

*Dr. Thomas Young.  
With the Author's Compliments.*

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A Concise  
**HISTORY**  
of **BIDEFORD**

By **INKERMAN ROGERS, F.G.S.**





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#### QUEEN ELIZABETH

In the dress in which she went to return thanks for the defeat  
of the Spanish Armada, 1588

## A Concise

# History of Bideford

In Chronological Order

A.D.

878

**D**URING the winter of this year Hingwar and Hubba, coming out of South Wales with their Danish followers, landed at Appledore from 23 ships and laid siege to Kenwith Castle situated a little over a mile N. West of Bideford. Oddune the Ealdorman of Devon alarmed at this new invasion fled with his followers to the Castle of Kenwith. He made a sudden sally on the Danes and defeated them. The Danes made a stand at Bloody Corner, Northam, where Hubba was slain and the "Raven" standard captured. He was buried on the shore near his ships.<sup>1</sup> The Danish entrenchments can still be seen near Kenwith. The historian Asser writing in 909 A.D. gives an account of this event.

In the year 1906 excavations were made at Bloody Corner for laying down gas mains. The man who carried out the work informs me that human remains were discovered in a trench in the middle of the road.

894

A fortress in the neighbourhood was besieged by the Danes who disembarked from 40 ships.

997

The Danes again landed in the neighbourhood and wrought much evil by burning and slaying, and having committed great spoil sailed away to the south coast and entering the Tamar completed the devastation of the two counties of Devon and Cornwall.

1025

King Canute bestowed his daughter Gytha (who afterwards held the Manor of Bideford) on Godwin.

1050

A number of Gilds were established in Devon at this time. The Gild managed everything concerning the life of a town, and probably had the power of electing a Provost or Mayor. The king gave them this privilege: "that any villen who had been of the Gild, should be thenceforth regarded as free." In a small volume which the writer saw in the Library at the British Museum, names of Saxons are given from various parishes in the county and "From Bideford Gildship: Edwine, Wulfrie, and Saewine."<sup>2</sup>

1068

Eighteen Manors, including the Manor of Bideford, belonged to one Brictric, who succeeded his father Algar, a Saxon, noble

1. Bede, Saxon Chronicle.

2. A Collection of English Charters. Brit. Museum.



as Earl of Gloucester. The Chronicle of Tewkesbury tells how Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, obtained all Brictric's lands.

- 1081 According to Domesday Book the population of Bideford numbered 52: "14 serfs and 30 villani and 8 bordarii. There are 10 acres of meadow and 20 acres of pasture and 150 acres of wood." Villeins belonged to the vill or village. They had no rights except that the lord might not kill or maim them. A villein who had lived a twelvemonth in a borough was regarded as free. Below the villein proper were the smaller tenants called bordarii, or cottagers, who worked in the open fields. Serfs were practically slaves. Domesday Book tells of the large amount of dense forest and uncultivated lands that existed at the end of the eleventh century.
- 1083 Matilda having died the Manor of Bideford reverted to the Crown, and in conjunction with Kilkhampton was bestowed by the Conqueror on Richard Grandivilla or de Granville, a Norman knight, as a reward for his services.
- 1154 Henry II. The Hundred Rolls No. 5. Brit. Museum, record  
-89 that "The King has wreck of sea in the vill of Bideford." (Pipe Rolls).
- 1202 A Charter was granted to Bideford by Sir Richard Grenville: "Let all men that are present and to come, know, that I Richard the son of Richard of Grenville, have granted and confirmed, for me and my heirs forever, the writing of Richard of Grenville, my grandfather, made to the burgesses of Bideford, etc."
- 1232 There is evidence that a Saxon and smaller Church was in existence in Bideford about this time. The writer has taken the following entry from the "Calendar of State Papers," Brit. Museum. "Henry de Tracy, Jordan (son of Oliver), Hugh Peverel, and William de Bruer, are appointed Justices of Assize of the presentation of the Church of Bideford to be taken at Exeter on the morrow of the close of Easter (i.e. the Monday week after Easter Day) between Richard de Greynvill, petitioner and the Abbot of Tewkesbury deforciant—Witness the King (Henry III.) at Kidderminster, 2nd day of June, 1232."
- 1259 About this time the Parish Church was built; dedicated to St. Mary by Bishop Bronscombe.
- 1259 Richard de Cnolle was the first Provost of Bideford. The names of later provosts have been taken from the "Calendar of State Papers" in the Library, Brit. Museum. Walter Cnolle, 1347; Richard Saunders, 1361; Richard Rowe, 1417; Henry Bolke, 1438; John Holcombe, 1461; and Roger Portman, 1505.

- 1261 The first Rector of Bideford recorded in the Episcopal Registers was Henry le Bratton, admitted April 26th. Patron Richard de Granville.
- 1272 A Market granted to Sir Richard de Greynville. A photograph copy of this Charter may be seen in the Free Library.  
"Know ye that we have granted and by this our Charter have confirmed to Richard de Greynville that he and his heirs in perpetuity may have a market each week at his Manor of Biddiford and an annual fair there, etc."
- 1297 "Protection to William Dunnyngg parson of the Church of Bideford."<sup>1</sup>
- 1304 William de Granville, younger brother of Sir Richard, became Archbishop of York.
- 1311 Bertin de Greynneville and his wife Amy obtained a license for the performance of Divine Service in Capella de Bydyford.<sup>2</sup>
- 1327 The Long Bridge of Bideford was built. A wooden structure of English oak may have been erected and reinforced with local stone. When we think of the rapid ebb and flow of the tide, of the combination of a high spring tide and the southeasterly gale, when we think of the enormous pressure, and particularly the great weight of heavy ice-flows brought down stream during the winter, it is most improbable that a bridge wholly built of wood could stand.
- 1376 "Theobald Greneville, tenant in Biddiford."<sup>3</sup>
- 1382 Roger Beaumont was admitted Rector of Bideford in Sept. this year. It was during his lifetime the Bishop Stafford 1396, granted an indulgence to all penitents who should assist "ad constructionem seu reparacionem longi pontus de Bydeford." Probably extensive repairs to the bridge had then become necessary; but fifty years later the structure appears to have deteriorated so much that it was found necessary to rebuild it entirely since Bishop Lacy promulgated two similar acts of grace in May 1437, and in June 1444: "ad novam constructionem, sustentationem, seu reparacionem pontis de Bydeford."
- 1400 During this period there were few or no enclosures, no sown  
to grass, little hay, and no other resources for feeding cattle particularly in winter. Robbers over-ran the country; and the disease of leprosy was very common among the people. During  
1500 the latter part of the 15th century several statutes were enacted with regard to the exportation of wool. It was found that sheep bore heavier fleeces when kept in enclosures. From

1. Calendar State Papers. Brit. Museum.  
2. The Great Roll of the Pipe. Brit. Mus.  
3. Inquisitions. Feudal Aids. Brit. Mus.



this time onward we may believe that the country was gradually divided by fences and hedges into fields as we see them at the present day.<sup>1</sup>

- 1428 An entry in the State Papers, "Inquisitions Relating to Feudal Aids," mention: "Johannes Taple, Robertus Taple, tenants in Instow."
- 1439 Indulgences were offered this year by Bishop Lacy in order to raise a fund for the maintenance of a causeway crossing the marsh between Bideford and Northam (Orchard Hill).
- 1513 Sir Thomas Granville, patron of the Church, died and was buried in the Granville vault. A monument was erected to his memory under an arch in the south side of the chancel.
- 1535 A license was issued in November this year to the wardens and keepers "to collect alms in any part of England for the repair and maintenance of Bideford's great and long bridge of 24 arches."<sup>2</sup>
- 1540 John Leland was appointed "kings antiquary" by Henry VIII. with power to travel over the kingdom to search for records, arranging a collection of priceless value. He mentions the river Torridge and Bridge which he terms "a notable work, fairly walled in on each side;" and also describes "a praty quik (i.e. lively) streate of Smithes and other occupiers for ship crafte" East the Water.<sup>3</sup> The forges of the smiths were situated in Barnstaple Street near the shipyards.
- 1542 An ancestor of the famous Sir Richard Grenville lived in Bideford as an "Extract from letters patent granting the site of Buckland Abbey to Richard Greynfield" goes to prove.  
"Know ye that we, as well as in consideration of the good true and faithful service which our well beloved servant Richard Greynfeld of Bedyford in our said county of Devon, knight," etc.
- 1561 The Register Books of the Parish Church date from this time; they are in a fine state of preservation.
- 1568 An entry in the Exeter records of this date makes reference to the fact that ships of more than one hundred tons were built at Bideford. It is as follows:—  
"that one J.W. of the cite of Exeter, Merchante, hathe at these presents buylded and fynished within the haven of Bidefford one ship of the portage and burden of two hundredth fiftye tonnes." This shows that Bideford must have been one of the most important ship building ports in the west as the certificate for building such ships came

1. History of England.

2. Calendar of State Papers. Brit. Mus.

3. Leland. Itinerary and Collectanea. 1533. Brit. Mus.

from "the Lord Highe Admyral of England." In the year 1566 a vessel 500 tons burthen was built in the Port of Bideford.

