planning applications were submitted and widely followed on social media, especially Facebook. Over 89% of visits were from the United Kingdom, the remainder being from 41 different countries, only China and the USA reaching 2% of the total. By a considerable margin, the Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments Page was the most popular, followed by the Recent News, Town Trails, and Bibliography and Resources Pages. There has also been a significant increase in the number of visitors requesting genealogical information who are researching their family trees.

Many thanks to the contributors and the editor. I very much hope you enjoy this Newsletter, and that you will consider submitting your own article for the next edition.

*Jeremy Salter*

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## Tiverton en fête

*The grand society wedding described below took place between Captain Walter Palk Carew, only son of Sir Walter and Lady Anne Carew of Tiverton Castle and Haccombe, and his second cousin, Ellen Daniel, of Stuckeridge House, Oakford. Ellen's widowed mother, Dorothea, was the daughter of Rev Thomas Carew of Collipriest House, Tiverton, and her father, Thomas Daniel, had died in a shooting accident in the Highlands in 1862. At the time of the wedding Collipriest was owned by Dorothea's brother, Thomas Carew, their father having died in 1848.*

On Thursday, 4th April 1872 Walter Palk Carew and Ellen Daniel were married in St. Peter's Church beside Tiverton Castle. The weather was fine, and the townsfolk were agog with excitement at having such a fashionable wedding taking place in their midst. Many of them had been roused from their slumbers early in the morning by the sound of guns going off, some enthusiastic young Tivertonians having decided to start the day by firing a salute. The church was thronged: 'although the beadles, Messrs. Grater and Simmons, were very dextrous, it was with some difficulty that they could keep the aisles clear'. With the bridegroom waiting at the communion rail, the bride made her appearance. Her dress was 'of poulle de soie, trimmed with four flounces of Brussels lace, headed with ruchings of tulle and white silk fringe; body made high, open square, trimmed with Brussels lace, tulle and orange blossom; and she wore a veil and wreath of orange blossom'. There

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were ten bridesmaids, among them Ellen's two sisters and the two sisters of Walter. The bride was given away by her brother, Thomas Carew Daniel, and the ceremony was conducted by the Revd. Robert Baker Carew, assisted by the Revd. H. A. Daniel. Describing the scene as the newly-married couple left the church the Tiverton Gazette got so carried away by the proceedings that it quoted the following inept but high-spirited verse:

Happy, happy, happy pair,  
None but the brave,  
None but the brave,  
None but the brave deserves the fair

Then 'amid the enthusiastic vociferations of a large assembly' the brave and the fair entered the carriage that was to take them to Collipriest House for the wedding breakfast.

If the spirit of Byron had been minded the previous night to descend (let us be charitable) from his eternal lodgings and urge the Tivertonians to 'let joy be unconfined', he would have found the worthy citizens in no need whatsoever of that advice. Indeed, if Pope had leaned over Byron's shoulder to warn them 'Man never is, but always To be blest' he might as well have saved his breath. The town was *en fête* for the occasion; a visitor ignorant of the cause might have thought a carnival was taking place. There were abundant displays of laurel, banners, and arches, especially in St. Andrew Street, through which the newly-married couple's and other carriages were to pass. Many of the

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displays offered expressions of goodwill and faith in the joyful nature of the married state. Messages such as ‘God bless the bride and bridegroom’, ‘Long live the happy pair’, ‘Long life and prosperity’ and ‘Happy may your union be’ greeted Walter and Ellen as they progressed. The Tiverton Gazette claimed that St. Andrew Street had never been seen to wear such an attractive aspect. Thomas Carew was evidently of a like mind; the previous evening he had sent a shilling round to each house in the street to thank the residents for their efforts. But ‘the crème of the decorations’, the Gazette observed, ‘was undeniably at the residence of Mr. Superintendent Crabb, who...must have taken great pains to make the heavy walls of the gaol assume such a brilliant aspect’. Officials at the railway station were not to be outdone, either, hoisting flags and making ‘suitable manifestations of joy ad libitum’. Nor was the last part of the mile or so long route to the entrance to Collipriest House neglected. Such was the profusion of laurels and other decorations placed on either side of the road that it ‘presented almost the appearance of an avenue’.

