



The **YARCOMBE STORY**

BY F.T. ORCHARD

To G. M. O. In Memoriam

and to D. + J.

This is affectionately
dedicated.

Many thanks are due to the staff of the Devon Record Office, the Exeter Reference Library, the Exeter City Records, the Public Record Office, the Devonshire Association, and especially to Bishop Armstrong for his help in permitting me to use the records in the church at Yarcombe, and for his encouragement in this project.

F. T. A. O.

Illustrations by Donald Tapster.

I

"What pirty hollers now the long
 White roads da windy roun' among,
 Wi diary cows in woody nooks,
 An' haymakers among their pooks,
 An' housen that the trees da screen
 Vrom zun an' zight by boughs o' green,
 Young blushen beauty's huomes between
 The white roads up athirt the hills"

William Barnes.

The roads are no longer white, but grey and smooth, and the pack-man wandering through the villages would marvel at the ease of the road. For him the road would have been much narrower, unmetalled, dusty, and in wet weather inches deep in mud. He would stop at the "Angel" as the old Yarcombe Inn was called, and spread his wares -

" tape,

Or lace for your cape,
 My dainty duck, my dear-a?
 Any silk, any thread,
 Any toys for your head,
 Of the new'st and fin'st, fin'st wear-a ?"

He might even bring a bolt of cloth from the serge makers of Tiverton for a farmer's wife to make suits for the year, which she had ordered the previous year when he was last in the village. And then his journey would continue along the roads to Glastonbury, Crewkerne, Salisbury and Winchester, gathering his wares and selling them as he wandered along.

If you look at the top of the window in the north transept you may see his portrait, looking towards the altar. We do not know the glassmaker, but he was put there probably in the late fourteenth century. He was one of the many wanderers who visited Yarcombe in the Middle Ages. Chaucer tells us

"Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
 The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote...
 Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
 (And palmers for to seke straunge strondes)
 To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;"

Through the spring and summer there might be a pilgrim wandering along with his broad hat decorated with a cockle shell, to tell us he had visited the shrine of St. James of Compostella, and his long staff to help him on his way. He might have come by sea in a small boat from Spain, and landed at Exeter and then wandered through Yarcombe on his way to visit the shrines of St. Swithun at Winchester, and St. Thomas at Canterbury. He would entertain the people at "The Angel" with stories of his journeys, and would rest in the church before continuing on his way. Remembrance of him is in the carving on the side of the stall on the south side of the chancel.

The packman and the pilgrim no longer pass by. The business of the world continues in lorries, coaches, and cars, and we hope that like the packman and the pilgrim, those who hurry along might stop like them, at "The Angel" for refreshment, and at the church for rest.



THE PEDLAR
STAINED GLASS
IN THE NORTH
TRANSEPT



CARVING ON
EAST END OF
CLERGY STALL
IN THE
CHANCEL

II

The earliest record we have of Yarcombe, then named Erticoma, is that it was in the possession of the Earls of Wessex, and so became the property of Harold, who was king for a year, and killed at Senlac 1066. William, Duke of Normandy, who became known as William the Conqueror, gave the manor to the Abbey of Mont St. Michael, in Normandy, and the translation of the entry in the Exon Domesday reads :-

"St. Michael has a manor called ERTICOMA which Earl Harold held on the day King Edward was alive and dead, and it paid geld for 3 hides (a hide being between 50 - 100 acres). These twelve ploughs can till. Thereof the Abbot of St. Michael has 1 hide, and 1 plough in demesne, and the villeins (serfs bound to the soil) 2 hides and 10 ploughs. There the abbot has 16 villeins, 8 bordars (or cottars, holding his cottage from the Lord of the Manor in return for service) 4 serfs, (a freeman but bound to his lord's land) 1 rouncey, (a riding horse) 7 beasts, 1 mill worth 6 shillings a year, 40 acres of woodland, 4 acres of meadow, and 50 of pasture. It pays 60 shillings a year: when he received it it was paying the same".

During the Civil War between Stephen and Matilda, which ended with the reign of Henry II, the moneys due to the Abbey of Mont St. Michael seem not to have been paid, for the Manor of Erticombe "was lying desolate, and its demesne squandered". Peace having come the prior in England for St. Michael tried to regain the lands for the abbey, but at that time the monks had no house of their own, and so "Fulchard, son of Orgar, that Orgar

quitclaimed the house in which his father had dwelt by the river Erti (Yarty) and the monks there made St. Michael's Hall. And Fulchard received in exchange a furlong and four acres of demesne land quit of all dues to the monks and 5 shillings of St. Michael's money at the hand of Robert de Mont Sorel".

Two years later Abbot Robert came to England, and "granted to Adam the priest the church of Erticombe for 40/-".

Some time later the manor of Yarcombe became part of the endowment of Otterton Priory, itself a cell of Mont St. Michael. St. Michael's Hall seems to have been of small importance, possibly when the manor became part of Otterton Priory, and we establish the presence of a vicar when 28th August 1269, Bishop Branscombe "assigned to him all the altar dues and the tithes of peas and beans growing in the gardens; the Prior of Otterton to bear all burdens". Evidently peas and beans formed the staple food of the populace since they are especially mentioned as tithes.

The "Ecclesia de Hertecombe" was valued at £10 in 1288, the vicar receiving 26/8. George Oliver, in his "Monasticon Diocesis Exoniensis" in his abstract of the cartulary of Otterton Priory says "Yerticumb - Here was a numerous tenantry. The rental was £15. 16. 5d. and the possible date of this information is about 1260.

The present church was built early in the 14th century, the High Altar being dedicated by Bishop Stapeldon on October 17th 1311, and two years later the first named vicar, Robert de Chulmleghe, was instituted, September 19th, 1313 on the presentation of Robert "called Dovel" Prior of Otterton.

