

SOUTH TAWTON PARISH COUNCIL

THE FIRST 50 YEARS

1895-1944

Patrick Shaw

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Contents

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Parish map | Page no. [not included] |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Part 1. The Background | |
| 1. South Tawton in the 19th century | 4 |
| 2. Local Government before 1895 | 9 |
| Part 2. The Activities | |
| Introduction | 13 |
| Chapter 1. The establishment of Parish Councils | 14 |
| Chapter 2. Parish Council Functions | 18 |
| Chapter 3. Overseers of the Poor | 19 |
| Chapter 4. Non-Ecclesiastical Charities | 20 |
| Chapter 5. Rights of Way | 23 |
| Chapter 6. Parish Roads | 25 |
| Chapter 7. South Tawton School | 28 |
| Chapter 8. Allotments | 30 |
| Chapter 9. Frequency of council and parish meetings | 33 |
| Chapter 10. Water Supplies | 35 |
| Chapter 11. Sewage | 47 |
| Chapter 12. Scavenging | 54 |
| Chapter 13. Miscellaneous Activities | 58 |
| Acknowledgements and Footnotes | 63 |
| Appendices | |
| A. Parish Population 1801–1951 | A1 |
| B. Parish Occupations 1841 and 1891 | A2 |
| C. Parish Councillors 1894–1944 | A6 |

/3/

Introduction

This account of the activities of the South Tawton Parish Council during its first 50 years is taken in the main from the Parish Council minute books. It is essentially a record of the development of the principal villages of South Tawton Parish from the poverty and bad living conditions of 19th century rural Britain to the comfort of the relative affluence of the new urban Britain.

It is intended to complete the Parish Council history with an account of the second 50 years 1945 to 1994 in a second volume of this series.

The Parish of South Tawton lies on the North East corner of Dartmoor some 4 miles east of Okehampton and 20 miles west of Exeter. The Parish is one of the largest in Devon with an extensive area of common land on Dartmoor. There are two principal villages, South Tawton village is the older but smaller of the two. South Zeal is the dominant settlement. It comprises the old village of South Zeal and the adjacent hamlets of Ramsley and Prospect which have coalesced into one unit.

In 1891, just before the establishment of the Parish Council, the parish population was 1,264 of which 530 lived in South Zeal, 105 in South Tawton, 39 in Whiddon Down, the balance of 590 were dispersed in farms and hamlets in the non-moorland part of this essentially rural parish.

The population of the Parish has not greatly changed over the years from 1891 but it has continued to move to the villages, so that in 1994, 50%–60% of the population lives in the greatly expanded village of South Zeal. Population data is presented, in graphical form, in Appendix A.

/4/ Part 1 The Background

1. SOUTH TAWTON PARISH IN THE 19th CENTURY

The parish has never, in recent history, been one of great wealth. A few landlords of large estates owned property in the parish, notably the Acklands, the Hoares and the Fursdons, but they lived in the main on their other estates and did not establish family houses on their South Tawton lands. The 'wealthy' of the parish, at the beginning of the 19th century, were the well to do larger farmers, like the Dunnings at East Week and Livaton, the Knapmans at East Ash, or, in the north of the parish, the Arnolds at North Wyke, and the Canns of Dishcombe, Taw Green and West Nymph. These were the pillars of the community, but their wealth was comfortable rather than conspicuous. Of the rest, some were modestly well off, as tenant farmers, small property owners, or as successful tradesmen, blacksmiths, tailors, boot & shoe makers, innkeepers, or, for a few, as skilled manual workers, carpenter, masons, thatchers and so on. But the majority of the population lived at a poverty level, uncertain of work and paid at minimal level when employed.

In his book, "The State of the Poor", published in 1797,(1) F. M. Eden writing of contemporary South Tawton stated:-

' *Nine tenths of the women in the parish, (all of the poorest class) are spinners and are regularly supplied by the serge makers with constant employment ... The wages of agricultural labourers are 1s. 2d a day: spinners cannot earn above 6d or 7d a day: common labourer earns about £18. 5s. a year; and his wife, about £9. 2s. 6d. ... The usual diet of labourers is milk and potatoes; barley or wheaten bread; and, occasionally, a little bacon ... The poor are chiefly maintained by a parish allowance at home: a few reside in a small workhouse. The clergyman distributes the money that is collected at church, every month among the most deserving of the necessitous.*'

Whilst some of Eden's estimates of the area and population of the Parish seem to be very far out, his figures for farm labourers' wages and for food prices are in general agreement with the figures given in the /5/ accounts of Richard Dunning of East Week(2) for the years around 1820 and 1830 and they remained true for first half of the 19th century.

Throughout the 19th century the bulk of the population were dependent upon farming for their livelihood, and the majority of men and boys were employed, when work was available, in one or

other class of farm work. These labourers lived with their families in small and overcrowded houses in the villages or hamlets of the Parish earning their living from the, often seasonal, work on farms and, at least in the early part of the century, frequently dependent on the charity of the Overseers of the Poor and the Church for the workless periods.

The majority of the labourers wives were fully engaged in housekeeping and child bearing and rearing, but, for the first half of the century as Eden describes in the "State of the Poor", there was a sizeable cottage woollen industry in the locality, which employed a few widows, wives, and daughters as spinners and weavers of wool in their cottages. The industrial woollen factory, Pearce's in Sticklepath, employed many more, mainly young unmarried women, from the villages of Ramsley, South Zeal and South Tawton until its closure in the mid 19th century.(3)

In addition to farming and woollen manufacture there were the ancillary industries. Four corn or grist mills in the parish; the South Tawton limestone quarries which provided seasonal employment for quarrymen, limeburners and, at times, a large number of labourers.

The need to improve both the Turnpikes and the by-roads, had encouraged the development of new roadstone quarries and the foundations of an embryo road building business and an increase in the opportunities for male employment. For example the road from Exeter to Okehampton was diverted from South Zeal in 1829(4) to a new route via the Rising Sun and Ford Cross.

On the other hand, there was little employment in mining in the parish in the early 19th century. Tin streaming, which centuries ago had been an important activity, had long since exhausted the local resources and was no longer carried out in or near the parish. The copper mines of Sticklepath and Ramsley were not developed until the second half of the century, by which time the population of the parish had fallen in a sense to match the work available.

/6/ As the century progressed the economic life and activity of the parish changed. Farming went through its usual series of peaks and troughs with corn prices high early in the century and then falling with the changes in imports following the Corn Laws of the 1840s. The traditional mixed farming systems of the west country buffered the effect of these price changes so that the west never saw the catastrophic falls in profitability experienced in the largely arable farms of the centre and south east of England.

Furthermore the improvements in communications, as a consequence of the macadamising of roads in the first part of the century and the introduction of railways in the second, opened up new markets for dairy and poultry products, and made it practicable to sell in the growing Newton Abbot and Torquay markets to meet the developing demands of the tourist industry in South Devon. By the second half of the century local carriers had developed a regular delivery service for farm produce to the areas of large population.(5) (The Post Office Directory for 1866 advertises carrier services to Torquay on Mondays, to Exeter on Tuesdays and Plymouth on Wednesdays.) By the 1890's the London and South Western Railway had completed the line from London to Plymouth via Okehampton, and North Tawton Station was now a thriving and busy centre of the district's trade.

So during the century South Tawton Parish emerged from the backwoods of Devon and was, in 1890, in the contemporary world. But the villages of South Zeal and South Tawton did not change rapidly and at the turn of the century in contemporary jargon we would say that the infrastructure was inadequate.

The reduction in population had left empty and neglected houses. Few house owners or landlords had the inclination, or the money to improve their properties radically. Additionally, in the absence

of an effective rural roads authority, the main street through Zeal and Ramsley in wet weather was little more than a muddy lane. In 1899 a surveyor from the Rural District council described it as follows:

/7/

"The road in question is entirely without shape or form in consequence of the more or less continuous wash which takes place as a result of:

(1) the non existence on the south side of the road of any water table and,

(2) of the liability to chokage of the stone covered drain which exists at intervals on the same side which receives in addition to the surface water from the road the top drainage from the backs of many of the houses."

The state of the road coupled with the poor condition of many of the houses gave the village a depressed air that probably correctly reflected the economic state of many of its inhabitants. All this is illustrated by the declining population of the Parish, which fell from its peak of 1,937 in 1831, to 1,264 in 1891 and continued to decline towards its nadir of 1,079 in 1901 at a time when the population of both Great Britain as a whole and of urbanised Devon was rising rapidly.

[photo of South Zeal village centre about 1905]

/8/ But the above description of the parish and its villages gives a far too gloomy picture of the life of individuals at the end of the century. The village fêtes and fairs were important social occasions, for which the school would shut and farmers give men time off to engage in the wrestling, the skittling for pigs, the fortune teller, the clog dancing and all the other traditional fun of the fairs. And there was a lot of drinking of cider and ale by the unrepentant! There were, after all, some eight inns and cider houses in the Parish.

The entertainment available was not all for the drinking males, the second half of the nineteenth century saw a rise in religious nonconformity and by the 1890's there were two chapels in South Zeal, and one in nearby Sticklepath. The Chapels ran Sunday Schools that were popular, at least with the parents, and the Sunday Schools, both of the Chapel and Church, had annual outings and picnics for which the Board school would often close to allow children to attend.

Then there were the slate clubs run by the pubs, the King's Arms, the Oxenham and the White Horse (soon to be rechristened, for the tourist trade, "The Cawsand Beacon"). The slate clubs would pay out to the contributors near Christmas, or accumulate funds to run excursions during the summer when the members, often headed by a Brass Band would march to the station and travel to holiday resorts like Teignmouth or Exmouth for the day.

But, in spite of the improvement in social activity, as the end of the century approached, the population of the parish was continuing to fall, young people were leaving to find work in the towns or the 'colonies', farming was in an unprofitable phase and 'shedding labour', and mining, quarrying and lime production had all become uncertain and were soon to cease altogether in South Zeal and South Tawton. To the outsider the villages gave the appearance of dying communities.

/9/

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PARISH COUNCILS

After the Norman Conquest the government of the parish of South Tawton, like that of all rural parishes, lay in the hands of the Manor Court. This Court, presided over by the Lord of the Manor, was staffed by the Constable (to enforce 'law and order'), the Waymaster (or Surveyor of the

Highways) and the Reeve (who amongst other duties collected the taxes and the market dues).

Parish ecclesiastical affairs, on the other hand, were managed by the "Vestry". The Vestry was the assembly of parishioners who, meeting in the Church vestry room, and presided over by the priest, appointed the churchwardens. The churchwardens were the effective administrators of the church and its affairs.

With the decline of the Manor and of feudal power, the influence and duties of the Vestry increased both in ecclesiastical and in civil village and parish affairs. Until the 14th century the power of the Crown, was mainly exercised through the Lords of the Manor and their courts. In the 14th century the appointment of the Justices of the Peace responsible to the Lord Chancellor, brought the power of the Crown direct to the countryside.

The Justices of the Peace, the magistrates, took over from the Lord of the Manor's Court the appointment of the parish constable who became, and remained for many centuries, responsible to them for parish "law and order". The Parish Constable's appointment by, and responsible to, the local magistrate finally ceased to exist in 1856, when the Parish Constable was absorbed into the newly constituted county police force.

16th century rural distress

By the end of the 16th century periodic distress, caused to peasants by land enclosures, and to labourers by unemployment in agriculture and the infant industries of the time, led to the need for a systematic collection and distribution of poor relief.