Possibly as many as a hundred guests sat down to the wedding breakfast; the Tiverton Gazette listed about 60 before resorting to ‘etc., etc.’ They included the Earl of Portsmouth and his son Viscount Lyminster and Sir Lawrence Palk (created Lord Haldon in 1880) and his wife. Sir Walter and his daughters and Thomas Carew – of Collipriest – led the large Carew contingent, which also included Sir Walter’s third and fourth brothers, Thomas and the Revd. Robert,

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along with their spouses. Old Mr. Daniel (of Stoodleigh) was there too, along with his grandson Thomas Carew Daniel. So too were Sir John and Lady Duntze. M.S. Yeatman Esq. was best man....

To return to the wedding reception: the responsibility of catering for the large and distinguished gathering had been given to a London firm, Gunter & Co. of 7 Berkeley Square, which had supplied a breakfast 'of a recherché description laid out in first-class style', with a wedding cake 'adorned with numerous ornaments' and about three-and-a-half feet high. 'The whole of the pastries, jellies etc. were excellent, and most assuredly (reflected) unbounded credit upon the firm...whose reputation as pastry-cooks is so well-known.' As to what was said when toasts were proposed and speeches made the Gazette maintained a respectful silence. According to custom, though, the paper offered its readers a comprehensive list of the huge number of wedding presents, which were laid out in the library, and their donors. The majority of the gifts were pieces of jewellery, but there were also items such as clocks, inkstands, vases, and a Chinese porcelain tea set. What seem to be among the more original presents were 'a large tazza in ormolu, set with agate and onyx', from the Revd. Robert Baker Carew and his wife, and 'a magnificent antique Roman locket' from Lady Henrietta Chichester. If the gifts were still there after evening had fallen, the wealth of jewellery and ornaments reflecting light from the lamps must have made a very pretty picture.

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At three o'clock 'the happy couple left Collipriest...in a carriage drawn by four greys. On their departure they were loudly cheered, and according to custom, received a profuse shower of slippers and rice. They proceeded to Honiton *en route* for Southampton and the Isle of Wight.' No doubt Sir Walter was there to watch the equipage clattering off. That morning, he had been given a reminder, if such were needed, that the first cause for which matrimony was ordained was 'for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord'. He must have been fervently hoping that the marriage would provide him with grandchildren, especially a grandson to carry on the line directly. He was now in his sixties, and Walter, of course, was his only son. After the couple's departure the celebrations resumed. During the afternoon the guests at Collipriest were entertained by the band of the 14th D.V.R., which 'performed a selection of music on the lawn'. Nor were the humbler folk forgotten. Thomas Carew gave a tea to the 200 or so children attending the national school, 'so that both old and young had a cheerful reminder of what was going on'. At the Castle, about 40 men engaged in the re-building of the wing known as the East Court, including the contractors, Messrs. Barnes and Pile, enjoyed a dinner with 'good beef and beer provided'. A dinner was also laid on at Collipriest for more than 50 domestics and other employees. Dancing followed, 'and those present engaged in the terpsichorean art with great zest until the small hours arrived, to the sweet strains of Metcalfe's-Quadrille Band'. Nor were Sir Walter's workmen forgotten by their employer;

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all of them 'sat down to a capital spread'. Lastly, 'an abundance of bread and beef' was distributed to the poor of the town. Such was the kind of tribute that rich folk felt obliged to pay to the poor on these occasions. A paternalistic custom, perhaps, but not one altogether to be despised, even if some of the well-to-do relished it mainly as a chance to flatter their own sense of status and liberality. As for the poorer folk, there can be little doubt that they found such a colourful event a wonderful diversion – a golden interlude in lives of mostly grey routine.

*Rivers Carew*

*Sadly, the outwardly happy marriage described above was brief and disastrous, Walter Carew showing increasing signs of sometimes violent mental instability, and the situation became intolerable for Ellen, who left him within three months of the wedding. He became suicidal, and he was eventually committed to a mental institution, Brislington House, in Bristol, where he committed suicide on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1873.*

*Many thanks to Rivers Carew, the 11<sup>th</sup> baronet of Haccombe, for facilitating our publication of this extract. It is taken from his excellent book, 'Footprints in the Sand', (Dubois Publishing, 2018), available in hardback (£25), in paperback (£11.99), or as a Kindle download (£7.50). If the hardback edition is difficult to find, please contact the editor, who will provide the author's contact details.*

*Editor*

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## Thomas Rossiter of the *Endeavour*

The three voyages of Captain Cook represent a pinnacle of scientific achievement in the eighteenth century, the lasting importance of which would be hard to exaggerate. Cook's exploits remain a topic for heated debate and controversy as well as ongoing study. 2021 marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the three-year voyage of HM Bark *Endeavour* which made Cook famous.