- 1573 In December of this year, by the interest of Sir Richard Grenville, Bideford was honoured by Queen Elizabeth with a Charter of Incorporation. This Charter, and the Charter of James I. and Parchment of Pardon, Charles I., were rediscovered by the writer, all of which were framed by the Town Council and placed in the Town Hall where they may be seen.
- 1575 A Quay was in existence at this time for the Charter refers to a Quay Hall and that a keeper of the hall was appointed.
- 1577 The Borough Seal dates from this time.  
Sir Richard Grenville was knighted this year.
- 1584 Among the Plymouth municipal records in the "Black Book," under this date, is the following entry:—  
"Sir R. Grendefelde, Knighte, departed from Plymouth with vi. shippes and barkes for Wingane Dehoy wher he caried vi hundred men or therabowts." He discovered Carolina and Virginia. The entry is interesting, as it is generally supposed that Sir Richard's first voyage to America did not take place till the following year.
- 1585 A fleet of seven ships was fitted out under the command of Sir Richard Grenville, who sailed from Plymouth and arrived at Roanoke, an island off the coast of Carolina and founded a colony there. On his return voyage he overhauled and captured a Spanish treasure ship, the "Santa Maria" without guns from St. Domingo laden with a valuable cargo worth £50,000 (600,000 ducats).<sup>1</sup> This ship Grenville boarded (note the prodigious daring of Sir Richard) with a boat made of boards of a chest "which fell asunder and sunk at the ship's side as soon as ever he and his men were out of it." (Hakluyt). He brought back with him a Red Indian, the first to this country from North America, who was baptised in Bideford Church. He died the following year. The following entries have been taken from the Church Register:—  
"1588. Christnynge.  
Raleigh, a Wynganditoian baptised 27th day of March.  
1589 Buryinge.  
Rawly, a man of Wynganditoia on the day of Aprill-four."
- 1586 Sir Richard Grenville who was probably born at Stowe (1544) the Cornish seat of the family, was living in Bideford at this time, which a letter to the Admiralty proves.  
"Bedyforde this 27th of February, 1586. R. Greynvile." and later in a letter to his kinsman he subscribes:

1. Spanish State Papers. Elizabeth. Brit. Mus.



"At my howse in Bideford this 19th day of Maye, 1589." He lived at Place House situated on the north side of the Churchyard. Place House is mentioned in the Sessions Book as late as 1790. (See date 1670).

1588 In the spring of this year Sir Ried. Greynville prepared at Bideford another expedition to Virginia. A fleet of seven ships was fitted out "this fleete being now in reddinesse only staying for a faire wind to put to sea."<sup>1</sup> A special letter from the Privy Council of Elizabeth to Sir Richard commanded him to "forbeare to go his intended voyage and to be in redynes to join the Navye at Plymouth." Five of the seven ships sailed over the bar "to join the Lord Admyrall or to the Fleete with Sir Francys Drake." An extract from a letter to Sir Francis Drake, dated from Plymouth, May 12th 1588, states that:

"Here are arrived all the ships from Bristol, and all the West parts with Sir Richard Greynville."<sup>2</sup>

On the Armada there were 934 iron guns<sup>3</sup> Eight of them found their way to Bideford, and now form an unique and priceless battery in the Victoria Park. It is probable that the guns came from the Spanish galleon "Don Pedro el Mayor," of 581 tons, 29 iron guns, wrecked on the south coast of Devon. The ship was plundered and all the guns were removed secretly.<sup>4</sup> Capt. Enthoven in his Report states: "it is more than probable that in these guns Bideford possesses ordnance captured from the Armada." (Account by the Writer. Bideford Gazette. July 1928).

Up to a comparatively recent date guns were enormously heavy, considering their small power. Thus in 1588 the artillery train consisted of demi-cannons, culverins, demi-culverins, sakers, minions, and falcons. At that period scarcely any attention was paid by makers to mathematical and mechanical knowledge. If we consider the various lengths and weights that have been given to pieces of artillery at different times by all nations, it will appear that no principle is so uncertain and unsettled as that upon which the artillery artificers have grounded their constructions. For in Queen Elizabeth's time they made some 18-pounders 24 feet long, and in other cases some 6-pounders weighed but 180lbs., and 25-pounders of 700lbs.; and about the same time the Spaniards cast some others not much heavier.<sup>5</sup>

1588 September 14. "The Quecn to Sir Richard Greynville: For the stay of all shipping on the North Coast of Devon and Cornwall, as some of the Spanish ships had been driven to sundry



SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE (1544-1591)

"The Spaniards' Terror"

1. Hakluyt. Voyages of Discovery of America. 1589.  
2. State Papers. Spanish Armada. Navy Record Soc.  
3. Spanish State Papers. Brit. Mus.  
4. State Papers. Privy Council. Elizabeth.  
5. Lord Arclibald Campbell. "Armada Cannon." 1899.



parts on the West Coast of Ireland. To receive further directions from Sir Walter Raleigh."<sup>1</sup>

- 1588 September 18th. "A letter to the Lord Treasurer; whereas James Quarrells, Surveieur of the Victualls of her Majesties Navie, hath by direccion of there Lordships made provision of victuell of 370 men for xiiij daies to serve in three of her Majesties shippes named the "Forsighte," the "Aide" and the "Tiger," under the conduccion of Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Richard Greenfeild, knightes; the charge whereof, by the accompte of the saide James Quarrells, ariseth to cxxixl. xs."<sup>2</sup> From the foregoing extract it is seen that Sir Walter and his cousin Sir Richard were prepared to attack the Spanish galleons should they again attempt to make their way up the English Channel.

- 1591 Sir Richard Grenville was now commander of the "Revenge" as Vice-Admiral of England. He achieved a most glorious action off the Azores, against 53 ships of the Spanish Navy, for which his name will ever be immortalised, and in which he met a truly heroic death.

"He fought such a fight in a day and a night  
as may never be fought again."

The following extract was taken by the writer from the "Spanish State Papers. Elizabeth":—

"They (the English) are much grieved at the loss of the Queen's (Elizabeth) galleon, called the 'Revenge.' They say she was the best ship the Queen had, and the one on which she relied most."

- 1600 At this time plagues were caused by the "nastiness and dirt, and slovenly habits of the people." "The floors," says a writer of the period, "are commonly of clay strewed with rushes, under which lies undisturbed an ancient collection of beer, grease, fragments, bones, spittle, excrement of dogs and cats. There scarcely was a chimney to the poorer houses; and the smoke sought its way out at the roof, or door, or windows: the houses were of stout watling plastered with clay: and the people slept on straw pallets, and had a good round log under their head for a pillow."<sup>3</sup>

- 1610 The former Charter not being explicit in some particulars, and the Borough having increased in wealth and importance, a new Charter was granted by King James I., which, after confirming the liberties granted by Queen Elizabeth, added the following: The right to have a town seal, to have seven aldermen instead of five, ten burgesses instead of seven, a power to the common council to make bye-laws, etc.

1. State Papers. Privy Council. Elizabeth.

2. Loughton's. Spanish Armada."

3. History of England.

- 1618 A complaint was made against the Warden of the Bridge that he "did retaine a sum of money in his hands, and refused to pay any part thereof towards the repaying, enlarging, and building of the Key of Bydeford, adjoining to the Long Bridge."

- 1623 Lady Mary Grenville, wife of the famous Sir Richard, died, and was buried in the family vault in the Church.

- 1638 The Bridge underwent thorough repair, and the walls were raised.

- 1642-3 When "the liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions of Parliament," the birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England, were threatened by King Charles I., the people in general favoured the cause of the Parliament whose strength lay in the larger and smaller towns. The traders and manufacturers and a very large proportion of the yeomen, then so numerous in England, held with the Parliament. Puritanism was especially a religion of the middle class and of the towns. Bideford, a stronghold of Puritanism, and Barnstaple, took an early and active part against the King. A Fort, provided with eight cannon, was erected in April, 1643, by the Parliamentary forces, under the command of Captain (afterwards Major-General) Chudleigh. It was called after his name and it still exists. A fort was also erected on the west side of the town. General Chudleigh was killed during the siege of Dartmouth and was buried in St. Saviour's Church. It was during the early days of disorder that the party names of Cavalier and Roundhead, afterwards so famous, first became current.