/10/ Poor Law Act 1601

The Poor Law Act of 1601 was the response to this problem. The Vestry was given responsibility for the local administration of the Act. Overseers of the Poor were appointed in each Parish. The Overseers, unpaid officials, were nominated annually by the Vestry to the Justice of the Peace who confirmed their appointment. They had responsibility

- for the care of the sick and 'impotent poor' by providing hospitals or out-relief;
- for finding work for the unemployed;
- for dealing, together with the constable, with 'sturdy vagabonds';
- for apprenticing poor children;
- and for levying and collecting parish rates to meet the expenses incurred.

The Churchwardens; the Peoples Warden, appointed by all the parishioners at a Vestry meeting, and the Rector's (or Vicar's) Warden, appointed by the priest, retained their importance in the new duties assumed by the Vestry under Elizabethan Poor Law. The accounts, which they submitted annually to the Vestry meeting, incorporated the expenditure of Overseers of the Poor and of the other Vestry officials, demonstrate their central importance in village life. Those of the South Tawton Churchwardens are still available for inspection in the Devon Record Office; they tell much of the life in the Parish from the sixteenth century onwards.

Elizabethan Poor Law failing

By the nineteenth century the Elizabethan Poor Law was proving inadequate and the whole of rural administration, designed for a simpler world, was beginning to creak. The history of local government in the nineteenth century is of the attempts to remedy the inadequacies of the provisions for the poor. In rural Britain the major change was the separation of ecclesiastical management from civil administration, culminating in the setting up of County Councils in 1888 and Parish and District Councils in 1894.

Poor Law Act 1834

The first step in the chain of change was the radical revision of the Poor Laws under the Poor Law Act of 1834. This act removed responsibility for the relief of the poor from the hands of the Vestry and placed it in /11/ the hands of a Board of Guardians who operated under the direction of the newly instituted Poor Law Commissioners appointed by Parliament.

The Board of Guardians was elected by the ratepayers of groups of parishes, described as Unions, and were responsible for the operation of poor relief and for the 'Union' hospital/workhouse, which for South Tawton was in Okehampton. The parish Overseers of the Poor continued to set and collect the rates for the parishes, contributing now, not directly to the poor, but to their support in the Union Workhouse. The Justices of the Peace remained in a key position in poor relief through their powers of inspection and control of the appointment of the Overseers.

The Local Government Board

Up to this time the central administration of operation of the Poor Laws in rural areas and the activities of the Justices of Peace was shared between the Poor Law Board, the Home Office and the Privy Council. In 1871 the Local Government Board was formed to overlook the workings of the various bodies which existed, and were to be set up, in the coming years. The Board continued in operation, often as a founding and monitoring agency, until 1919 when it was superseded by the Ministry of Health.

Public Health Act 1875

Then in 1875 the Public Health Act used the existence of the Union of Parishes under the Guardians as a basis for the establishment of Rural Sanitary Authorities. These authorities were given the power to appoint Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors and other officials with the duties of improving rural water supplies and village sanitation and hence rural health.

Local Government Act 1888

The Local Government Act of 1888 established County Councils to take over the patriarchal rule of the Justices of the Peace, who, while preserved in their judicial capacity as magistrates of the local courts, lost their administrative functions to an elected body. The County Councils became responsible for Rural Sanitary Authorities, which in due course became the basis for the elected Rural District Councils.

/12/ Local Government Act 1894

The establishment by the 1894 Act, of the Rural District Councils and the Parish Councils was a logical step in the whole process of moving rural administration out of the hands of the Vestry, the church and squirearchy, into the hands of a civil administration—an administration which had available the technical knowledge to implement improvements in living standards, and the democratic authority, and motivation, to carry them through.

Some Lords distrust Democracy!

However the development of democracy into parish management was not regarded by everyone as 'a good thing'. During the debate in the House of Lords, on the third reading of the Local Government Bill, there was much concern at the proposal to allow Parish Councils to raise up to 3d in the £ for parish projects. Could these councils, elected by some who lived in property of very low rateable value, or maybe who dwell in cottage, dwellings where the rates were paid by the landlord, be trusted to behave responsibly? Earl Fortescue, the Devon landowner, said:-

"what security was there that in some rural parish where agricultural labourers had found it difficult to get employment they might not start works of excavation on a comparatively gigantic scale—for example a swimming bath, not so much for swimming but to provide

work at the expense of rates?"

This disturbing thought did not stop the Liberal government of the day proceeding with the Bill; and, it must be admitted, they were vindicated. There is no record that any parish councils dug swimming baths to create work!

/13/

Part 2 The Activities

INTRODUCTION

For the first fifty years the Parish Council, often prodded by the Okehampton Rural District Council, worked to give the village a reliable water system, workable sewerage, and good roads and services. They succeeded in doing so through the effective interaction of the four bodies concerned, the Local Government Board in Westminster the County Council in Exeter, the Okehampton Rural District Council and the Parish Council. The interests of these bodies often differed.

Initially the Parish Councillors were nearly all members of the previous Vestry, they were the well-to-do farmers living away from the villages and deeply concerned to avoid expenditure. In succeeding years younger and more forward looking personalities joined the Council and strengthened the forces for change, as a result it is possible to see apparently sudden and irrational movements in Council attitudes.

The District Council, made up of councillors from a similar background to the Parish Council also wished to contain costs. But they were acting under pressure from the County Council, who in turn were pushed into action by the Local Government Board, operating on occasion through the Medical Officer of Health, in their concern to improve rural living conditions. The positions taken by these four bodies changed as the elected representatives changed and as the political complexion of the government swung to and fro between Left and Right. The account of the installation of the Parish Water Scheme, described in Chapter 12, is perhaps the best illustration of these four forces in action.

/14/

CHAPTER 1 ESTABLISHMENT OF PARISH COUNCILS

The elections

The Local Government Act set up a timetable for the election of councillors and the meetings of the newly elected councils. As a consequence in early December 1894 parish meetings were held all over Devon, and indeed all over England, at which parishioners nominated candidates for the councils and held elections, either by a show of hands at the meeting, or within the following 15 days, by ballot.

Newspaper praise

The Western Morning News for December 5th 1894⁶ printed a lengthy leader on this new development in local government, the paper gives one picture of the favourable public feeling of the time.

"... The reports published to-day show however that great interest has been taken in this new

experiment in local government. All the meetings were well attended and at most of them there was a super abundance of candidates for seats on the parish councils. Another fact to be noticed is that generally the interest was by no means confined to one or two classes. Everybody entitled to express an opinion or to vote seems to have made a point of being present, and labourers and artisans were as freely nominated for office as the squire and the Parson and the farmer. The gentler sex does not seem to have taken very great advantage of the right which the new act confers on them. In most cases they were conspicuous by their absence from the meetings, and in only a few cases do women figure in the list of nominees for service on the new bodies. This is a pity."

And disgust

On the other hand on the 22nd December 1894 the Exeter Flying Post

"Speaking generally there is much grunting (sic) at the elections being fixed so near Christmas, with the inevitable consequence of interfering with trade and commerce. That however is one of a Radical Government's weakest points; it cares little how the business of the country suffers so long as they can carry out their plans. It would move heaven and earth to get a man a vote but couldn't trouble whether he had employment or not or whether his earning power diminishes through any of his actions."

/15/

A limited electorate

The Parish Councils were elected by those on the local government electoral roll, which at that time included parish landowners, householders and men who had a home in the Parish all of whom had to be aged over 21. The council electorate differed from the Parliamentary electoral roll in that women, over thirty and property owners, were included.

The Councillors had to be either parochial electors, or to have been resident in the Parish, or within three miles of it, for the whole of the previous twelve months, enfranchised women were eligible to be elected as councillors.

The elections were to be held at a parish meeting convened with adequate notice and attended only by parish electors. The election was to be conducted by a show of hands but electors were entitled to challenge the result and demand a ballot, a demand that had to be granted. The requirement for an initial election by a show of hands at Parish meetings was later abolished and all elections were made by ballot.

The Local Government Act stated that on the 15th day of April in each year the parish councillors shall go out of office and their places shall be taken by newly elected councillors, this requirement was subsequently altered to allow each Councillor to serve for three years before resigning and putting up for re-election.

The South Tawton Councillors

The first South Tawton Parish Councillors were elected by ballot at a meeting, held in the South Tawton 'Board' School schoolroom, on December 21st 1894, after a show of hands had been disputed at an earlier Parish meeting. With the task of electing eleven councillors from a field of 23 candidates 1,636 votes were cast, implying that about 50% of the 230 qualified electors in the parish voted.

The wide franchise and the 'classless' nature of the support for the election meant that in South Tawton, as the Western Morning News reported happened elsewhere, the squire and parson could be

challenged. /16/ Thus in South Tawton the Vicar, the Rev Foulkes Clarke, elected at the first show of hands, failed to get a seat when the poll was repeated in a secret ballot, while William Cann of South Tawton, the only candidate neither farmer nor businessman, was successful. Incidentally William Cann (no known connection of the current Parish Council Chairman William Cann, of South Zeal) is mentioned as a ballad singer in Baring Gould's account of his visit to South Zeal in 1894.

In the outcome the successful candidates were mostly members of the previous vestry, they were:

| Name | Occupation | Address | Votes |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| G. D. Cann | Solicitor & Landowner | Exeter | 135 |
| D. S. Warne | Mining Agent | Owlsfoot | 90 |
| J. Powlesland | Farmer | Coursebeer | 88 |
| G. Grendon | Farmer | Lovaton | 87 |
| J. Endacott | Farmer | East Week | 84 |
| W. G. Finch | Blacksmith | Taw Green | 83 |
| J. Lethbridge | Farmer | Poltimore | 82 |
| Wm. Cann | Farm Labourer | South Tawton | 82 |
| W. C. Brely | Retired Miller | South Zeal | 80 |
| S. Sampson | Farmer | Black Street | 77 |
| Jos. Ponsford | Farmer | Taw Green | 73 |

At their first meeting the Councillors elected G. D. Cann as Chairman (a position that he held until his death in 1921). John Sampson, farmer of Sessland and previous clerk to the Overseers of the Poor, was appointed clerk, at a salary of £35, he remained in this post until 1913. And H. V. Vincent of the National Provincial Bank, Okehampton, Treasurer. A list of subsequent Councillors is to be found in Appendix C.

The occupations of the members of the council reflect the changing social influence and make up of the parish. In 1894 the Parish was dominated by the members of the Vestry from whom the Parish Councillors were, in effect, selected.

A male bastion, farmer dominated

Farming was the most important economic activity in the Parish and farmers were very well represented in the Council, from its inception they formed a considerable majority. A majority which did not, of course, live in the two main villages of the Parish, where most of the /17/ Parish electors lived. Although a proportion of women could be councillors and could vote at elections the council was a male bastion for its first thirty years.

But in 1928 all women can now vote! And one enters the chamber.

The two Representation of the People Acts of 1918 and 1928 gave the vote to women of all ages in all elections but the first female councillor was not elected until 1934 when Miss Blanche Counter (later Wonnacott) was elected. Blanche Counter proved to be an outstanding, but uncomfortable, addition to the Council, who was no respecter of persons and who made her presence felt from the start. It was a further 11 years before a second woman appeared on the Council.

[Map of South Zeal]

CHAPTER 2 FUNCTIONS OF PARISH COUNCILS AT THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN 1894

The following summarises the principal duties of Parish Councils as laid down in the 1894 Act.

