

VENN FARM, EAST PUTFORD, DEVON

OS ref. SS 376 168

Report K721

Unlisted buildings

The Brief

Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants are contracted by Rosemary and Jeremy Jessel to provide an assessment of the farm from an historic and archaeological point of view. The report comprises a description of the fabric of the buildings, their layout, features, dating and development. It is accompanied by a photographic record. It also includes the documentary history of the property.

The site survey was entirely non-invasive, and it is likely that building works will uncover historic information which may refine or even alter the conclusions contained in this report.



[1] *Venn from the south with the farmhouse backing onto the yard. The stone wall immediately to right of the house is the back of the cartshed, with the southern gable end of the barn beyond.*

SETTING

The parish of East Putford, is situated approximately 11km southwest of Bideford (as the crow flies) and approximately 5km northeast of Bradworthy in North Devon. Even today it is a relatively sparsely populated part of Devon. The settlement is dispersed, and has been so well back into the medieval period, and the hedged fields are still relatively small. The landscape is characterised by gently undulating land. The lush foliage lining the valley lanes provides a sense of privacy in the valleys but the lanes then rise to the main roads along broad ridges with distant views. One such ridge runs through the north end of the parish. Remarkably a large part of it is still unenclosed and unimproved where native culm grassland flourishes. It survives as a rare impression of common land. Elsewhere in the southwest most of the parish commons were enclosed and shared amongst the commoners in the 19th and 20th centuries. The prehistoric barrows along the ridge attest that this is an area of very ancient settlement.

Venn lies just below the ridge with its northern fields bordering the open former commons. The farm is approximately 1 km to the northeast of East Putford, which is no more than a small hamlet. Nevertheless it includes the former parish church (rebuilt in 1882) but this is now used as a farm building.

The steading is on a gentle west-facing slope and stands just above the springline. There is a spring just over 100m downhill (west of) the yard. It is marked W (for well) on the first edition OS map of 1886 (Fig.4), which also shows it quickly feeding a small stream draining into the River Torridge, about 1km to the west. There is a wind pump near the site today.

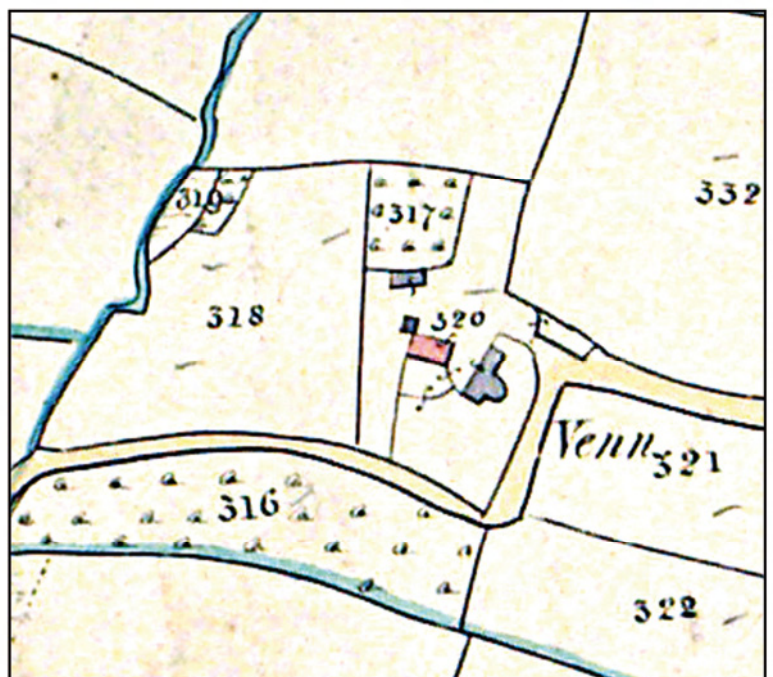
The farmhouse includes some fabric which dates back to the 17th century, but it was massively rebuilt in the mid-late 19th century (c1880 as it is argued below), along with all the buildings in the yard. Despite the fact that it was built in a single phase the arrangement of farm buildings appears fairly random. The extent of the mid 19th century farm is recorded in the first edition OS map of 1886 (Fig.4). A couple more buildings had been added by 1905, the date of the second edition OS map (Fig.5). An old photograph show that all the buildings survived with a few later accretions up until the 1960s (Fig.7) when the pigsties were clearly ruinous. Others were demolished in 1994.

The earliest map of the farm is the parish tithe map of 1842 (Figs.2 & 3) with its

accompanying apportionment from 1841 (Appendix 1). At this time, the total acreage was 161, which was quite a large farm by the standards of the time. The fields belonging to Venn in 1842, are mostly to the north and east of the farm, with a couple of fields to the southwest and a former orchard just south, over the road. It is perhaps surprising how many of the fields are designated as arable in the apportionment, but this is probably a reflection



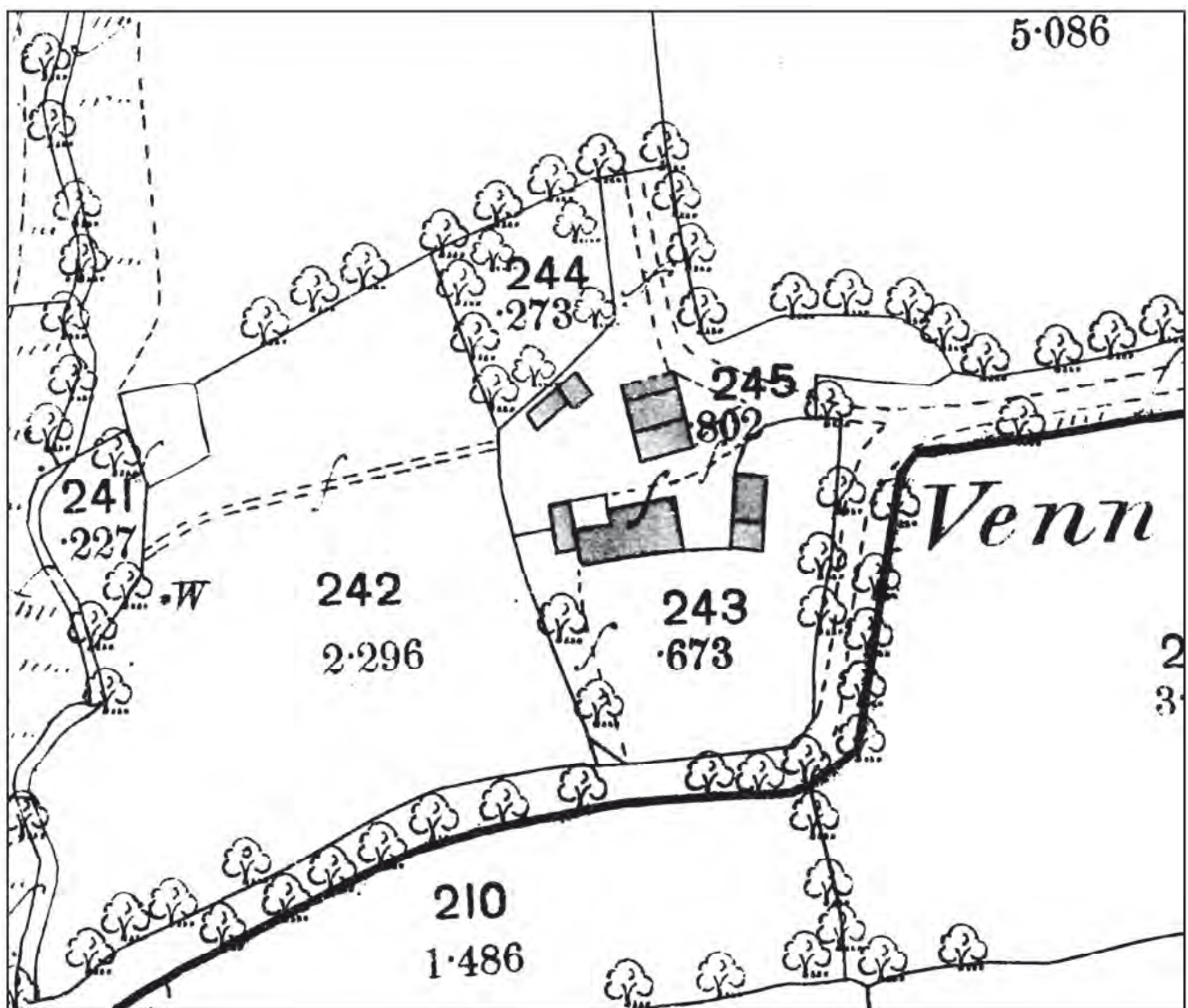
[2] The Venn holding (missing the extreme east end) on the East Putford parish tithe map of 1842. Someone later has outlined the boundaries of the various farms in blue, but not always according to the fields listed in the accompanying apportionment.