At that time the church would have been cruciform, and there were no aisles, these being added a century later. It is to this period that the two angels with outstretched wings supporting the transeptal arches belong, and outside the church the bagpiper, and the well preserved possible portraits of the donors as corbel heads on the north wall. The gargoyles jutting from the base of the parapet table, from the embattled wall, leer demonically downwards. The glass of the pedlar, and the other figures, St. Peter, a saint, a crowned and seated figure with hands raised in blessing, possibly Our Lady, which are in the north transept window belong to the building of the transept in the 15th century.

The church was valued at £35 per annum by Bishop Grandisson in 1334, but forty one years later Bishop Brantingham reported to King Edward "that Yarticombe church was valued at the annual sum of £20."

The rents and tithes from Yarcombe were collected by Otterton Priory and then sent to the Abbey of Mont St. Michael in Normandy, but during the Hundred Years War the moneys were frequently seized by the king, who appointed his nominees to the parsonage. The suzerainty of the Abbots of Otterton lapses in the reigns of Edward III, Henry IV, and Henry V, who appointed Sir Richard Westone, 1 July 1373; Sir John Acland de Loftedhomme 8 Nov. 1376; Sir Richard Ferroure 22 April 1393, John Hele 20 March 1408; Richard Fanton 8 March 1413. Possibly owing to the transfer of moneys to France from Otterton, Henry V suppressed the Priory of Otterton and gave Yarcombe to his new foundation of Syon Abbey, at Isleworth, Middlesex. In pre-reformation times when the incumbent had no university degree he was called "Sir..." One is reminded of Shakespeare's Sir Oliver Martext in "As You Like It".



THE YARCOMBE
BAGPIPER - TWO
VIEWS OF A
CARVING ON
THE NORTH
AISLE WALL



III

Henry Vth annexed Yarcombe on April 20th, 1415, with other manors in East Devon to form the New Abbey of Syon House at Isleworth, Middlesex. The famous Syon Cope, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is one of the finest examples of English Ecclesiastical needlework, and it is a pleasant thought that the ladies of Yarcombe who embroidered the kneelers, and also the altar frontal, are unconsciously carrying on the tradition of ecclesiastical embroidery for which Syon Abbey was famous.

The patron of the living of Yarcombe now becomes the Abbess and Convent of Syon and remains with them until the dissolution in 1534. The then incumbent was Roger Brampstan, and he continued in office, so that it seems that although in this neighbourhood the great monastic house of Glastonbury, and the lesser ones of Newenham and Forde were closed, and Glastonbury and Newenham become ruinous, the troubled times around them do not seem to have affected the village, which pursued its even tenour, following the demands of the seasons, and living quietly and undisturbed by the happenings in London and the northern counties. The first royal patron of Yarcombe was Edward III, at the time of the Hundred Years

War, and apart from the patronage of Syon House, and for about one hundred years after the dissolution, the patron of Yarcombe has always been the reigning monarch. The present patron is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The invention of printing and the ability to read and write in the common tongue, the institution of schools during the reigns of the Tudors, and the need for some form of registration of people caused a mandate from Thomas Cromwell, 5th September 1538, for a registry of weddings, christenings and deaths to be kept in every parish, and to contain these records there had to be provided a 'sure coffer' with two locks. Yarcombe Church possesses two coffers. One, now standing in the north transept, is of older origin, and has three locks, a second is kept in the vestry under the tower, and comes from this period. The records of christenings and deaths are from Tudor times, and the coffers now contain the indentures of apprenticeships of 'poor children' of the parish during the XVIIIth century.

At the dissolution of the monastic houses the income from the manor and church dues reverted to the crown, and the first possessor of a part of the land was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth. Soon after being granted the land, Robert Dudley sold it to Sir Richard Drake, whose mother was a daughter of Sir Roger Grenville, of Stowe, Cornwall. A memorial to the Drake family is to be seen in Musbury church, in the south aisle. This family owned Ashe House, built from the ruins of Newenham Abbey, and were in no way connected with the family of Sir Francis Drake the explorer. Ashe House was the birthplace of

John Churchill, who afterwards became first Duke of Marlborough. The present Ashe House is fairly modern, the old house having been destroyed by fire.

Sir Richard Drake did not own his moiety for long, for in 1582 he sold it to Sir Francis Drake, the explorer, who obtained a grant from Queen Elizabeth for the remainder, and so the manor of Yarcombe passed into the Drake family, through the brother of Sir Francis, whose descendants are still in the neighbourhood.

In the Elizabethan era the pattern of life in England altered completely. There is now a rise of Yeomen, or farmers renting their land from the Lord of the Manor, and paying tithe to the vicar. Yarcombe absorbed its poor, and seems to have become a fairly prosperous community. There is extant a copy of the will of "John Knighte of Yertcombe in the Co. of Devon" He is "sick of body" and wishes to be buried "in hollye turffe". He had three sons, Robert, William and Nicholas; a daughter, Joane, married to Henrie Barfoote, and his wife Alicie. He leaves

To wife Alice ij kyen and xx sheepe to be halfe weathers and half ewes.

To Joane Barfoote my daughter one cowe and Tenne sheepe (half re as before)

To Henrie Barfoote iij ewes.

To Sonne Roberte Knighte one cowe fyve weathers and fyve ewes.

To ey'ye of my godchildren viij d. a pece

To the church of Yarcombe vis. viij d.

The rest of John Knight's goods "as well moveable as unmoveable" are left to William and Nicholas, and they "shall remain in house together with their mother and to have the use of all the household stuffe and if they do not agree then the overseers shall appoint her a bedd furnished & c. for life".

Thirteen years later Alicie Knighte died intestate, and Master Thomas Barrett, Archdeacon of Exeter granted administration to William Knighte, her son, and the value of the estate was "xvj ii xix s". William's will, dated "xiiij March 1587" has an entry "that the saide Henrie Barfoot shall have the xxvij s. viij d. wch. will be dewe at thanutiation of or Ladie next after the date hereof from Tristram Perrie".