1. To assume the powers and duties of the Vestry, except so far as they relate to the affairs of the church.
2. To meet not less than four times per year, one of which meetings must be the annual parish meeting.
3. To appoint the Overseers of the Poor who assess and collect the Parish Poor Rate.
4. To administer the Parish's non ecclesiastical Charities and appoint trustees to the boards of the Ecclesiastical Charities.
5. To maintain the Rights of Way and, if necessary, to raise money to repair public footpaths.
6. To appoint managers to the local national school (*this duty was instituted after the 1902 Education Act*).
7. To hold a parish meeting at least once per year, at which parishioners can raise matters of local concern. After investigation, it is the duty of the Parish Council to pass the requests to the appropriate local authority.
8. To acquire and provide allotments for the benefit of the 'labouring poor', where there is a demand for them.
9. To provide and maintain a village hall, or a playing field, if demanded by the parishioners at a parish meeting.
10. To provide a water and sewage scheme, consistent with the Public Health Act 1875, if demanded by the parishioners at a parish meeting.

CHAPTER 2 THE OVERSEERS OF THE POOR

The role of Overseers of the Poor, for two centuries of great importance in the life of the country, had been declining ever since the Poor Law Act of 1834 and the establishment of the Union and the workhouse. By the time of the establishment of the parish councils the Overseers' activities were largely confined to setting the parish rates, ensuring they were paid and representing the parish on the Board of Guardians.

Nevertheless the job was still 'prestigious' and the Parish Council appointed only the most reliable and respectable of the parish to the office. The appointees were nearly always farmers prominent in local public life, usually as Parish Councillors, Rural District Councillors or Churchwardens.

The first appointments in South Tawton were made at the first business meeting of the council. Four farmers were appointed, J Powlesland, of Itton, J Endacott, of Week; Samuel Sampson, of

Blackstreet, and George Grendon, of Lovaton; with John Sampson of Sessland, the previous overseer's clerk, as clerk to the newly appointed body. In South Tawton the new body looked very like the old Vestry!

Overseers abolished

After the Rating and Valuation Act (1925) all the powers of the Overseers in making, levying and collecting rates were exercised by a newly established Rating Authority, on which the Parish council appointed two persons, and was responsible for establishing a general rate, in lieu of a Poor Rate, for each Parish. These new rate setting arrangements did not operate smoothly, on occasion the Parish Council and the Parishioners joined in strong disapproval of their assessments made by the Authority.

The appointment of Overseers of the Poor to the Board of Guardians of the Okehampton Union continued until 1927 when the Local Government Act (1927) gave the remaining powers of the Overseers of the Poor to the County Council.

/20/

CHAPTER FOUR NON ECCLESIASTICAL CHARITIES

The Parish Council is responsible for the administration of the Non-Ecclesiastical charities and has the power to appoint trustees to the boards of the Parish Ecclesiastical Charities, acting with the consent of the Charity Commission.

The Council appointed four Charity Trustees at its first business meeting. The Trustees, on February 9th 1895, met with the Vicar and established a system whereby applications for 'gift money' (the monies derived from a number of small charities) should be made to the Trustees at the Vestry Room by an advertised date. Distribution of the money was to be made by the Trustees at the Board School on an advertised date shortly after the applications are received. The system is essentially the same as that which is operated today by the South Tawton Charity Trustees, a body made up by nominees of the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council, the successors to the Vestry.

Some charities did not exist

The newly appointed Trustees were thorough in tracking down charitable activities in the Parish some of which were alive, like the Itton Moor Allotment, and others either moribund or non existent like the Fulford Bequest. The Itton Moor Allotment Trust is discussed on page 26. The Fulford Bequest was one of the ancient charities investigated. The Trustees were asked to report to the Council "such particulars as they could ascertain respecting an annual payment of about 15 shillings made to the Poor of this Parish out of an estate called Fulford".

The Trustees reported that no reference to this Charity was made in the Charity Commissioners report of about 1830, nor in their subsequent report of 1889. It is presumed that no such Charity exists. However Mr W Sampson told the Trustees that when, as a tenant of Fulford, about 1845 he took in some of the Commons and after dispute with the commoners he agreed to pay 15 shillings a year to the Poor for the enclosed land; this he did for some years but when he found that others who enclosed land did not pay he declined to pay the sum. The Charity Books from 1961 show no payments have been made.

/23/ Another moribund Charity, the "William Smythe Gift", was investigated. It was made by a deed of 17th June 1583 and gave

to the impotent Poor the produce of 3 steers and 4 ewes or their value, estimated at £6-16-

0, the gift to be made on Good Friday.

As there was no provision for purchasing other steers or ewes and no money left for that purpose it was obvious that the Charity had not existed for centuries.

Others needed attention

The Charity Trustees were appointed Trustees of the Burgoyne Charity by a Scheme dated 13 April 1897. The Charity consisted of three Almshouses and gardens and a field called Jamphay let at an annual rent of £6, given by the will of Robert Burgoyne in 1656 to Trustees for three poor widow women to live in the Almshouses. In 1902 the Charity Trustees reported to the Council that

"the almshouses were all unoccupied there being no applicant for them, only one has for some years been occupied, the applicant not being in a fit state to look after herself was taken to the workhouse many months since. They are not in a good state of repair, nor up to modern requirements and are not wanted for the purpose for which they were intended."

In view of this it was agreed that the Trustees should sell the properties and invest the money and pay the income to some deserving person. In the event the properties were sold to Mr and Mrs Crocker of South Zeal, who built the house now called Glenelven on the site.

In 1906 a new scheme of Administration for South Tawton Charities produced by the Charity Commissioners was approved by the Council. From that date forward the Council were involved in the mechanics of distribution of alms but, effectively, not in charge of the management of its investments. These were all made in "Trustee Stocks", fixed interest Government stocks which declined in real value over the first half of the century. The 1906 scheme was varied in 1940 and in 1954, at the last revision the value of the annual income of the Charities was about £80.

/22/

[Map of South Tawton parish]

/23/

CHAPTER 5 RIGHTS OF WAY

The Council has a duty to maintain rights of way open and if necessary, to raise money on the rates to repair public footpaths. Their authority can only be exercised through, and with the consent of, the Rural District Council.

The Ford Farm road to Dartmoor

The Council's activity started in 1895 when they made a very thorough investigation of a dispute over the rights of way over a path through Ford Farm to Dartmoor. The evidence collected was referred to the Rural District Council, who agreed with the Parish and asserted the public's rights on the lane.

Looking back at this case, the interest lies less in the problems of rights of way than in the evidence of the past use of Dartmoor as a source of fuel. This emerges clearly from the witnesses' demonstration of the long standing nature of the rights of way over the path. For example:

"Mr Jno White Senr of South Zeal says he is 77 years of age, has known the path from boyhood, has always understood it to be a public halter path for pack horses and donkeys. Has always passed there with scores of loads of fags (*turf*) during the last thirty years and has never been interfered with but is not sure whether carts were allowed to pass ..."

"Mr Wm Coombe of South Zeal had passed through Ford regularly with turf 30 years ago ..."

"Mr John Holman of South Zeal (Baker) passed there about 25 to 26 years ago with scores of loads of furze for his master, ..."

"Mr John Kelly has been accustomed to pass through Ford for the last 25 years with his donkey and cart ..."

"Mrs Elizabeth Kelly regularly passed through Ford with bundles of heather all her lifetime ..."

"Mr Jas Crocker senr South Zeal, has passed there during his lifetime with hundreds of loads of turf ..."

/24/ "Mr Wm Fewins of Ramsley, South Zeal has passed through Ford scores of times with his uncle with loads of turf from Turnimeads ..."

Mrs Eliza Knott of South Tawton says she is 70 years of age and has known Ford lane from childhood "and have always known it as a public thoroughfare and have had firing brought to Sticklepath through this lane in waggons by the late Mr Brook of Sticklepath ... My son had a quantity of ferns brought in that way by Mr George Pine. My late husand, Samuel Knott, was a parish apprentice at Ford with Mr Orchard. I have heard him say that at that time it was used as a public thoroughfare for pack horses ..."

There were a number of other reports of denials of rights of way, but none that were reported so fully in the Council minutes, nor resisted so firmly by the farmer.

Paths at Minnimores and Millfield in trouble

The maintenance of the Parish footpaths, the gates and stiles thereto was a continuous problem and some footpaths, such as the one across Millfield, which leads from the village centre to the road to Hillfield at Moorlands, and that through Minnimores (the field to the north of the Primary School), were constantly demanding attention. Since the Parish Council was not empowered to spend more than £10 on the maintenance of footpaths, there was at times protracted disagreement between the Council and the field owner as to who should pay the cost of repairing damage.

However the most important activity of the Council in maintaining Rights of Way came after the second World War when the definitive maps were drawn up. This activity will be reported upon in the history of the second 50 years of the Council.

/25/ CHAPTER 6 PARISH ROADS

Parish Councils had no funds to maintain Parish Roads, but they had an obligation to inform the District Council of deficiencies in road maintenance.

In the heyday of the Parish Vestry Waywardens were appointed to look after the highways. This duty was inherited by the County for the main roads, and the Rural District Councils for the by-roads, the Parish Council, in contrast to their role in footpath maintenance, had no formal role in Parish road maintenance. But the Parish Council constantly received complaints, from parishioners, of roads needing repair and was assiduous in passing these to the R.D.C. and in seeing that action was taken.

Macadam roads, no tar

It will be remembered that, in the early part of this century, the improved roads in the parish were generally Macadamized but not Tar macadamized. That is the roads were topped with 2" stone rolled in and shaped to throw rain water off the crown of the road, no tar was used to give a waterproof or dust free finish to the roads. This surface gave a satisfactory finish for roads designed for carrying horse drawn traffic.

Many roads were however unimproved and many parish roads and village streets were little more than the muddy tracks, the R.D.C. surveyors report of South Zeal street in 1899, quoted on page 5, was not atypical.

Stone Carting ruins roads

One of the early problems faced by the parish was the damage to roads caused by exceptional traffic. The most difficult of these cases occurred when the house and cottages at Wood were being rebuilt by Mr William Lethbridge in 1905/6. The stone was carried from the quarry at Ford farm through South Tawton to Wood, in fairly large quantities over a period of around 18 months causing considerable damage to the road surface.

/26/

[Photograph of South Tawton]

/27/ The R.D.C. finally came to an agreement with the Lethbridge family on a charge that the estate would pay to reinstate the road, plus an agreement for Mr Lethbridge to pay the cost of road maintenance until he had finished his building operations. Incidentally, the negotiations for this settlement must have been complicated by the fact that Mr Lethbridge was out of the country for much of the time and left the matter in the hands of his agent Geo. D. Cann, who was of course the Chairman of the Parish Council!

Similar, but less extreme, problems faced the R.D.C. continually and the need for the R.D.C. to plan the travelling route for their steam roller around the parishes often made the South Tawton Council impatient at delays in repair work.

Hedges untrimmed

The Parish Council was constantly calling the R.D.C.'s attention to farmers who had left their hedges untrimmed and to the hazard caused by the large number of small quarries, used by the R.D.C. for roadstone, left unfenced or ungated.

The arrival of the motor car and Tarmacadam

The problem wasn't helped by the arrival of the motor car from the early part of the century onwards. The car demanded a much higher standard of road maintenance than horse traffic and, eventually, the almost universal use of Tarmacadam to give a tolerable surface.

Dangerous corners

Equally importantly the danger of road accidents became a major factor in the design and use of parish roads. The Parish Council frequently drew the attention of the R.D.C. to danger spots, the corner at Ford Cross, the Cross roads at Zeal head and, more than once, to the need to do something about the corner in the main road at Prospect. The latter piece of straightening and widening was not undertaken until sometime in the 1960's had a nasty accident with an army truck. Then, as now, road reconstruction cost money!