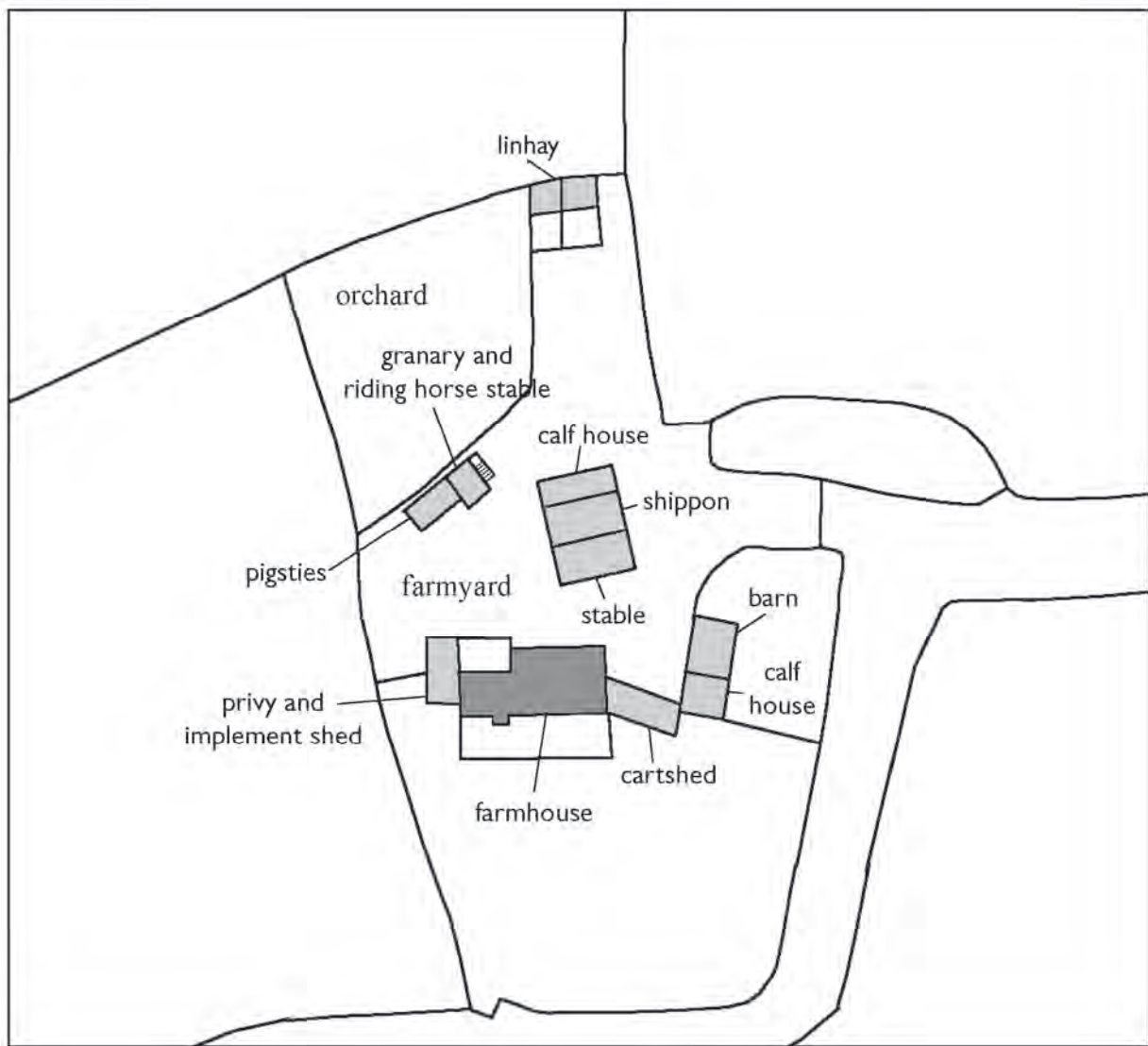
[3] A detail of the steading from the tithe map.

of the Devon convertible farming system of the time which involved a slow rotation with fields under the plough for several years, then rested as pasture (never fallow as such). Thus the apportionment describes the potential of the fields rather than actual usage in 1841-2.

The farm was surrounded by orchards in 1841-2. One still remains immediately to the north of the yard, but more are indicated on the tithe map. The largest orchard was the long narrow field over the road to south of the yard entrance. The field immediately to the east of the farm, also over the road, is referred to in the tithe apportionment as the old orchard, (but by 1842 was a meadow). Up until the 1960s and 70s just about every Devon farmhouse was surrounded by apple orchards. The apples were used to make cider. Whilst some farms produced commercial cider most was drunk on the farm. However here it seems that all except the small northern orchard had gone by 1886. This may be a reflection of the Bible Christianity, and attendant disapproval of alcohol, which was the



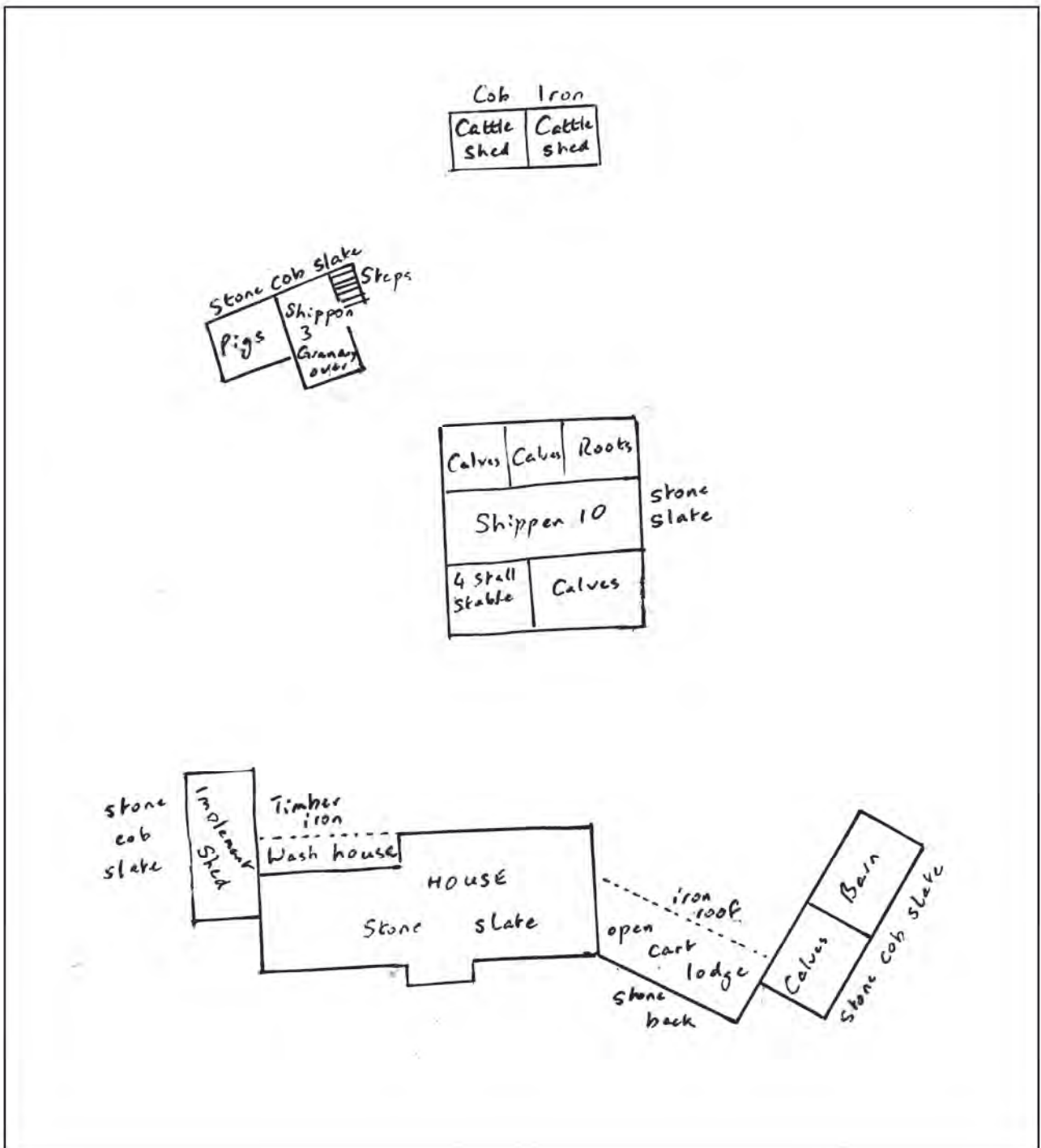
[4] The Venn steading on the first edition OS map of 1886.



[5] A tracing of the second edition OS map of 1905 adapted to identify the traditional farm buildings around the yard from the Inland Revenue survey of c1911.

non-conformist religion of the Ridge family who lived at Venn in the 1860s.

The 1842 tithe map shows the house and outline of the yard (Fig.3), apparently much the same as they are today. There is a short drive in from the lane at the east end. The yard is an uneven pentagon with an arm off the northern corner, past the east side of the orchard to the fields beyond. The house is built down the hillslope on a rough east-west axis, taking up the greater part of the south side of the yard. The largest of the farm buildings is shown a short distance to east of the farmhouse, on the east side of the yard to south of the drive entry. There was also a small square building off the northwest corner of the house and a relatively long building on the north side of the yard backing onto the orchard. The semi-circular projection on the east side of the large eastern building almost certainly represents a horse engine house, which identifies the building as a threshing barn. Part of the barn's foundations are incorporated into the existing barn. The function



[6] A sketch plan of Venn, traced from the original in the field book of c1911 associated with the Inland Revenue 'doomsday' survey. It mentions building materials and building usage. (ref. IR/58)

of the other buildings cannot be known for sure, but it would seem fair to assume that the northern one was a shippon or some other form of cattle house.