Nicholas, the third son leaves a will dated 28t November 1594. This is interesting because it leaves items of goods, presumably valuable at that time. He commences his will "I, Nicholas Knyght of Yarcombe, Co. Devon, husbandman" and leaves "To the poor people of Yarcombe xxd.

John, my sonne my beast brasse Crock my ffourth best brasse pan and one coffer.

Mary, my daughter, my best brasse pan, my beaste brasse Crocke lackinge one and one Coffe but my wil is that my wyffe shall have the occupation thereof during her lyffe. Item I give and bequeath unto Dorothye my daughter one bearing sheete three chercheres two neccherchers one partlett and one coffer".

Nicholas leaves to his "wyffe", Joone, "All my said messuage lands meadowes and pastures with thapptences To Have and to

hold the said messuage & c. to Joone my wyffe and to her assigns for the full and whole terme of xxix years, and half cell of the said terme of xxx yeres to begin immediately after the decease of me the said Nicholas and Robert my brother"..

Nicholas provides for his "sonne John.. one peny of Currant Englishe money at the ffeast of St. Michael tharchangell as long as she lyveth A wydow and if she doe marrye again then she and her assigns to pay unto my said soonne John six l. yearly at the ffower usuall termes of the yere that is to say att the ffeastes of the byrthe of one, lord god, Thannuntiation of our blessed Ladye, St. John the Baptiste and St. Michael Tharchaningell".

Nicholas also provides for his son John should his wife marry again for if she and her husband "do find his said son John in meate and drinke and clothes and reasonable maintenance the said six l. yearly is not to be paid."

Another interesting item is the account of debts owed to him, and owed by him.

"Debtes due unto me Nicholas Knyght, John Collye of Yarcomb vitler oweth me xxxs. whereof I ha Receaved in pte of payt. two bushelles of wheate. Item Charles Pavey oweth me xxiiij viij d. Johan Gardener oweth me ijs. iiij d.

Debts which Nicholas Knight do owe, I owe unto my brother Robert xxii to be payd fyve pounds a yere.

The even routine of farm life was broken in the days of the Stuarts not so much by the fighting that took place in skirmishes along the south coast roads to Exeter, but by the enforcement of regulations during the time of the Commonwealth.

A return made to the Bishop of Exeter by the incumbent Thomas Major 20th September 1601, gives details of the lands which were held by the church at that time. "The Parish hath three parts, viz. the Lynne meadows, Culborhayne, and Stockhayne meadows," and then tells in detail the boundaries of each part. It also mentions the "vicaradge" house, which has a "barne, a stable" and other "necessary roomes", but does not describe it. The church then owned 43 acres of "yerable" land, and must have been a considerable property in those days.

In the wills of this period it is of interest that almost the first item recorded is the gift of money to the poor of Yarcombe.

The will of Margerie Spiller, proved at Honiton 28 March 1627, leaves 3s. 4d. to the poor of Yarcombe, and that of Ellan Knight of Yark Combe, nuncupative, leaves £5 "to the poore". The inventory of the goods and "chatells of Ellinor Knight" items "wearing apparel x li, two silver spoones 2 ii, pewter vessells xiis. twenty pounds of lawful English money given by her ffather will . xx ii., one Bible v s."

In both the Plague years, 1625 and 1659 the entries of burials are no more than usual, so that the plague did not come into the village. This might possibly be due to the isolation that the village had, since the main traffic to Exeter would go from Axminster to Honiton from the coast road through Dorset, or along

what is now A 303 from Salisbury and Yeovil, and the track through Yarcombe would be a solitary one for packmen and horses, later on becoming a toll road to Chard.

The troop movements of the 1640s. move near Yarcombe, but there is no mention of the village in the records. Eugene A. Andriette's book, "Devon and Exeter in the Civil War" relates that the men of Honiton, Ottery, as at Cullompton, were moving under the command of Colonel Prideaux towards Sherborne, to aid the Parliamentary cause, but the next year, 1643, Cornish royalists from Okehampton, Bow, Crediton, Exeter, Honiton and Chard move eastwards in much the same direction.

An entry in the Quarter Sessions at Honiton during the Commonwealth describes the state of the district "Whereas by reason of the late distrations in the Commonwealth it is observed that among other movements that have heppened the number of sturdie beggars, rogues and wandring idle persons is greatly increased, and although there have been made excellent good lawes made for the punishment of them yet because of the remissness of some unknown officers they have not been duely executed". An injunction is given to the constables of every hundred within the county to "raise good watches and wards to be kept at the bridges and highways within their several parishes for the apprehending of all beggars, rogues, vagabonds, wandring idle and suspicious persons."

Punishments were severe - whipping and burning in the hand or branding were usual, but in the eleven years of the Commonwealth there were not many of these punishments given at Honiton. Swearing, and bearing illegitimate children were

grave offences for which persons could be sent to "Bridewell".

The parson at Yarcombe at this time was Gamaliel Chase.

Gamaliel was born at Membury Court, and was educated at Oxford. He was appointed rector of Wambrook in 1621, and to Yarcombe, holding Wambrook in plurality 1628. He let three cottages at Wambrook for £10 per annum and his personal estate was £110.

Walker ("Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion", published c. 1714) whose knowledge must have come from John Chase, Gamaliel's son, and Hugh Chase, his grandson who was afterwards vicar of Yarcombe, says that Parliament directed that the wife of a dispossessed minister should have one-fifth of the revenue for the maintenance of herself and her children - at that time Margaret Chase had four children. During the Interregnum Yarcombe had seven parsons, appointed by Cromwell. Most of these were there only a short time, but Richard Morse who was appointed in 1651 and remained until he died in 1658, was the most notorious, for he tried to evade paying the fifth of his income to Margaret Chase, who is described as a formidable woman. Walker tells that Margaret was brought before the Exeter Sessions for taking some hay which her husband had made from the glebe to feed a horse and a cow. This story might be one which the Chase family remembered, for there is no record in the Honiton Quarter Sessions, and the Public Record Office has no records of the Exeter Assize.