CHAPTER 7 SOUTH TAWTON SCHOOL

By the Education Acts 1870 and 1873 the ratepayers of the Parish elected the School Governing Board at a parish meeting to be held every three years. The Parish Council initially did not have a responsibility for the school but in 1895 they established a "Parochial Technical Education Committee" on which they appointed a number of councillors, a number of parishioners with an interest in education matters and the head teacher.

New school boards

The Education Act 1902 altered the system and school management became a County Council responsibility. In 1902 the Council appointed, from their own number, two representatives for the School Board and gave to the County Council suggestions for other nominations, the latter were not necessarily Council members. Thereafter the Parish Council maintained two representatives on the South Tawton School governing body and one representative at Whiddon Down School (where they shared their responsibility with the Drewsteigton Parish Council). On both these school boards they were joined by the nominees from the County and Rural District Councils and were thus in a minority.

The mystery of Langdown School

Curiously, there is no record in the Council minutes of the managers of the school at Langdown, which was in use from the late 1870's until 1916, nor is there a reference in the South Tawton School log books to the existence of the Langdown School. The history of this school which drew pupils from Taw Green, Itton and farms in the north east of the Parish seems wholly lost, except for the names of one or two of the teachers recorded in the Census data and the memories of Parishioners whose parents or grand parents attended the school

William Avery

As far as South Tawton School went, the council were fortunate, for they inherited a very stable situation. After a period of twenty years of frequent change of master, the young William Avery came to the school in 1891, he remained in South Zeal as master until his retirement 35 years later.

William Avery was a good schoolmaster. His teaching and his discipline were very much of the period, but effective in a society where literacy was perhaps not generally regarded as very important. He was active in promoting technical education evening classes, where he was supported by the Council's Technical Education Committee, he established an adult reading room in the village, held variously in Beacon Cott, the Schoolroom, and, latterly, in the newly built Victory Hall.

By the time Mr Avery retired public education and South Tawton School were on a well established footing, and the Parish Council's educational duties were light.

Technical training and dairymaids

In 1907 reference is made to the "Committee for Higher Education", a body with a similar membership to the Parochial Technical Education Committee, it is not clear if it is the same body, the minutes do not define the role of either committee and the record of their activities is absent. It seems likely that their role was largely advisory and to provide liaison with the County Education Committee, who had the power to fund technical and evening classes.

Periodically the Council discussed the desirability of holding classes in technical subjects, (usually thatching!) and in 1910 the South Tawton Ploughing Association recommended to the Technical

Committee that they apply for classes in

'rope and spar making (without thatching) and in ploughing, hedging and stone hedging'.(7)

Clearly the Technical Education committees were also involved with the head teacher in getting, for example, the regular dairying classes that were held in the Parish for farmers' daughters and others.

Wartime pressures

During the war years the Parish Council was empowered to recommend that parents should be allowed to withdraw their children from school to help with essential work, such as farming, instead of being educated. The power seems to have been used sparingly, but there are at least two recorded cases of children aged 13 or 14 leaving school early. The evacuation of a London school to South Zeal(8) in 1940 is, surprisingly, not mentioned in the minutes.

/30/

CHAPTER 8 ALLOTMENTS

Under the Allotments Act of 1887 the County Councils and the local sanitary authorities were empowered to acquire and to provide Allotments for the "labouring poor". This duty was assumed by the Parish Council.

Itton Moor

When the Council met for the first time on the 31st December 1894, the only allotments in the Parish were at Itton. These allotments were established by a bequest made at the time of the inclosure of Itton Moor, in 1842. The inclosure award of Itton Moor Allotment stated that:

"the award was made to the Churchwardens and overseers of the Poor of the Parish of South Tawton of a piece of land containing 4 acres to be hold in trust for allotments for the labouring poor of South Tawton, subject to a rent charge of £1 payable to the owner of the large moor adjoining thereto".

Itton Moor Allotments sold

The allotments continued in use under the Parish Council's jurisdiction for the next 50 years, but little detail is recorded in the minutes, other than the regular payment of £1 rent to the owner of the Great Moor, and periodic costs of maintaining the field's fencing. By 1944 the Council desired to sell the field to the owner of Itton Manor, presumably because of a lack of tenants for the allotments. After suitable enquiries they were authorised, by the various responsible government bodies, to sell the field, which they did for £30. It is not clear from the Charity accounts what happened to the £30.

Parish Allotments

In 1894 there was a clear demand for allotments conveniently placed to the villages of South Zeal and South Tawton. During 1895 the Council located two suitable fields whose owners were willing to let them to the Council on a yearly lease. The first at Perkins Close, a field at the head of the road from Shelly to the Exeter road, farmed by Messrs Hill and West Wyke and owned by the Hoare Estates. The second field, Broom Park, Blackstreet Farm, South Tawton, was owned by the Wood Estate. /31/ By March 1896 the allotments were established and let to tenants at a rent of 6d per yard for their allotments. (A 'yard' is 1/160th acre i.e. a square rod, pole or perch.) The actual rent asked was regularly adjusted to meet the council's outgoings on the allotments (there was a positive intention to balance income and expenditure). During most of the first 20 years of the allotments the rent was 3d per yard.

Annual allotment inspections

The new allotments were managed by a committee of councillors who inspected them annually, passing judgement on those who misused them either by poor husbandry or by cropping with agricultural rather than horticultural crops. For the first 25 years of the allotments there was a regular demand for them and often a waiting list, but after the 1914-1918 war enthusiasm appeared to waver.

A critical report

The allotment committee's report for June 1921 said that

“at Perkins Close the allotments were looking well but James Wonnacott, shoemaker, piece was rather weedy, Messrs Mogridge and W Tuckers piece awfully weedy, J Lee had tilled his to mangold and that not very special. James Wonnacott, trapper, his piece was a disgrace. Broom park looking clean but the committee surprised to see so much corn tilled and requested the Clerk to write and give them the understanding that they must abide by the law in future and till it to potatoes and garden produce and not to corn.”

Through the 1920's the Wood Estates (the landlord of Broom Park) and the allotments committee complained periodically of the neglect of their pieces by tenants and at one point the Wood estates suggested the council give up the field. Then in 1931 Mr Hill of West Wyke died and the sub-tenancy of Perkins Close was in question. The Council offered to buy the field from the Hoare Estates for £80, but the Hoare Estates refused and asked for £120 then one day later raised the price to £130. The council refused to pay this amount.

/32/

Sir Henry Hoare's gift

In February in a surprising move Sir Henry Hoare offered the Council the field as a gift, conditional on it being known as the Hoare Allotment Field and on the council encouraging allotment holders by offering annually £3 prize money for the best run allotment. The council gratefully accepted the gift and the prize condition.

Throughout the next decade and to the end of the 1939-1945 war the allotments remained popular, the Parish Council only occasionally complained of neglect or misuse by tenants, and each year the Home Allotment prizes were advertised, competed for, and won.

Waning enthusiasm

However the interest in allotments was waning and, as will be recorded in the post war history of the Council, within 15 years of the end of the 1939-45 war the Hoare allotment field had been sold, the lease of the South Tawton field given up and the Itton Moor allotments returned to the owner of Itton Great Moor and there were no longer allotments in the parish.

/33/

CHAPTER 9 FREQUENCY OF PARISH COUNCIL AND PARISH MEETINGS

The Council are required by the legislation to meet four times a year and to hold an Annual Parish Meeting, and additional Parish meetings when demanded by the electorate.

Board School as a village Hall

In 1894 the School, built some twenty years earlier, was the only public building in the Parish; the Local Government Act made sure that it was available both for Parish Council and for Parish

meetings. In fact, until the building of the Victory Hall in 1922, the School was used extensively by the parish for meetings of all sorts, for teas, for concerts, or for dances on village occasions like Zeal Fair, or when National Celebrations were ordained.

The Council met six times in the second year, thereafter, until the mid 1920's, the statutory four meetings a year were the norm, though occasionally business demanded additional meetings. Regular monthly meetings did not become the routine practice until after the Second World War.

Parish meetings popular!

The Parish meetings were often very well attended. At the annual meeting the Council reported on the year's activities and future plans, such as the regular beating of the Bounds of South Tawton Commons, arrangements to mark the death or crowning of the Monarch. But more interesting were the special meetings called to discuss parish problems, the water scheme or the need for sewage or scavenger services. These meetings did from time to time raise immense interest, attendances of 200 parishioners at Parish Meetings are reported in the minutes.

Sometimes they weren't!

But it wasn't always like that and as occurs to-day sometimes only a handful of the electorate would arrive to discuss an issue that the Council thought of vital importance.

Post war enthusiasm

After the Great War the duties and aspirations of the council increased. They were responsible for the setting up of a committee to erect and operate the new Victory Hall, they remained deeply involved in /34/ problems of village water and sewage arrangements and, finally, in 1933 with the installation of street lighting.

All these affairs were dealt with as democratically as the Council thought fit, Parish meetings were held, some time three or four times in a year, to give the Council, or other authority, an opportunity to say what was happening or what was planned. The meetings were usually well attended, 150 to 250 Parishioners on some occasions. They were then as now an opportunity for Parishioners to raise suggestions for Council action.

A Forward looking proposal rejected

One proposal, raised both in a Council meeting and at the Parish Meeting in 1931, failed to gain any support. Mr W Wedlake, seconded by Mr Pethybridge proposed that Duck's Hill be used as a car part. Duck's Hill is now gentrified into Green Bank and described as the village Green, but a similar proposal for car-parking made in the early 1990s received the same emphatic thumbs down!

The minutes of the Parish Meetings show little sign of the public apathy it is popular to complain about to-day. There were, perhaps, few rival entertainments in the Parish and fewer disagreements about future proposals.

/35/

CHAPTER 10 WATER SUPPLIES

There was a duty on the council to work with the District Council to achieve the provision of water and sewage servics as set out in the Public Health Act 1875.

Historically the supply of water for most farms and cottages was dependent on wells and springs near the houses. There was usually enough, but it was always a major domestic labour, usually for the women and children, every bit of water had to be carried into the house in buckets.

But by the nineteenth century the water supplies for Ramsley, Shelly and South Zeal were grossly inadequate, many wells and streams were polluted, either by industrial waste from the woollen or mining industries, or by a somewhat basic system of sewage disposal.

Mrs Vera Knapman who lived in Mill House in the centre of South Zeal has recalled how, while there was running water in the stream outside the back door, for drinking water it was necessary to go to the spring in Tampits Lane (the path behind the houses lying immediately west of Greenbank), a distance of several hundred yards. It was even more difficult for residents in Ramsley and Shelly and the task of carrying water must have been a very major chore, with the need to avoid water use very real. The early Ordnance Survey maps of the village identify very few wells and pumps in the village (marked with a 'P' for pump or 'W' for well), but there may have been many other private wells or pumps.

The Exeter water scheme, a dream that failed.

There had been a brief moment, in 1877, when the Exeter Water Co raised a parliamentary bill to dam Skaigh valley making a reservoir which would supply water not only to Exeter but also to villages on the way between Skaigh and the reservoir to be built at St Thomas. The scheme, a brief account of which is recorded in the Beacon for January 1989, was never adopted. The water supply in the villages remained unsatisfactory and unchanged when the Local Government Act became law.

/36/ Water absorbs the Council's attention

It is not surprising therefore that for the first thirty years of the Parish Council's existence the problems of water supply were a major preoccupation. The account of their efforts is a saga of developing, and ultimately successful, public enterprises.

Parishioner's complaint.

The tale of the Parish Council and South Zeal water supply started with 'a memorial', submitted by residents to the council meeting on August 12th 1895.