The majority of buildings in the present farmyard were built between the production of the tithe map of 1842 and the OS map of 1886. They may well date from c1880 (as argued below), and their historic usage is confirmed by the 1911 Inland Revenue survey (Fig.6). The present barn appears to occupy the footprint of the older one shown on the tithe map. There was a large building in the middle of the upper part of the yard, two and

a half ranges deep, comprising originally a working horse stable, shippon and calves shed in parallel ranges. The last two components were demolished in 1994. On the north side of the yard, roughly in the position of the putative tithe map shippon, there was a granary over a small riding horse stable with pigsties alongside. The sties went in the late 20th century. This was the extent of the c1880 farm. By 1905, the date of the second edition OS map, there was also a linhay at the end of the northern arm (Fig.5). It survives facing south and is depicted with a small stockyard in front of it. Also an open-fronted cartshed had been created between the east end of the farmhouse and the barn.

An aerial photograph of the place from c1960 shows a mid 20th century pole barn to the north of the yard (within that northern arm), and a Nissen hut in front and at right angles to it (in the yard proper), both of which have been demolished (Fig.7). Apparently the Nissen hut had collapsed under the weight of one winter's snow, presumably 1963.



[7] *An aerial photograph of the farm from c1960, showing all the traditional buildings, plus a Nissen hut and pole barn. The pigsties are ruinous, and a c.1950s dairy is built in front of the old stable.*

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Medieval and early modern history

The name Venn means fen, and occurs at least 33 times in Devon, in addition to composite names like Feniton and Venn Ottery. [Gover] The earliest known occurrence in East Putford, which is in Shebbear hundred, is in the lay subsidy rolls of 1330, which record Roger atte Fenne. [Gover] These taxation records are in the National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office). That for 1332 has been edited and published but does not include East Putford. [Erskine] In fact, it often seems to have escaped the attention of tax collectors altogether. It was originally a chapelry to Buckland Brewer, and so might be thought to be subsumed into returns for that parish, but in only one of the published tax returns is that made clear. This is for 1525, but it lists only names, with no connection to dwelling places, and so tells us nothing about the occupiers of Venn.

We do have a reference to John Wille at Fenne in 1411. He acted as attorney with William Stowforde in a pair of feoffments by which Richard Hayman and his wife Margaret, formerly the wife of John Whythere, secured their lands in Mambury in East Putford to Richard Whythere, presumably her son. [Devon RO Z16/1/1/4, 5] However, after John Wille, we have no record of an occupier until the 18th century. East Putford does not occur in the commonly available published sources, that is, the lay subsidy rolls 1543-5, the muster roll 1569, subsidy rolls 1581 and 1660, the protestation returns 1641, and the hearth tax 1674. [Stoate and Howard] A potential source of information lies, surprisingly, in Duchy of Lancaster court rolls from the reign of Richard II to Elizabeth (but not continuous) in the National Archives. The Duchy had a sort of overlordship of Buckland Brewer. However, these are legal courts, mainly reporting debts, very briefly, and a sample of the first six (of about fifteen) gives no indication at all that East Putford was included in this allegiance. [Castlehow 1948; TNA DL30/57/683-689]

The manor of East Putford descended to the Pollard and Rolle families, but there is scarcely anything in the deposited Rolle records. There are a few deeds relating to the manor itself, but they do not break down properties within the manor. [Rogers; Devon RO 96M]

Venn from 1780-1900

Regular surviving land tax returns begin in 1780. The owner of Venn was then the Revd James Flexman, and it was occupied by John Mee, and assessed at £3. 14. 10, a fairly average rate for the parish. From 1783 to 1792-3 it was owned by Mrs Flexman, and from 1785 occupied by John Short, alias Lewis. In 1799 it was occupied by John Trick, but thereafter until 1808 by John Lewis, so perhaps Trick was another alias. Mr Flexman succeeded as owner in 1795 (unfortunately his first name is not given). The Flexmans were not a landed family, and the few index references in the record offices reveal nothing of relevance about them. James Flexman, son of James of Torrington, matriculated at Oxford 1729/30 aged 18, and James son of James of North Molton, cleric, matriculated at Wadham College 1765 aged 18. [Foster] It must be surmised this is the Revd James who owned Venn, but nothing has emerged of the circumstances of his ownership. Briefly in 1809 Samuel Vanstone was the tenant, and then, in 1810, Elias Leach appears as both owner and occupier. Presumably the Flexmans sold it to him. However, for the next twenty years he let the farm, first to Anthony Essery, then 1814 Mary Essery, presumably widow, 1817 James Parsons, and then from 1830 to 1832 Elias Leach again occupied Venn himself. The land tax series ends in 1832.

Elias Leach was owner and occupier in the tithe award 1841 (map 1842), and farmed 161 acres. [see Appendix1] The first detailed census return, 1841, describes him as a farmer of 65, and his household comprised his wife Phebe, son Ezekiel 30 years old, and daughter Mary 20 (ages were rounded off in this first census) with two female servants, three agricultural labourers, and two apprentices. The return of 1851 gives the farm acreage, now down to 120 acres, farmed with four labourers and one boy. Elias was now 75, Phebe 72. His brother Robert, 70, an agricultural labourer, was there, and two granddaughters, Mary and Emma Bartlett, aged 13 and 10. Census returns had to include visitors present on the designated night, so this does not prove these relations lived permanently with the Leaches at Venn. There was one female servant, and two agricultural labourers. Billings' Directory 1857 gives Phoebe Leach as the farmer. In 1861 Robert Leach, widower, had succeeded his sister-in-law. His age is illegible and the acreage not given, but he farmed with one labourer and one boy. Henry Colwill, 75, lived in, as did John Hedger, 11. There were two female domestic servants aged 26 and 9.

Morris & Co's Devon Directory of 1870 describes John Ridge as the farmer at Venn Farm. A local historian, Margaret Smale, has undertaken research into the Ridge family. In the course of her research into the history of Venn Farm, Dr Anita Travers contacted her and she drew attention to the headstone of John Ridge in East Putford churchyard. He died at Venn on 31 January 1871. His widow Grace lived at Venn Cottage when the 1871 census was taken in April. Venn Farm itself is not mentioned. The tithe map and other historic sources show no separate cottage on the farm. Presumably the farmhouse was being referred to, as in 1881 - see below.

Margaret Smale adds, without source, 'By 1871 (?) the owner/tenant at Venn Farm was William Penhale, MRCVS, and his family. He was a prominent Bible Christian.' This is backed up by an undated newspaper cutting describing the opening of the Bible Christian Chapel at Milton Damerel at which William Penhale is described as of Venn Farm. The chapel was opened in 1892 [Thorne 1975, 64]. Her source for putting William Penhale at Venn in 1871 is not the census. There are only about 32 houses listed in East Putford and there is no Penhale in any of them in the 1871 or 1881 censuses. The list of Baptisms for the Shebbear Bible Christian Circuit records the Penhale family at Venn Farm in Milton Damerel, not East Putford. This is verified by the 1871 and 1881 censuses.

In the 1881 census for East Putford Venn Cottage is followed by '1 uninhabited' which probably relates to Venn Farm. This may also indicate that the farm was being rebuilt at this time, which is wholly consistent with the stylistic evidence of the standing buildings. William Routcliff is given as the farmer at Venn in the 1883 and 1890 trade directories. Little is known about the Routcliff family, but William could well be the man responsible for the major rebuilding of the farm. It is not exactly sure that William owned the place but it may be assumed since it was certainly owned by a Thomas Rowtcliff around 1912 (see below).

In the 1891 census Venn Farm was occupied by William Ellis, 35, and his wife Laura, 34, three small boys and a daughter, his father William Ellis 70, a retired farmer, one farm servant and one general domestic servant.

Venn from 1900-2005

In 1901, the last available census, there were Stephen and Henrietta Hopper, 31 and 20 respectively. No live-in servants are mentioned. Venn in fact had labourers living in longer than is usual; in general they seem to be moved out to cottages in the mid 19th century. This may have some bearing on the arrangement of accommodation. Stephen Hopper 'junior' is named in Kelly's Directory 1902. Stephen Hopper was the tenant, not the owner. After the Leach family, ownership is not clear. When the Inland Revenue made their 'Domesday' survey c1911, Hopper was the occupier, and described as an agricultural labourer, but the owner was Thomas Rowtcliff, who lived in Bradworthy. The farm is described as of 161 acres, as it was in the tithe apportionment. [NDRO 3201 V/1/42] In fact, Hopper was the outgoing tenant in 1911 and the incoming was John Piper. [Owners' deeds] The Inland Revenue field book has been amended accordingly, and shows Piper as also owner, having presumably bought from Rowtcliff. It is described as 'A fair mixed farm with a good house & cottage. The house is of stone & slate & contains Parlor Kitchen back Kitchen Dairy & Potatoe store. 5 bedrooms & apple store. Outside closet. Water pump.' The gross value was put at £2193. A small plan (Fig.6) gives building materials. [TNA IR58/4609 no 14] (see Fig.6)

Frances Fanny Piper, widow of John, died 1969, aged 83. Their daughter, Frances Mary, married in 1965, at the age of 56, Stanley John Moore, then 65. Frances Mary Moore died in 1993 having vested assent in favour of William Piper, tenant for life. He died in 1995 and the farm was vested equally in Miss Margaret Mary Piper (his executor) and Derek John Piper. In 2005 Mr and Mrs JG Jessel bought the farmstead with 48.5 acres, 40 acres were retained by the Pipers. [Owners' deeds]

BUILDING MATERIALS

All the buildings are vernacular, that is to say they were built of local materials by local craftsmen. Most of the buildings are built of local sandstone and mudstone rubble, sometimes, as in the barn with cob on the walltops. Iron oxides in the mudstone give it its typical brown colour, and in contrast the sandstone is predominantly grey. Sandstone is the higher quality stone, and therefore used for features, such as the jambs of the fireplaces. The masonry is bonded with mud mortar and pointed in white lime mortar. A couple of buildings are cob on stone rubble footings, and this includes the 17th century walling of the farmhouse (see below). There is evidence (described below) of a plaster render on the granary.

