



# Heritage

No. 38

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Summer 2011

*Journal of the Ottery St. Mary Heritage Society*

## Including...



Ottery turns out in 1569



Ottery's Literary connections - the full story



Iron made in Ottery - are our local resources ignored?

...plus Letters, What's on, Talaton's war memorial pursued, and drinking from a Goose's Egg...

[www.otteryheritage.org.uk](http://www.otteryheritage.org.uk)

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Members had a rare treat awaiting them when they arrived at the Institute for the group's May meeting. A packed audience were transported back to the time when traditional Romany wagons evolved into some of the most advanced, ornate, decorative and highly colourful means of horsedrawn transport ever seen. They were prized for their practicality as well as aesthetic design.

Guest speaker, Brian Phelps, first charmed everyone with amusing anecdotes of how he was introduced to the art of modelling these Romany 'vardos' in their several design variations. The accuracy and attention to detail in the samples he brought along were truly amazing.

For our June meeting, we shall welcome back Sue Andrews whose subject this time will be 'The Green Men of Ottery'.

The talk will be preceded by a short AGM – your attention is drawn to the word 'short'. In an attempt to speed up the proceedings (which I'm sure will meet with everyone's approval) the usual paperwork you receive in advance of the AGM will this time

contain ALL the reports and documentation. This means you can scrutinise everything beforehand.

At the meeting itself, committee executives will answer any questions on their reports, followed by the election of Trustees for the coming year plus AOB. All this should take little more than 15 minutes. It's worth a try!

Members are asked to be in their seats ready for a prompt 7.30pm start.

Thanks to all members and guests who support our monthly meetings, and importantly those who help to set out the room, assist with refreshments, and put everything away at the end.

Finally, a word about our ongoing negotiations to lease part of the redundant public toilets beneath the public library at Flexton. The idea is to convert the room for use as a 'records office' in which to store our growing collection of local artefacts, documents and collectibles, together with our

Letters, articles or any other submissions to the Journal can be emailed to [otteryheritage@googlemail.com](mailto:otteryheritage@googlemail.com)

## The end of local history?

The Heritage Society enjoys continuing success in providing ongoing events of a broadly educational nature to members and their guests. Everything appears to be running very nicely, I think you would agree. This is all set to change. The notes from the chairman follow a familiar theme in asking for people to consider giving up a little of their time to help run the Society, but this time there is a deadline, after which there will no longer be a functioning committee, and without that there will be very little in the way of activities and services for members. So the clock is ticking, and you are urged to consider how this problem can be solved, other than suggesting that someone else would probably do a better job than you. It's not true - you ARE the best person to serve on the committee - it goes without saying.

## Easily missed

Imagine my surprise when I discovered that there is, almost on our doorstep, a Saxon village complete with wattle and thatch houses, and people using pole lathes, people making bows and arrows, or furniture in green wood, or smelting iron (see page 8) - all the things you could want for an active visit to the past. This resource will probably be familiar to local schools but it had certainly escaped my attention, in spite of it being in existence for some years already. I discovered it by chance, in a round-about way because of the iron ore I found on the Ottery skatepark site.

It served as a timely reminder to keep tabs on what's going on locally - and if you think you might be partial to a little experimental archaeology, then Escot Education ([www.escoteducation.blogspot.com](http://www.escoteducation.blogspot.com)) is a good place to start.

*Chris Wakefield*

## From the Chairman (cont from p1)

heritage reference library. This will mean they can be made accessible for public scrutiny. The project has been put on hold pending contamination reports and planning consent for change of use. Let's hope our problems will soon be sorted.

'Floreat Ottregia'

*Robert Neal*

## Forthcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, all the Society's meetings are held in the Institute, Yonder Street, Ottery St. Mary.

