

Bickington

Bickington is administered by Teignbridge District Council. Historically it formed part of Teignbridge Hundred. It falls within Moretonhampstead Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 237 in 1801 215 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In 1641/2 99 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

A parish history file is held in Newton Abbot Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

Maps

The image below is of the Bickington area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 109/9
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 109SW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SX795726
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SX77SE
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 031
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 191
- Geological sheet 339 also covers the area

Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954), included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Bickington has a much restored 15th century church (St. Mary), cluttered up with Victorian woodwork, and of no great interest. The 16th century house E. of the church was formerly the Church House.

Bickleigh (Tiverton)

Bickleigh (Tiverton) is located within Mid Devon local authority area. Historically it formed part of Hayridge Hundred. It falls within Tiverton Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 297 in 1801 207 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In 1641/2 83 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

A parish history file is held in Tiverton Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

Maps

The image below is of the Bickleigh (Tiverton) area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS941072
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS90NW
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 114
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 192
- Geological sheet 310 also covers the area

Illustrations

The image below is of Bickleigh (Tiverton) as included in the Library's illustrations collection. Other images can be searched for on the local studies catalogue.



Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954), included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Bickleigh lies astride the middle valley of the Exe, here of perfect pastoral beauty with rounded green hills rising to 700 ft. or so on either side. Bickleigh Bridge, a noted "beauty spot" (but unspoilt), dates from the late 16th century. In 1809 it was severely damaged by floods and was rebuilt.

Bickleigh Castle (so called), on the W. bank of the Exe, was a moated and fortified manor-house, of which the gatehouse range is the chief remnant to-day. A fortified house of the Bickleigh family existed here in the 12th century. Work of this period may be seen in the bases of the imposts in the gatehouse, and in the small chapel immediately across the lane. Bickleigh came to the Courtenays of Powderham, who used it as an estate for younger sons, and it was they who rebuilt the Norman house early in the 15th century.

There are traces of the former great hall, and N. of the gatehouse is a portion of the old moat, now mostly filled up. The gatehouse, which has a vaulted entry (c. 1400 in date), was reconstructed in the 17th century by the Carews. The house later degenerated into a farmhouse, but was rescued after the sale of the Carew properties in 1922, and restored to its present form. The Carews had acquired Bickleigh about 1510.

Bickleigh church (St. Mary) is a badly restored 14th century building, with a 12th century S. doorway and font. It is chiefly notable for the charming, though crudely executed, Carew monuments of 16th and 17th century date. Bampfylde Moore Carew (1690-1758) was the son of a rector of Bickleigh. He became a gipsy and was elected their king, was transported to Maryland but escaped back to England, followed Prince Charles Edward's army to Derby in 1745, and eventually settled down at Bickleigh where he died in 1758. There was still a Carew at the rectory in 1890; but the long association of the family with the parish was ended at the sale of 1922.

Bickleigh (Plymouth)

Bickleigh (Plymouth) is located within South Hams local authority area. Historically it formed part of Roborough Hundred. It falls within Plympton Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 264 in 1801 296 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In 1641/2 65 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

Maps

The image below is of the Bickleigh (Plymouth) area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 118/6
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 118NW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SX521623
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SX56SW
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 108
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 201
- Geological sheet 349 also covers the area

Illustrations

The image below is of Bickleigh (Plymouth) as included in the Library's illustrations collection. Other images can be searched for on the local studies catalogue.



Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954), included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Bickleigh lies on the W. slopes of the wooded Plym valley, here very beautiful. Bickleigh Vale was often visited by the historical painter Benjamin Haydon for inspiration. The manor was given to Buckland Abbey in 1278. After the dissolution it was sold to the Slannings, a local family. It was eventually bought (1798) by the notorious Manasseh Lopes, then M.P. for New Romney, who accumulated a vast estate in this part of Devon. The church (St. Mary) was wholly rebuilt, except the handsome tower, by Sir Ralph Lopes in 1829, and restored again in 1861. (So Worthy, Devonshire Parishes, I, 19, but Kelly's directory (1935) says the church was rebuilt to the design of Fowler of London in 1838 and restored in 1882) It contains the remains of a memorial to Gamaliel Slanning, killed in a duel with Sir John Fitz of Fitzford in 1599. Above this are the helmet and gauntlet of his son, Sir Nicholas Slanning (one of the "four wheels of Charles's wain"), killed at the siege of Bristol 26 July 1643. There are also monuments to the Lopes family.

Bicton

Bicton is located within East Devon local authority area. Historically it formed part of East Budleigh Hundred. It falls within Aylesbere Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library. The lay subsidy of 1524 valued the community at £02/17/08.