Small quantities of cream –coloured Marland brick are used as dressings on the house and farm buildings. Brick had been introduced into the repertoire of building materials in North Devon in the second half of the 17th century. Bridgeland Street in Bideford is a street of fine brick merchants' houses built in 1692-3. However this is of only passing relevance to the use of brick at Venn. More important is the fact that there are deposits of good ball clay between Great Torrington and Hathrerleigh which were exploited industrially by William Wren following the opening of the London and South Western Railway to Torrington in 1872. He established the Marland Brick and Clay Works on Clay Moor in the 1870s.

The roofs of the c1880 buildings appear to have been slate originally although this now survives only on the farmhouse, the barn and granary. Elsewhere it has been replaced with corrugated iron or (more recently) formed steel sheeting. The later buildings may have had corrugated iron from the start. The slate is Welsh slate, but slate as such is not alien to the Devon vernacular tradition. It was a quite common historic roofing material in north Devon since it could easily be imported along the coast from north Cornwall, where the Delabole quarry is still in operation.

THE FARMHOUSE

Despite a massive rebuilding of c1880 the farmhouse incorporates features which can be proved to date back to the mid 17th century. Its basic plan form may indicate medieval origins.

Layout

The house is built down the hillslope on an east-west axis and is terraced into a gentle slope at its east end. It faces south (Fig.8). Unusually for a Devon farmhouse it backs onto the yard (Fig.10). The main block has a linear plan of three rooms and a cross passage which is the traditional layout of Devon farmhouses with early origins. This appears to have survived the massive rebuilding of c1880. The historic maps suggest that the whole steading was rebuilt between 1842- 86. In the 1881 census the house is described as uninhabited, which may indicate building works in progress. This may be speculation but it fits nicely with the facts.

Some impression of the survival of 17th century, or earlier, fabric comes from looking at the floor plans and relating that to the visible remains. As described below, the east end wall can be demonstrated to date at least from the 17th century, whereas, it seems, the west end wall was rebuilt c1880. Quality of the masonry apart, the east wall is considerably thicker than the west one. Taking this literally as a yardstick, the ground floor level has thick walls on all sides of the main house except the west end. These thick walls then could have 17th century or earlier origins. At first floor level thick walls (old walling) is confined to the outer three sides of the parlour chamber at the east end. The interpretation of the thicker walls as older fabric is wholly consistent with the visible features in the farmhouse, and it is interesting to add that the stairblock and dairy outshut for instance also have thicker walls than the putative c1880 phase of the house.

The basic ground plan of the original house is centred on the cross passage, between opposing front and back doorways along the lower status (west) end of the hall/ dining room, the principal living room, with parlour beyond at the east end. Below the cross passage is the former service room, which was conventionally associated with food preparation and storage. All rooms were originally full-width and the hall and parlour were heated but not the service room until it was rebuilt as the kitchen in c1880. There

are now three chimneystacks, end stacks to the parlour and kitchen and the hall/dining room has an axial stack backing onto the parlour.

18th and 19th century lean-to additions have accrued on the north and west sides. By 1886, the date of the first edition OS map and the date by which the present layout of the farmhouse was essentially established. On stylistic grounds the earliest addition was the stairblock off the back of the hall/ dining room, just next to the rear cross passage door. It abutts the house and therefore must be later than the rear wall of the main house. It was probably added in the 18th century. Some time after the stairblock was created a lofted dairy was built next to it on the east side, with a doorway off the back of the hall and maybe an external doorway in the east side. Later, but by 1842 according to the tithe map, a lean-to store was constructed out the back of the parlour up against the dairy. This has been known as the potato store, at least since 1911. The dairy has a small loft off the stairs which may have been a wool or an apple store – it is described as an apple store in 1911 (see documentary history above). Both stairblock and dairy now share a monopitch roof which dates from c1880.

At the west end a lean-to privy abuts the end wall of the house. It does not appear on the tithe map, and presumably dates from c1880. Very shortly afterwards a small outbuilding with a monopitch roof was built off the east and north sides of the privy. This continues its south wall to the west and extends north as a relatively long and narrow single-storey range facing west with its north end open-fronted (it is shown on the 1886 OS map). At first sight this might be seen to incorporate the outbuilding which is shown on the tithe map, projecting from the northwest corner of the house. However, the accuracy of the early maps cannot be relied on in such detail. and therefore interpretation must be based on the archaeological evidence. The present outbuilding was there by 1886 on map evidence, it is secondary to the privy, and includes no structural evidence for two phases. The lean-to has been used most recently as a workshop, but was described as an implement shed in 1911 (see documentary history above). The implement shed, at the level of the average farm, was a 19th century phenomenon where the plough, harrows and other such equipment was kept.

In the massive refurbishment of c1880 the kitchen was created with a fireplace in a new west end stack, and a service stair to the chamber above. The hall was reduced in width by the insertion of a partition on the north side, which was designed to create a short corridor to provide separate access to the dairy and the stair block. In 1911 the main

ground floor rooms were described as parlour, kitchen and back kitchen (see documentary history above). Most of the first floor dates from this time, but largely mirrors the ground floor layout, with four chambers in all, the one over the kitchen separate from the other three. In 1911 it is described as having five bedrooms (see documentary history above), so presumably the large eastern chamber was sub-divided by then.

In the 1950s there were various modernisations. The wash house across the north side of the kitchen was demolished, and the dairy and adjacent lean-to potato store, to rear of the hall/ dining room and parlour respectively were brought into domestic use. In addition, a new doorway was created in the northeast corner, to link the parlour with the lean-to potato store beyond. The dairy was converted to a bathroom at about the same time and is now linked to the potato store. In fact this might have an the original external door to the dairy from before the potato store was built. Also a stair was introduced into the parlour to provide access to the master chamber above.



[8] *The south front of the farmhouse.*

EXTERIOR

The house is basically a long rectangle, built on an east-west axis and terraced into a gentle slope at its east end. It is two storeys and gable-ended. There is an open-fronted cartshed built at an obtuse angle off the east end. The small area behind the rear doorway and kitchen (between the stairblock and the west-end implement shed) is walled off as a back yard and projects a little into the main farmyard. In 1911 this space was described as a timber and iron –roofed wash house (see documentary history above and Fig.6). It was apparently built after the 1886 OS map.

The south front is the main elevation of the house (Fig.8). It overlooks a small garden to the fields beyond. It extends the full length of the house, and is hedged with hawthorn. This is the show front of the c1880 house. It was extensively re-faced in the 19th century, but clearly includes older masonry. Some of the lower masonry, particularly towards the east end looks as well

coursed as the 17th century masonry in the east end wall (see below), but this is not flattered by the cement pointing from the 1990s. There is also an anomaly in the masonry right (east) of centre at first floor level (Fig.9). It includes a vertical straight join. This does not seem to relate to some blocked opening or feature, but it does coincide with the break between the thicker wall of the parlour chamber to right, and thinner first floor front wall of the hall/ dining room chamber to left. The wall to east has a cob walltop and so does the west end. In the middle the masonry rises to the eaves, presumably relating the the internal crosswall associated with the hall/ dining room chimneystack. The butt join is rather ragged which is consistent with the rebuilding of the first floor level only as



[9] Detail of the south front showing the vertical butt join in the masonry between the two eastern first floor windows. Notice too the Z-shaped plate of the c1880 tie-rod.

far as the front wall of the parlour chamber. That is to say that rebuilt section of masonry to left (west) had to make good against the thicker stub of old masonry retained to right (east). It is the masonry of the east wall which appears to rise up to the eaves and over the top of the eastern masonry. Its position in relation to the internal crosswall is actually off centre to east, which suggests that the upper part of the crosswall was rebuilt with the newer masonry to east of the break. It looks like this was done to accommodate the new roof of c1880.

It is a regular gable-ended four-window front. The front doorway to the cross passage is left of centre. The doorway is a generous size and was rebuilt c1880, although the opening itself may date from the 17th century. The doorframe is constructed from solid timber with pegged joints. The applied architrave has a Greek ogee to a canted fillet moulding. The inside of the frame has applied closing strips moulded with a bead and quirk. It contains a door of plank construction with two glazed panels in the top half. It is hung on pintles from strap hinges. The lower hinge has a teardrop finial and the upper finial is damaged and tapers to a point. On the inside, there is a drawbar arrangement, which possibly survives from the 17th century. Such a feature is rare, if not unknown, in Victorian farmhouses. The whole is sheltered under a simple, gabled porch constructed from local Marland bricks. Its roof is steeply pitched, covered with slates and finished with ridge tiles. The gable verges are hidden behind thin boards, with a flattened arch cut into the lower edge above the porch entrance. There are timber seats inside the porch along each side.