• **21st June 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm**

**AGM plus The Green Men of Ottery**

Speaker: Sue Andrews

• **19th July 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm**

**Green Lanes of East Devon and beyond**

Speaker: Valerie Belsey

• **20th September 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm**

**In the Footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson**

Speaker: Philippe Planel

• **18th October 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm**

**Woodbury Castle - The Hill Fort**

Speaker: Bungy Williams

• **22nd October 2011 (Sat.) 12.30pm for 1pm**

**Coleridge Anniversary Lunch**

Guest Speaker: Chris Wakefield

(see advert on page 3)

• **15th November 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm**

**Bells and Bellringing**

Speaker: Dr Ian Campbell

## 2012

• **10th January 2012**

**Thackeray & Larkbeare (Tuesday) 7.30 pm**

Speaker: Betty Williams

• **21st February 2012**

**An Insight into A La Ronde**

Speaker: Salli Carr-Griffin

• **20th March 2012**

**Landscape and History**

Speaker: Chris Wakefield

## Heritage Society Trustees

Hon Chairman	Robert Neal	813686
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	Hazel Abley	
	Vaughan Glanville*	812628
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	Chris Wakefield	815262
	Betty Williams	814044
	Oliver Wilson	813021

## Co-opted members

Membership Sec.	Judy Mullinger	813019
Meetings Secretary	Sylvia Wainwright	813041

Articles or letters can be emailed to the Journal at

[otteryheritage@googlemail.com](mailto:otteryheritage@googlemail.com)

[www.otteryheritage.org.uk](http://www.otteryheritage.org.uk)

\*pending until AGM of 2011

# Letters

## Coleridge at Home - problem solved



Dear Chris

I believe the photograph on page 4 of the Spring 2011 Journal is of my much loved, respected and missed uncle, the Reverend Nicholas Francis Domville Coleridge, lately vicar of Tatworth, who sadly died on 10th July 1976 aged 49. There is a clue in the suggestion of a cassock, the garment not quite covering his clerical collar when seated and, the date given in your article 'Coleridge at Home'.

You will be aware that his father, my grandfather, the Reverend Gerard Hartley Buchanan Coleridge (1882-1945), lately vicar of Cornwood, instigated the public subscription of funds for the purchase of Coleridge Cottage (a former public house) for the benefit of the nation.

Nicholas Coleridge was just eleven years older than me and was a regular visitor to my old school, Wellington, from where I much looked forward to him taking me out for the day and the occasional weekend. Besides dedicating his life to the church and his parishioners, he was an enthusiastic campanologist claiming to have rung every bell in England! (Who was I at 13 years to disbelieve

him?). He was also a fine organist with a similar dubious claim!

Anyway, I recall that his generosity alternated with visits to churches with bell practice and my crawling round the dusty backs of various old organs looking for some note that had fallen off, or pumping bellows, and that after a two hour bus journey Afterwards he would treat me to a cream tea. My greatest reward however, was being invited to be the Best Man on his marriage to my dear Aunt Denise who survives him - a compliment I have never forgotten.

He will always be remembered by me, and probably by his parishioners, for his terrific sense of humour and mischievousness. There are many, many anecdotes, but one fit for publication was when he was asked to play at a wedding, at short notice, in a church near Newton Abbot, where he was curate. He took me along and put me in the choir. The bride was late, the groom was in tears and the father of the groom was pacing up and down. My Uncle, without muse or ceremony, started to over play his organ voluntary with snatches of Glen Miller and Gilbert and Sullivan. The groom's father sat down and his son stopped crying and, a hush fell upon the loud congregation, as if they'd had a reminder of where they were. The organ voluntary returned when the bride was at the door.

Regards and best wishes

**Gerard William Coleridge**

Rothwell  
Northamptonshire

Dear Chris

I was interested to see the photo taken in Coleridge Cottage in this months newsletter. The man in the picture is not my father, Alwyne Coleridge but his brother Nicholas who was at that time vicar of Tatworth near Chard. The photo was taken in 1972 during celebrations to mark the 200th anniversary of STCs birth. Incidentally the poem he is reading is Frost at Midnight. He later preached at Ottery church.