Gamaliel's life under the Commonwealth was very troubled. Richard Morse refused to pay the fifth part to Margaret Chase, and then followed a long period of legal argument. Gamaliel was accused of a "monetary transaction with a supposed delinquent", possibly of giving money to the King's cause, and was imprisoned

at Lyme Regis by the Parliamentarians for one month. Then he was transferred to Portsmouth and kept there in prison for nearly one year. He paid part of the fine imposed and gave security for the remainder, but then suffered from the Royalist Sir R. Brett, and was again imprisoned, this time by the other side. On returning to this neighbourhood he again came into contact with the garrison at Lyme who wanted the complete payment of the fine, and he fled to Exeter. Richard Morse appealed against paying Margaret her due of one fifth the income from the vicarage lands, but Morse lost his appeal, Margaret received her fifth, but had to pay the costs of appeal. Gamaliel summarises his expenses for the litigation, which cost altogether £22. 14s. 4d. This account tells that his brother William went on his account to London, "tarrying there five weeks, and his disbursements to Counsell for the second hearing £4.10s." Bills for counsel, affidavits, and solicitors come to £13. 8s. 6d.

After the death of Richard Morse the next incumbent was John Galpin, who was in office for only two years. Gamaliel returned to Yarcombe and enjoyed the fruits of his living for another eighteen years. John Galpin came from Ash Priors, Somerset, and returned there in 1660. He was brought before the Somerset Assize in 1663 and bound over on indictment for "seditious assemblies", and again at Somerset Quarter Sessions 1668 for being at a conventicle, and sent to Ilchester gaol, but having taken an oath of allegiance was released. His house at Ash Priors was the meeting place for his followers. He later became minister at Totnes, where he died, 1698. There is a

story of a vicar in Hampshire who altered the last verse of the Te Deum to "O Lord, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be a Roundhead."

Jane Knight, in a will dated 1670, who was a tenant of Pitt-hayne and left her tenancy to her son George, and after him to her grandson Nicholas "for the term which shall be unexpired", left "to the Poore People of Yearcombe 20s. Her will mentions the possessions she had, a best bedstead standing in the chamber over hall, a chest, a spruice chest, two silver spoones, two brasse pannes with six pewter dishes", and a "best brasse crocke". The inventory of her goods, 24 August 1671 mentions

	£	s	d
Wearing apparel	6	13	4
For her corne	8	0	0
.. .. shepe	12	0	0
.. a heffer & calfe	4	0	0
to Hoges	2	0	0
.. bedsteds with furniture	8	0	0
.. half heded bedsteds and two Truckell beds purfumed	8	0	0
.. her Chest Coffers and Boxes	2	10	0
.. one Malting	-	10	0
.. tember bessell	3	16	8
.. one appell wring & to Chese wrings and Chese Vates belonging	1	3	4
Three table boards one cubord & three pine stolles	2	18	4
for her wooll	3	0	0
.. one cubord more	-	16	0
... three mowstadles	1	0	0
.. iron stuffe	2	0	0
.. to ffurnes panes	2	13	4

The will of grandson Nicholas, 22 April 1702 gives more details of the furnishings of a house of this period. He has "fflower Joynestooles, two cheares and one glass Cage, and one pair of Andires. In the ketchen Chamber for three bedstedes & beds furnished

milke house chamber	one bed and Bedsteed
Hall Chamber	one bed & bedsteed & furniture
Buttery Chamber	one bedsteed and beed furnished.

The value of Nicholas' possessions was put at £440 14s 6d.

The Monmouth Rebellion did not affect the parish, for Monmouth's route to Taunton and then to Sedgemoor was further east, and the army of Churchill following him from Shute near Axminster also avoided Yarcombe. There were as reprisals twelve men hanged at Chard, 1695 after the "Bloody Assize" and one of these may have come from Yarcombe, Edmond Warren. In the lists available of those hanged and transported, or recommended for transportation, no place names are given, but Edmond Warren has an entry in the register as having been baptised 19th May, 1660, and would have been of age to have served with Monmouth.

The first Terrier, or account of the church, vicarage, and lands was made by Thomas Major, 1601. Two terriers are extant of Hugh Chase. Both are undated, but refer to the early years of the eighteenth century. Neither mentions the church, but are concerned with the vicarage and lands.