The windows are all replacements from the 1990s, inserted by JE. Stacey and Co.Ltd from Holsworthy (*ex info* Margaret Piper – the owner before the Jessels). They are two and three-light timber framed casements with glazing bars. The ground floor windows have replacement concrete lintels, and all these front windows have replacement Delabole slate sills.

There are two gable end stacks and an off - centre axial stack. They have similar rectangular shafts of Marland brick with simple cornices.

The north wall backs onto the farmyard (Fig.10). Most of the wall of the main range is hidden behind later additions but the kitchen end and rear doorway is exposed to west of the stairblock. This is rear doorway of cross passage and directly opposite the front one. It is therefore off centre to the west in relation to the main range as a whole, but up against the west side of the projecting stairblock. As with the front doorway the opening could



[10] *The back of the house from the northeast. The nearest and lowest of the rear lean-tos is the potato store and, beyond is the dairy and then the stairblock under the same roof.*

date from the 17th century, but it was remodelled in c1880. The frame is similar to the front doorway but lacking the architrave, and it too contains a plank door with two glazed panels in the top half. Directly above the doorway there is a first floor window which lights the bedroom above the cross passage. The window is a two-light timber casement with glazing bars and internal stancheons. The casements are hung on H-hinges. This dates from c1880. To the west of the doorway, at ground floor level, the kitchen has a 20th century two-light timber casement window with glazing bars in the blocking of a second rear doorway. This had been created to provide access from the kitchen to a wash house (see c1911 sketch plan - Fig.6) which was demolished in the mid 20th century (*ex info* Margaret Piper).

The two-storey lean-to projects forward to the east of the doorway. It contains the stairblock and dairy, which share the same roof. However the stone quoining of the straight join between them indicates that the stairblock to the west came first. The stairblock has cob to the walltops. The north front has a single stair window - a two-light timber casement with glazing bars and internal stancheons dating from c1880. The adjacent, and wider, two-storey dairy outshut is rendered in hard cement above first floor level (maybe over cob). It has a window to each level. The ground floor window is a c1880 casement of three lights, with a solid timber, pegged frame and glazing bars. Each

light contains an iron stancheon; the central one external in front of the casement. The apple store above is lit by a fixed single-light timber window with an internal stancheon. It has the same style as the other windows of c1880, but appears to have been re-glazed in the mid 20th century.

The easternmost lean-to is the single-storey former potato store which is partially rendered in cement. Its roof is covered with 20th century corrugated steel sheeting. The store is lit by a timber three-light timber casement window with glazing bars within a solid pegged frame. This was inserted in the 1950s (*ex info* Margaret Piper).

The west end wall is blind. It was rebuilt in c1880 to include a gable-end chimneystack. The wall is thinner than the other outside walls at ground floor level at least, and the masonry exposed in the privy is characteristic of the 19th century random rubblestone construction. The top of the gable was rebuilt in concrete block and refaced in stone in the late 20th century, and the whole of the top (above the lean-to roof) is rendered in cement.

The privy is accessible from the south through an opening which is now lacking a door and frame. The lower sections of the privy walls are of rubblestone construction but the upper sections are cob. It has a monopitch roof, covered in corrugated iron, which is continuous with the roof of the workshop. The north side of the privy is flush with the rear wall of the house with a straight join between the two. It is interesting to note that its position and ready (in)accessibility in relation to the main chambers must have made the use of chamber-pots obligatory, and implies the employment of servants.

[11] *The privy and workshop/ implement shed off the west end of the main house shown from the southwest. All seems to be part of the c1880 rebuild, but there is a sequence. The privy, shown here against the gable-end wall of the house, is built against the house. The shed is built up against it.*



The workshop/ former implement shed is partly constructed from random rubblestone and partly cob (Fig.11). Its monopitch roof is covered in corrugated iron. The blind taller east wall, butts up to the privy and is cob on stone rubble footings, the base of which projects inside as a plinth. The south end wall is also stone rubble and includes a blocked window. The rubblestone continues round the corner along the southern half of the western front, finishing with a neat jamb to a blocked doorway within the rest of the front, which has been reconstructed in mid 20th century concrete blockwork. A post remaining on the inside in the northwestern corner suggests that this blockwork filled a former open front. The north end wall is a rudimentary construction of timber framing and corrugated iron, and contains a full-width 20th century metal door. These 20th century alterations are dated to March 1961 by an inscription in the cement inside. The interior is a single long space, which is narrower at the south end where the privy intrudes a short distance. There is a drain through the rear (east) wall of the workshop, from the small yard to the north of the kitchen part of the house. As mentioned above there was formerly a wash house here. Presumably the drain was from the wash house and continued westwards through the workshop issuing through the open front of the workshop to falling ground beyond.

The east end wall is the gable end of the house with the adjacent east end wall of the potato store. The top of the main block gable was rebuilt in concrete block in the 20th century and the greater part of the upper wall is rendered in cement. However the section sheltered under the cartshed roof and just beyond, to the north, escaped this treatment and shows the face of original 17th century wall construction. This exposed area of wall shows neat local sandstone and mudstone rubble of roughly-shaped blocks which are brought to course. The masonry rises roughly to first floor level with cob above, except the north end which is the back of the 17th century chimneyshaft. The only opening is the first floor window on the farmyard side, which has a pegged timber frame containing a two-light casement with glazing bars, dating from c1880.

The doorway through the north end of the potato store contains a mid-20th century door of small glazed panels above two lower timber panels, each moulded with a Greek ogee to a canted fillet. The contemporary frame has a variant ovolo moulding. This is presumably a more domestic 20th century replacement of the agricultural original.

INTERIOR

Like the outside the interior is essentially the product of the extensive rebuilding of the farm around 1880, but retains and re-uses a couple of 17th century features. As mentioned above the ground plan fossilises the traditional three-room and cross passage plan.

Originally, **the cross passage** was the main thoroughfare in the house separating the domestic from the service rooms. By c1880 it separated the hall/dining room, with parlour beyond, from the west end kitchen. It is lined both sides with thick (presumably stone rubble) crosswalls. The ceiling joists are carried on two plain beams across the passage. At the south end of the passage, a timber pulley survives. This was used to hoist a pig by its back legs for slaughter. Up until recently many older farmers remember participating in this form of slaughter was often undertaken in the cross passage. The photographer Chris Chapman recorded the brothers Joe and Owen White with their slaughtered pig as late as 1978 at Batworthy Farm in Chagford (*The Dartmoor Photographs of Chris Chapman, Vol.1: 10*, high quality black & white prints, 1994).

The doorway off to the east, which leads to the hall/ dining room, contains a 17th century oak frame (Fig.12). It is a fairly heavy and well-worn frame, which includes a threshold. The frame is joined by pegged mortise- and-tenon joints which are true mitres on the front (to the passage). The moulded surround is a fillet to an ovolo moulding down to worn stops, which appear to have been a chamfer to a bar and scroll form. It is common in North Devon to find carved decoration on the stops of 17th century main doorframes. It looks as though the surfaces of the chamfer, bar and scroll here may have received some decoration, though they are so worn that the pattern



[12] The 17th century oak doorframe from the cross passage to the hall/ dining room. It contains an 18th century fielded-panel door.

cannot be recognised. The applied moulding to the inner edge of the frame was added as a doorstep when the door was adapted in c1880. The doorleaf is 18th century with four fielded panels on the passage side (Fig.12). It is hung on late 19th century strap hinges with tiny round finials. On the plainer hall side it is grained. The doorframe may have always been in this position, but the authors suspect that it was reused here in c1880. This is partly down to the level of its ornament, but mostly the degree of wear which might suggest it was an outer door originally, presumably from one end of the cross passage.

Further north there is a narrow second doorway off the east side of the passage into the lobby to the main stair and dairy. The doorway has a plain solid frame and contains a two-panel, possibly of 18th century origins, re-used and cut down to fit its present position in c1880. Now the upper panel is glazed.

On the other (west) side of the passage the doorway into the kitchen all dates from c1880. It has a solid, pegged frame with an applied architrave moulded with the characteristic Greek ogee to a canted fillet. The contemporary door is of plank-and-ledge construction and hung on tapering strap hinges.

The west end service room was converted to a kitchen in c1880, or back kitchen as it is described in 1911 (see above). It is heated by a fireplace in a new chimneystack. The fireplace is smaller than the older fireplaces in the hall/dining room and parlour. Its original timber lintel, which is chamfered with runout stops, can be felt behind a 20th century surround. The fireplace is disused and the oven doorway blocked up but the existence of a bread oven is confirmed by its housing as represented by masonry curving forward in the cupboard under the stairs immediately to north of the fireplace.

The stair to the service chamber above rises round the northwest corner of the kitchen. It is typical of the rustic joinery of the c1880 rebuild, enclosed by vertical pine bead-moulded planks fixed to a frame of chamfered timbers. There is a doorway at the foot of the stairs which is of plank-and-ledge construction and hung on strap hinges which taper to splayed ends. The stairs rise past newel posts, which are chamfered with run out stops, and stick balusters to the plain handrail whilst the top landing of the stair is enclosed by a light post and rail balustrade.

The window in the north wall is in the blocking of a doorway, which is likely to have been associated with the construction of a timber wash house in the back yard, which housed a copper and is remembered by Margaret Piper, the former occupant. The 19th

century south-facing front window has a windowseat.

The first floor is supported on an axial beam, which is chamfered with runout stops., and the joists are exposed.