- 1643 August. Bideford surrendered to the Royalists. "The Fort at Appledore, which commanded the river to Barnstaple and Bideford being delivered to Col. Digby, within two or three days after his victory, those two towns shortly after submitted to His Majesty, upon promise of pardon and such other articles as were of course; which Col. Digby saw precisely observed, as far as concerned the towns in point of plunder or violence towards the inhabitants."<sup>1</sup> The following is a copy of a letter written 1645 by Lord Goring the Royalist commander:—

"From Bideford. Lord Goring to Lord Culpepper with complaints of want of pay for the men and officers; and the frequent desertions from the army. The differences between Sir Richard Grenville and Sir John Berkeley increase daily, and if not reconciled all will go to wreck." Sir Richard Grenville, the opposite to Sir Beville—who was loved by everybody—was cantankerous, self-willed and crothety, and resolved to take no orders from anybody.<sup>2</sup>

- 1646 February. "His Excellency (Sir Thomas Fairfax) took Torrington and routed the Royalist Army, took 200 horse and 400 prisoners."

1. Thomason Civil War Tracts. 1643. Brit. Mus.

2. Markham. "Life of the Great Fairfax." Brit. Mus.





COLONEL DIGBY  
Royalist Commander who captured the town,  
August 1643



SIR THOMAS FAIRFAX  
General of the Parliament's Forces which occupied the  
town, February 1646

Bideford is occupied by the Parliamentary forces.<sup>1</sup>

The Plague raged here. At its commencement the Mayor left the town, and John Strange, four times Mayor, took the difficult office on himself, but died while attending to the sick. A monument was erected to his memory in the Parish Church. It is interesting to record that Mr. W. D. K. Wickham, merchant, of this town, is a descendant of John Strange on the maternal side. Almshouses in Meddon Street founded by John Strange as a refuge for 7 poor families.

- 1649 The Rev. A. Gifford was ejected quietly from the Rectory, and his living sequestrated, and the Rev. W. Bartlet, a Curate Lecturer, was placed there instead; though at the time he was in London, and therefore had nothing to do with the actual turning of Mr. Gifford out of the parsonage.<sup>2</sup>

- 1651-7 Impressing men for the Naval Service has always been since the 14th century. The pressgang usually proceeded to such houses in seaport towns, as were supposed to be the resort of the seafaring population, laid violent hands on all eligible men, and conveyed them forcibly to the ships of war in the harbour. Many terrible fights took place between the pressgangs and their victims. The pressgang was very busy in Bideford as the extracts taken from the "Calendar of State Papers" prove.

"John Tucker (Officer) at Barnstaple, with money for all purposes for 1,500 impressed to sail from Bideford to Ireland."

"Orders for impressing mariners about Bideford and Appledore where we are assured there are many seamen, but the seamen arm themselves with clubs and staves, and say if we take them, it is at our peril."

"Capt. Hatsell has been to Bideford and Barnstaple but could only get 24 seamen, they having fled out of reach of the constables. Capt. Cowes has done his best to get men for the fleet."<sup>3</sup>

- 1657 The Grammar School adjoining the Bridge Buildings was rebuilt this year, but undoubtedly it was established in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth.

- 1658 For the second time "The Solemn League and Covenant was signed in Bideford Church by William Bartlet (Pastor), Daniel Slade (Ruling Elder), Thomas Beale (Deacon) and fifty others. The Covenant was "a renunciation of popery and prelacy, and a mutual bond," by which the subscribers engaged upon oath 'to oppose all religious innovations, and to assist each other in defending their liberties'."

1. Thomason Civil War Tracts. British Museum.

2. Lansdowne MSS. Brit. Mus.

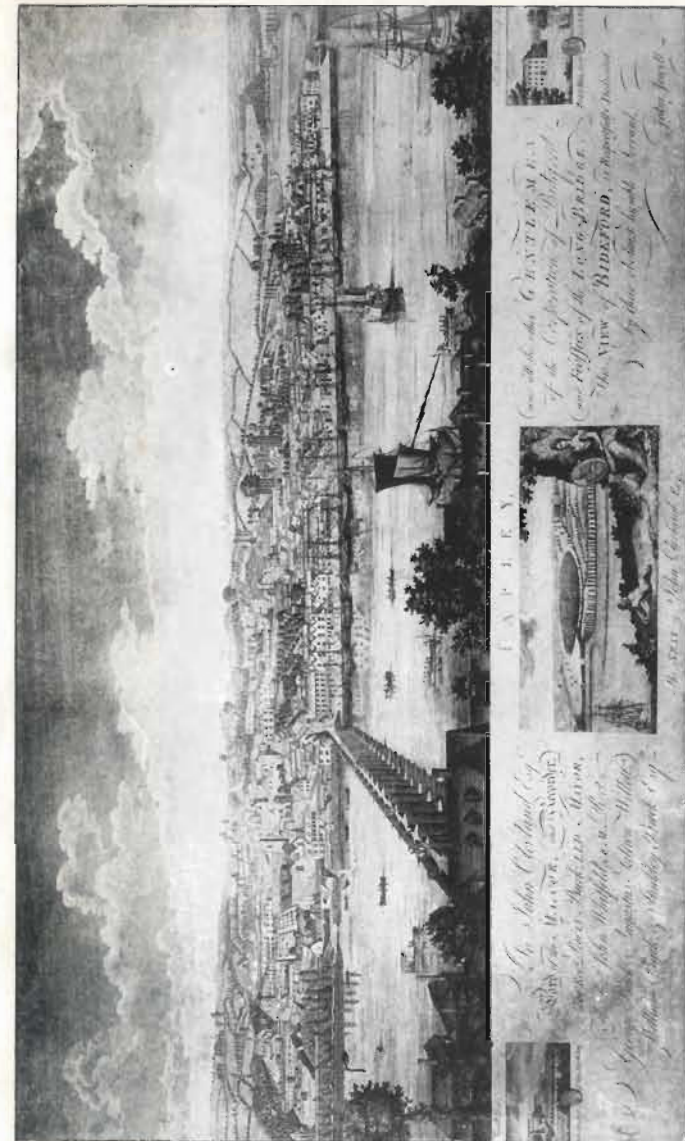
3. Calendar of State Papers. Domestic Series. Brit. Mus.

4. George Warren. "Independent Church." Bideford.



- 1660 Capital (leading) Burgesses to the number of 514, took the oath of Supremacy and Allegiance to King Charles II., and also all the inhabitants above the age of eighteen years. The Rev. A. Gifford was reinstated in the living, and the Rev. William Bartlet was ejected. Mr. Bartlet was Congregational in his judgment, and was eminent for his humility and sincerity; and being a powerful preacher his ministry was attended with remarkable success. He became the founder of the Independent Meeting in the town. When Mr. Gifford came to lie on his dying bed, he was desirous to see and speak with Mr. Bartlet but was discouraged and diverted by those that were about him who kept his desire so secret that Mr. Bartlet knew nothing of it until after his death.<sup>1</sup>
- 1661 Bideford had the honour of giving a baronial title to its lord. Sir John Granville, then created an English Peer for his services in the restoration of Charles II., by the titles of John, Lord Granville of Bideford and Kilkhampton, Viscount Granville of Lansdowne, and Earl of Bath.
- 1663 Almshouses—with gardens attached—were built by Capt. Henry Amory in Old Town (now Clovelly Road) for six widows of seamen.
- 1663 A new Quay was built by the Corporation this year. A description of it as it appeared at that time is as follows:—
- “The Key of Biddiford according to the commission returned into the Exchequer in Easter term 29. Charles II., measures from north to south from the head of the stone stairs on the north to south corner of Conduit Lane 428 feet or thereabouts; it also contains the slip and stairs in the middle of the key, and a slip adjoining to and beyond the south end of the limits of the said key, which measures 60 feet in length and 10 feet in breadth; the said key also containing in breadth at the south end thereof, being the head of the said slip, at the corner of Conduit Lane 28 feet; and at the south corner of High Street 30 feet, and at the north corner of High Street 31 feet, and at the north of the forge 36 feet, and at the south side of John Mark’s house 55 feet, and so the same breadth or thereabouts, continued to the north end of the said key.”
- [Tablets were suggested and placed by the Corporation at Conduit Lane, and also at the bottom of Cooper Street, to record the length of the above quay, the inscriptions being furnished by the writer.]
- 1670 Buttgardens—“The Earl of Bath purchased a house and garden in Maidenstreete for making the new streete or passage between Maidenstreete and Highstreete.” He also gave “a plott of