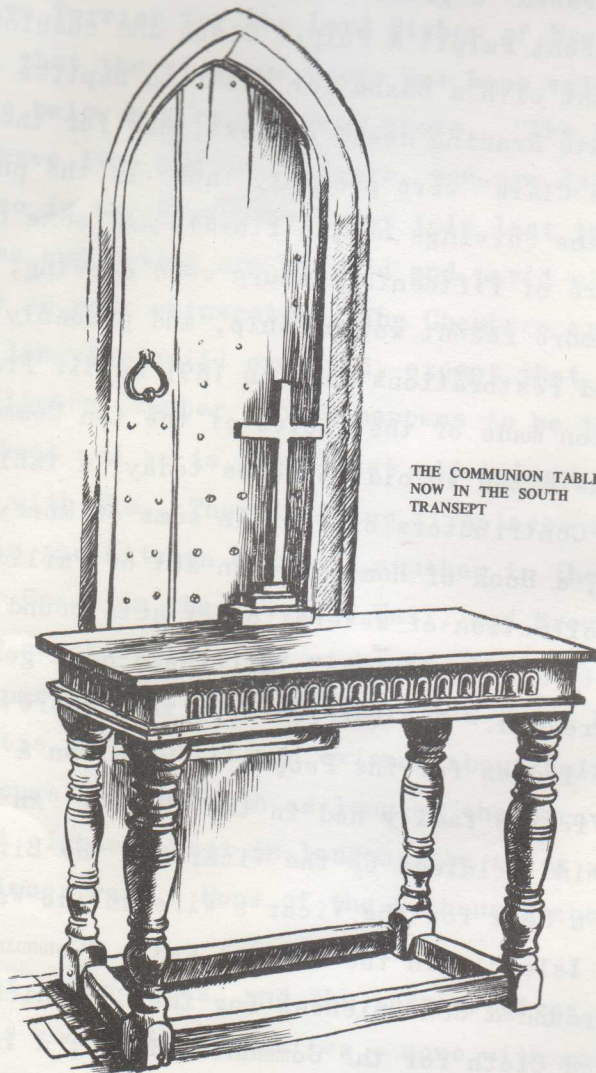
"For the house there are in it four under rooms, viz., a Partlour which is planched and plastered, a kitchen which is plastered, a Dairy which is plaisterd. Over the Kitchen there are two Chambers and lodging chamber and a study. Over the Kitchen there are two chambers and over the Dairy one. There are three out houses, a stable, a barne and a Brewhouse. There is also one Orchard & three Gardens". It then gives a list of the lands and acreage, with titles - Pound Meddow, Wellmoor, Hilly Close, Worford, Vicars Stere Colourfield, Shutting Close, Lake Acres, and Stockhouse Meadow. Lake acres is of seven acres, and the largest strip of land. Most of the other fields are about three acres each. This terrier is signed by Hugh Chase, Vicar, and John Perry (or Pavey) and Robert Winrent, Churchwardens.

Hugh's second terrier enlarges on the vicarage. "As for ye walls, they are made of stone; wh.house contains four under Rooms, viz., a Parlour, a Citchen, a Dairyhouse, & a Buttery. The Parlour is planked but no winscoat but plaistered. The kitchen, Dairy and Buttery are plaister'd & pitch'd with flint stone. There are over these Rooms five Chambers, over ye Parlour two, of wch. one is a Study wch. I took in since I came to ye place, it is inclosed with Deal boards covering Citchin & Dairy, two only plaistered & over ye Buttery one. There are belonging to ye vicaridge four outhouses, Viz. a Brewery, a Malthouse, a Barne & a Stable. There is also three Gardens & a little Orchard. There is also thirty seaven Acres & half belonging to ye Vicaridge." The list of fields is given as in the former terrier, but divides them into pasture, arable and "meddow". This terrier is signed by Hugh Chase and also Henery Newbery and Robert Bowett, Churchwardens. The Lord of the Manor at the time of Hugh Chase was Sir Thomas Drake, much given to lawsuits, for according to Lady Elliott-Drake's book - The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake - he was continually at odds with the parson. He petitions to the King in Parliament, 1706, that he might be able to procure the presentations of Yarcombe.. "The present incumbents (of two parishes) are two such drunkards that they have really ruined both their parishes, one of them hath been twice if not three times in prison for debt, and the other as often absconded upon the same account. Both places are not worth more than £140 a year at the outside. If I might purchase them at a hundred broad pieces I would give it and pay the charges of passing". But Sir Thomas did not gain from this, and we find him again in litigation with the next incumbent, Abraham Smith, concerning the collection of tithes.

Abraham Smith, who was vicar for twenty two years, drew up a very comprehensive Terrier for the Lord Bishop of Exeter, 1726. In this we learn that the vicarage house has been extended, and now has six rooms below stairs, as many above. "The kitchen, Hall and Pantry have lime and sand floors, and are "plaistered" over head, and "so is the Brewhouse; but this last together with the Milkhouse and Cellar are pitch'd and pav'd with small flints. There is no room wainscotted, The Chambers are all well plank'd and likewise ceild overhead, except that over the Brewhouse. The Kitchen Chamber (which happens to be the best) is all laid with Deal and so is the Closet adjoining; the others are mostly with Elm. There are two fireplaces in the Upper rooms, one in the Kitchen Chamber, another in the Study, and three in the Under Ones, in the Kitchen, Hall, and Brewhouse. The Barn is twenty one foot long and eighteen wide. The Walls are part of stone and part of Cob or Mud. There's a Fewel House on the west side that shutts off from it and extends about half the length of it and an Out House on the North as long as the barn is wide. The stable is about eighteen foot in length, the sides are some stone worn, some timber work. None of the Outhouses above are Tiled."

The estate was about fifty acres, and the terrier gives details of the number of fields and their boundaries - some with cob walls, some stone walls, some quick hedges, and ends with a plaint that "The Glebe is so void of Timber that upon the first coming of the present Incumbent, the Lord of the Manor generously gave Timber for Reparations; and even now the Vicar is oblig'd to buy Gates. However care is taken to let up some Saplings for future Service. In the Churchyard are six Elms and Sixteen Ashes, worth, if sound,

between three and four Pounds. There is an old yew tree besides." The church possessed "a great Bible" and a "proper Desk" on which it stood, "a Decent Pulpit & Pulpit Cloth and cushion both of velvet, a large Font with a Bason for Water to Baptise with". The "two separate Reading desks or Pews, one for the Minister another for the Clark" were probably those in the position they are in today, and the carvings on the finials and some of the panels on the sides are of fifteenth century wood carving, but the back panels are of more recent workmanship, and probably date from the alterations and restorations made in 1891 by Sir Francis and Lady Drake. There is mention made of the Tables of the ten Commandments, which one finds often in old churches today, a Table of "Several Benefactors & Contributors of certain sums of money to the Poor of the Parish, a Book of Homilies, an act of Parliament against swearing, a collection of several other acts bound up with the Canons & Thirty Nine articles." All these have gone, and none of the pews are old. The terrier says that there were "seats with tilts or ledges for the People to kneel on & ten hansom Pews". The Vicar's family had in the Chancel "An handsom Pew... time out of mind..claimed by the Vicar for the Life of Family (but there's a Seat for the Vicar's Wife in the Watchford Pew in the South Isle)". In the Chancel was a "Communion Table with Rails around & Conveniences for the Communicants to kneel, an Embroidered Cloth for the Communion Table, a large fair Linnen Cloth to be laid on it & a Napkin to cover the Sacramental Bread & Wine, a large Flagon & Silver Bowl eight ounces & half mark'd with the letters HC I August 6th 1639. A Silver Paten, seven ounces & half a quarter mark'd with the Tower Stamp only; two chests, one with three locks; two Ranges of Seats & a hansom Pew".