The hall/ dining room is heated by a fireplace in the eastern crosswall (Fig.13). It is of large size and dates from before c1880. This is described as a kitchen in 1911 (see documentary history above). This suggests that the large fireplace was open then, but, with the “back kitchen” at the west end. It may seem incongruous that the greater part of the farmhouse was taken up by two kitchens. However the back kitchen might be regarded as the more industrial space. It includes evidence for a large bread oven, and there was once a wash house off the north side. It was the workaday kitchen, and also the place where the men from the fields would come in for food and drink. This room, the hall/ dining room, was probably a more private and formal multi-purpose dining room, a more low-level familykitchen and general living room. Since the mid 20th century the fireplace has been mostly blocked in brick, and the lintel covered with lath and plaster, to create a much smaller fireplace. The original has jambs of neatly- finished sandstone blocks and an unchamfered oak lintel. If this plain lintel is the original, it is unlikely that the fireplace was built before c1700, since it seems to have been designed for an applied



[13] *The east end of the hall/ dining room contains the probably 18th century large fireplace, and there is an 18th century door through to the parlour to the right.*

surround or chimneypiece. Its size suggests it was the kitchen fireplace, in a kitchen/ dining room, even before the c1880 kitchen was created at the west end. It would not be surprising to find another, originally older, side-oven in this fireplace.

The c1880 partition along the north side of the room is made up from bevelled vertical timber planks fixed to a post and rail frame, recognisably pine behind the paint. The posts are chamfered with runout stops on the north side. It is plastered on the hall/ dining room side and contains an internal window, borrowing light from the main room to the lobby at the foot of the stairs.

On the other side, the window in the south wall has a window seat, just like the kitchen one mentioned above. The window itself was replaced in the 1990s, but the seat goes back to c1880 at least.

The full-width ceiling is plastered and flat so the form of its construction (and its consequent interpreted date) is unknown.

The doorway to the parlour, through the south end of the east wall, has a solid pegged frame with an applied ogee architrave, which dates from the 18th century (Fig.13). The door has six fielded panels on the hall side, and plain panels on the other. It is grained on the hall side. At first sight it may seem surprising that the best face of the door faces to hall, rather than the higher status parlour beyond. This may lead some to suspect that it has been re-hung the other way round. However, this is quite normal. The door advertises the high status of the room beyond, rather than keeping it secret within.

The parlour is full-width and heated by a fireplace in the east-end wall and is lit by a window to the south. The fireplace is a typical parlour example from the early or mid 17th century. It has neatly-squared sandstone block jambs, with an oak lintel, which has, along the lower edge, a hollow to an ovolo moulding with chamfer to scroll stops (Fig.14). The grain of the oak is shot through by burrs. To the left of the fireplace there is a small oak lintel to a



[14] Detail of the 17th century parlour fireplace showing the stop to the moulding on the oak lintel.

blocked rectangular opening, indicated by a straight join. Its original function is open to speculation, but it may have been a cream oven.

At the front the window has a seat as in the hall and kitchen.

A stair rises against the north wall, roughly in the centre. It is an introduction from the 1950s and is a simple straight flight construction. It has chamfered posts with run out stops and plain stick balusters. Where it has been inserted through the ceiling, it was, in April 2996, possible to see the original ceiling construction. The joists are mostly upright and measure 11 x 17cm. They are full-width and set approximately 32-38 cm apart. The ceiling is lath and plaster with a white lime skim over a haired mud plaster base. The laths are riven (that is to say split rather than sawn). The date of the ceiling joists is uncertain but their size suggests they could be as old as the 17th century. This, with the riven laths and make-up of the ceiling plaster, certainly suggest a date from before c1880.

The dairy: It was commonplace for a dairy to be attached to or be a part of the main farmhouse, as butter and cheesemaking were often the domain of the farmer's wife. Typically they were positioned on the cooler north side, as here at Venn. It was thoroughly modernised and converted to a bathroom in the mid 20th century and incorporated into the main house. The door joinery dates from this period. The only surviving original features are the couple of crossbeams supporting the floor to the apple store. The centre one is quite large with a worn chamfer. The doorway in the east wall could well have been the original external access, until the lean-to potato store was built on the east end.



[15] *The main stair was refurbished c1880, but the lower newel post may survive from the 18th century.*

The potato store is a simple, functional structure and shows few features other than external access through an original opening in the east wall and a window in the north wall. The door and window joinery is mid 20th century.

The main stair possibly dates from first half of the 18th century with some repairs from c1880 (Fig.15). It is a dogleg stair with a balustrade from the half landing to the first floor. There are two newel posts. Both are chamfered posts with faceted mushroom-shaped finials. The stair has a narrow closed string (little more than a board) with stick balusters to a simple handrail. It is difficult to date such plain and rustic joinery. However it does seem that the stair has been repaired. The lower newel post has straight cut stops to the chamfers and looks more worn than the upper one, which has runout stops. Assuming the repair dates from c1880 the stair must be older.

The apple store has access from the upper flight of the main stair. It has a small, c1880 ledged door held on strap hinges with round finials.

The First Floor: Three bedrooms are accessible from the landing and corridor off the main stair. All are fairly plain with most of the joinery dating from c1880. The doors are of plank-and-ledge construction with Suffolk latches and the solid doorframes have applied architraves with Greek ogee to canted fillet mouldings.

The largest chamber is the one at the east end, over the parlour (Fig.16). It is also accessible by means of the 1950s stair. There is no sign of a recent fireplace or the blocking of one in the east end wall. However the deep embrasure of the eastern window

[16] *The first floor chamber at the east end of the first floor level, looking east. A scar along the ceiling shows that there was once an axial partition dividing the space into two.*



includes some neatly dressed limestone blocks which look as though they might have been the jambs of a 17th century fireplace. In the same wall, to the south, there is an alcove, which previously housed a built- in cupboard probably dating from c1880. It has been recently (April 2006) opened up and although it has lost its doors it still has rows of wooden hooks on boards. The window to the south has a full-height embrasure and is deeply recessed, with a seat.

According to Margaret Piper the central room was originally heated. The fireplace was in the east wall and was blocked in the 1970s. There is a cupboard in the alcove to the south, adjacent to the site of the fireplace. There are no features in the small chamber over the passage

The servants' room, above the kitchen, is completely separate from the rest of the first floor and unheated.

The roof is a complete replacement from c1880. It is six bays of A-frames with bolted X-apexes. There are two collars; the lower one is at ceiling level, which is lap-jointed and bolted to the principal rafters. The higher one is secondary, more flimsy than the original and nailed. A vertical post rises from the lower collar to the apex. A plate yoke supports the ridge. There are two sets of staggered back purlins.

THE FARM BUILDINGS

THE THRESHING BARN

A barn appears here on the tithe map of 1842, and is identified as such by a semi-circular projection on the east side, which was undoubtedly a horse engine house. However the barn was rebuilt with the rest of the yard between 1842-1886, on map evidence, c1880 as inferred from documentary evidence. It apparently occupies the footprint of the older barn.

It is on a rough north-south axis facing west into the yard. It is seven bays long, gable-ended, built across the hillslope and terraced into the slope to the rear. It is built from sandstone and mudstone rubble with cob to the top of the walls. The north gable end is constructed from cob, but the southern one is rubblestone, though thinner than the wall below. It incorporates the rubblestone footings of a wider wall from the previous barn in the east wall, at the south end. The rubblestone is fairly neat and blocky. Under the shelter of the cartshed roof, which abuts the southwest corner of the barn, the original finish of the wall is preserved, and shows ribbon pointing in lime, giving it the appearance of neat snecked masonry (neat masonry but randomly coursed and featuring blocks of different sizes)



[17] *The west front of the barn.*

(Fig.18). The roof is slated with earthenware ridge-tiles, probably made in Barnstaple or Bideford.

It has a traditional plan with opposing doorways in the middle of the long walls onto the threshing floor. However it was also built for powered threshing machinery. This is not unusual. With the introduction of new technology many farmers built new barns with the option of old-fashioned hand-threshing. Unusually the south end bay is divided off as a calf house, its ceiling providing a loft at that end. There is a slight problem of interpretation when comparing the physical structure with the historic map evidence. Both the 1886 and 1905 OS maps show the whole space to south of the threshing floor as a separate unit. The division is repeated sketch plan in the Inland Revenue notes from 1911 where the south side is labelled calves. There is no sign of a partition along the south side of the threshing floor, no sign of ventilators in the side walls, and (apart from the existing narrow calf house) no sign of feeding troughs, mangers or the like. The assumption is that the south end was floored from the start with just the south end walled off for calves. The loft level provided a space for granary bins.

.Exterior: The west front has a central large threshing doorway flanked by projecting midstreys cheeks (like pilaster buttresses) (Fig.17). The roof-pitch continues forward between the cheeks to provide a narrow hood over the doorway. The doorway, up three stone steps, is full-height and takes double doors in a sturdy, solid and plain frame, joined with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints. There is a central, removable post which acts as a doorstep when the doors are closed but can be removed when the doors are open. The double doors are of plank-and-ledge construction hung on strap hinges, although the left door is largely a 20th century mend.



[17] *Detail of the original pointing on the south end of the front, preserved within the cartshed.*

To the north of the doorway there are four small, square holes in the wall, which appear to be putlog holes, used to support timber scaffolding used during the construction

of the building. Two have been converted to pigeon holes, by providing slate ledges for the birds to land on. Putlog holes are often filled with stone and mortar which could be easily raked out if they needed to be used again during repairs.