STC had nine great grandchildren and many great great grand children and beyond, so there are several direct descendants about, quite a few of us still in East Devon.

kind regards



The Ottery St Mary Heritage Society

## ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

in celebration of the birth of

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Poet & Philosopher

at the

## TUMBLING WEIR HOTEL

Ottery St Mary

on

**Saturday October 22nd 2011**

12.30 for 1.00pm

**Guest Speaker: Chris Wakefield**

**Tickets £19.95**

Phone ROBERT NEAL 01404 813686

# For King & Country



In spite of considerable conflict in Ireland, the Elizabethan era is not remembered for large scale land battles. England's growing naval power moved the theatre of her European wars to sea, where most of the historic battles took place. During much of this period however, the tradition of military service (or preparedness for such service) for all adult males remained in place - although it was by no means in a healthy condition, as the following records from Ottery's muster roll of 1569 demonstrates.

Since at least the Anglo Saxon period (and very likely long before that too), a grant of land by a nobleman to a retainer was more than likely tied up with the provision of military services to the grantor when he had need of it. So while you farmed your estate (or got it farmed for you in many cases) some of your income had to be deployed in preparing for military service. This committed you to buying armour, weapons and a suitable war horse against the day you would be called up. The business of warfare in the middle ages was an aristocratic affair where considerable wealth could be achieved through the spoils of war, which was not vastly different to plain thieving.

The system continued into the later middle ages, but with increasing opportunities at home to make money through land, trade and commerce, the demands and risks of foreign warfare looked less attractive and military service in these areas fell increasingly to a professional military elite (still drawn from the ranks of the

aristocracy) who paid conscripts to do the actual frontline fighting.

At home though, there was technically still an expectation of service from all adult males in a national emergency, and each parish had to find their quota of eligible men and also the cash needed to equip them.

This last was achieved through a local tax (and the records of quite a few of these exists for Ottery), but those who were eligible for immediate service are noted in a different document - The Muster Roll - and the 1569 list for Ottery is appended at the end of this.

The list is of particular interest to family and military historians, but anyone with an interest in the town will find the surnames of interest if only because many of them are still in evidence today.

The roll demonstrates that the turn out was a bit shambolic - many of those with responsibility to turn out had no weapons to present. The harquebusiers were supposed to each have an arquebus (a precursor of the

musket) - but there were only ten pieces listed for the parish as a whole. The mismatch of men and resources is obvious from the commissioner's notes at the head of the lists, which reads "The total of all the geldings armour and weapons within the said hundred and parish of Ottery Saynte Marye: five light geldings furnished, 13 corselets (breastplates) 10 pikes, 10 haquebuts, 10 murrians, one almen rivet, 15 long bows, 15 sheafs of arrowes, 15 steele cappes, 5 black bills.

The pike was a very long javelin style weapon - up to 15 feet in length, with an ash handle. The bill was similar but somewhat shorter with a flat axe blade included below the piked end.

The notes which the commissioners made to accompany the list

The complete 1569 muster roll for Devon is in the DRO(1)

## Light Horsemen

Roger Courtney gent  
Henry Beaumont Esq  
John Sherman gent

## Archers

Christopher Sawnder  
William Bucklond  
Henry Foorde  
John Bowcher  
John Stofford  
Robert Crockhaye  
William Axe  
Robert Gellarde  
John Butston  
Thomas Cullyforde  
Gawyn Moore  
John Pester  
Edward Parker  
John Searell  
Richard Chanon  
John Churchehill  
John Crese  
Richard Churchehill  
John Chanon  
John Carnell  
William Clode jun.  
John Holwill  
William Tille  
Richard Coppe  
Roger Ware