THE COMMUNION TABLE
NOW IN THE SOUTH
TRANSEPT

The Communion Table mentioned stands in the south transept, and dates probably from the time of Edward VI, when stone altars were removed from many churches, and "tables" put in their places. The chest with three locks is of the fifteenth century, and the one with two, kept in the vestry, one provided following the rule of Thomas Cromwell, that every church should keep its records of baptisms and funerals, and that these should be kept in a chest with two locks.

The present lectern was made from parts of the old pulpit, when the present one was made. The wood for this came from Exeter Cathedral, and is said to have come originally from Yarcombe Parish, when repairs were being made to the roof timbers there. The paneling, Tudor linen-fold, was brought from Buckland Abbey, and used to make the present fine pulpit, when the restoration of the church was made in the last century.

The silver Paten and Chalice are still in use, on special occasions, and although their donors are not known it is with gratitude we remember those unknown people who gave such beauty to the church. The "Surplice Fees are for Offerings at Easter two pence for every person above the age of Sixteen unless otherwise in Composition; for Marriages usually half a Crown; for Churchings Sixpence; for breaking the Ground if a stranger is buried in the Churchyard three shillings & four pence; for Mortuaries the Custom is if an House-keeper dies worth ten Marks (£6. 13s. 4d.) and under thirty Pounds to pay three shillings and fourpence; if more than thirty Pounds & less than forty Pounds ten shillings".

"The Clerk's wages have, for many years been fix'd at forty shillings a year; & the Sexton's at five, they are paid by the Churchwardens & both chosen by the Vicar."

In the days of embroidered coats and waistcoats, on brocades or satins the will of John Knight, almost the last of the family of Knight of Yarcombe, mentions bequests of clothes" to Oliver Topley my Sittout coat likewise my best blew Coate and waiscoate. Likewise all my household goods that is in Oliver Topleys house. Also to Henry Godfrey son of my sister Ann Godfrey my second best blew coaste and waistcoat. Also I give to my brother Benjamin One Shilling also I give to my sister Joan Spiller One Shilling. Also I give to my sister Ann Godfrey my chist now to Northeel also I give to Bettey Knight Dafter of my brother Joel that is deceased One box also I give to my cozen John Knight of Stockland in the C. of Dorset (transferred to Devon 1830) son of my brother Robert deceased all that cottage hoose Orcheds gardens and plots of ground at or night Pye Crow Lat in the poseshon of John Spiller but now in my poseshon with all the household goods now in the aforesaid cottage hoose."

John Knight's will is dated 22nd Dec. 1771. John Knight's name is on the C bell at Yarcombe with that of Robert Newbery, as wardens 1749.

The payment of tithes has always been a very sore point with land-owners, and in the case of country parishes, of farmers. There was a case between Thomas Drake, the brother of Sir Francis Drake the explorer, and the vicar of Yarcombe, Thomas Major, in the year 1601.

Thomas Major had tried to alter the tithe payment from kind to money, "in order to bring greater comodetye to himself, he devysed a plott to deale with the parishioners to let them their tythes for a yearly rent certain, culling his pretence with a fayer shew that he sought only to free himself from the trouble and business of collecting his tythes, whereby he might better able to applye himself to studye and function; which fayer pretence after he had drawen the inhabitants to be inclined to it, he became a suetor to Thomas Drake for his consent who liked verrie well of it, if it might be done without impeachment of the ancient custome."

Thomas Major, the Vicar, apparently "mynding nothing lesse than the performance of the agreement, delte severally with the tenants and leased to them their tythes at several rents, without mentioning the auncient custome, which consisting in the brestes of auncient men, was like to dye and peryshe with the same".

One hundred years later, in the Terrier of Abraham Smith, 1726, there is mention of Petershaies Farm and Great Lye being exempted from paying the tithe (in kind?) the first being "stinted at forty shillings per annum; the other at two shillings and eightpence".

There is a chorus in Purcell's "King Arthur" (1691) of countrymen who sing

"We've cheated the parson, we'll cheat him again
For why should the parson have one in ten?
One in ten, one in ten,
For why should the parson have one in ten?"

The collection of tithes formed a great part of the vicar's salary. He farmed the fifty acres, with help from the apprenticed children, the money from the burials and marriages would not account for much, for the average number of funerals per annum was about ten to fifteen, and so he depended on gifts in kind to supply his needs.

The amount of tax in kind was laid down by a Decree of Court, Anno. 1605, and so by the time of Abraham Smith this would have been in use for over one hundred years.

This Decree of Court might possibly be the decision of the court for the case between Thomas Drake and Thomas Major, the Vicar. It is very precise, and embraces almost everything produced.

"The Vicar is to have the tenth Calf delivered, when seven weeks old, if Sent for; and two pence a Cow or three half pence a Heifer that has calved in Lieu of Cowwhite, and for depasturing all young Cattel Bred for the Pail and to have an halfpence a piece for every Lamb under Seven, And to have the Seventh Lamb, if no more than Seven and to pay back three halfpence to the Owner; the Eighth and to pay a Penny; the ninth and to pay an halfpenny; the tenth without paying anything back. The Lambs are to be driven together on St. Mark's Day; The Owner to chuse the first two, the Vicar or his Deputy the third, then the owner the next Seven so on for every ten Lambs. The Vicar to fix on the Tyth Lamb without handling of him, but by laying his Rod or Stick on him. If there are any odd Lambs above ten and under seven, the Owner must (and for the seventh, eighth and ninth Lamb above ten and the manner of Tything is the same as for the number under Ten) pay the Vicar an halfpenny a piece. The tenth Fleece of Wool Sever'd from the Locks is also due. The Owner to wash and sheer the Sheep at his own charge. The

Piggs the same as the Lambs, only to be deliver'd when fourteen daies old.