The north end wall has a central loading loft containing double doors in a solid, pegged oak frame, with a central post, for the doors to close against. The doors are ledged and hung on strap hinges. The gable top is cob above the oak lintel of the loft opening. There are more putlog holes to the right of it.

The east long wall to the rear has a central man-sized door to the threshing floor which is formed under a segmental arch of Marland bricks (Fig.19). The frame is solid and pegged, and it contains a door of ledge-and-brace construction, hung on strap hinges. To the left of the door there is a hard standing, apparently on the site of the former horse-engine house. The wall above contains the evidence for a powered machinery inside the barn. There would have been a steam engine on the hard standing (maybe a traction engine that toured the smaller farms after the harvest), and agricultural machinery inside.



[19] *The centre of the north wall, showing the man-sized doorway to the threshing floor, with the driveshaft and belt drive for an external source of power.*

The wall contains a cast-iron driveshaft with a wheel for a belt drive. Further to the left, a small area of blocking indicates the position of a shouting hole, where those working the engine outside could communicate instructions with those on the machines inside. There is a small rectangular hole close to the drive shaft hole. Its purpose is not clear, but could have been provided for another driveshaft. Nicholas Cooper speculates that this was “an opening for some kind of simple control (a string or a chain) whereby someone inside the building could operate a brake or a valve or a reverse on the steam engine.” (letter 02.01.07)



[20] *The southern gable end of the barn. This is all stone rubble, and this end includes a calf-house.*

The south gable-end wall has a doorway to the left, into a calf house, with a segmental arch head made up of Marland bricks (Fig.20). The doorframe is plain solid timber and pegged. The door is of plank-and-ledge construction and hung on strap hinges with one splayed and one teardrop finial. The door has a timber latch. There is also a narrow ventilation slot to the right of the door.

Interior: The remains of the threshing floor survive between the two doors (Fig.21). It consists of hefty timber (probably elm) planks laid between the opposing doorways. They needed to be heavy to withstand the repeated impact of the hand flails. Conventionally they were constructed from either oak or elm. Alongside the front



[21] The inside of the barn, looking south towards the lofted end, and showing the threshing floor in front. The driveshaft with belt drives and gearing comes through the the right-hand (east) side just beyond the threshing floor.

threshing door, there is a keeping place in the wall. These are commonly found in post-medieval barns. They are usually interpreted as places where a flagon could be kept to quench the thirst of those involved in the long sweaty and dusty task of hand flailing the wheat. Additionally, it could store the grease needed to keep the joints of the hand flails swivelling smoothly.

The loft, to the south of the threshing floor, seems to date back as far as the 1886 OS map (Fig.4). The only feature in the calf house is a stone feed trough on the north side. The loft floor has ladder access from the north end and is carried on plain beams embedded in the side walls. It includes the remains of two timber corn bins.

The cob is given a smooth finish inside the barn, and the lower walls have the remains of a plaster finish. This is fairly commonplace inside threshing barns, the intention being to reduce the collection of dust and deter vermin.

The rear also includes the inside end of the iron driveshaft with a wheel for a belt drive and a gear train, and alongside is the blocked shouting hole (Fig.21).

The barn has c1880 roof of A-frames with X-apexes and halved, lap-jointed collars, which are bolted together. In addition there is a second collar to each truss. At the north end, there is a plate yoke, which extends down to the collar and another to the adjacent truss, (but this one appears to be broken off below the apex). The barn drops slightly to the north, and the purpose of the elongated plate yoke is to level up the ridge. The plate yokes are notched for the ridgeboard. Most of the principals are supported on pads in the wall tops. They carry two sets of staggered back purlins.

Discussion: The threshing barn at Venn follows the basic traditional form, even though it was also designed for powered machinery. It represents a bridge between the ancient and modern farming worlds. Typically, a traditional threshing barn had three sections, the threshing floor in the middle for hand flailing and winnowing, (often called the midstrey) a section to one side for the unthreshed sheaves and a section on the other for the threshed straw. The ears of wheat were threshed on the floor with flails made from two sticks, the upper one shorter than the lower and jointed between by a universal joint, which allowed the flail to be used like a whip. The grain would then be dressed, or winnowed. It was repeatedly thrown into the air and caught in a basket or a shovel especially adapted for the purpose, until the chaff had been dispersed by the through draught. Alternatively the grain could be winnowed outside. It was common for threshing doors to be of two flaps, so that the draught could be better controlled. This was evidently not considered necessary here. Grain was sometimes stored in a loft in the barn, but was often kept in bins in a dedicated granary (as here), elsewhere sometimes in the farmhouse. It was after all a valuable commodity. It must also be pointed out that a barn could be used for storing other materials, and when empty could be put to other uses, such as lambing in the spring.

By the early 19th century, the threshing process had become mechanised. Commonly, the threshing machine was powered by a horse engine situated outside the barn (See Devon Building, An introduction to Local Traditions, ed. Peter Beacham, p67-68 for drawing and explanation of how a horse engine works). Later in the 19th century, the horse engine was often replaced by a steam engine, and by the early 20th century, a diesel engine.

Some barns have opposing full-height doorways and some, like Venn, have only the one. These are commonly described as wagon entries. However this cannot be the case here because of the steps up to the front doorway. This is not an uncommon feature of Devon barns where, it seems, the sheaves had to be hand pitched onto the floor from a wagon standing outside the front doorway. Alternatively they could be delivered through the loading hatch in the north end.

THE WORKING HORSE STABLE

This stable was built c1880 and is the only surviving part of a larger building complex which originally comprised a double gable-ended block with the stable to the south, a shippon to the north and a further lean-to to the north of the shippon, which was another calf house with one end walled off as a root store. It is shown complete on the first and second edition OS maps of 1886 and 1905 (figs.4 & 5) in its three parts, and was recorded as part of the 1911 Inland Revenue 'Domesday' survey (by which time calves also occupied the eastern end of the stable) (Fig.6). It survived in this complete form, with additional lean-tos off the west, east and south side, until 1994, when the northern sections (and lean-tos) were pulled down. It is recorded complete on the aerial photograph of the farmstead from c1970 (Fig.7), and its demolition was recorded in a series of photographs taken by the Piper family (Figs.22-28). The last agricultural use of the stable was as a shippon, and it had been used for this purpose for a considerable number of years.

It seems as the surviving southern block was built as two stables, the west one a little larger than the other. In 1911 the western stable was recorded as containing four stalls. It is the generous doors and windows that identify this block as stables. Such windows would never be provided for cattle. However it is clear from the buildings that the farm was requiring more and more accommodation for cattle through the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The building is five bays long and constructed from local mudstone and sandstone rubblestone, some of which is semi-dressed and roughly brought to course in places. The arches above the ground floor doors and windows are constructed in Marland brick. It is gable-ended and the roof is covered with corrugated sheeting (replacing the slate shown on the old photographs). Besides the blind rear wall of the stable which was the shared division, all that remains of the shippon to the rear is the lower part of the west end wall, with a central drain-hole, with the remains of an original window above and a secondary window to the south. It extends northwards as a low wall as far as the end of the former calf house (Fig.29).

Exterior: The south (front) wall of the stable has a central blocked doorway (now blocked up and containing a window), a loft hatch above, ground floor window to either side, and a large doorway at the east end (Fig.30). All four ground floor openings have low segmental arch heads of Marland brick. The two doorways are relatively wide, which



THE c1880 MULT-PURPOSE BLOCK IN THE CENTRE OF THE YARD IN 1994.

- [22] The complete stable, shippon, calf house and root store block from the east. The right hand gable, to the shippon, includes a load of cob.*
- [23] By 1994 the south range was a milking parlour with a mid 20th century concrete blockwork lean-to in front for the milk tank.*
- [24] The 20th century lean-to was removed.*
- [25] The west end elevation with the stable, shippon and calf house still standing.*
- [26] A photograph taken within the shippon, looking west, during demolition. Although part of the north wall has gone, the roof structure is still there.*
- [27] The north side of the range was the leanto calf house (taking up the right hand two thirds or so) with the boarded root store to left. A photograph taken during demolition.*
- [28] Another view of the same.*

All these photographs were provided by Rosemary and Jeremy Jessel.



- [29] *The west end of the working horse stable/ the later shippon and milking parlour showing the low wall extending to left (north) across the ends of the former shippon and calf house.*
- [30] *The south front of the former working horse stable in 2006.*
- [31] *The roof of the former working horse stable looking west.*

is characteristic of a stable door for a working horse. The east doorway is an original opening but it now contains a rough 20th century frame and steel door. The central doorway now includes a mid 20th century top-tilting timber casement above concrete blockwork in the lower half of the original opening. To the right of the blocked doorway there is a window opening containing a probably original transomed two-light timber window with pegged joints. The window to the left is now blocked with timber boarding. The loft hatch above the central doorway has a plank-and-ledge door, which could be the original, in a plain, pegged timber frame,

The east end and the north wall to the rear are blind, and the west wall contains a blocked small ground floor window under a low segmental arch head of Marland brick.

Interior: This is fitted out with mid 20th century concrete cow stalls and a concrete floor with a wide drain channel. It was lofted originally. There is a single beam remaining at the west end and a few stubs elsewhere. This survivor shows that there are no original housings for final joists against the back wall, which indicates a feeding gap. This was used to drop hay from the loft into a hay rack below.