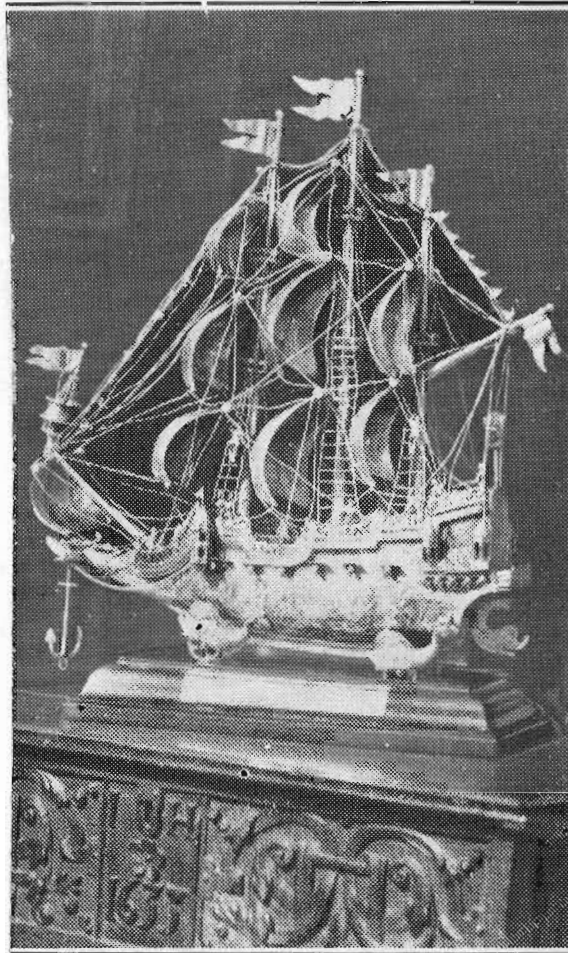
<sup>1</sup> Lansdowne MSS. Brit. Mus.



BIDEFORD FROM AN OLD PRINT.

1780





Model of an Elizabethan ship presented by Sir Basil Peto, M.P.  
(See year 1928)

the garden of the old Place House for enlarging the churchyard on the north side thereof."

- 1671 Two documents of this date belonging to the borough give a list of the streets of the town. They contain the following:—

"Highstreete, Alhallonstreete, Churchyard, Backs, Butt-garden (mostly gardens), Mayden streete (mostly fields and gardens), on the Kaye, Bullhill, Towerstreete, East the Bridge, Coldharbour, Nunnery, and Strand Kaye and Backs."

Old Town, then known as "Townsend Westward," was practically in the country. William Pyne, who owned land in that neighbourhood in the 16th century is remembered by a narrow road named Pynes Lane.

- 1675 "The Markett Bell from the old Markett place in Highstreete removed to the new Markett place in the Butt-garden."

"Tiplers, travellers on the Lord's Day, and drunkenness—punished," which means that they were put in the Stocks.

- 1676 In this year the extent and Limits of the Port of Bideford were settled as follows:—

"From a rock in the Parish of Northam called Whiplestone on the West side of the river of Bideford and from the Pill called Jewell's Pill in the parish of Instow near the new Quay on the East side of the river, and so on both sides of the River to the Long Bridge of Bideford." In 1848 a new Quay was built at Instow by Sir John Speccot.

- 1677 "The common Cryer or Bell man of this Towne had a pension of eight pound a yeare allowed to him for his niggthly walks to see that the houses of this Towne and the shipping at the Key might be better preserved from the dangers which might happen from fire."

In 1836 the Crier of the borough was furnished with a suit of livery similar to the livery worn by the London "Polier," and in 1852 a red collar was added to the Crier's livery.

- 1680 During this period Bideford reached the height of its prosperity, to its population having increased considerably. The old Pottery  
1700 which was still in existence in 1900, dates back to this period and much earlier.

- 1682 Three women of Bideford were executed at Exeter for witchcraft.

- 1685 Upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the French Protestants were driven out of their native country by the ferocious bigotry of the papist Louis XIV. and his cruel soldiery. A considerable number of Huguenots, with their Ministers, came to Bideford, and established several branches of trade here,



considerably enlarging the commerce of the town. They were engaged chiefly in silk and cotton manufacture.<sup>1</sup>

"Several Informations made against Michael Ogilby, Rector of this towne, concerning his abusing and striking Mr. Mayor." It is related of him that his character was not consistent with his profession.

"Henry Parsons (Independent) that preached att the late Conventicle att Grange was (for preaching) sent to the common gaol."

- 1685 Two Latin speeches were spoken at Bideford in the Grammar School this year, probably on St. George's Day in honour of the coronation of King James II., and a copy was handed to Richard Coffin as being present as High Sheriff of Devon on this occasion. The foregoing shows the efficiency of the School at this early period.—Portledge Papers.
- 1685 The town suffered dreadfully during the reigns of Charles II. and his brother James, from all the severe penalties and bitter persecutions so mercilessly inflicted on the Nonconformists, and it is not to be wondered at that on the landing of the Duke of Monmouth numbers flocked to his standard. The atrocities committed by the Royalist troops after the suppression of the uprising were remembered for many years in the West. Those who had joined Monmouth's standard from Bideford were condemned to death at the "Bloody Assizes," Exeter, by Judge Jeffreys "whose name became a proverb for blasphemy and brutality."<sup>2</sup> The captives were executed and their bodies were quartered and boiled in pitch, and hung in several parts of Bideford to the disgrace of humanity and to the great inconvenience of the inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> So disorderly and monstrous had been the conduct of the dragoons sent to Bideford in particular that in January of this year Sir John Granville, Earl of Bath, was specially commissioned to make inquiry into the same.
- 1687 The "Calendar of State Papers" for this year records that a considerable number of ships from Bideford traded to Newfoundland. In 1689 that "Don St. Jago dell Castillo arrived at Bideford in the ship 'St. Peter,' burthen 100 tuns, and prayed leave to procure seamen to navigate his ship."
- 1688 Colonial Buildings erected East the Water by John Davie, Merchant, who also built Heanton Court, and partly rebuilt Orleigh Court.
- 1691 "Transport of 300 horses and troopers from Biddiford into Ireland in three ships" to join the army under King William III.

1. R. L. Poole. History of the Huguenots.  
Dr. Taylor. Manual of Modern History.  
2. History of England.  
3. Rev. R. Granville. History of Bideford.

- in the campaign against the deposed papist James II. and his rebels who were utterly defeated at the Battle of the Boyne."<sup>1</sup>
- 1692 "A new street (Bridgeland Street) and Quay were made." The Quay was extended from the bottom of Cooper Street to Bridgeland Street, a distance of 280 feet. A Commission from the Court of Exchequer 1717, made this new Quay lawful.<sup>2</sup> The front of Cumberland Buildings stands on the wall of this quay.
- 1693 In this year "the Town of Bideford was filled with inhabitants amongst whom were a great number of merchants who carried on a very considerable commerce in the importation of Tobacco from Virginia and Maryland, of wooll from Ireland, and in the fishery at Newfoundland, besides other kinds of merchandise which employed 64 sail of ships, trading to foreign ports."
- 1695 A separation took place in the Independent Congregation in consequence of the dismissal of the Minister, and a party who attached themselves to him built him a new chapel in High Street. This Chapel was closed in 1760.
- 1696 The old Meeting House (Congregational) built in Bridgeland Street. There had been a congregation of Independents ever since the year 1662.
- 1698 A Town Hall was built and described as being a large convenient structure, with two prisons underneath it, one for criminals and the other for debtors.
- 1699 Bideford had twenty-eight ships engaged in the Newfoundland Fisheries and one hundred and forty-six boats, ranging from 220 to sixty tons. Barnstaple had only seven or eight, Plymouth sent five, Bristol twelve, Liverpool three, and Southampton two. The shipping trade of this town was inferior only to that of London.
- 1700 Bideford imported more Tobacco than any other port in England, except London, and in some years even surpassed that port.
- 1755 It is thought that Drake's fleet returning from the West Indies in 1586 first introduced tobacco into England, bringing the weed from the island of Tobago.
- 1702 Ships to Newfoundland. John Smith, owner, of Bideford. "Laurel," 120 tons, Capt. Thomas Whitefield and 15 men, to Maryland with English manufactures.
- 1706 Grant to sail.—George Buck, owner, of Bideford. "Zant," 200 tons, Jonathan Whitefield, Capt., 16 men and 16 guns, to Maryland and Virginia. George Buck, owner, "Ruby," of Bideford, 120 tons, Wm. Rendle, Capt., 10 guns and 20 men, to Virginia and Maryland.<sup>3</sup>

1. Calendar of State Papers. British Museum.  
2. Cal. St. Papers. Brit. Museum.  
3. Cal. State Papers. Brit. Mus.



- 1715 "Memorial of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Capital Burgesses, etc., of the Borough of Bideford, in opposition to an application by the Corporation of Barnstaple for altering the long and uninterrupted usage of granting warrants for dispatches for the shipping and unshipping goods at Appledore by the Custom House Officers within this Port."<sup>1</sup>
- 1716 Potters, pipemakers, "woolcombers, cordwayners and sayle-makers" carried on their various trades in the town at this time. Clay was obtained at Fremington for the trifling sum of two shillings and sixpence per ton. One John Berryman had a pottery in the town in the year 1659. William Milton, the last owner of the old porrtrey in North Road (formerly Potter's Lane), manufactured coarse earthenware, ovens, pipes and other articles; also glazed ware, several specimens of which are in existence. After a destructive fire the pottery was closed down in the year 1900. The Pottery at East-the-Water, once owned by Henry Phillips, was closed about 27 years ago. Excellent examples of his glazed ware may still be seen.
- 1719 Smallpox raged in Bideford and the neighbourhood, 140 deaths being registered this year as against 73 the year previous. Some years later complaints were made of dung being heaped in many parts of the town, and of hogs and bulldogs straying in the streets weekdays and on Sundays to the inconvenience of the inhabitants.
- 1720 The earliest reference to the Stocks that I can find is taken from the records of the Bridge. It is as follows :—  
 To 1 strong lock for the stocks with 2 keys 10s. 6d.  
 To 2 strong screws and plates for the stocks 5s.