## Harquebusiers

Henry White  
Robert Axe  
William Hobbes Jun  
Thomas Colpreste  
Richard Searell  
John Browne  
Rechart Bucklonde  
Edmond Hendley  
John Searell  
Anthony Clerke  
Warren(?) Harries  
John Kurrudge jun  
John Spurwaye

## Billmen

William Chaplyn  
John Swayne  
Richard Hallens  
Thomas Darbye  
Robert Beste  
Roger Belmye  
Philip Kyne  
William Stanchell  
John Hooper  
Henry Mannyng  
Thomas Venner  
Peter Baker  
Michael Salter  
Robert Clappe  
Bennet Hamond  
John Lake  
John Crockhaye  
Richard Torren  
Nicholas Carye  
John Northcot  
John Norington

George Hilcombe  
John Sprake  
Henry Martyn  
Robert Buckley  
Robert Hamlyn  
John Plumer  
William Cruchard  
edmund Ashford  
Michael Turner  
John Hayman  
Hugh Salter  
William Salter  
Join Horne  
John Crabbe  
Robert Skinner  
Charles Wescot  
Andrew Bowcher  
Gilbert Manley  
Michael Radman  
Thomas Creyse  
Mathew Sonnyng  
Thomas Bucknoll  
James Skeyt  
John Newale  
William Tucke

## Pikemen

John Barret  
John Clerke  
Thomas Harries  
Thomas Hallet  
John Basten  
William Baillye  
Edward Peryman  
William Crucharde  
William Wishlake  
Thomas Brangwill  
Michael Searell  
John Goulde  
Rfchard Bradden  
John Sprake  
Robert Sprake  
Alexander Northamton  
John Cole  
Richard Shebroke  
Mathew Hayman  
Walter Pawle  
Robert Baston  
William Crese  
Michael Steven Jun  
Richard Carnell Jun  
Richard Franks  
Thomas Inglood  
Christopher Salter  
John Aishe  
Robert Hutchell  
John Englonde  
John Trapnell  
Thomas Babington

*Chris Wakefield*

ref: Devon Muster Roll for 1569.  
A.J. Howard (Editor), T.L. Stoaate  
(Editor)



Above: a pikeman. Right: an Harquebusier. Both these pictures postdate the list of Ottery men but their appearance is not much altered from that time.

*All pics: Wikimedia Commons*

## Uncovering the Stories of the Men on Local War Memorials

One hundred years ago, men from the neighbouring parishes of Escot and Talaton were going about their daily business in the lengthening shadow of imminent conflict between Britain and Germany. For some, work went on at Escot, in the stables or gardens; others laboured in nearby farms in Ottery, Fenny Bridges,



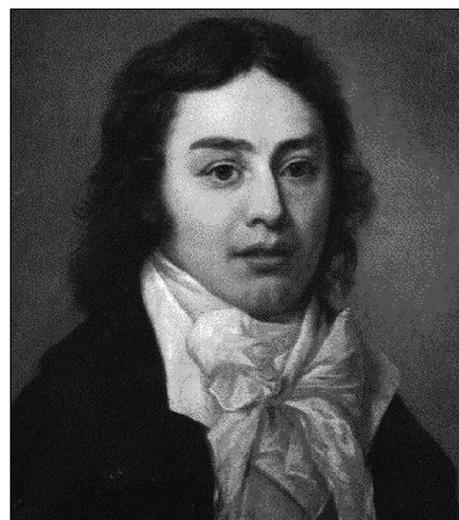
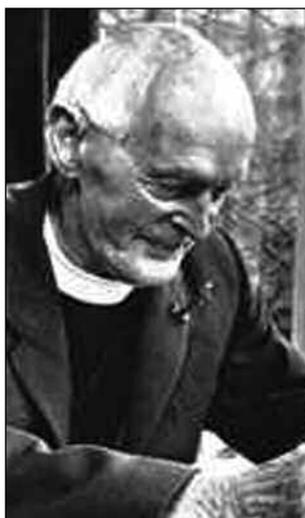
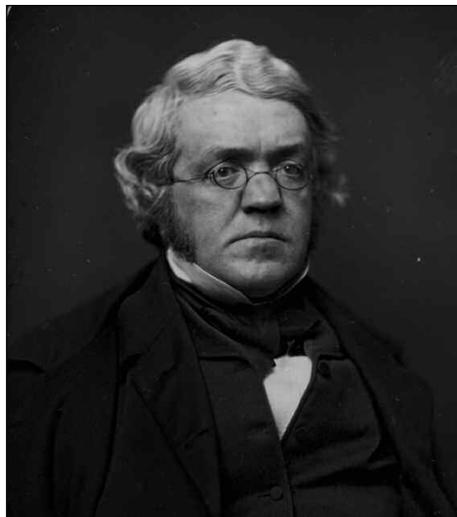
Talaton and Talewater. Some knew each other; others were strangers but within a very short time, they fought and died together in Flanders, Picardy, Italy, Mesopotamia and on the high seas.