A parish history file is held in Budleigh Salterton Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

Maps

The image below is of the Bicton area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 93/8 Six inch (1:10560) sheet 93NE
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SY070865
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SY08NE
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 030
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 192
- Geological sheet 325 also covers the area

Illustrations

The image below is of Bicton as included in the Library's illustrations collection. Other images can be searched for on the local studies catalogue.



Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954), included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Bickton came to the Rolles, with other large estates, by the marriage of Sir Henry Rolle of Stevenstone to Anne, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas Dennis. By this marriage the Rolles became the largest landowners in Devon. They made Bickton one of their principal houses for several generations, and here they laid out a park and accumulated a fine library, now dispersed. The present house is said to have been built about 1730, but was certainly not finished until the end of the 18th century. It has been one of the great houses of the West of England, much visited by royalty. The gardens, laid out c. 1730, are some of the finest in the West of England, and employed forty gardeners early in this century. The arboretum, and especially the avenue of araucaria trees, is one of the best in England. The mansion is now an Agricultural College under the Devon County Council, but Lord Clinton (the present representative of the Rolles, now extinct in the direct line) retains the gardens and the arboretum, which are being slowly brought back to their former state after years of wartime neglect. The Obelisk, just outside the park, was erected in 1730 as a *point de vue* from the gardens, and the tower in the woods behind the house known as the China Tower was built about 1840 by Lady Rolle as a birthday gift to her husband. She later used it to house her magnificent collection of china, gathered from all over the world.

The present Bickton church (St. Mary) was built by Hayward of Exeter in 1850. It is dull. Near by are the ruins of the former church, of which little remains but the tower. It has been converted into a mausoleum for the Rolles, and contains a

magnificent marble tomb of Dennis Rolle (1638) and his wife and child, which Oliver suggests may be the work of Nicholas Stone. If so, it is the only known work of Stone in Devon.

Bideford

Bideford is located within Torridge local authority area. Historically it formed part of Shebbear Hundred. It falls within Hartland Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 2987 in 1801 8754 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In the valuation of 1334 it was assessed at £06/00/00. The lay subsidy of 1524 valued the community at £11/06/02. In 1641/2 662 adult males signed the Protestation returns. It is recorded as a borough from 1217 and was incorporated in 1573. A turnpike was established in 1764. The community had a grammar school from 1689. A market is recorded from 1271.

A parish history file is held in Bideford Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

Maps

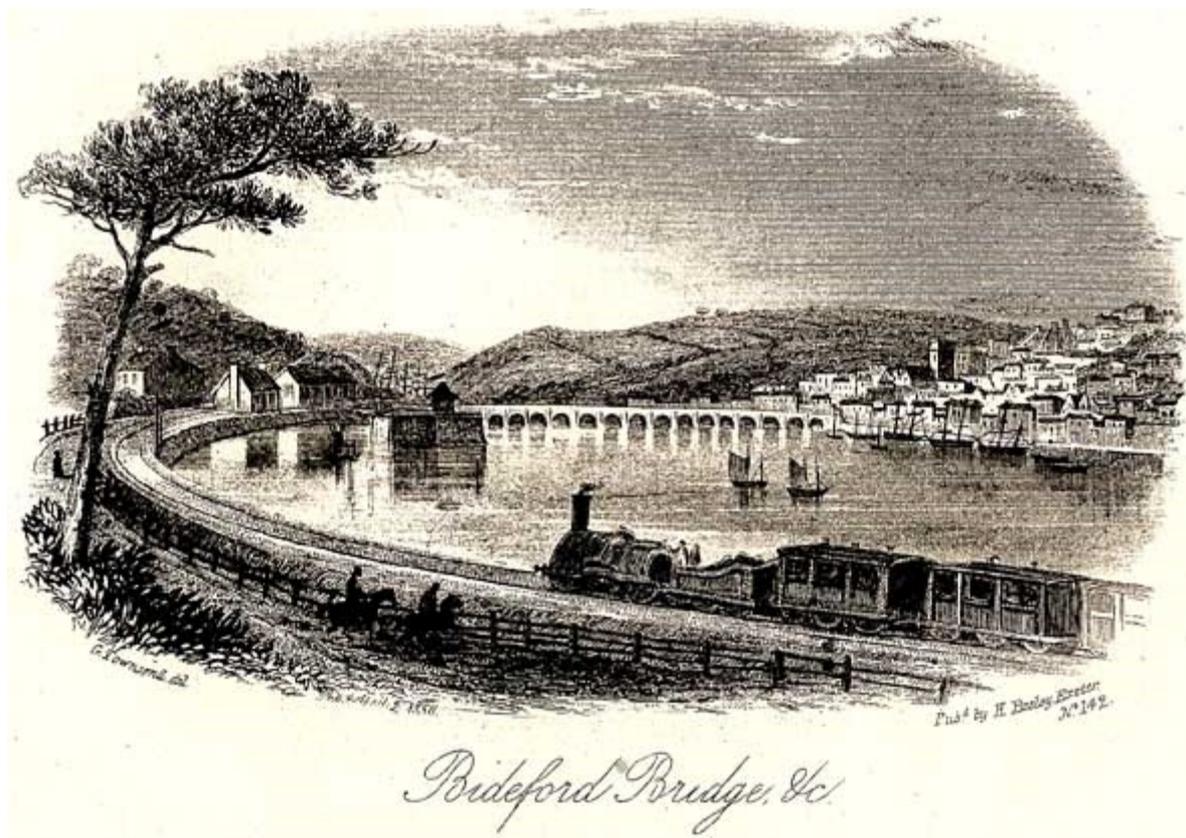
The image below is of the Bideford area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 19/6
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 19NW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS445265
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS42NW,NE
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 139
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 180
- Geological sheet 292 also covers the area