The council, only one of whose members lived in S Zeal, set up a committee to inquire into the water supplies of Ramsley, South Zeal and Shelly. On November 25th the committee reported as follows:-

“The Ramsley water supply committee have met and seen many of the memorialists. There is only one well in the hamlet and the committee are of the opinion that water should be brought in if possible as most of the inhabitants now have to fetch it a considerable distance amounting in most cases to some hundreds of yards. There is also a deficiency of water in Shelly and the eastern half of Zeal. The committee are of the opinion that these houses should be provided with water and think it desirable that the District Council should enquire into the matter.”

The County Council prompts.

In January 1896 the County Council, prompted by the Medical Officer of Health, requested the R.D.C. to produce plans for a water supply for South Zeal, Ramsley and Shelly. This they did and, in due course, applied to the Local Government Board for a loan of £800 to pay for the scheme. On 12th July 1897 the Parish Council considered the following report from the Local Government Board, addressed to Okehampton R.D.C.-

“I am directed by the Local Government Board, to state that they have had under consideration the report made by their inspector, Mr Ducat, after the Inquiry held by him

with reference to the application of the Rural District Council of Okehampton for /37/ sanction to borrow £800 for works of water supply for the village of South Zeal in the Parish of South Tawton.”

“I am to state that it appears from the report that the Parish is in need of an improved supply of Water, but the Board are advised that they could not properly sanction any loan to carry the scheme in its present form.”

“The Board consider that the District Council should obtain the services of a competent Engineer of experience in carrying out schemes of water supply with a view to placing before the Board a revised scheme.

*Signed Alfred D Adison
Assistant Secretary”*

Water supply system costs too much

The Parish Council acknowledged the receipt of the Report and replied to the R.D.C. as follows:

“... we have fully considered the matter and are of the opinion that the original scheme to bring water to South Zeal, Ramsley and Shelly would be entirely out of the question on account of the great expense that it would involve and the inability of the inhabitants to meet it.”

“We consider that the only places in need of a further supply of water are the hamlets of Ramsley and Shelly, and would suggest that the Okehampton R D C authorizes a sum of money to be spent in sinking a few wells with a view to finding pure water, to the satisfaction of the Medical Officer of Health Dr Young; and in the event of this not being obtained that the District Council engage the services of a competent surveyor who is accustomed to give evidence before a Local Government Board Inspector and to advise the inhabitants as to the best course to pursue.”

The local Government Board steps in.

A period of quiet then followed until the Local Government Board contacted Geo W Fulford, clerk of the Okehampton R.D.C., on June 8th 1898, as follows:

“Sir, I am directed by the Local Government Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd ult., with reference to the Water Supply of South Zeal in the Parish of South Tawton and to state that having regard to the number of houses /38/ in need of an adequate supply of wholesome water, the Board are clearly of opinion that the proper course to be pursued is for the Rural District Council of Okehampton themselves to provide a supply for the village under the provisions of section 59 et seq of the Public Health Act 1875.”

“As regards to the proposal that the Rural District Council should call upon individual owners to provide a supply I am to draw attention to the provisions of section 4 (4) of the Public Health (Water) Act 1878 and to the last paragraph of that section.

*I am Sirs, Your obedient Servant
signed Alfred D Adison, Assistant Secretary”*

In citing the Act the Local Government Board's letter pointed out to the Parish and Rural Councils that they could be compelled to supply water to a household provided it would cost less than 2d per week for each house. The District Council reacted by writing to the Clerk of the Parish Council on

July 28th offering a sum, not exceeding £5, to the Parish Council for the purpose of sinking trial pits for water at Shelly and Ramsley.

At this moment the passing of the buck from one body to another almost achieved an art form it is difficult to decide which committee deserves the accolade!

Another committee finds water!

This response was discussed by the Parish Council on August 1st, who decided to refer the matter of spending £5 on trial pits to a parish meeting. On October 11th 1898 the parish meeting agreed to refer the matter to an enlarged committee which, unlike the Parish Council, had the virtue of being comprised mainly of village residents who had actually experienced water shortage, this appears to have been effective.

And a pump is installed.

On 18th February 1899 the Parish Council reported that a trial pit had been sunk and a sufficient supply of good water was found. The R.D.C. agreed to a grant of £14 to wall up the pit and install a pump.

/39/ There the matter appeared to rest, three and a half years after it was raised the Parish Council mechanism had achieved results. But though the process seems slow, in earlier years when the parish was run from the vestry the water problem existed but was not tackled, even though the relevant legislation to assist, or even enforce, activity had been enacted for 20 years.

The M O H acts in the country.

The question of the quality and quantity of the parish water supply obviously caused the Medical Officer of Health concern. He not only endeavoured to prod authorities to provide a proper scheme in the villages; he also saw that individual landlords, away from the hamlets and villages, were ordered to obey the law and provide, where necessary, a water supply to their tenanted properties. For example on 18th April 1896 the R.D.C. issued an order to Mrs Skinner to supply water to her cottage at Wickington, occupied by Mr White.

South Tawton Water Supply.

The water to South Tawton village was less of a problem at this time, a main had been laid to the Cross Tree in 1868 by Sir Henry Hoare and seems to have supplied adequate water to the village. But, in September 1901, a letter signed by a number of residents addressed to the R.D.C. complained of the supply of water from this main. The R.D.C. acted promptly, a contract to repair the pipe was given to Mr A Dawe.

Problems with the Ramsley Parish Pump!

The Parish Council did not discuss water supplies again until the meeting on March 14th 1902, when a complaint was received on the performance of the Ramsley well pump. The complaint was 'left on the table' until, on November 24th 1902, a sub committee was formed to meet at Ramsley and discuss with Mr Tope the repairs to the pump.

This committee reported at the meeting of March 23rd 1903, one year after the original complaint, that they had inspected the pump, and found it badly out of order. They also reported on a house to house visit to the householders who had petitioned for the pump 6 years earlier. They all refused to contribute anything towards the pump's repairs as they were of the opinion that the water was not pure.

/40/ The pump abandoned!

The Committee therefore would not recommend the Council to spend any money on repairs as the

pump was not used. The report was adopted.

Inaction?

The minutes of both the parish and district councils record no more on South Tawton Parish water supplies until 1906. Just what was happening in Ramsley in the meantime is unclear! It is however certain that the women of the village carried an awful lot of water a lot further than we would like to do today.

Back to battle.

In July 1906 the R.D.C. prompted by the Medical Officer of Health and the Devon County Council wrote to the Parish Council urging action. In response the Parish Council called a Parish Meeting, at this the following motion was passed:

“That in the opinion of the meeting it is desirable that a proper water supply be obtained for the villages of Ramsley, Prospect and Shelly.”

The R.D.C. immediately asked the Sanitary Inspector to prepare a scheme for supplying the villages.

Plans drawn up and consultation started.

On March 1907 the Sanitary Inspector presented plans to the R.D.C. On 15 April a public meeting of parish Ratepayers met at Ford Farm, when the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector demonstrated the plans on the ground and at subsequent discussion held in the Council School.

A Loan requested.

As a consequence of this meeting the Parish Council wrote, on the 14th May 1907, to the R.D.C. accepting the plan (but recommended that the reservoir should be placed at the source rather than Zeal Head).

They asked the R.D.C. to apply to the Local Government Board for a loan of £1,000; proposing that repayment of the loan should be spread over 30 years; and that, in the first instance, 2/3rds of cost of repayment /41/ should be borne by consumers and the remainder spread over the whole parish.

The scheme approved.

It wasn't until May 1908 that the R.D.C. was ready to make an application to the Local Government Board for £1,000. From then until the following March the L.G.B. made extensive and detailed enquiries into the scheme, including, on 22nd October 1908, a public enquiry held in the South Tawton Schoolroom.

Finally the Local Government Board approved the scheme, provided that the council acquired in addition the waterlogged land to the west of the proposed collecting area.

The R.D.C. duly negotiated the purchase of this land, from Sir Henry Hoare who, claiming that the area was a part of the Ford stream watershed, negotiated a free water supply to the Ford Farm homestead, to a cattle trough and to the farmhouse backdoor.

Action!

Suddenly it was all happening, on 17th April the advertisement for tenders for the construction of the scheme was placed in the papers, on 29th May the tender of Mr John Cornish was accepted, and following requests to the parish council, the scheme extended to supply the Rising Sun and to South

Tawton village. On the 12th June Mr Maurice Warne was appointed Clerk of Works at a sum of £2-2-0 per week, and conveyance of land from Mr S Cooper signed and sealed. And, after some debate and bargaining, conducted by Mr G D Cann for his client Mr James White, a Mortgage deed for £1,100 was signed.

The finalised plan was to draw water from the fields and moor above what is now Crow's Nest, pipe it to a settling tank and reservoir on land near to Crow's Nest, (the remains can still be seen) from here the water was piped down the valley to Ford Cross and then under the Ford Cross to South Tawton road with a major branch to South Zeal at Zeal Head.

A system installed

Initially the Water System served the community from a series of stand pipes through the village, with only a few properties being connected with an indoor supply by spurs from the main.

/42/

A fly in the ointment?

As the years progressed more and more properties were connected to the system and the village reached a point where there was an urgent need for a proper sewage disposal system! A system that was not installed for another 25 years. But for the moment the council could congratulate themselves.

A Celebration Dinner

The Parish Council minutes for November 15th 1909 carried the following entry:-

Celebrating the completion of South Zeal, South Tawton Water Supply.

The Chairman Mr Geo. D Cann very kindly offered to entertain all the members of the Council and Clerk also the Contractors, Medical Officer of Health, Sanitary Inspector, Workmen etc., to a dinner at the Oxenham Arms Hotel on Dec. 6th to celebrate the completion of the South Zeal Water Works.

Proposed by Mr D S Warne and supported by Mr Geo Grendon that Mr Cann's generous offer be accepted and that this Council accord a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Cann for his kindness. "Carried unanimously".

Rates settled, Collector appointed

In February 1910 a water rate of 1/- (=5p) in the £ was set and a rate collector, the clerk of the council, Mr John Sampson, was appointed at an annual salary of £4 with effect from Ladyday (25 March).

Engineer rewarded. Water flows.

At the same meeting, an obviously pleased Parish Council awarded Mr H Ward, the engineer of South Zeal Water Works, a sum of £20 to be paid for his extra services in connection with South Zeal Water Works.

/43/

Extension of water supply

During, and immediately after, the completion of the water works a number of extensions were requested, and granted, so that within a very short time the main served South Tawton village, the Rising Sun and Poltimore in addition to the original plan for South Zeal, Ramsley and Shelly.

And now, problems. Poor installation

During the succeeding months the Council continued to find business to do with the water

distribution scheme. They complained to the R.D.C. about the very unsatisfactory state of the laying of the water main under the two bridges in Zeal where the pipes had been laid on the bed of the river. They collected all the rubbish and blocked the flow of the river water, so that after heavy rains the river overflows and floods the houses in the vicinity.

Trouble with the rate payers and with the water rate collector

In November 1911 it was revealed that there were a great number of ratepayers in arrears. It was resolved to find out from the R.D.C. who the defaulters were and why they had not paid.

Mr Sampson tendered his resignation as rate collector, pleading pressure of other work. In response to an advertisement for a successor there was only one application, from Mr Edward Woods. The council offered him the post at a salary of £3-15-0, per annum which Mr Wood accepted.

And with the new water rate collector

In April 1913 Mr Woods applied for an increase in salary! It was reported that many people were still not paying their rates and that there was a lot of leakage from taps.