Cook had long held a fascination for me, but I was surprised to find a suggestion on the internet that a Tiverton man had sailed on the *Endeavour*. One comment in someone's family history research which, in spite of a trawl of the rest of the web and all the books on Cook I had at home, I was unable to corroborate. In spite of my feeling that this particular family historian was simply indulging in wishful thinking, this seemed to me such a momentous suggestion that I could not let the matter drop.

The *Endeavour* expedition was a joint enterprise between the Royal Navy and the Royal Society. Lieutenant James Cook (1728 – 1779) was appointed commander, his mission to round Cape Horn to Tahiti where the scientists aboard would observe the Transit of Venus. However, Cook carried sealed orders to proceed thence to seek out the legendary *Terra Australis* or great southern continent.

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An ex-collier, measuring just 106 feet long by 29 feet in the beam at its widest, the *Endeavour* provided cramped accommodation for her crew of 71 officers and men. She cleared Deptford for Plymouth at the end of July 1768 where she was to pick up the botanist, Joseph Banks (1743 – 1820), and his party, as well as a contingent of 12 marines, making the ship's company up to 94 including 11 civilians. By the time she returned to Kent in July 1771, 38 of those men had died. The 56 survivors had wonderful tales to tell – but could one of them really have been from Tiverton?

Surely, I thought, had a Tiverton man been involved in such a famous exploit, it would have been common knowledge, indeed the stuff of legend. All the past historians of the town would have repeated an oft-told tale. Martin Dunsford must have known the man himself – but his pages are silent. F. J. Snell was always on the lookout for popular stories, yet he apparently missed this gem. There is not one word in our history books. All I had to go on was the man's name – Thomas Rossiter.

The *Endeavour's* muster book records the contingent of 12 marines who joined the ship in Plymouth in August 1768, comprising a sergeant, John Edgecombe, a corporal, John Trusslove, a drummer, Thomas Rossiter, and nine private soldiers. All we know is their names and Company numbers, nothing further to identify them. Rossiter belonged to Company No. 30 of the Plymouth Division of the Marine Corps. Surely, however, it was pure

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speculation on the part of the genealogist to assume that the *Endeavour's* Rossiter was one and the same man as their ancestor from Tiverton?

That speculation was founded on the fact that in 1818 Mary Ann, the granddaughter of Tiverton's Thomas Rossiter, married one Thomas Forwood, whose own eponymous grandfather, also a marine, had served under Cook in Quebec when he was charting the mouth of the St Lawrence River in the late 1750s. In addition, it is believed that Thomas Forwood recommended his younger brother Stephen to Cook, who engaged him as gunner aboard the *Endeavour*. The Forwoods were based in Plymouth at the time and so Tiverton cannot lay claim to them.

Captain Cook himself recorded an incident in his journal which took place on 2 December 1769 when Stephen Forwood and Thomas Rossiter had been caught, with two others, stealing rum. Rossiter was punished with 12 lashes, although Forwood was let off – he seems to have been a favourite of Cook. These links had led that genealogist to assume that Thomas Rossiter of the *Endeavour* and his ancestor Thomas Rossiter of Tiverton were one and the same man. But, a quick search on the web revealed plenty of other Thomas Rossiters from all over the country who might equally have been the *Endeavour* man, although no one else seems to have laid claim to him. Students of the early Marine Corps are hampered by a lack of surviving records going back quite this far, so we cannot easily check the background of Cook's marines.

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What exactly was a “drummer” in the marines and what were the duties of the marines on the *Endeavour* expedition? There is a romantic, largely nineteenth century, notion of the heroic “drummer boy” on the battlefield oft depicted by artists. Although Rossiter may have joined the Marine Corps as a boy, he was almost certainly an adult man, ranking above an ordinary private on board ship, with slightly higher pay. The drummer had a role in maintaining discipline among the troops, and the beat of the drum acted as a signal during times of conflict. In this mission, one assumes that Rossiter alongside corporal Trusslove was a figure of authority in the small military force. Of the twelve marines who set out from Plymouth, only eight returned home.