Illustrations

The image below is of Bideford as included in the Library's Illustrations collections. Other images can be searched for on the local studies catalogue.



Extract from: Kingsley's country. A guide to Bideford and district. Bideford: "Gazette" Office, 1894. p. 6.

The renaissance of Bideford is principally attributable to two things: the publication of Kingsley's romance, *Westward Ho!* In 1855, and the extension of the London and South Western Railway from Barnstaple in 1856. There are other subsidiary causes for the revival of prosperity, and these will be mentioned later. It must also be admitted that the local authorities of the town have been very fully alive to the turn of "the tide which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." No town in the West of England has grown so rapidly, and few have been so radically improved as Bideford.

Extract from *The glove is up! Devon's historic fairs*, by Tricia Gerrish, by kind permission of the author

ORIGINAL CHARTER: 1271. Charter granted by King Henry III to Richard de Grenville. 5 days at Feast of St Margaret: 20th July Bideford's 1271 charter was the first of at least two granting fairs to this borough. The second, in 1573 from Queen Elizabeth I, confirmed St Margaret's Fair and added two more: 4th February (later St Valentine's) and 3rd November, each for four days. These were given to a later Richard de Grenville, who had been knighted, making him Sir Richard. In addition, a court of Pied Poudre was to be set up, governing the conduct of the fairs.

All three fairs appear in *Magna Britannia* and in Owen's list, but by 1888 the Market Rights and Tolls List indicates neither fair nor market. A report from the *Western Morning News* in 1933 says that a suggestion to revive the ancient fair was made at the annual Bideford Manor Court. This court, set up under the Elizabethan charter,

sat once a year. It had the power to appoint the Churchwardens in Bideford's parish church, which is a very unusual circumstance. The lack of newspaper reports since World War II suggests it was unsuccessful.

Horned cattle, sheep and farm products were sold at Bideford Fair. A 1790 historian says that the fair was: 'distinguished for nothing else than horned cattle.' Attempts had been made to attract other types of animal sales and trading to Bideford, but these had failed due to asking excessive tolls. The mid 19th century fairs were relatively successful in trading terms. Prime animals and full prices are recorded by Bideford Gazette. Fat bullocks fetched 11/- per score: cows with calf £10 to £16 each in 1860. Saint Valentine's Fair was very popular with locals and countryfolk in those days. There was often unscheduled entertainment. In 1847 a horse omnibus, bound for Torrington, and loaded with homebound fairgoers, got too close to the edge of Bideford Quay in the crowds. It fell in the Torridge, drowning eight people. Earlier in the century, an 1825 newspaper report tells of two navigators (navvies) put in the stocks at Bideford's St Valentine Fair, as a punishment for having assaulted a female the day before. They were treated by fairgoers as part of the day's entertainment, and thoroughly pelted with rubbish. By 1892 however, Bideford Fair was almost defunct. To quote a Bideford reporter: 'all that remains of Bideford Fair was celebrated yesterday by the appearance in Bideford Corn Market of Mrs Thornby's fairing stall. Saint Valentine's Day itself: the proper day for the fair - receives but scant attention.'

Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954), included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Bideford the most attractive town in North Devon, lies on a hillside rising sharply from the W. bank of the Torridge where it begins to widen into its estuary (Plate 21). On the E. bank, joined to the town by a stone bridge of twenty-four pointed arches, is the suburb of East-the-Water, which is itself an old place. It probably arose when the bridge was built, shortly before 1300.