Another committee!

In response to these problems a committee was set up consisting of Rev F T F Boulton, Messrs G D Cann, Albany Finch, C White and W Wedlake. The committee reported, in May 1913, that a number of the non-payers claimed to have a water supply of their own, in some cases it was believed to be taken in pipes from tanks in the fields. It was thought that this water was likely to be contaminated and it was resolved to get the Medical Officer of Health to take samples of the water at different times of the year to ascertain if it was pure and fit for drinking purposes.

/44/ The District Council was asked to check on the leaky taps, the dangers of shortage of water in a drought were emphasised. Finally as to Mr Woods' salary the council minute reads:

“With reference to Mr Woods' application for an increase in salary, as the District Council are of the opinion that the Parish Council have no power to increase his salary as he is one of their (the R.D.C) officers and any application should be made to them, it was decided to make no recommendation.”

Some readers may think this was a bit sharp, after all it was the Parish Council who set Mr Woods' salary at 5/- below that of his short lived predecessor!

Routine sets in, some users don't pay

For the next five years there were few problems, a number of houses were connected to the mains and there are no complaints of water shortage. But in 1918 the Council discussed at length the problem of those who did not pay their water rates and although they claimed not to use the mains water the Council did not wholly believe them and requested the R.D.C. to take some firm action.

A Waterman is appointed

By the 1920's the water system was well established, and by and large worked well. At some point, it is not clear when, a “Waterman” was appointed with the duties, amongst others, of keeping the 'drains' to the reservoir clear and of looking after the water taps on the stand-pipe, and of turning the water supply on in the mornings and off in the evenings during the summer months. This latter function was clearly critical as water consumption increased, and the capacity of the system was stressed.

A Waterman is disappointed!

But in spite of several applications by the waterman, Wm Kellaway, for an increase in pay to meet

the increased demands of the job, met with refusal from the Parish Council always careful to look after the pennies.

/45/ **And still they don't pay**

Rate collection problems continued, and in March 1922, the Parish Council passed a resolution to be sent to the Rural District Council:

“that everyone that don't pay their water rates should be summoned”.

Since many consumers still drew their water from stand pipes, there was little that the Council could do if the R.D.C. didn't prosecute, the option to cut supplies did not exist! The Council felt angered but impotent.

The County steps in.

The problem of water rate was solved when, in 1925, the Rating Act 1925 set up a county rating authority and abolished the local Poor rate this enabled the County and Rural District Councils to set a general rate, which then included water rate, for everyone in the Parish.

More houses connected, more water needed.

Throughout the 1920's and 1930's the area and number of individual houses supplied with water continued to increase. In 1928 water shortage was attributed to choked collection pipes, but even after they were cleared there was still insufficient water. A new set of collection drains were cut in the field opposite the reservoir and these provided a temporary relief. In 1932 the catchment area was increased by extending the collecting pipes to a new spring at a cost of £100.

Taw March the solution?

Early in 1937 the North Devon Water Board brought forward a proposal to dam the Taw in Taw Marsh and pipe the water to parishes in the north of the county.

The idea caused consternation in South Tawton Parish on two counts:

- 1 the infringement of South Tawton Commoners' rights and
- 2 the potential damaging effect on the supply of water to the South Tawton Reservoir.

The worries of the Council and parishioners led to a number of packed and verbally heated Parish meetings. But in the end the scheme, strongly opposed by national and county environmental groups, failed to get through the House of Lords and was abandoned.

/45/

Well what about Ramsley?

The water supply position continued to be delicate and in 1940 the Parish Council encouraged the development of a well at Ramsley 1 to supplement the village supplies. Parish papers do not record the success of this scheme.

The North Devon Water Board

In May 1944 the R.D.C. informed the Parish Council that the North Devon Water board proposed to enclose about 1 ½ acres near Irishman's Wall and asked for the names and addresses of the Commoners affected. The clerk replied to the R.D.C. saying that every ratepayer in South Tawton Parish was a commoner and sending the R.D.C. a list of the Parish Councillors.

Water for all, maybe!

The development of the North Devon Water Board and the end of the South Zeal's own water supply is a story for the period 1945-1995.

It is hard today to grasp the magnitude of the problems in the village before either piped water or sewage existed. Open streams and gutters ran down the village to the stream at its foot and water flowed in from the old leat across Millfield to cross the village street below Mill house to join the open gutter running in front of the site of the modern "Riverside".

/48/

Home pig killing

Many villagers were smallholders who reared, slaughtered and cured their own pigs and had waste to dispose of with no easy sanitary way of doing so. In at least one house in the village the slaughtered carcass was hung in the cross passage for cleaning and scalding, the waste water from this very messy operation was swept out of the passage through the front door and into the open drain immediately opposite!

The effect on village drainage of several households with this sort of practice is not discussed, but it is not unreasonable to support the Sanitary Inspector and the M.O.H. in their protests that something need to be done with South Zeal drainage. It was the beginning of a 30 year war! One of the reformers difficulties was that although the sewage arrangements of South Zeal and Ramsley were every bit as primitive as the water supplies, they never presented quite such an urgent problem. However the Medical Officer of Health thought differently.

Medical Officer of Health on the Rampage

From 1896 onwards the minutes of the Okehampton R.D.C. meetings contain frequent references to polluted streams in South Zeal; and the problems of 'drainage'. The interest culminated, in 1900, in a formal request by the R.D.C. to the Medical Officer of Health to investigate South Zeal drainage. On 1st of September that year, the R.D.C. surveyor was asked to prepare a drainage plan for South Zeal.

Sewage systems are too costly

In due course the Parish Council considered the plan and referred it to a Parish meeting, the outcome of which was that the village rejected the plan on the grounds of cost. Annually thereafter the Medical Officer of Health's annual report reminded the County Council and the Rural District Council that drainage (sewage) at South Zeal was still unsatisfactory.

More earth closets the answerer

In 1902 the Parish Council, replying to yet another request from the R.D.C. for a drainage progress report, reiterated the conclusion of the Parish Meeting held in 1900, and pointed out that the village has a falling population and that the rateable value of the property that would benefit from a Sewage scheme is only £107.10s.0d. The Parish Council's /49/ solution was that earth closets should be more generally adopted and more attention paid to the existing drains. The R.D.C. agreed to post notices in South Zeal warning against the throwing of slops and refuse in the highway.

"No urgency"

No progress appears to have been made with the drains during the next eight years. However in October 1910 after the South Zeal water scheme was completed, the R.D.C., presumably pressed by the M.O.H. and the County Council, wrote to the Parish Council to say that "a sewer was required at South Zeal". The Council replied that, in view of the great expense of the water scheme, it would be a great hardship on ratepayers to incur any additional expense at present. And the Parish Council repeated their "opinion that a sewer at South Zeal was not a matter of urgency or required at

present”.

The only thing to be done

There the matter rested for the next twelve years, during which time the use of piped water increased and a number of new houses were built and had water closets installed. In June 1923 the R.D.C. pressed by the Medical Officer of Health reopened the matter with a letter which reminded the Council of the Government's powers to enforce the installation of a sewerage scheme under the public Health Act 1875. The letter included an extract from the Medical Officer of Health's most recent report:

“I saw two or three cases of accumulations of Manure refuse etc., with the Sanitary Inspector which he will attend to. The conditions are such that it is impracticable to get individuals to rectify the sanitary condition and drain their own property in each case. The only thing to be done is to undertake a thorough scheme of drainage for the whole village ...”

The Council says yes, maybe

The Council, by this time made up of a new generation of councilors, several of them village dwellers, unlike those who had so consistently opposed the cost of any scheme, agreed. They *“thought it was quite time there should be a move in the matter. A 'sewerage' was wanted very badly in the village of South Zeal”* in the March of 1924 they /50/ became impatient and pressed the R.D.C. to get on with producing a scheme.

The Ministry asks for an improved planning

In June of that year a scheme was produced for discussion and the siting in June of that year of the sewerage works considered in detail between the two councils, with the field Minnomores suggested as the most suitable sit. Negotiations for the purchase of the field were proceeding, when the Ministry of Health intervened to say that they were not satisfied with the scheme and that the R.D.C. should employ a specialist to draw up a new professional scheme, implying that the local Sanitary Inspector was not likely to be sufficiently experienced. The Okehampton R.D.C. duly advertised in the Western Morning News for quotations from Sewerage experts for the work of drawing up a sewerage scheme and in the end they hired Captain Jenkins RE (ret'd), M.I.C.E. A Plymouth consultant engineer for to produce a scheme.

Captain Jenkins was doubtful about using Minnomores as a site for the works, it was too near the village, larger than necessary and too good quality grassland for the purpose. He proposed the field to the North East (where the Shelly Nature Reserve is now established). Mrs Lethbridge, the landowner, did not wish to sell the field but was willing to let sewerage works be established there.

The new scheme still too expensive

Captain Jenkins' scheme was worked out in detail and presented to the Parish Council with an estimated cost of £5,520. The repayment of a Ministry of Health loan of this size to finance the work would increase the rates by 2s 9d in the £ on the whole Parish. The R.D.C. considered this possibly unacceptable, and furthermore questioned if the existing water supplies would be adequate for the demands that the scheme would impose. South Tawton Parish Council agreed with the R.D.C. and asked for the engineer to produce a modified scheme omitting South Tawton village and several South Zeal properties.

The Ministry says “yes but ...”

The modified scheme was submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval and received the following less than enthusiastic reply.

Ministry of Health
Whitehall London SW1
February 17th 1927

Sir,

I am directed by the Minister of Health to state that he has had under consideration the report by his inspector Mr J Garner after the enquiry held by him into the application of the Rural District Council for sanction to a loan of £3,500 for purposes of sewerage and sewage disposal at South Zeal in the contributory place of South Zeal.

I am to point out that the cost of the scheme for loan repayments and maintenance would represent a rate of 1s 5d in the £. The present rates are high, 14s 3d in the £, and I am to enquire whether the Council and the ratepayers fully realise the burden which the scheme would impose.

I am also to point out that there are only 31 water closets in the area to be sewered, the remaining houses being served by earth closets. In order that full advantage may be taken of the sewers it would be necessary that these earth closets should be converted to water closets. This would involve considerable expenditure, particularly in view of the fact that there is only a stand pipe supply of water available at present, and the Council should ascertain whether the property owners are prepared to undertake the necessary expense.

The Minister would also wish to be informed whether any building development is in progress or is likely to be undertaken in the immediate future. It is noted that the present estimated population is only six above what it was at the 1921 census.

Assuming that the replies to the above points are satisfactory the Minister would be glad if arrangements can be made for the consulting engineer to attend this office to discuss certain amendments of the scheme.

Your obedient servant, W. A. Goss.

The Parish says NO

The Council unanimously resolved to refer the matter to a Parish meeting. At the Parish meeting, held on April 11th 1927, the electors present voted 15 for the scheme, 150 against, and again the matter went dormant.

/52/ [Map]

/53/

The Ministry offers a cheap loan and all say YES

In December 1927 the R.D.C. received a circular letter from the Ministry of Health offering assistance to Local Authorities towards execution of approved schemes on condition that 50% of the labour is drawn from Depressed Areas. (A depressed area: was one needing exceptional aid in the post War slump.) The R.D.C. felt that the sewerage scheme would qualify for this assistance which would increase the rates by 4 ½ d in the £ for the first 15 years of the loan and by 6d in the £ for the next, and final 15 years. The Parish Council put the proposition to a Parish meeting on January 10th, 1928 when a motion in favour was passed by 198 to 2.