The marines get numerous mentions by Cook and Banks in their respective journals, but they are rarely identified by name. On 21 February 1771, Cook recorded the administration of 12 lashes to Rossiter for drunkenness, assaulting the officer of the watch and beating some of the sick. The marines came into their own when accompanying landing parties, protecting the scientists and guarding the equipment - no one knew if the natives would prove friendly. They no doubt fetched and carried equipment, water and supplies and generally acted as useful pairs of hands. In both New Zealand and Australia, the marines did open fire and some local people were killed. Cook himself fired the first shot to wound as his party arrived in Botany Bay, when the aboriginals opposed his landing. These are momentous events

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which ring down the centuries and cause heated debate, controversy and resentment in our own times.

The *Endeavour* was away from England for almost three years. Back home the newspapers had reported her lost at sea. For a time, no one expected to see her again which made Cook and Banks's arrival at Deal on 12 July 1771 the more remarkable. They became instant celebrities. Within weeks Banks was being congratulated by King George III himself, amidst a swirl of engagements. Thomas Rossiter of the marines, however, is lost to view on his disembarkation.

What of Thomas Rossiter of Tiverton? Thomas was born in Tiverton on 1 May 1743, the son of another Thomas Rossiter, a millwright, and Mary Pingstone. His parents had married on 3 May 1741. If he was on the *Endeavour*, our Thomas would have been 25 years old when he embarked, the same age as Joseph Banks. Thomas himself was married on 26 August 1771 to Elizabeth Phillips of Halberton, at Halberton church. The banns for the wedding were first called on Sunday 4 August 1771, just three weeks after the *Endeavour's* arrival at Deal. Is this just a coincidence? If this is our man, then he must have left his sweetheart at home in 1768, pledging to wed her when he returned, and this promise was fulfilled as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. One can only imagine Elizabeth's anguish when she heard rumours of the *Endeavour's* loss. She must have given up hope of ever seeing Thomas again. By coincidence, Joseph Banks was in exactly the same position; he too

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was engaged to be married, with a fiancée waiting for him. After the voyage, however, Banks was a changed man and his delay in arranging his own wedding began to be the subject of London gossip. In August 1771 the engagement was formally broken off, a payment of £5,000 to his former fiancée sealing her fate.

Thomas Rossiter married on 26 August 1771. He signed his name confidently in a flowing hand on the marriage certificate; he was not an uneducated man. (Where did he learn to write so well? Was it aboard ship on all those endless days at sea with nothing to do? – there were many educated men aboard who could teach). The witnesses who signed his marriage certificate perhaps reveal the truth behind this story. Normally at a wedding, parents, siblings or close friends act as witnesses. In Rossiter's case these were Peter Calmel and Henry Brougham.

Calmel (died 1790) was a wealthy London lawyer and property developer who owned land in Halberton. Brougham (1742 – 1810) was also a wealthy lawyer and landed proprietor with estates in Cumberland, being Calmel's "intimate friend". It is very hard to imagine why these two upper class men should have been honoured guests at Rossiter's wedding, unless, of course, he was fresh from the *Endeavour*. Can it be a coincidence that Brougham was Joseph Banks's best friend at Eton College? Why on earth would these men attend the wedding of a nobody unless Banks had asked Brougham to go down to Halberton to represent him, and Calmel agreed to accompany his friend

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because of his local connections? In the confinement of a small ship, surviving the trials, tribulations and hardships of an extraordinary adventure over three long years, a bond would have formed between all of the men on board regardless of rank and privilege back home in England. It must have been a lively topic of conversation that Rossiter, like Banks, had a sweetheart waiting for him and that they were to marry as soon as he got home. Perhaps Banks had promised to attend the wedding, little imagining the frenzied celebrity into which he would be thrust as soon as he set foot on English soil. Banks was formally introduced to King George III on 10 August, and over the course of the next month attended court numerous times – he was the most talked of man in London. There was no way he could afford to leave Town for a week or more to travel to Devon himself.