There is payable two pence an Hogshead of Cyder in Lieu of the Tyth of Apples Pears Grubbs, a Penny a Garden, a Penny an Colt, two shillings a Mill, i.e. for the Parish Customary Mill and one shilling for Dinnington Mill.

Every particular Estate pays moreover a certain sum in lieu of Tyth Hay.

Payment is made for Flax and Hemp by the Acre according to the Statute, but there is no tythe paid from Nurseries nor other Fruit than what is before received; nor anything from Fowls or Eggs, Honey or Wax, Clover Trefry or Hops; and nothing in particular in Lieu thereof nor yet feeding dry and barren Cattel and Horse and Beasts kept or bred within the Parish for Plough, Harrow, Maintenance of Tillage or Travel."

As time went on the actual collection of tithes was made by a Proctor and his work is made more difficult as the payment of tithe was so heartily disliked by the parishioners. Simon Spiller "who lives at the Devon Gate and was Proctor many years obtained the following information, can be brought forward and will readily attend whenever required.

He knows the Report to be correct, though the Tenants will in many Instances depretiate the facts especially the number of Cows or Pasture in 1801, an account of these was given in expecting an Invasion. "Tenants were unwilling to return and keep their returns under, some few would not return at all but the return was as follows."

There were 469 cows, 238 heifers and grazing stock, and 1478 sheep. Then follows a list of tenants, the number of cows each had,

the acres of hay, the acres of arable land, the number of orchards, and the total estate. Simon Spiller then has four suggested plans for the collection of tithes. The expectation of invasion - by Napoleon - seems odd to us with today's knowledge, but was very real at the time.

A questionnaire which was sent before visitation in 1821 tells us more details of life in the parish. There were 129 families. There were a "few Baptists but no teaching of any kind nor place of public Meeting within the Parish."

"Divine Service is performed alternately at half past ten and at three, which is the ancient custom, but during this summer half year I have service twice of a Sunday and two Sermons".

There is a School supported by Voluntary Donation.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered four times in the year, and the number of communicants 30.

A Meadow belongs to the poor as also £16. 6s. 7d. paid by the Mercers Company to the Vicar and Churchwardens and the Duties are faithfully discharged.

There are no almshouses, hospital, or charitable endowment, no library. And there is no Chapel in the Parish.

VI

From very early times the common lands were places where the cattle, hogs, geese and possibly sheep also, were pastured by the common folk who possessed no land of their own. After the Napoleonic wars and the distress there was among the very poor people of the towns and villages there came a new scourge to them - the Enclosure of the Commons. This stopped the raising of animals on the common lands, and caused more hardship.

In Yarcombe most of the common lands were appropriated by the Drake family, and the preamble to the act, dated 1817, gives the Drake family the lion's share in the enclosure.

"Thomas Trayton-Fuller-Elliott-Drake, Esquire, was Lord of the said Manor and as such claimed to be entitled to the soil of the said Common, Heaths, and waste lands, and that the said Thomas Trayton-Fuller-Elliott - Drake was Impropriator of the Tithes of Corn and Pulse growing and arising within the said parish and that the King's most excellent Majesty in right of his Crown was Patron of the Vicarage of Yarcombe aforesaid, and that the said William Palmer as such Vicar as aforesaid was entitled to the Vicarage House and certain Glebe lands and to all the Tithes arising within the said Parish of Yarcombe except the Tithes of Corn and Pulse." The collection of tithes on corn and pulse by the Lord of the Manor reflects back to the tithes of beans and pulses collected in the Middle Ages and sent to Otterton Priory and from there to Mont St. Michel in Normandy up to the time of Henry V.

The Commissioners are to parcel out the land in lots not exceeding four acres "in such convenient place or places as he should think proper for getting Stone, Gravel or other materials for repairing the Roads and Highways ... BUT THE GRASS AND HERB-AGE SHOULD BELONG TO THE SAID THOMAS TRAYTON-FULLER-ELLIOTT-DRAKE

EXCLUSIVELY OF ALL OTHER PERSONS WHOMSOEVER.

The Vicar, churchwardens and overseers were to allot "for every twenty acres part of the common called Brown Down and also so much and such parts of the other commons and waste lands (not exceeding ten acres) as he should deem sufficient for the poor settled inhabitants ... residing therein to dig or cut turf or furze thereon for their own use but not for sale."

The two chests in the church contain the indentures for apprenticeship, for both boys and girls. The earliest indenture is for William Northam and he is bound apprentice until he "shall accomplish his full age of ffower and Twenty years."

Apprentices are to have "meet, competent, and sufficient: Meat, Drink, and Apparel, Lodging, Washing, and all other Things necessary and fit for an Apprentice AND also shall and will so provide for the said apprentice, that he be not any way a Charge to the said Parish, or Parishioners of the same; but of and from all Charge shall and will save the said Parish and Parishioners harmless and indemnified during the said term. AND at the end of the said term, shall and will make, provide allow and deliver unto the said Apprentice double Apparel of all sorts, good and new, (that is to say) a good new Suit for the Holy-Days, and another for the Working-days."

The age for indenture was generally about eight or nine years. The girls were without exception apprenticed to "housewifrey" and were bound until they attained twenty years, or less if they married.

All the boys with three exceptions, were bound to husbandry - that is field work, and until the age of twenty four, but this age limit was reduced to twenty in the early days of Victoria. All the

apprentices were "poor children" of the parish. It is possible that in those days of hardship children so apprenticed were fed and clothed, for farm kitchens generally had a large cheese, butter, a new loaf, and a cask of cider for anyone to help himself.