Plans to extend the sewerage scheme to South Tawton, Zeal Head and Shelly were completed in

July 1930. This restored the scheme to that put forward in the summer of 1924 and closed the 40 year discussion period. The Council minutes say no more on the subject, but many of the older residents in South Zeal will remember the installation of the Sewerage system with its attendant disruption and ultimate benefits.

/58/ CHAPTER 13 MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

At the beginning of this record (on page 19) the functions of Parish Councils as at 1894 are listed. Over and above those functions the Council took on many activities at the request of Parishioners and in later years at the request of the Local Government board and its successor the Ministry of Health. It is not possible to list every activity undertaken but the following were important when the role of the Council as a whole is considered.

Ramsley Mine

From 1896 right up to 1944 and after the Council was assiduous in its effort to make the mine shafts safe for both children and livestock. Nearly every year the Clerk is asked to write, first to the mine owners and later to the Lord of the Manor (G. D. Fursdon) and to the District and County Council, asking for the fencing around the shafts to be installed, renewed or strengthened. Vandalism is often reported by the Council; in this case 'vandalism' probably included adventurous small boys, and girls, breaking into the mine shafts to explore!

Beating the Bounds

In 1896 there is an account of the beating of the bounds of South Tawton Commons, and throughout the record the beating of the bounds is recorded. Sometimes the walk was done by a large number of parishioners and a suitable 'picnic' held at Taw Marsh; on other occasions weather, or maybe apathy, limited the number of walkers to a mere handful.

Beating the bounds was not a mere ritual, observations on activities on the boundary are recorded as are regular disputes with the Duchy of Cornwall as to the exact route of the boundary and the commoners' rights on the Moor. The latter are guarded jealously in the first fifty years of the Council and at times led to very heated debate. Infringements were judged on their merits; in some cases tolerated but in others treated severely as when a building erected by Mr Coombe of Mill Farm, near Week Gate, impinged on common land and the Council insisted on its demolition.

Celebration of State Occasions

At Queen Victoria's and George 5th's Jubilees [and] at the Coronations of Edward 7th and George 5th, and at the end of the Great War, the Parish /59/ council set up committees to organise Parish celebrations: a parish tea, sports for children and adults, a dance or a concert to be held in the Schoolroom or, later, in the Victory Hall.

Postal arrangements

The installation of letter boxes at Zeal Head, Week Gate and at other points in the parish were the result of Council requests. The need for a Post Office at Whiddon Down, and the opening hours and need for a telegraph officer and other facilities at the S Zeal Post Office were pressed.

Mid Devon Light Railway

In 1898, and again at intervals until around 1922, the Council supported a campaign for an extension of the railway from Moreton Hampstead to Okehampton. A policy all supported but no one would pay for!

The Victory Hall

The Parish Council were empowered by the 1894 Act to acquire land and to build a Village Hall. After the Great War there was a general feeling of need for such a Hall and at a Parish meeting a committee was set up to forward the project. The account of the building and opening of the hall has been printed elsewhere. The Parish council were from the start Trustees for the Hall and have always been represented on its Management Committee. The activities of this committee are however another story for another place.

Okehampton Hospital

Okehampton Memorial Hospital was built in 1925/26 and the Parish, by virtue of having contributed over £100 to the building fund and undertaking to provide £10 each year towards maintenance, became a member of the board of Trustees and appointed a representative to the board each year.

Subsidised Housing, not wanted

The Parish Council involvement in council provided housing first occurred after the passing of the Town Planning Bill of 1909. In response to an enquiry from the District Council the Parish felt there was no need for any additional cottages "at present".

/60/ Post-war housing 1919 version, wanted

The question of Council Housing was raised again in 1919 when the R.D.C. raised the question of the "*New Housing Scheme for the working Class*". On this occasion the council, of largely newly elected councillors, agreed that houses were needed and suggested 10, recommending the following locations: four at Firestone Ley, four in South Tawton village and two at Langdown. The R.D.C. reply to this proposal is not recorded, but in a later minute the rent of Council Houses in South Tawton is discussed. Presumably the Firestone Ley and the Landown suggestions were rejected in favour of houses in South Tawton.

The rents are too high

The Council was concerned that the rents should not exceed 5/- and 6/6d per week since wages were falling and "*if the rents are any higher the working man will not be able to afford them.*"

Selecting the tenants

The Parish Council selected the tenants for the new houses from the list submitted by the R.D.C. This practice continued as the number of houses increased but every now and then the Parish Council complained because they were not consulted before some tenancy was allocated by the R.D.C. There was however little apparent friction over house allocation, though the Parish Council fought on several occasions to keep rents down.

Post-war Housing 1945 version

By 1943 plans for rehabilitation after the war were being discussed and the R.D.C. query on requirements was answered by asking for 20 houses in South Tawton, 4 at Whiddon Down and 4 at Langdown. The R.D.C. responded to this request by saying that 8 houses would be erected in the Parish, 4 to be at Whiddon Down and asking the council to recommend sites. There was no recorded grumble at this more modest proposal, and sites at South Tawton and Whiddon Down were suggested.

Thatch and Fire risks, a long standing problem

House fires were always a serious hazard in South Zeal and South Tawton. Thatched roofs and open fires inevitably led to trouble so through the century the amount of thatch in the village has declined /61/ dramatically. Fear of fire was evident, on one occasion Mr Freeman, living at Hillside, wrote to the R.D.C. to protest at Mrs Holman being allowed to have a bakery in amongst so many thatched cottages.

There have of course been several notable house fires in the villages, one mentioned specifically, is that of Mr Hooper's cottage in Ramsley, which resulted in a total loss of his possessions. When there was a surplus of funds after the celebration of King Edward VII's coronation, the Council voted to give the unspent money to Mr Hooper to help him re-establish himself.

A shared Fire Brigade

It is not unexpected that once water mains had been installed the Parish Council set about installing Fire Hydrant and storing adequate lengths of hose. At this time (1913) there were discussions with Okehampton Borough about the use of their Fire Engine but, as no agreement to pay for its services could be negotiated between the Insurance companies and the Parish Council, the proposal was abandoned.

In 1926 the question of sharing the expense of a fire engine with Okehampton rose again and, on this occasion, the more positive Parish council were favourable to the proposal which Okehampton estimated would cost £250 per annum, including depreciation on the Fire Engine which would cost £1,000 to purchase.

Wartime

The 1939-45 war, unlike the war of 1914-1918, greatly altered the character of the Parish Council's activity. Parish elections were suspended for the period, vacancies on the Council were filled by nomination from the various village bodies.

The Council inevitably became an agent for passing on government advice and schemes. They were instrumental in starting a Pig Club to use waste food, in promoting charitable appeals for a great variety of subjects from Red Cross and War Savings to Aid for China. Air Raid ~Precautions and fire fighting arrangements occupied a great deal of Council time. But as recorded earlier, post-war housing was considered and, in what was rather an atypical less parochial move, the Parish Council subscribed to the National Council of Social Services, Miss Counter and Mr Abbot were appointed to represent the Parish Council on the Social Service local committee.

/62/

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks the many of the older South Zeal residents who have answered questions about the past. Particular thanks are due to Mrs Vera Knapman who, over the years, has given the author a valuable insight into the life in the village in the first half of this century.

The Devon Record Office and the West Country Studies library have of course been of particular help and their patience in dealing with their 'client' has been remarkable!

Special thanks are due to Barbara Shaw who made many helpful comments during the gestation of the manuscript and to Philip Shaw and Roger Yeates who read the document, attempted to improve the erratic punctuation, and, above all, made constructive suggestions on the content and clarity of the text.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Eden Sir Frederick Morton "The State of the Poor, an History of the Labouring Classes in England". London 1797.
- (2) Richard Dunning, of East Week, Ms accounts. D.R.O. 785M/E1.
- (3) Census data 1851. West Country Studies Library, Exeter.

- (4) Exeter Flying Post June 1829.
- (5) Trade Directories for period 1857-1900. West Country Studies Library.
- (6) Western Morning News, 5th December 1894. Plymouth Central Library Local Studies.
- (7) Minutes of the South Tawton Ploughing Association, Mrs Jean Waddington, Brook Cottage, South Zeal.
- (8) Margaret Tucker, South Zeal. Personal communication.

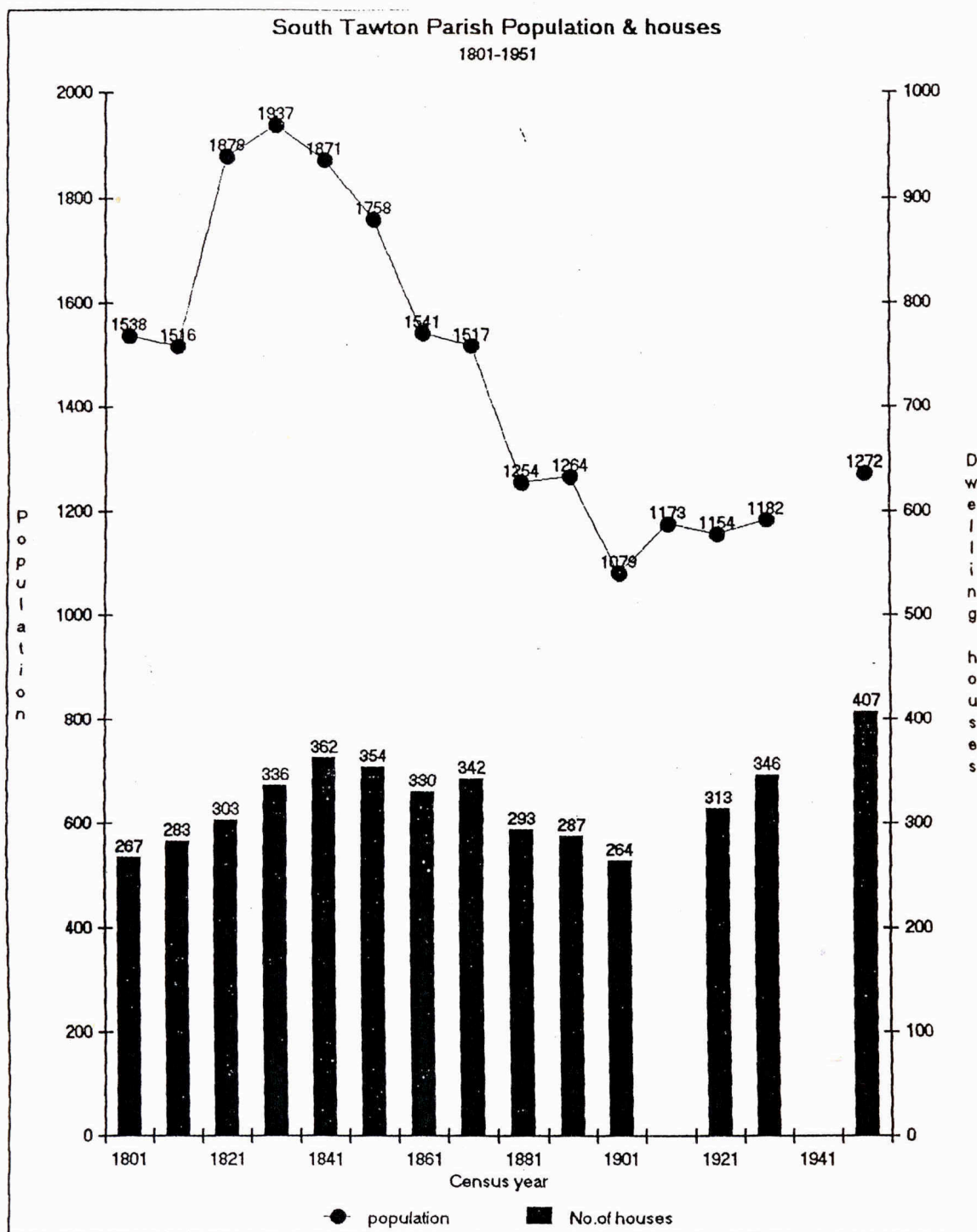
/63/

SOUTH TAWTON PARISH COUNCIL
THE FIRST 50 YEARS
1895-1944

APPENDICES

| | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Appendix A | Parish Population 1841-1951 | page 1 |
| Appendix B | Parish occupations 1841 and 1891 | page 2 |
| Appendix C | Parish Councillors 1894-1944 | page 3 |