Thomas Rossiter and his wife Elizabeth settled down to a quiet life in Tiverton – there is no evidence that he left the town again (if he ever did!). They had ten children, one every other year until the last, Marianne, who was born in June 1790. Sadly, as was only too common at the time, many of them died in infancy. Thomas Rossiter joined his father in business as millwright or mill carpenter, trading as Thomas Rossiter & Son; his father lived until 1789. In 1730, Tiverton had 56 fulling mills, not to mention numerous grist mills, and there were also water mills in every surrounding parish. They all needed constant maintenance, so the Rossiters would have been busy. In the late 1770s and early 1780s, Thomas Were & Sons called on the services of the

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Rossiters every year to repair their fulling mills in Wellington. In March 1783, Were promised to send horses for Thomas and his son to bring them to Wellington. In 1790 Thomas Rossiter quoted a price of almost £100 for repairs to a fulling mill and water wheel at Bolham – this was a lucrative and specialised trade and no doubt Thomas made money from it. In 1799, Thomas insured his property in Westexe for £300 with the Sun Fire Office, and in 1803 Thomas Rossiter, millwright, sold North Sidborough, Tiverton, to George Besly for £600, a property he had inherited from his uncle John.

Thomas Rossiter's eldest son, another Thomas, was born in Tiverton in May 1772. By the 1790s, the writing was on the wall for the trade in which his father had earned his living. Devon's cloth industry went into terminal decline with the onset of war in Europe. Tiverton had depended for over a century on selling cloth to the Dutch, but war put paid to that. The advance of mechanisation, driven by the industrial revolution in Yorkshire and Lancashire made Devon's domestic-based cloth manufacturing uncompetitive. Thomas Heathfield's large spinning mill was already under construction in Westexe to spin yarn by water power, all of the machinery being bought in.

It is, perhaps, against this backdrop, as well as his father's exploits in his youth, that Thomas junior chose a different career path. However his arrival in Jamaica, where in 1796, described as a merchant of Kingston, he married Elizabeth Sophia Jones, the daughter of a plantation owner, remains as yet totally unexplained. Thomas junior acted as an agent in Jamaica on behalf of

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other merchants, handling cargoes of sugar. The couple had several daughters, the second of whom, Mary Ann, was born in Kingston in November 1799. Following the death of his father-in-law Charles Jones in December 1807, Thomas junior inherited a plantation through his wife at Peartree Grove, Jamaica, with over 100 slaves. Shortly afterwards, Thomas junior and his family returned to England, his wife dying in childbirth in January 1809. The family settled in Westexe near Thomas senior, on the western side of Westexe South, just north of Birchen Lane.

It would no doubt have been a proud day for old Mr Rossiter when, on 26 October 1818, his grand-daughter Mary Ann married Thomas Forwood, the great nephew of his old shipmate Stephen Forwood, but alas he was the only one left alive who remembered. Thomas Rossiter was buried on 6 October 1822 in St George's churchyard, at the age of 79, his wife Elizabeth having predeceased him in 1815 at the age of 66.

Although I have only been able to amass circumstantial evidence that Thomas Rossiter of Tiverton was one and the same man as the marine drummer who served on the *Endeavour*, I do feel that this evidence is compelling, if incomplete. Efforts are ongoing by experts in military records to confirm the identities of all of the *Endeavour's* crew. Let us hope that one day they succeed.

*Peter Maunder*

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## **Collipriest Part IV: The First Collipriest House?**

It is said that no trace remains of the first Collipriest House, but it may be that it has lost its identity because it was incorporated in the Thomas Winslow mansion of nearly a century later. English Heritage describes the south wing of the present house as the 'early 18<sup>th</sup> century south garden front'. The north wing looks contemporary with the south wing although smaller and plainer with interior features which suggest it was the 'service wing' as described by English Heritage. The hipped roofs of the two wings and also the former stable block (now known as 'Stable Farm') are similar.

The 'garden front' traditionally facing south, had nine bays, the centre three projecting slightly and surmounted by a pediment and cupola. It was later extended at the east end (probably by Winslow) by two more bays with arched windows to match the existing ground floor windows but with an incongruous flat roof. The three bays of the western end of the south front are taken into the enlargement of the West Front and altered beyond recognition by Winslow. The Stable Farm building also has a pediment, but with a clock-turret. It has six arched bays matching the windows of the south front, although these would have formed an open arcade to accommodate stabling (see front cover picture).