One "poor child" was in 1727 "apprenticed to Ephram Burford... in the art of cordwinding and shew making" who was to "instruct and Teach or cause to be Taught" Simon Vincent.

VII

Three apprentices were bound by their parents one, Thomas Sansom, (1715), paying five pounds "three pounds in hand paid and two pounds in one year after that". John Sansom is bound until he reaches the age of twenty four years "to be taught the art or trade of amason". He must avoid inns and almshouses "he shall not frequent matrimony".

Richard Gollopp, the master "doth promise and agree to and with his said Apprentice to keep and maintain his said Apprentice in sickness as wol as in health and to provide for him sofficant meat drink washing and Lodging and Apparrill as such Apprentice of his condition ought to have during the said term of his Apprenticeship",

The second indenture is between John Mutter, son of Elizabeth Mutter, widow, and Samuel Taylor of Farrington. This indenture, written by hand, and not on the usual printed form in use for the "poor children" is dated 1770. Samuel Taylor is to provide meet Competent and Sufficient Meat, Drink and Apparole Lodging; Wahing and all other necessaries fit for an Apprentice as woll in Sickness as in Health" and agrees to give him the usual two suits when he attains the age of twenty one years. There is a good signature of Elizabeth Mutter, but John Mutter makes his mark. John Mutter is apprenticed to husbandry. The third apprenticeship not to husbandry is that of John Boriow to John Billon "of the pish of Curland in the County of Somsett". These indentures include an item that the apprentice "shall not at any time after the Expiration of his said apprenticeship set up or keep the Trade of a Blacksmith within the space of three miles from the now dwelling house of the said John Billon". The apprentice is to be provided with clothes, "fit and convenient for one of that calling or trade to wear except his shirts or changes only". He is also to avoid taverns and innes or alehouses, he shall not play at unlawfull games. "Matrimony with any woman within this said term he shall not contract nor espouse."

This apprenticeship is to be for seven years and a half, he is to be kept "as well in sickness as in health", and when he leaves at the end of his time he is to have "as many shirts and as good as he had when he came into the said John Billon's service."

Among the apprenticeship papers comes one strange document. It concerns Grace Radford, of the parish of Otterford in the County of Somerset. What personal tragedy there lies behind this we do not

know. Grace Radford, married to William Radford, with two children, is brought before two Justices of the Peace" in and for the said County of Somerset" as being chargeable to the parish of Otterford. The name of the elder son, twelve years old, is deleted, but Charles, the younger is to be conveyed to the parish of Yarcombe as that is her lawful settlement. What happened to William Radford we do not know, nor do we know anything about the elder son, aged twelve, then mature enough to be apprenticed to husbandry.

The Justices "require you the said churchwardens and overseers of the Poor of the said parish of Otterford or some one of you, to convey the said Grace Radford, the wife of William Radford and Charles their child from out of your said parish of Otterford to the said Parish of Yarcombe and them to deliver to the churchwardens and overseers of the poor there, or to some or one of them, together with this our order, or a true copy thereof. And we do also hereby require you, the said Churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of Yarcombe to receive and provide for them as inhabitants of your parish of Yarcombe."

Given under our hands and seals the 24th day of January in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty five."

On the back of this document is written "To the Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Yarcombe in the County of Devon.

We whose names are hereto subscribed being the Overseers of the Parish of Otterford in the County of Somerset do hereby give you notice that the within named Grace Radford, the wife of William Radford and one child is become chargeable to and have been relieved by our said Parish. Dated the 24th day of January 1835.

Henry Spiller

Overseers of the Poor.

The mark X of James Turner

Witness Wm. P. Pinchard.

VIII

We leave Grace Radford wandering along the dusty road, the boy scuffling along in the white dust, and the constable at her side. The boy, enjoying the brilliance of the hedgerows, the bracken, dry and golden, the first glimpses of spring in the early primroses, the orange of the dry beech leaves in the winter sunshine, regardless of whatever the future might bring for him; his mother looking backwards on her life with her husband no more, and her other son left behind, a future in which she, too, must "eat the bread of sorrow and drink the waters of affliction", but for the moment a period of easement when she sees the tower of the church, and knows that for her she will be among friends, and that she will be given "safe lodging, holy rest, and sweet peace at the last."

We bid farewell to old John Knight of 1771, with his "best blew Coate and waistcoate", and his high wig, buckled shoes, three cornered hat and tall cane, listening with joy to the sound of the bell which has his name engraved on it, and to his predecessor of the same name, 1573, whose body lies buried "in hollye turffe".

We think of Margaret Chase fighting for the means to live, for herself and her children during the Commonwealth, and of Gamaliel in prison or in hiding, until, like Job, God "blessed the latter end..more than the beginning", and those others with whom the "fever of life is over, and their work done."

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die: a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up;

A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance."

There have been no great names in the story of Yarcombe.
We are people whose labours are those of springtime and harvest,
and have been so from the time of the Saxons, one thousand
years ago.

And in the centre of the village, the lode stone, has
been the church looking down over the valley through good times
and bad, times of peace and times of war, a constant reminder
that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us - to us, to
pray "Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem, dona eis semperternam
requiem" for the departed. (Blessed Jesus, O Lord, grant them
eternal rest) - and for us to pray "Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata
mundi, dona nobis pacem" (O Lamb of God who takest away the sins
of the world, grant us Thy peace).

- - - -

The only news I know
Is bulletins all day
From Immortality.

The only shows I see,
Tomorrow and Today
Perchance Eternity.

The only One I meet
Is God - the only street,
Existence; this traversed

If other news there be,
Or admirabler show -
I'll tell it you.

Emily Dickinson.

Mr. E. MULLETT.

Mr. E. MULLETT.