The Men on the Cross and in the Window by Heritage Society member Richard Powell traces the history of the men whose names are inscribed on the War Memorial in Talaton churchyard and the window in Escot church. Drawing on the records of their individual units, the booklet describes the most likely circumstances of the men's death and maps their tragically brief stories from farm and stable to so many corners of foreign fields.

The booklet, (£5) is available at the Curious Otter in Ottery St Mary, the post office and tourist information centre and will shortly be available in the shop at Talaton. Profits from the book, which Richard hopes will be reprinted with further stories of the men of the two parishes who served in, and came home from, the Great War, will go to the Church of St James in Talaton

*Richard Powell*

# Literary Connections of Ottery St Mary



**Coleridge dominates the scene where Ottery's links with literature are concerned, but our chairman reminds us that there are a host of other associations that we can celebrate. I would have captioned each picture had I not thought you might wish to identify each character yourself... Ed. all pics wikimedia commons**

Ottery has proved to be an inspiration for a host of literary greats down the centuries. Many have lived in Ottery, some holidayed, others merely passed through, many returned time and again. Writers including Dickens, Christie, Hardy, Austen, Keats, Browning, Kipling, Tennyson, Shelley, Wilde, have all at some time had links with, or made reference to, Ottery St Mary. Some no doubt were drawn out of a curiosity for the name, but others

captivated by the beauty and character of the ancient town and the richness of the surrounding countryside. As the Rev. Richard Polwhele wrote in 'A History of Devon' (1797), "Proceeding from Exeter to Honiton, we were presented within six miles of Honiton with the sweetest scene of cultivation I ever beheld. This may be called the garden of Devonshire."

Alexander Barclay (1475?-1552), poet, scholar, and divine, was a priest at

Ottery's once famous ecclesiastical college founded by Bishop Grandisson in 1337. Whilst here, Barclay translated Sebastian Brandt's *Narrenschiff* (1494) into English as *The Ship of Fools* (1509). His version was a free adaptation of the original, which had been written first in Swabian dialect and then in Latin, and he intended it as a satire of contemporary English life and its corruptions and abuses. It was a compelling account of the injustice

which lay at the heart of early sixteenth century English society rendering it ripe for political and religious changes. He taught at the school within the college, and scholars now agree that he helped and influenced the transition from medieval allegory to drama and the English novel. There was certainly power in his writing and he created word pictures in his writings which we still use today: phrases such as 'skin deep', 'from pillar to post', 'robbing Peter to pay Paul', 'making the mouth water' and many others.

Famous poet and philosopher, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in Ottery on 21 October 1772 at the schoolhouse, the 13th and youngest child of the Revd John Coleridge, vicar of Ottery parish church 1760–81, and master of the Grammar School. After his father's death the young Coleridge received his schooling at Christ's Hospital, London. His many sonnets include 'To the River Otter' in which he recalls his happy childhood, and fondly remembers the music of the church bells in 'Frost at Midnight' (Feb. 1798). A memorial plaque on the churchyard wall has a low-relief bust and portrays the albatross from his popular 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798).