Possibly the present West Front was a building linking the north and south wings, housing the kitchen and other domestic accommodation, before it was

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completely altered by Winslow. This suggestion is supported by a number of features:

- an interior wall to the rear of this section, which has 'bind' arched features and which is solid enough to have been an exterior wall;
- the position of the chimneys;
- the configuration of the roof; and
- the position of the staircase before the house was converted again in recent years.

There may have been a gap between the service block and the rear of that building, but alterations where the south wing merges into the present main building were so extensive that it is impossible to guess what the original building was like and whether it had only two floors and not three as at present.

John Blundell, son of Sarah, married Jane Daw of Exeter in 1708 and wrote his memoirs in 1712 seated in a small 'fishing house' on the bank of the Lowman below Collipriest, while living in part of the house. This John Blundell died without issue in 1734 and his nephew Philip continued at Collipriest House. Two further generations of the Blundell family, the first of six children, and the second of eight, were resident at Collipriest House so it was indeed a family home for some seventy years.

*Mary Toft*

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## **A Reflection on 2020-2021**

The last year is likely to be one that will be remembered by many people for the different ways in which the Covid 19 epidemic and the necessary restrictions of freedom have affected our lives and lifestyles. For our Society, the most notable change has been that we have not been able to meet regularly or to go on our usual outings kindly arranged by Alison Gordon. With this continuing in 2021, we hope as many members as possible will be able to take part in the Zoom AGM and May meeting that Jeremy has arranged.

Individually, the greatest impact has been for those who have lost loved ones. Our thoughts are with those who have suffered and continue to suffer in this way. There have been difficulties too for those unable to attend necessary medical appointments and we hope that this has not led to a deterioration in medical conditions or to dental pain for our members and their families.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, life continues for all of us. Individually we have experienced other changes, notably the impossibility of meeting with other family members during the lockdowns except in local 'bubbles'. We hope that with the gradual easing of lockdown in England, it will be possible for family and friends to meet again safely in the summer. Walks and holidays have been missed by many, but it is good news that we are now able to visit the gardens at Knightshayes, which look stunning at the moment. We hope you are looking forward to the summer and better times to come. *Editor*

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## **Jane Chorley, Midwife**

Tucked away in the stores of Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life we have a wonderful handwritten bound volume titled 'Mrs Jane Chorley's Book'. This is a ledger kept by Jane Chorley of 28 Leat Street, Tiverton, where she records her attendance at local births from 1875 through to 1907.

The first Midwives Act of 1902 legally recognised midwifery, but it took some years before the majority of midwives had been formally trained. Although after 1910 local (untrained) women attending births had to be under the supervision of a certified midwife or doctor.

It appears that Jane Chorley is one of these local women and she records over 1,500 births in 32 years. The first is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1875, Mrs J. Authurs who had a girl. In 1847 she starts to record part of the address, such as Leat Street, New Inn Court, Chapel Street, Gold Street and West Exe. She also attends some local farms and goes to local villages including Washfield, Withleigh and Bickleigh. The handwriting appears to change several times in the last 7 years recorded in the book, and it is possible that Jane was attending with someone else, or possibly that her practise was taken on by someone else who continued to record in the book.

Census records from 1901 show a Jane Chorley, Midwife, aged 67. This means that she would have been 41 when the book starts in 1875. The census records show that Jane was married to William who was a boot and shoe-

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maker. In 1891 they were living at 33 Leat Street with their grandson Fred aged 7.

There is a note in the book that Mr and Mrs Chorley entered Greenways Almshouses on Easter Monday in the 1900<sup>th</sup> year of our Lord. The cover of the book is also amended to read Mrs J. Chorley, 29 Greenways B?, Tiverton.

There are subsequent notes in the book that she received money from the Parish on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1906, and January 1907 when she would have been aged 73.

## **Update on the museum:**

The museum faces another challenging year in 2021. Whilst we are closed under the national lockdown, we are not able to generate any income. When we can re-open, anticipate a much-reduced income as we will not yet be able to generate any income through some of our usual income streams (events and school activities), and income through admissions and the museum shop will be reduced. We do need the local community to keep on supporting the museum, either through visiting when we open, joining our membership scheme or by donating to our emergency appeal which is still ongoing and can be done online at: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/12418> We very much hope that we will be able to rebuild our services later in the year.