It is a massive pair of ancient stocks capable of accommodating four persons and used to be kept in the stone seated arcade, which the writer remembers, in front of the Bridge Hall. The Grammar School boys frequently used to entrap the more unwary of their number into trying how they would fit, when they generally had to remain awkwardly seated longer than they intended.

As far back as 1376 the Commons appealed to Edward III. that Stocks should be placed in every village. Later each parish had its stocks. They were used chiefly for the punishment of petty offences and drunkenness. The culprit was placed on a bench with his ankles fastened in the holes and allowed to remain there an hour or two, during which time he had to withstand the jeers of, and sometimes the missiles from the passers-by. A few extracts of cases of punishment in the stocks at Bideford, are as follows :—

A man for stealing was "sentenced to be confined in the Common gaol for some days, then to sit in the Stocks two

hours in the Public Market and afterwards to be publicly whipped round the town."

A woman for stealing was "sent to the Common Bridewell of Bideford and during that time to sit one hour in the Stocks in the Market Place, and also one hour in the Stocks before the house of the prosecutor."

A man for stealing one cotton handkerchief was "sentenced to be imprisoned in the Common Bridewell for several days and then to be set in the stocks from 10 o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon."

It is interesting to note the severe penalties meted out for more serious offences during the next hundred years. Whipping was not an uncommon form of punishment particularly for theft, as the following extracts show :—

A man for stealing was "sentenced to be whipt on his bare back from the Guildhall to the square Tomestone on the key and back again." (As to the original use of a Tomestone or table there can be little doubt that it was where the merchants and shippers settled their bargains).

A woman for theft was "sentenced to be whipped on her bare back from the Town Hall to the Tomestone on the Key and back again the same day."

A man imprisoned in the gaol under the Guildhall for larceny was caused "to be whipped between the howers of three and five in the afternoon from the doore of the prison throw Allhallien Streete and soe up Highstreete and soe up through the Market place and from thence, down through Bridge Streete to the prison doore."

Sentences of Transportation are recorded for seemingly trivial offences :

For stealing a small piece of mutton a man was "ordered to be transported for 7 years to some part of his majesty's plantations in America."

For stealing five shillings a woman was transported for 7 years.

A man for killing a sheep was "sentenced to be transported for 14 years to such places beyond the seas as his Majesty should think proper to direct."<sup>1</sup>

- 1728 The Church was repaired. The Corporation gave an Organ and a grant of £20 a year for an organist, John Spencer. The Bridge was widened in part from time to time.
- 1733 At the Court a man was fined one shilling "for not coming to some place of Divine Worship."

1. Sessions Books and Record Books. Bideford.

1. Calendar of State Papers.

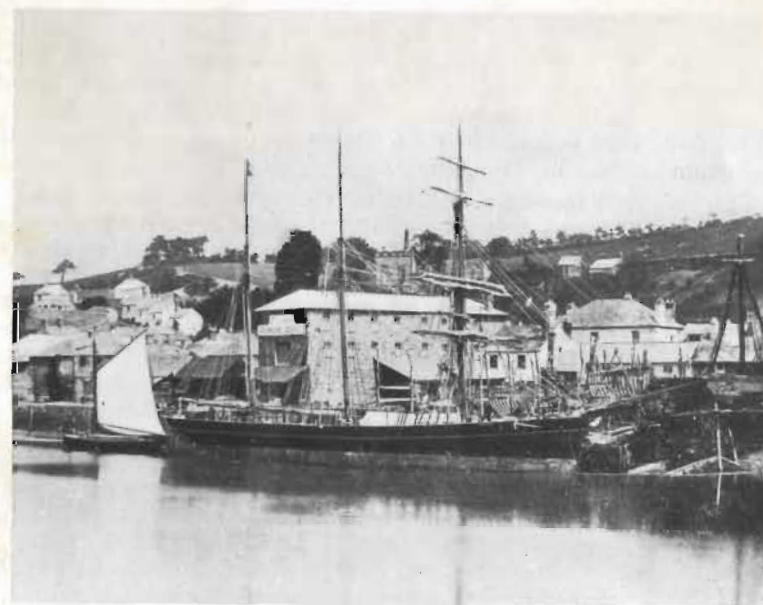


- 1738 A Workhouse was built in "Maidenstreete and a house of Correction to see that all persons and offenders sent thither to be sett to work or punished as they ought to be." This building was situated about 20 yards further down from Hayercroft's Almshouses.
- 1742 Opening the new Church burial ground in Drum Field in Old Town.  
A Bowling Green was opened in a field at the top of Honestone Street opposite the parsonage. Some years earlier Bowls were played on a long strip of green on the south side of Nunnery Courtledge near the Churchyard and near the Swan Inn (now Tanton's) on the riverside.
- 1744 The Bridge Feoffees provided two gowns for the Sergeants-at-Mace at a cost of £8. The Sergeants were appointed by Charter of Elizabeth and the office has continued 364 years. The Mayor is entitled to have the Maces borne before him as a symbol of authority.
- 1749 A description of the town at this time states that "Bideford is a clean, handsome, well-built, populous town. The Street which fronts the river is the oldest, but very pleasant, and three-quarters of a mile in length; in which is a noble Key, Custom House, and the Bridge. And besides this there is a new street (Bridgeland St.) very long, and as broad as the High Street of Exeter, well built and inhabited with considerable and wealthy merchants, who trade to most parts of the world, but particularly to the West Indies and Ireland. It is a member Port of Exon."
- 1750 The Manor of Bideford was purchased by John Cleveland. The Advowson of the Rectory was purchased by Lewis Stucley, and is now in the gift of the Diocesan Board of Patronage and the Bideford Church Council held since 1934.
- 1751 The Rector of Bideford at this time was the Rev. John Whitfield, who was a man of strong passions, and who kept the town in a constant state of warfare for many years. He was indicted "for breaking open the Record Room under the vestry floor of the parish church and Detaining the Records and Articles of Agreement thereon." He was, unhappily for the welfare of the parish, spared to a very old age, not dying until the spring of 1783.
- 1757 John Wesley visited Bideford. The entry in his Journal is as follows:—"Monday, Oct. 3rd. I rode to Bideford but did not reach it until after five the hour appointed for my preaching: so I began without delay in an open part of the street where we alighted (the north end of Silver Street). One man made a little noise at first but he was easily silenced; all the rest, a large number, attended, though the wind was piercing cold,

- while I opened and applied "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- In the early part of last century the services of the Methodists were held in a long room at the back of the Swan Inn in Nunnery Lane, which had been purchased and fitted up by Richard Drew, who was appointed a resident preacher. Opposition was strong. Methodists had not only to endure the scorn and derision of the populace but not unfrequently were subjected to personal violence.
- 1758 The Bridge Hall was rebuilt. It comprised a tapestried room used for the meetings of the feoffees, and besides the ancient Grammar School, a Free or Commercial School. It had an arcade underneath the front in which the Stocks were kept. The Stocks may now be seen in the Bideford Museum.  
Before 1758 there was no approach to the Bridge from the quay excepting through Conduit Lane and Allhalland Street as a long slip (60ft.) from the end of the quay led down to the bed of the river. A wall connected the Bridge to the Bridge Buildings. From Conduit Lane to the Bridge (a distance of 220ft.) a new section of the quay was constructed and the wall taken down by the lord of the Manor, thus extending the quay and opening a new approach to the bridge.
- 1759 In an old book of the Devonshire Regiment of Militia, an entry referring to Bideford is as follows:—  
"General Orders, Sept. 22nd. Detachment of 1 Captain and the same strength as the last to be at the Mill Prison on Monday morning in order to escort 200 French prisoners to Bideford."  
The following is an extract from a letter dated "Bideford, August 26, 1759":  
"This town is at present made very brilliant by one half of the Somerset Militia, who are sent to guard the Prison as need requires; for there are about 1,000 poor fellows confined in a very close place, without any hope of being sent home till peace is concluded—none having been yet exchanged from hence, which makes them sometimes most desperate. The officers are almost universally persons of large property and great distinction; and they have their wives and families with them, at private lodgings, where they are pretty well accommodated, and give two guineas, and two guineas and a half for them." The Regiment was encamped in Drum Field (now the old cemetery) situated in Old Town.  
The principal prison for the French prisoners was at East-the, Water, where a quantity of human remains has been found—which the writer has seen. The present Gas Works stand on the site.
- 1760 About this time Bideford ceased to trade to Maryland and Virginia, and to every part of America about fourteen years later.