It is probable that both Barnstaple and Bideford bridges, the two most famous bridges in North Devon, were first constructed in the last quarter of the 13th century. The earliest bridge at Bideford was of oak timber, and the first stone bridge (c. 1460) was built over and around this wooden bridge, which was used as scaffolding. Repair work before the widening of 1925 brought much of this timber to light from inside the masonry. The variation in the span of the stone arches from 12 ft. to 25 ft., and hence in the thickness of the piers, arises from their being built around the arches of the wooden bridge, which in turn varied according to the length of the oak-timber used in the lintels. The present bridge is substantially the 15th century structure, though it has been widened more than once. It is managed by a body of trustees or feoffees, out of an income derived mainly from property in Bideford (cf. Bridgeland Street). Not only does the bridge maintain itself but its surplus revenue has from time to time enabled the trustees to initiate and support numerous schemes and improvements in the borough, above all, perhaps, the maintenance of the grammar school. (Whiting, *The Long Bridge of Bideford* 18-19).

Bideford was a place of little consequence until Elizabethan times. It grew up beside a ford over the Torridge, and was given by William Rufus to the Grenvilles. From this time until 1744, Bideford remained their property. (R.H., 559; Lysons, 51) The town owes a great deal to the Grenvilles. Richard de Grenville made a borough of it before 1217, (D.C.N.Q, 24 (1951), 204) and a later Grenville obtained a market and a five-day fair (probably a confirmation) in 1271. Bideford was, however, entirely overshadowed by Barnstaple until the late 16th century, and was a place of no more than local importance, chiefly notable for shipbuilding (as Leland tells us) and fishing.

By 1573 the town had grown sufficiently to receive a charter of incorporation from the Queen, at the instance of the great Sir Richard Grenville. Sir Richard's colonisation of Virginia and Carolina led to the establishment of a considerable American trade at Bideford, which lasted for some 200 years until the American colonies achieved their independence. By Charles I's time the Bideford merchants were importing wool from Spain for the flourishing Devonshire textile industry, later extending their commerce to Holland, France, and the Mediterranean. Bideford Quay was first built in 1663 by the corporation. By the end of the 17th century the town had a large share in the Newfoundland trade, sending out more ships in 1699 than any other port except London and Topsham. Above all, it was the tobacco trade with Maryland and Virginia which made the largest Bideford fortunes, a trade which was at its height c. 1680-1730, and ceased about 1760. It was during this period that Bideford became the leading port in North Devon, far surpassing its ancient rival of Barnstaple. The handsome houses in Bridgeland Street (c. 1690- 1700) and the Royal Hotel, at East-the-Water, formerly a merchant's house, testify to the wealth of these days. One after another, however, Bideford's over-seas trades dwindled or collapsed, mostly as a result of the incessant wars of the 18th century, and partly because of the collapse of the woollen industry in the county. By the early 19th century only a coasting trade remained.

The town revived during the course of the 19th century and grew steadily in numbers, more than doubling in size between 1821 and 1901. Today it has rather more than 10,000 people, and is an active and cheerful town, with a good market and shops. Its foreign trade revived, on a small but useful scale, after the Napoleonic Wars. From the 1830s onwards it also developed a considerable emigrant traffic to America, with four first-class emigrant ships sailing regularly to America and elsewhere in the 1840s and 1850s. (Whites Directory) The ancient shipbuilding industry was carried on vigorously throughout the century, down to the present day. Many of the local industries that flourished in the 19th century (potteries, lime-burning, breweries, etc.) have now gone or declined, but others have taken their place; and the town is now becoming known as a holiday centre and a good place to retire to in one's old age.

Although Bideford has such a long history and looks so attractive from any viewpoint, it is less interesting architecturally than might be expected. Much of the town is Victorian, built of the rather unpleasing local yellow brick, but there are some good things left. Most interesting of all is Bridgeland Street, which was laid out by Nathaniel Gascoyne about 1690-1700, planned from the start as a wide street

lined with merchants' houses,' Several of these houses, especially Nos. 1,4, 12, and 28, are good examples of their period; others have been refronted with stucco or rebuilt in the late 18th or early 19th century. The other old streets contain little beyond some plain late Georgian building, of which the New Inn Hotel is a pleasant example. The old workhouse was built 1835-6 and is attributed to Sir Gilbert Scott.

The parish church (St. Mary) was rebuilt in 1865, except for its plain 4th century tower, and has lost most of its character. It contains a fine late-Norman font, the canopied tomb of Sir Thomas Grenville (1513), a tower screen of handsomely carved late 16th century panelling, and some good mural monuments to the 17th to 18th century merchants of the town.

Across the river, the Royal Hotel embodies (at its N. end) the original town house of John Davie, an eminent merchant, built in 1688. The front has been altered, but the interior contains a good late 17th century staircase and two fine plaster ceilings on the first floor. Charles Kingsley is said to have written part of *Westward Ho!* here.