*Pippa Griffith*

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19<sup>th</sup> Mrs Downs Chapel St  
 24<sup>th</sup> Mrs Miller Coombes Head  
 28<sup>th</sup> Mrs Morrel Melbourne St  
 29<sup>th</sup> Mrs Kingdom Ashley  
 30<sup>th</sup> Mrs Hancock Bolham  
 Nov.  
 26<sup>th</sup> Mrs Fitzgerald Holwell  
 Dec  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs Lane East St  
 1<sup>st</sup> Mrs Harris Ashley Farm  
 11<sup>th</sup> Mrs Greenleaze

1900  
 Jan.  
 8<sup>th</sup> Mrs Goslin John St  
 2 Girls  
 4<sup>th</sup> Mrs Disney, Allers  
 Chertiscombe Boy  
 4<sup>th</sup> Mrs Jewings Church  
 St Boy  
 13<sup>th</sup> Mrs Bevan Butterleigh  
 Girl  
 13<sup>th</sup> Mrs Stone Washfield  
 Boy  
 24<sup>th</sup> Mrs Reed Newport St  
 Boy  
 24<sup>th</sup> Mrs Jackle Bolham  
 Girl  
 28<sup>th</sup> Mrs Duckham Phoenix  
 Lane Boy

1885  
 Jan  
 5<sup>th</sup> Mrs Hole Canal & My  
 15<sup>th</sup> Mrs Jackson Cosway's Buildings  
 a Girl  
 Feb  
 13<sup>th</sup> Mrs Penny G. Moore a Girl  
 18<sup>th</sup> Mrs Nailing East St a Boy  
 15<sup>th</sup> Mrs Clarke Beaches Square a Girl  
 25<sup>th</sup> Mrs Chown Westone a Girl  
 26<sup>th</sup> Mrs Coleman's East St a Boy  
 26<sup>th</sup> Mrs Perkins Lee Farm a Boy  
 27<sup>th</sup> Mrs Blister Hensleigh a Boy  
 27<sup>th</sup> Mrs Beer Butterleigh a Girl  
 March  
 5<sup>th</sup> Mrs Davy Chapel St a Girl  
 14<sup>th</sup> Mrs Lane Kingsdown a Girl  
 31<sup>st</sup> Mrs Robt Saunders Sampford  
 April

June  
 10<sup>th</sup> Mrs Hawkins Frogwell a Son  
 11<sup>th</sup> Mrs Stone Westcott a Son  
 16<sup>th</sup> Mrs Keen Lunkhill a Girl  
 21<sup>st</sup> Miss Tucker Frogwell a Boy  
 28<sup>rd</sup> Mrs L. Barton Pauls St a Boy

July  
 11<sup>th</sup> Mrs Webber Broadway a Girl  
 27<sup>th</sup> Mrs Middleton Hensley a Boy

Aug  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs Freeman Gold St a Girl  
 15<sup>th</sup> Mrs Wright Middlehill a Girl  
 16<sup>th</sup> Mrs Sweet Beauchamp Farm  
 Beauchamp Farm Boy & Girl

Sept  
 5<sup>th</sup> Mrs C. Gill Willbrook St a Son  
 5<sup>th</sup> Mrs Woodward John St a Son  
 14<sup>th</sup> Mrs May Seaward a Son

Records kept by midwife Jane Chorley

## Record of the marriage of Thomas Rossiter and Elizabeth Phillips

No 5.  
 Nicholas Alee - of [the] Parish  
 and Elizabeth Carnell - of [the]  
 same - were  
 Married in this [Church] by [Danns]  
 this sixteenth Day of July - in the Year One Thousand seven Hundred  
 and seven one - by me Henry Weston [Parate]  
 This Marriage was solemnized between Us The Mark of Nicholas Alee  
 The Mark of Elizabeth Carnell  
 In the Presence of William Cane  
 In the Presence of [Private Seal]

No 6.  
 Thomas Rossiter - of [the] Parish of Tiverton  
 and Elizabeth Phillips - of [the]  
 same - were  
 Married in this [Church] by [Danns]  
 this seventh Day of August - in the Year One Thousand seven Hundred  
 and seven one - by me Henry Weston - [Parate]  
 This Marriage was solemnized between Us Thomas Rossiter  
 Elizabeth Phillips  
 In the Presence of Peter Carmel  
 In the Presence of Henry Chapman