- 1761 The Rev. Samuel Lavington, an eminent divine, united the two parties of Independents in the town, when the Little Meeting in High Street was closed. In 1859 the Great Meeting was replaced by the Lavington Church in Bridgeland Street. He died in 1807 and was buried at Bideford. He exerted a great influence on his people, who were distinguished for deep and fervent piety.
- 1765 "Two men were committed for swearing, and two labourers were committed and punished for profanely swearing 5 oaths each." They were in all probability placed in the Stocks as they deserved to be.
- 1781 A Sunday School was instituted at Bideford and supported by public subscriptions. This was only eight years after the first Sunday School was opened in England.
- 1791 At this time a Bridge without railings on the south side linked up the bottom of Bridge Street with the Long Bridge.
- 1799 The Devonshire Regiment was quartered in Bideford under the command of the Right Honourable John Lord Rolle, "gallantly offering their services and assistance in the suppression of the rebellion in Ireland." The Regiment probably encamped in Drum Field. The entrance to the Field was at the corner of Meddon Street.
- A new Clock with two dials was fixed in the Church Tower, and John Parish was appointed clock keeper at a salary of £3 a year.
- 1801 The population of Bideford was 2,987; 1831, 4,846; 1861, 5,742; 1891, 7,825; 1911, 9,078; 1935, 9,444.
- 1805-7 Several sloops of war and several frigates and a fire ship were built in the shipyards of the town. There were no less than 10 shipyards fifty years earlier, and continued in existence for many years after the above date, in which smaller vessels were built. The principal articles of manufacture were cordage, ropes, sails, and common earthenware; there were several tan-yards and a small lace factory. The principal Rope Walk extended from the bottom of Bridgeland Street to the end of the Strand.
- 1806 The Torridge Battalion was 876 strong, commanded by Col. Lord Rolle. The Devonshire infantry generally wore scarlet uniforms with yellow collar and cuffs and white breeches. Loyal Bideford Cavalry, Strength 70: Capt. W. Jackson.
- 1810 The Bridge was widened and the parapet walls were rebuilt and the angular recesses on the cutwaters made as spacious as possible. Semicircular arches were added and parapets of hewn stone substituted for the rubble walls which had previously existed, the whole costing £3,200.



The closing of this Shipyard (1887) brought to an end 400 years of Shipbuilding at East-the-Water



The long Bridge as it was in the early 19th Century, showing old Shipbuilding Yards in background.



The ancient bridge was a pack-horse bridge just wide enough for a horse road with recesses on either side so that passengers crossing the bridge might get out of the way of the horses. That packhorse bridge remained for nearly 500 years when the wheel traffic began, and it became necessary to widen the bridge. A few years earlier the 29th Regiment of Foot encamped in Drum Field, in Old Town.

- 1811 The shipbuilding yard at Higher Cleavehouses was started by Mr. Evans about this time. He was joined later by Mr. Cox—Evans and Cox. After Mr. Evans it was carried on by Messrs. Cox and Son, who built the large premises which stand at the end of the river bank. The writer was on board one of the vessels launched from this yard about 60 years ago. There were four shipbuilding yards at East-the-Water which had been working one hundred and fifty years by Evans, Brooks, Waters, Johnson, and lastly by H. M. Restarick when all the trade at East-the-Water ceased.

The late caretaker of the Town Hall, Thomas Sanders, succeeding his father in shipping, was for many years an extremely clever designer of models of many ships built in the Port of Bideford. A dozen or more of these beautiful models are still in existence in the Bideford district and bear evidence of his outstanding ability as a craftsman.

Coarse brown earthen-ware was manufactured at this time.

- 1812 The insignia of the Borough consists of two greater and two lesser maces, a silver oar, pieces of silver plate, a silver model of an Elizabethan ship, a chain and badge, two snuff boxes, and corporate seals. The greater maces are *temp.* Charles I. and are surmounted by modern arched crowns which were added this year as the inscription round the base of the mace-head proves:—

“The Maces ornamented and repaired at the expense of Stephen Wilcock, Mayor, 1812.” The two lesser maces date from 1573. The silver Oar, 6½ inches long, was held by the former lord of the manor, as the letters J.C. (John Cleveland) on the blade prove. It passed to the Corporation in 1881 when the town purchased the Manorial rights, and was immediately handed to the Mayor for the time being, which custom continues to this day. The Snuff Boxes, made from wood of the sunken battleship “Royal George,” were presented to the Corporation by T. Wickham in the year 1840.

- 1815 The Wesleyan Church was built in Bridge Street.

- 1824 A new road was made from the town to run by the west side of the river to Torrington. A new road was made through Instow to Barnstaple.

- 1826 First lighting of the Bridge and Quay in consequence of the numerous accidents which happened from people falling over the quay.

- 1827 The new road constructed from the Bridge to the bottom of Torridge Hill.

“On Saturday (October) was launched at Clovelly, the “Ranger,” of 35 tons burthen, built principally for the fishing trade. The whole population was on the beach and pier when the vessel left the stocks and gently glided into the briny deep.” Clovelly, for centuries a fishing village, has acquired a reputation as a seaside resort.

- 1828 The Quay was widened and improved. An extension of the quay from Cooper Street to Bridgeland Street was brought out in line with the main quay making a total length of 1,200 feet; but the improvement was nullified to a great extent by the accumulation of mud banks caused by the deposits of the river. In 1842 the quay was further improved by the lord of the Manor at a cost of £3,200. This work being completed the river bank was extended to the Pill (1843-4) and a wooden bridge placed across, thus opening a new way from the quay through Chanters shipyard to Cleave Houses.

A fine brig, burthen 200 tons, was launched from the yard of W. Tardrew at Annery.

A Report was made on the Culm Mines at Bideford. In 1822 it was recorded that “the anthracite found near Bideford is raised in considerable quantities for the purposes of a pigment, and is employed as such in the dock-yard at Plymouth.”<sup>1</sup>

- 1831 The Colonial Buildings were used one part as a Workhouse, and another as a prison. Bideford under its old charter had great powers for imprisonment. To accommodate the number of persons sent to imprisonment no less than three prisons were provided. There was one at Burrigge, in Meddon Street, another at the buildings referred to above, and the third was the pit under the old Town Hall, adjoining the room where the fire engines were kept.

- 1835 Turnpikes were established for the maintenance of the roads by persons using them, money being paid by travellers to collectors at the toll-gates. It was a most unpopular impost. A board affixed to the toll-house indicated the various rates of dues exacted for an ass, a score of sheep, a riding horse, a cart, etc. Gates were placed at the entrances to the town. Turnpikes were abolished locally about the year 1873. The earliest mention of a turnpike in Bideford that I can find is under date 1753.

- 1835 The first Paddle Steamer that sailed up the river to Bideford was built by Clibbett who owned a shipyard at Appledore about this time. She was named the “Torridge” and was commanded by Capt. Macnamara, of the Steam Packet Hotel, on the Quay. She did a large passenger trade to Bristol for London.