The roof is five bays of 19th century A-frames with bolted X-apexes (Fig.31). As in the threshing barn, a plate yoke, which extends down to the collar, is used to level up the ridge at the west end where the stable drops away slightly. The plate yoke supports a ridgeboard. The adjacent truss has the remains of the extended plate yoke. The feet of the principals rest on pads in the wall and there is a wall plate on the south side. The collars are halved and lap-jointed. There are two sets of staggered back purlins. In four places the purlins rest in a notch in the top of the collar. The rafters are 20th century replacement coupled rafters.

GRANARY AND RIDING HORSE STABLE

The granary is a small two-storey building on the north side of the yard and is set into a bank bordering the orchard to the north. Like most of the yard buildings it was built in c1880 and appears on the OS map of 1886, with a narrow building projecting from the west side, which is known to have been pigsties. It is identified in the sketch plan of 1911 as a granary over a shippon for three, but, for the reasons described above, the size of the original window suggests it was designed as a small stable. Dedicated granaries became a common feature of late 19th century farms, having been quite rare before. They reflect the mechanised revolution which affected Victorian agriculture.

It is a two-bay, two-storey building with the granary above, reached by a flight of external stone steps to the east, and a small stable below (Fig.32). It is constructed from mudstone and sandstone rubblestone and quoins bonded in mud mortar. A patch of original lime render survives on the west wall (Fig.34). The northeast corner was reconstructed in concrete block in the 20th century. It is gable ended with a slate roof and red earthenware ridge tiles consisting of alternate plain and roll moulded tiles.

The south (front) wall (Fig.33) has a central doorway with an oak lintel, and a ledged



- [32] *The east end of the granary over the putative riding horse stable, showing the external stairs up to the first floor granary.*
- [33] *The south front and west end of the granary over the putative ridinghorse stable.*
- [34] *A detail of the blind west wall of the granary block showing the surviving remnants of its lime plaster render.*

plank door hung on pintles with strap hinges with a teardrop and plain finial. The frame is solid and pegged. There is an opening to the right under an oak lintel but without a frame. A small central window to the loft above has Marland brick dressings and an unglazed timber frame. A similar loft window in the north wall preserves its original boarded shutter with chamfered ledges. The west wall is blind. The east wall has the external stone steps, with some mended with concrete treads, up to a doorway which has a solid frame, and a ledge and brace door under an oak lintel.

The riding horse stable has a cobble floor with a drain running east-west to an exit hole through the south. Along the north end, kerbstones form the lower edge of a trough, which is divided by brick into four compartments. Three upright staves, tethering posts, rise from the kerbstones and are fixed at the top of the first floor joists. The joists run east-west and the ends rest on slate pads in the wall. The walls of the granary are plastered in lime to keep dust

levels low and deter vermin. Marks on the wall show how the loft was divided with corn bins.

The roof is two bays with an A-frame with a bolted X-apex, and a lap-jointed collar. There is one set of back purlins and a ridgeboard. The rafters sit on a wall plate to the north. The slates are torched below. This practice consisted of laying up lime mortar between the slates from the inside to prevent condensation.

LINHAY

The linhay lies at the end of the northern arm of the yard to the northeast of the orchard, and backs onto fields. It was built between 1886 and 1905. It appears on the 1905 OS map with its own small yard to the front. The 1911 sketch plan shows it divided into



[35] *The south front of the linhay.*

[36] *The linhay from the northeast showing the rear wall and the east end containing the hayloft loading hatch.*

[37] *The roof structure of the linhay looking east. The end wall contains a socket towards the left hand side which, with others, suggests an original lofted building.*



two. It is three bays long, gable-ended and faces south (Fig.35). Linhays are a particular type of shelter shed found in Devon. Conventionally they consist of an open front, with shelter for cattle below a tallet, which was used for storing hay. The tallet was usually open, but sometimes it could be boarded. Later alterations have removed just about all evidence of the tallet floor, except for a couple of holes on the cob at loft level. It is also tall enough to accommodate a tallet, and the loft hatch would suggest that there must have been one.

It is constructed from local rubblestone and cob. The east gable and back wall are cob over tall stone rubble footings (Fig.36), and the north gable is all rubblestone (maybe a rebuild). There is a loft hatch in the east gable end. It has a ledge and brace door and is hung on strap hinges with teardrop finials. It has a solid pegged frame, lintel and sill. There is a doorway through the north end wall (from the orchard). The south front is open and supported on secondary timber posts. There is a stone trough and the remains of a hayrack along the back wall.

The roof is three bays of waney principals with halved, lap-jointed scissor braces (Fig.37). The feet of the principals rest on timber pads in the cob wall to the rear and onto the tops of the posts to the front. The timbers are pegged and nailed. There is no evidence of the original purlins. The common rafters are 20th century replacements for the corrugated iron roof.

CARTSHED

This is an open-fronted building between the house and the barn on the south side of the yard, which was built between 1886-1905. It is described on the 1911 sketch plan as an “open cart lodge”. On the 1886 OS map there is a straight yard boundary, either hedge or wall, between the southwest corner of the house and the southwest corner of the barn. The rear wall of the cartshed is at a different angle so that it cants into the field to the west with a short return at the north end to meet the barn. This was apparently built this way so that the front of the shed did not interfere with the front doorway of the barn.

It is three wide bays long and open-fronted (Fig.38). The roof is monopitch and covered with corrugated iron. The rear (south) wall is constructed from mudstone and

sandstone rubblestone and bonded with mud mortar and pointed in lime. The short return at the back of the north end includes a doorway from the field, which now contains a 20th century ledge and brace door and frame. Otherwise the end walls are those of the barn and the house.

The north front is open, with waney, square-section posts supporting the roof timbers.

Inside there is a keeping place under an oak lintel in the back wall. This would have been used for storing small tools and materials for the carts, such as grease. The floor is cobbled.



[38] The inside of the cartshed looking west from the barn end towards the end of the house. the rear wall to left includes a keeping place. The capentry is rather rudimentary.

July 2006 (revised July 2008)

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267A/ PW1 churchwardens accounts and rates, Buckland Brewer, does not seem to include East Putford

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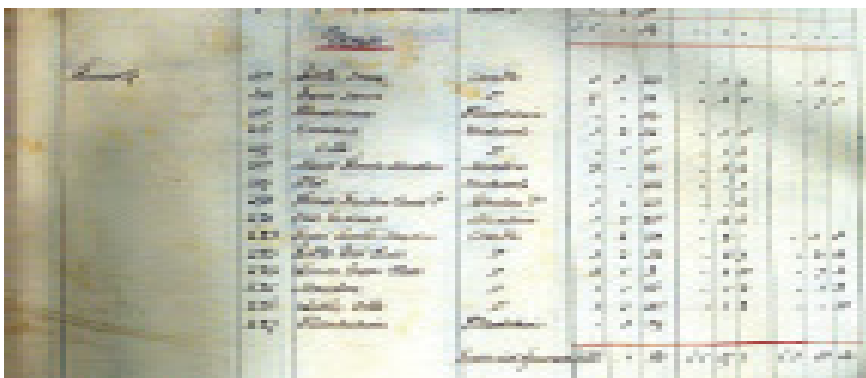
Private

Owners' documents of title, 20th century; earlier deeds are understood to remain with the Piper family who retain agricultural land.

APPENDIX 1

THE TITHE AWARD 1841

Number on map			acreage		
			A	R	P
313	Little Down	arable	3	3	32
314	Great Down	Do	9	-	10
315	Plantation	plantation	-	-	34
316	Orchard	orchard	1	2	32
317	Ditto	Do	-	1	8
318	Malt House Meadow	meadow	2	-	36
319	Plot	orchard	-	-	24
320	House Garden Court &c garden &c		1	1	33
321	Old Orchard	meadow	1	2	28
322	Great South Meadow	arable	1	3	20
323	Colts Foot Close	Do	3	3	32
324	Lower Green Close	Do	4	1	2
325	Meadow	Do	1	1	16
326	Little Ditto	Do	1	3	38
327	Plantation	plantation	-	3	29
328	Wester Rix and Beams	arable	3	-	8
329	Easter Rix and Beams	Do	2	2	36
330	Middle Green Close	Do	6	1	20
331	Higher Ditto	Do	9	-	20
333	Grove	Do	1	1	21
334	Little Newer Park	Do	4	3	24
335	Homeward Newer Park	Do	9	-	32
336	North Ditto	Do	8	1	8
337	Shap	Do	5	2	16
338	Higher Wester New Grounds	Do	6	1	22
339	Lower Ditto	Do	5	2	20
340	Plantation	plantation	-	1	31
341	House Gardens & c		-	1	2
342	Lane	lane	-	1	22
343	Higher Easter New Grounds	arable occlly	6	1	36
345	Collins Down	Do	11	1	12
345a	Waste	waste	-	1	10
346	Lower Easter New Grounds	arable occlly	10	2	10
347	Moor	Do	11	3	-
348	Marsh Moor	Do	16	1	34
			161	-	10



[39] A photograph of the opening part of the 1841 tithe award in the East Putford parish apportionment.

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Debbie Horton was site assistant.

The staffs of the West Country Studies Library, The Devon Record Office, the North Devon Record Office, and the Public Record Office.

Sandi Ellison input the text.

CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

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The purpose of this report is to give an opinion on the specific matter which was the subject of the request and not to comment on the general condition of the buildings.

Parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed, or otherwise concealed and/or inaccessible have not been inspected.

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