Larkbeare, a residence in the parish of Ottery, is where author and satirist William Makepeace Thackeray (1809–1891) lived with his stepfather during his vacations from Charterhouse. Ottery St Mary is the setting for a large part of his famous novel 'Pendennis' (1848–1850) in which the town is featured as 'Clavering St Mary' – the illustrations in his first edition are clearly recognisable scenes from the town of Ottery itself.

The Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924) – Novelist and Scholar, was vicar of the church at Tipton St John in the Parish of Ottery. He composed many hymns including the rousing 'Onward Christian Soldiers', later adopted by the Salvation Army, and the ever-popular 'Now the Day is Over'.

A. W. Kinglake, travel writer and historian lived in Ottery and attended

the local Kings Grammar School before going to Eton, and then Trinity College Cambridge. He abandoned his legal practice in favour of literature. His opus magnum was his 'Invasion of the Crimea' in 8 volumes (1863–1887).

Rev. William Keble Martin, Member of the Royal Society, British botanist and botanical illustrator, known for 'The Concise British Flora in Colour' published in May 1965 when the author was 88. The book was the result of sixty years' meticulous fieldwork and exquisite painting skills, and became an immediate best-seller. For a while he lived at 'Sandrock' Ottery St Mary with his two sisters.

Frank Harvey, (1912–1981) was an English playwright and screenwriter who won a joint BAFTA award for 'I'm All Right Jack' in 1960, and was also nominated for a second BAFTA for 'Private's Progress'. Most popular of his plays was 'Saloon Bar' and he penned numerous TV scripts during a prolific writing career. He lived in Ottery St Mary from 1947 until his death in 1981.

Philip Johnson, 20th century playwright, wrote more than fifty plays, a number of which had long runs in London's West End and proved popular with drama groups throughout the UK and abroad. His most memorable was 'Lover's Leap' which was later made into a successful film. The author lived at 'The Owl Pen', West Hill, Ottery St Mary for many years.

The family of television comedian, satirist and writer, Mike Harding were born and lived in Ottery St Mary, and although family connections were lost in 1940, there was a tearful reunion in 1978.

Most recently, J. K. Rowling, who became familiar with Ottery whilst at Exeter University, has featured the town in her Harry Potter books as 'Ottery St Catchpole'.

*Robert Neal*

## Words speak volumes

### Keith Turner notes some curious Devonshire terminology

I recently came across some interesting names for jars, jugs, barrels or bottles. They were 'Field Firkin' or 'Virkin,' 'Costrel,' 'Owl' or 'Verwood Owl' a 'Blackbird,' an 'Old Thrush,' 'Little Dick,' and a 'Goose Egg'. Sometimes a small oak cask would be referred to as a 'bottle' It seems as if a mixture of dialect terms had come together to create a maze of names for different size containers, although I'm certain that everyone at the time knew exactly what the names represented in terms of relative size.

How much cider was there in a 'Blackbird,' or a 'Firkin,' and why did they have these names? Those of a nervous disposition are next warned that my 'concepts' are in pints and gallons, as I have not yet fully converted to metric values. Starting with the Field Firkin or Verkin, the name suggests a small, quarter size cask (vier meaning a fourth part, and kin, the diminutive for small) probably containing about eight pints – roughly a days allowance at harvest time. A Costrel would have been smaller, for the name suggests it would be hung by the worker's side (old French 'costerel') and may have contained about two pints. The next size up from this was the 'Little Dick' at three pints, followed by the Owl or Dorset Owl – sometimes also referred to as the 'Verwood Owl,' with a capacity of four pints. A Blackbird might have been five pints, and last and probably least a 'Goose egg' – a small container of a pint, for child workers. These containers would not have been carried around all day, but placed somewhere convenient, where they could be visited when needed – in the shade, or if possible left in a stream to stay cool.