1. Daniel Lysons Bros. Topography of Devon. 1822.



- 1836 The town was lighted with Gas the first time this year, and 37 public lamps were fixed in various parts of the borough. The lamps were lighted only from the month of October to the following April. A subscription was commenced for the purpose of raising funds to defray the expenses of erecting and filling up the lamp posts.
- 1837 The first Police Officer, Elias Palmer, who was sent from the London force, was appointed to superintend the Watchmen of the borough, at a salary of 30s. per week and to find his own lodgings. He was provided with a cap, a large cloak or gown, a staff, a lanthorn, and a rattle. The appointment was only for twelve months at a time. A few years later he was, as usual reappointed, on condition "that he carried out his duties faithfully, and be of good behaviour." There were three gaols in the town and John Pim was the gaoler. The second Policeman was appointed in 1853 at a salary of £30 a year, from the time he ceased to act as gaoler. The Watchmen patrolled the town between the hours of ten at night and four in the morning.
- 1838 The Baptist Chapel was built in Lower Gunstone. It was enlarged in 1869.
- 1839 The Union Workhouse erected in Meddon Street. The population of the Parishes within the Union District for the year 1891 was 20,160.
- 1840 A shipyard owned by Mr. Crocker, was situated on the Potter's Pill at the bottom of Willett Street. The last vessel launched from this yard took place this year. The Pill at this time was deep and wide and for centuries the tide flowed up to and beyond the Strand. The Pill was filled in many years ago and a road constructed along its site.
- 1846 Appledore Quay built by several private persons about this time.
- 1847 An omnibus fell over Bideford Quay, eight persons being drowned. At the request of the Town Council the lord of the manor fenced the quay. Chains attached to posts were placed throughout its whole length. A few years later it became the duty of the two policemen to see that the chains were fastened every night.
- 1848 The old Market was covered in for the first time by John Cleveland, the lord of the Manor.
- 1849 The first Dispensary established in Buttgarden Street, which was the result of a public meeting officially convened at which the Mayor, W. Wickham, presided. During the first year 427 patients were treated. Afterwards removed to the Quay (1858) and in 1873 an Infirmary was added to the Dispensary for the reception of six indoor patients.

- 1850 The Town Hall built in the Elizabethan style.
- 1842 A gown was provided by the Council for the use of the Mayor for the time being and was paid for out of the borough rate. And in 1865 the Town Clerk was also provided with a gown.
- 1853 The Prison at Bideford was closed this year.
- 1856 The Railway extended from Barnstaple to Bideford. The earliest reference to the Regatta that I can find is under this date.  
The present Congregational Church built on the site of the Old Meeting House.  
The Brethren Meeting House built. Reconstructed in 1930.
- 1859 The 21st Devon Rifle Volunteer Corp was established in the Town. Three years later Regimental Colour Serjt. W. Rogers, a distinguished Crimean Veteran, was appointed to the Corp. During seventeen years he raised a second Company in Bideford and established a new Company at Torrington. Later he was appointed Serjt. Major of the North Devon Battalion and was enabled thus to complete forty-two years in the service of the Queen.
- 1859 Pillar letter boxes were erected in suitable places in the town. In 1869 Postmen in the borough wore uniforms for the first time.
- 1862 The Mayor reported that the following articles were handed to him as belonging to the Borough, viz: "2 large Maces, 2 small Maces, 2 Snuff Boxes." It is to be noted that the Silver Oar is not mentioned.
- 1864 The Parish Church rebuilt in the perpendicular style, the ancient Tower, Norman Font, and monumental Screen being preserved as relics of the old Church.
- 1864 The North Devon Archery Association established at Littleham, near Bideford.
- 1865 For many years earlier the Bridge between the parapets was 15 feet wide, and there was a footway on either side 2 feet wide, giving a carriage way of 11 feet.  
This year the Bridge was widened to 24 feet and there was a footway on each side 4 feet 6 inches wide, giving a carriage way of 15 feet, at a cost of £6,000. The cutwaters of the arches being nearly all rebuilt without stopping the traffic, the whole being strengthened by wrought and cast iron. The character of the old bridge with its 24 arches was preserved.
- 1869 Music Hall built in Bridgeland Street, and is now the present Palace Cinema.

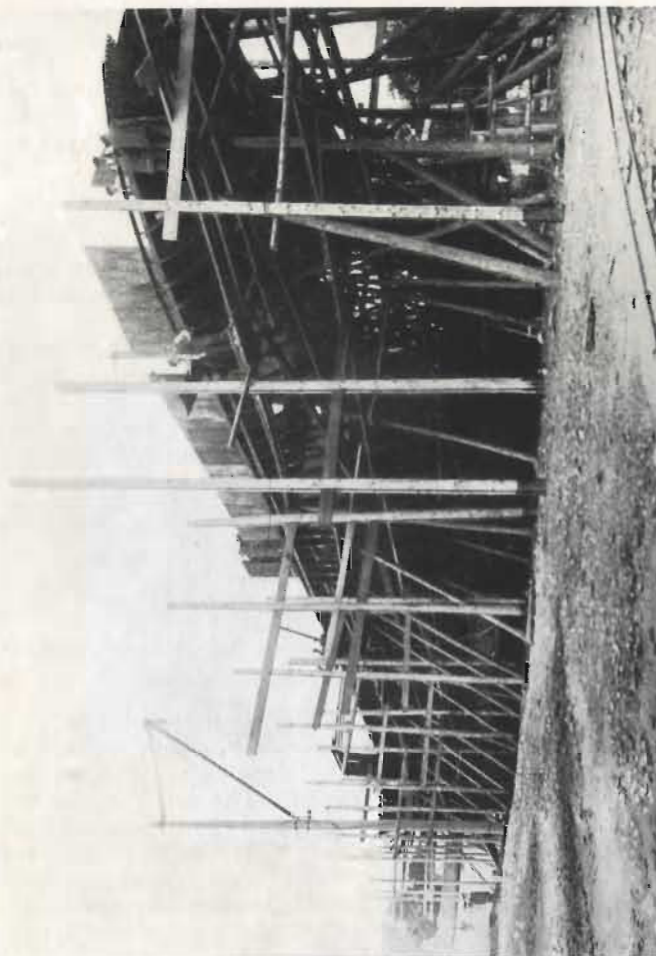


- 1871** Board Schools established. Numerous wells were situated in many parts of the town, but the Corporation being desirous of providing a better supply of water made the first Reservoir at Gammaton, which is capable of storing 14,459,344 gallons of water. In 1893 a higher reservoir was made at Gammaton, with filter beds added, capable of containing 18,377,263 gallons of water at a total cost of £30,000. An additional Reservoir (with filter beds) was constructed at Jennetts in 1920 at a cost of £39,626, inclusive of engine plant. It has a capacity of storing 26,957,000 gallons of water.
- 1870** Almshouses in Meddon Street erected on the site of Strange's Almshouses by John Haycroft.
- 1872** The Railway extended from Bideford to Torrington.
- 1875** A Free Library and Art School established in Bridgeland Street, now the Masonic rooms. The Reading Room was in the front and the library at the back on the ground floor. The Art School occupied the rooms on the first floor. Mr. Thomas being the first Art Master. The writer was a pupil under him. In 1896 a new building was erected on the River Bank.
- 1878** The old Commercial School in the Bridge Buildings was broken up in consequence of the superior influence of the Board Schools, and in the year previous the feoffees discontinued the salary of the master.
- 1879** The Grammar School of ancient foundation was removed from the Bridge Buildings to the School House in North Down Road, under the scheme of the Endowed Schools Commission.
- 1880** Amory's Almshouses in Clovelly Road demolished. The site was sold and a road constructed leading to the back of the Workhouse. It is to be regretted that the old houses with quaint canopy along the whole front, lattice windows, and curious oak doors were not preserved. At this time elm trees, fields, gardens and barns bordered the main road on either side.
- 1880** A beautifully modelled ketch named "Pilot" was launched from the shipbuilding yard of H. M. Restarick, 59 tons burthen, and was intended for the North Sea Fisheries. This made the eighth vessel of the same class he had built for the same firm. In 1883-4 the "Cholmondeley" and the "Edward Auriol" were specially built and fitted up as Mission ships for the purpose of carrying on Gospel work among the deep sea fishermen in the North Sea.
- 1881** The Manor of Bideford owned by John Cleveland, of Tapley, was purchased by the Mayor and Corporation who are therefore the present lords of the manor with all the customary rights and privileges. In the ancient fully organised manor the local customs were enforced by three courts: A Court Baron for the

- free tenants, a Customary Court for the copyholders, and a Court Leet in which officers were elected and minor offences punished. Its president was the lord's steward. Gradually the Manor ceased to have any social or economic importance and its few remaining privileges were swept away by the Law of Property Act, 1922. The Court Leet is the most ancient to the law. Bideford still maintains the ancient custom in holding annually the Manor Court: not forgetting the banquet.
- 1882** Bridge Buildings erected on the site of the ancient Bridge Hall which had a clock and a sundial on the front. The sundial with its motto "The Sun to us the sign gives," may still be seen on the new building. It was made by Abraham Gearing in 1692 and cost £3. The clock, an excellent specimen of the early clockmakers' art, was thrown on the scrap heap. It is a great pity the old clock was not preserved. The school bell is in the town Museum.
- 1883-4** The Market House rebuilt by the Corporation at a cost of £4,200.
- 1887** The accommodation being insufficient at the old dispensary a new Infirmary and Dispensary was built in Meddon Street, which contained five beds in the male ward, six beds in the female ward, and one for accident cases. The following year the institution was endowed, and a few years later the endowment returned an income of £101 16s. 4d. In the year 1925 a new Hospital fully equipped was built in Abbotsham Road, at a total cost of about £22,500. The wards give accommodation for 32 beds, and the surgical facilities include X-ray and Violet-ray equipment.
- 1889** The local Police came under the control of Devon County. In 1898 the Police moved from their quarters in the Town Hall to a fine brick building erected in New Road, overlooking the river. St. Peter's Church erected in Gothic style, East-the-Water, at a cost of £2,150.
- 1889 -90** A public work of great importance was the widening of the Quay. In 1663, measuring from the N. corner of High Street, the width of the quay was 31 feet; two later widenings added 50 feet; the further widening this year was 30 feet: total 111 feet. The mooring posts on being taken up were found to be ancient guns of the Armada, which had been fixed in the old quay by the lord of the Manor who brought them from Graysand Hill in the estuary. The guns now form a priceless battery in the Victoria Park. In 1891 a promenade was constructed the whole length of the quay and planted with trees making a boulevard which greatly enhances the appearance of the lower part of the town. The work was carried out at a cost of about £5,000.