Appendix A



Appendix B
South Tawton Paris 1841 and 1891
Population and occupations
(DATA DERIVED FROM CENSUS RETURNS)

Table 1 Occupations in 1841

| | Occupation | women | men | total |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Agriculture | | | | |
| | Farmer | | 60 | 60 |
| | Part Time Farmer | | 6 | 6 |
| | Farmer's Son | | 24 | 24 |
| | Agricultural Labourer | 10 | 233 | 243 |
| | Gardener | | 3 | 3 |
| | Farm Apprentice | | 36 | 36 |
| | Total | 10 | 359 | 369 |
| Mining & Quarrymen | | | | |
| | Lime Quarries | | 32 | 32 |
| | Road Maker | | 10 | 10 |
| | Total | | 42 | 42 |
| Woollen Industry | | | | |
| | Serge Weaver | 6 | | 6 |
| | Woollen Weaver | 24? | | 18? |
| | Wool Comber | | 7 | 7 |
| | Wool Spinner | 5 | | 5 |
| | Woollen Factory | 32 | | 32 |
| | Total | 67? | 7 | 68? |
| Domestic Work | | | | |
| | Washerwoman | 1 | | 1 |
| | Domestic Servant | 52 | | 52 |
| | Apprentices | 16 | | 16 |
| | Total | 67 | | 67 |
| Building | | | | |
| | Masons | | 16 | 16 |
| | Carpenters | | 13 | 13 |
| | Joiner | | 1 | 1 |
| | Thatchers | | 4 | 4 |
| | Apprentices | | 3 | 3 |
| | Total | 0 | 37 | 37 |
| Professions | | | | |
| | School Teachers | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Governess | 1 | | 1 |
| | Clergyman | | 1 | 1 |
| | Total | 2 | 2 | 4 |

| | Occupation | women | men | total |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Clothing | Boot and Shoemaker | | 18 | 18 |
| | Tailer | | 12 | 12 |
| | Dressmaker | 2 | | 2 |
| | Milliner | 4 | | 4 |
| | Seamstress | 1 | | 1 |
| | Glove Maker | 1 | | 1 |
| | Apprentices | | 5 | 5 |
| | Total | 8 | 35 | 43 |
| Food and Drink | Butcher | | 4 | 4 |
| | Baker | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| | Grocer | | 3 | 3 |
| | Tea Dealer | | 1 | 1 |
| | Fishmonger | | 2 | 2 |
| | Inkeeper/Publican | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| | Total | 7 | 16 | 23 |
| Others | Blacksmith | | 9 | 9 |
| | Tinsmith and Glazier | | 1 | 1 |
| | Miller | | 6 | 6 |
| | Wheelwright | | 2 | 2 |
| | Cooper | | 1 | 1 |
| | Cordwainer | | 1 | 1 |
| | Harness Maker | | 1 | 1 |
| | Basket Makers | | 2 | 2 |
| | Chimney Sweep | | 1 | 1 |
| | Tallow Chandler | | 1 | 1 |
| | Rope Spinners | | 3 | 3 |
| | Apprentices | | 12? | 11? |
| | Total | 2? | 31? | 33? |
| | Total employed | 161 | 526 | 681 |
| Unwaged etc | Army Pensioner | | 2 | 2 |
| | Independent | 22 | 12 | 34 |
| | Married Women | 287 | | 287 |
| | Total | 309 | 14 | 323 |

Table 2 Population in 1841

| | women | men | total |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Children under 13 | 305 | 328 | 633 |
| Adults 13 to 75 y.o. | 594 | 562 | 1156 |
| Adults 75 and over | 35 | 27 | 62 |
| Total | 934 | 917 | 1851 |

Table 4 Occupations and status of women 1841

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Wives | 287 |
| Wives at work | 5 |
| Single at work | 119 |
| Other single | 82 |
| Widows at work | 23 |
| Widows not at work | 18 |

1891

Table 5 Occupations in 1891

| | Occupation | women | men | total |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Agriculture | Agricultural Labourer | | 106 | 106 |
| | Gardener | | 2 | 2 |
| | Farmer's Son | | 35 | 35 |
| | Farmers | 2 | 49 | 51 |
| | Part Time Farmers | | 12 | 12 |
| | Total | 2 | 204 | 206 |
| Mining & Quarrying | Copper miners | | 12 | 12 |
| | Mine Agents | | 3 | 3 |
| | Tin miners | | 4 | 4 |
| | Lime Quarries | | 12 | 12 |
| | Roadstone Breaker | | 2 | 2 |
| | Road Contractor | | 1 | 1 |
| | Total | | 34 | 34 |
| Woollen Industry | no entries | | | |
| Building | Masons | | 20 | 20 |
| | Granite masons | | 5 | 5 |
| | Carpenters | | 15 | 15 |
| | Thatcher | | 3 | 3 |
| | Total | | 43 | 43 |
| Domestic | Washerwoman | 2 | | 2 |
| | Laundress | 4 | | 4 |
| | Charwoman | 3 | | 3 |
| | Domestic Servant | 24 | | 24 |
| | Child's Maid | 1 | | 1 |
| | Cook | 2 | | 2 |
| | Housekeeper | 3 | | 3 |
| | Total | 39 | | 39 |
| Clothing | Boot and Shoemaker | | 4 | 4 |
| | Tailor | | 6 | 6 |
| | Draper | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Dressmaker | 9 | | 9 |
| | Total | 10 | 11 | 21 |

| | Occupation | women | men | total |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Food and Drink | Baker | | 9 | 9 |
| | Butcher | | 1 | 1 |
| | Grocer | | 7 | 7 |
| | Poultry Dealer | | 9 | 9 |
| | Fish Hawker | | 2 | 2 |
| | Licensed Victualler | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| | Total | 1 | 31 | 32 |
| Professional | School Teacher | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| | Clergyman | | 1 | 1 |
| | Governess | 1 | | 1 |
| | Total | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Schoolchildren, Students | Scholars | 96 | 83 | 179 |
| | Student | | 1 | 1 |
| | Total | 96 | 84 | 180 |
| Others | Blacksmith | | 3 | 3 |
| | Wheelwright | | 4 | 4 |
| | Miller | | 4 | 4 |
| | Licensed Hawker | | 1 | 1 |
| | Postman | | 2 | 2 |
| Independent | Retired | | 6 | 6 |

Table 6 Occupations and status of women 1891

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|-----|
| Single over 12 | not at work | 65 |
| | at work | 62 |
| Wives | at work | 3 |
| | others | 213 |
| Widows | at work | 15 |
| | others | 35 |

LIST OF PARISH COUNCILLORS 1894–1944

| Name | Occupation | Address | Years served |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| J Sampson, Clerk | Farmer | Sessland | 1894–1912 |
| G D Cann, Chairman | Solicitor & Landowner | Exeter | 1894–1921 |
| D S Warne | Mining Agent | Owlsfoot | 1894–1897 1906–1919 |
| John Powlesland | Farmer | Coursebeer | 1894–1910 |
| Geo. Grendon | Farmer | Lovaton | 1894–1913 |
| John Endacott | Farmer | East Week | 1894–1909 |
| W G Finch | Blacksmith | Taw Green | 1894–1897 |
| John Lethbridge Jnr | Farmer | Poltimore | 1894–1897 |
| Wm. Cann | Agricultural Labourer | South Tawton | 1894–1910 1911–1913 |
| W C Brely | Retired Miller | South Zeal | 1894–1919 |
| Samuel Sampson | Farmer | Blackstreet | 1894–1904 |
| Joseph Ponsford | Farmer | Taw Green | 1894–1910 |
| Wm. Vizard | Farmer | Great Cocktree | 1896–1900 |
| Edwin Vigers | Tailor | South Zeal | 1897–? |
| P Travail | Farmer | Oxenham | 1898–1907 |
| W A Knapman | Farmer | Redlake | 1902–1905 |
| R Sampson | Farmer | Addiscott | 1905–1922 |
| Wm Endacott | Farmer | East Week | 1910–1919 |
| R Page | Farmer | Alison | 1911–1913 |
| J E Dyer | Farmer | Wickington | 1911–1915 |
| James Yeo, Clerk | Clerk | Sticklepath | 1912–1928 |
| Rev T F Boulton | Vicar | South Tawton | 1913–1916 |
| Albany Finch | Foundry & Landowner | Sticklepath | 1913–1945 |
| W G Wedlake | Farmer | South Zeal | 1913– |
| Chas. White | Farmer | Barton Farm SZ | 1913–1945 |
| Jno. Tucker, Chairman | Farmer | Livaton | 1915–1922 |
| Rev E F Ball | Vicar | South Tawton | 1916–1922 |
| James Cooper | Quarry Labourer | South Tawton | 1919–1922 |
| J P Hocking | Farmer | Oxenham | 1919–1931 |
| James White | Miller | South Tawton | 1919–1922 |
| W J Tucker | Farmer | Quarry Farm | 1919–1928 |
| Hubert Kelly | ? | South Zeal | 1919–1922 |
| Thos. Hendy | Farm Bailiff | Oxenham | 1919–1922 |
| Edwin Stanbury | Farmer | North Wyke | 1922–1925 |
| George Holman | Farmer & Dealer | Yellands SZ | 1922–1931 |
| Wm. Osborne | Granite Mason | Prospect SZ | 1922–1925 |
| John Darch | Farmer | Lovaton | 1922–1937 |
| H W Perryman | Farmer | Sessland | 1922–1925 |

| Name | Occupation | Address | Years served |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Thos. Wright | Shopkeeper | South Zeal | 1925–1934 |
| Ernest White | Farmer | South Zeal | 1925–1945 |
| T Clements, Clerk | Organist | South Zeal | 1928–1937 |
| Albert Wonnacott | Butcher | South Zeal | 1925–1937 |
| F R Buckingham, Chair | Landowner | Dishcombe | 1928–1940 |
| James Abbot | Farmer & Builder | Newberry's | 1925–1945 |
| Ray Wilmington | Farmer | Blackhall | 1928–1934 |
| A E Endacott, Chair | Farmer | Gooseford | 1928–1940 |
| E Blanche Wonnacott née Counter | Schoolteacher | South Zeal | 1934 |
| William Sampson | Farmer | Addiscott | 1934–1937 |
| Harold Worth | Monumental Mason | South Tawton | 1937–1940 |
| A A H Elliot | Smallholder | Poltimore | 1937–1940 |
| W J Knapman | ? | South Zeal | 1937–1940 |
| Isaac Darch, co-opted | Farmer | Quarry Farm | 1940 |
| T Wright, co-opted | Farmer | South Zeal | 1940 |

There are some uncertainties in this list. For example E. Vigers is recorded as being a Councillor continuously from 1894 to 1945. This is probably a father and son succession, the father being a Tailor and Draper living in Shelly, the son a farmer living at one time at Dibbe House. The dates of any change are not clear.