Local and regional names that recognise size and shape were included among container names, and maybe helped inject a bit of poetry into the language. I prefer Old Thrush and Blackbird to pints and gallons – which leaves the metric litre a long way behind in third place.

*Keith Turner*

# Iron made in Ottery

Members will recall that the last edition of the Journal included an article about iron ore located at the site of the new skatepark just west of the Kings School (Journal No 37 p5). By a series of curious events there arose the opportunity to actually use this local ore in a smelting operation - part of the experimental archaeology work carried out at the Escot Education Centre.

The experiment was supervised by Jake Keen, an experimental archaeologist specialising in worldwide historic (and prehistoric) iron production, assisted by the staff of Escot Education.

Two furnaces were in action, requiring constant attention and aeration, one of them by hand bellows - requiring non-stop effort over many hours. The ore was first roasted, then broken up into a coarse gravel, which was then layered into the furnaces with charcoal (also produced mostly at the centre) and heated brought up near white heat, at which point the sandy impurities melt into a runny vitreous slag, which was clearly in evidence in both furnaces. The ore used differed for each furnace - one had the Ottery ore, and the other a mixture of ores from local and more distant sources.

In the smelting process metallic iron is released from the compounds that form the ores, and this drips to the



This ore, found at the skatepark site, was used in a recent iron smelt conducted at Escots Education Centre.



**A bloomery in action: Ottery iron ore produced plenty of slag and a small quantity of metallic iron. The experiment made clear the potential for iron production using local ore.**

base of the furnace forming a spongy mass known as a "bloom".

East Devon has many links with ancient iron production. There are iron ore pits dating from Roman times on the Blackdowns, and slag appears in many local fields. An abundance has been found in Church Field in Alington. This may not always indicate the former location of iron furnaces (simply because broken slag was bought by farmers as a fill for gateways and other wear spots on the farm), but the presence of iron ore in a number of places in Ottery parish suggests that local production was highly likely at some point during the medieval period.

The results of the smelt were an impressive bloom from the mixed ore, and a quantity of metallic iron from the Ottery ore, although it did not aggregate into a bloom. Even so, this is the first time that iron has been smelted from local ore for many centuries.

*CW*

## What's on elsewhere

17 October – Monday 7:30:

### Village at War:

talk by Sue Dymond & Amanda Statham

### EXHIBITION

22 – 30 October: BRANSCOMBE'S

### WAR:

Life in Branscombe during WW2

more details: [www.branscombeproject.org.uk](http://www.branscombeproject.org.uk)

### Colyton Parish History Society

Wed 28th September: CAPT WILSON

### and the PELEW ISLANDS

Alan Jones 7.30pm Colyton Town Hall

Wed 26h October: THE YANKS ARE COMING

The Americans in Colyton 1944

Ben Joslin 7.30pm Colyford Memorial Hall

Wed 23rd November: RECENT

### DISCOVERIES AT SHUTE BARTON

Stuart Blaylock 7.30pm Colyton Town Hall

more details [www.colytonhistory.co.uk](http://www.colytonhistory.co.uk)

### Otter Valley Association and Sid Vale Association

both run a comprehensive series of local walks. visit [www.sidvaleassociation.org.uk](http://www.sidvaleassociation.org.uk) or [www.ova.org.uk](http://www.ova.org.uk) for details.

Letters, articles or any other submissions to the Journal can be emailed to [otteryheritage@googlemail.com](mailto:otteryheritage@googlemail.com) more information at [www.otteryheritage.org.uk](http://www.otteryheritage.org.uk)

Articles or letters to the editor can be posted to Chris Wakefield, "Melbury" Longdogs Lane, Ottery St Mary EX11 1HX or emailed to [otteryheritage@googlemail.com](mailto:otteryheritage@googlemail.com). Published by The Ottery St Mary Heritage Society.

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