- 1892 The new Wesleyan Church built in Bridge Street in front of the old building which is now used as an Assembly Hall.
- 1893 Belvoir Mission Hall built in Lime Grove.
- 1901 The Railway to Westward Ho! Northam and Appledore was opened for regular traffic, the starting place being on the Quay, on the river side of the promenade. During the great war the rails throughout the line were taken up, and with the rolling stock, sent across to France.
- 1903 Geneva School built. The Church Schools were built in 1871 and 1883.
- 1906 Kingsley Statue on the river bank unveiled by Lord Clinton. The statue of white marble forms an imposing spectacle as viewed from the Bridge. It cost about £500 which sum was raised by public subscriptions. Kingsley came to reside at Bideford in May, 1854, and wrote his famous book "Westward Ho!" published in January 1855. Having no parish work he did house to house visitation and he lectured on the Fine Arts, and held a drawing class for young men which may be regarded as the nucleus of the Bideford Science and Art School. He resided in the town about fifteen months.
- 1906 The Carnegie Free Library and Municipal Buildings opened. The whole structure, an imposing block of buildings, is a free treatment of the Perpendicular-Gothic style, cost £6,000. When the foundations were being excavated some interesting but gruesome finds were made, sixteen human skeletons being discovered side by side quite near the surface not far from the old gaol, as the writer observed. They were supposed to have been the remains of French prisoners of war.
- 1908 The Museum was opened in August this year. The collection, chiefly geological, was divided into four parts: the one was composed of minerals, the other of N. Devon and other fossils, the third of modern shells, and the fourth part was formed of local and other objects of antiquarian interest. The Mayor congratulated the town on its museum. Thanks were expressed to the writer for "having mounted and labelled the whole collection, and for the attention and trouble he had devoted to the task."
- 1912 The Victoria Park opened. The Borough boundary from the Pill—including the park—was extended to Chanter's Lane in 1935.
- 1914 The United Methodist Chapel built in High Street. The Silver Street Chapel was erected in 1844.
- 1919 The Hansen Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing Company established a yard at Cleavehouses. The old shipyard owned by Evans and Cox, where wooden ships were last constructed in 1877, was converted into a modern site thoroughly equipped with all that was latest and best in the way of machinery for



STEEL SHIPBUILDING AT CLEAVEHOUSES (1920-24)



the construction of up-to-date steel vessels. The keel of the first ship, named "Hubbastone," was laid in March, 1919. The vessel was a single screw cargo steamer of over 1,000 tons dead-weight capacity and was driven by triple expansion engines. In 1921 two new ships were launched from the yard. In 1923 four ships were on order and two ships of 1,600 tons respectively. At their busiest time the yards provided work for 500 men. The following year shipbuilding on the Torridge suffered from the slump in shipping common with other places in the country. It was anticipated that the slump would pass and employment be in full swing, but as conditions in the industry did not improve the yard was closed in 1924.

- 1921 The War Memorial Cross erected on high ground by Chudleigh Fort; the memorial comprising the purchase and gift to the town of the historic fort, together with  $2\frac{1}{4}$  acres of land for a public resort, at a total cost of £1,250 raised by public subscriptions.

A number of local men who gave their services during the great war are still abroad, but 186 men of this town sacrificed their lives, and by their death we obtained liberty. "We must live this life as people who owed a great debt to those who had died for us."—The late Bishop of Exeter.

- 1922 Edgehill College rebuilt after being damaged by fire in 1920. The College was founded in 1884. It maintains its position as one of the most successful scholastic institutions in the county. The College is built with a careful eye to the requirements of health. It is beautifully situated.

- 1924 The Bideford and District Electric Supply Co. established a Generating Station, East-the-Water.

- 1925 The Bridge was widened and greatly strengthened and improved. It has undergone several widenings in its six centuries of history, but the work this year was by far the greatest that has been carried out since it was first erected. The width of the roadway was increased from 15 to 16 feet, and the footpath from 4 feet six inches to 6ft. 11 inches., thus giving a width of 30ft. between the parapets. The sterlings and piers were practically reconstructed, and the whole of the top of the arches filled in with reinforced concrete. The parapets of pennant stone replace the former iron structure. The ancient character of the 24 arches remains. The improvements were carried out at approximately a sum of £40,000. The approach to the west end of the bridge was widened at the same time.

- 1927 Kingsley Road constructed along the line of the former Westward Ho! Railway at a cost of £29,000. To commemorate the opening of the road, a great pageant of local romance and history,

with over 1,000 performers, was enacted. It was the most picturesque of its kind staged in North Devon, and a fine spectacle was provided.

This year thirty-eight houses of the three-bedroom non-parlour type were erected at Bowden Green—west entrance to the town—at a cost of £19,000.

- 1928 The Lords of the Treasury directed (Oct. 1881) that Bideford be no longer maintained as a "Customs Port." After frequent representations made to the Treasury the ancient privilege was restored this year, and Bideford became a "Port" once more.

"The Treasury says 'To the cause you plead  
We have listened well and will straight accede.

Now hear ye the name that of old ye bore

Let Bideford Town be a Port once more

And as for your bounds they shall stretch thus far :

From Bideford Bridge to Appledore Bar'.<sup>1</sup>

To mark the occasion a beautiful model in silver of an Elizabethan ship was presented to the Town by Sir Basil Peto, M.P. for the N.W. Division of Devon.

- 1933 Sentry Corner Housing Scheme was carried out, 42 houses being erected at a cost of £12,615. The houses are of the non-parlour type, eighteen of the number being of the three-bedroom type, and twenty four two-bedroom type. Sentry Corner, in contrast to its previous somewhat lonely spot, has become an important residential district in the Borough.

- 1933 A ship and boat-building yard was established at Ford this year by W. Blackmore and Sons. The firm is on the Admiralty list for boats up to 60 feet in length of all types—cutters, whalers, motor dinghies, motor surveying boats, and motor pinnaces. Also pilot cutters of 15 feet beam, and yachts 60 feet long for the Royal Yacht Squadron. A number of small vessels and Admiralty boats has been built, and the orders recently received by the firm will furnish employment for some time to come.

- 1933 -4 New Road between the bottom of Lower Meddon Street and Howe's Yard, Torridge Hill, had, for some time, been in danger of collapsing. An ominous bulge appeared in the river wall that supports the road and its heavy traffic. To safeguard the road 6,000 tons of stone were dumped along the river side of the wall and after final settlement the bank was finished by stone pitching set in concrete. The former carriage way of 17 feet was widened to 30 feet and a five feet footpath, and on the river side a 12 feet promenade in place of the single footpath 4 feet wide. The work costing £25,000 was carried out by the County Council.

1. Poem. Arthur M. Samuel M.P. Financial Secretary to His Majesty's Treasury.



- 1935 The new Grammar School erected and equipped in Abbotsham Road, with accommodation for 240 boys, at a cost of £18,000 ; Bideford thus having the first complete secondary school built on modern lines by Devon County Council. In the school assembly hall a tablet is fixed dated 1657 which was in front of the old school in Allhalland Street, and which had lain in obscurity for many years, and to the historic importance of possessing the same the attention of the School Authorities was drawn by the writer.
- 1936 Armorial Bearings, Registered at the College of Heralds, were granted to Bideford. The Coat-of-Arms was framed by the Corporation and fixed in the Town Hall, April, 1937. The motto is "Bold for King and Faith."

BIDEFORD'S NEW COAT OF ARMS



"BOLD FOR KING AND FAITH"