

CHAPTER 12.

AMENITIES

OF TODAY

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atque vale

"Today" will be history tomorrow. A few glances at existing conditions will not come amiss.

Nothing approaching a full description of the varied

scene can be attempted.

The preceding Book Survey. The preceding the material which has been found here, alongside may be of use in the

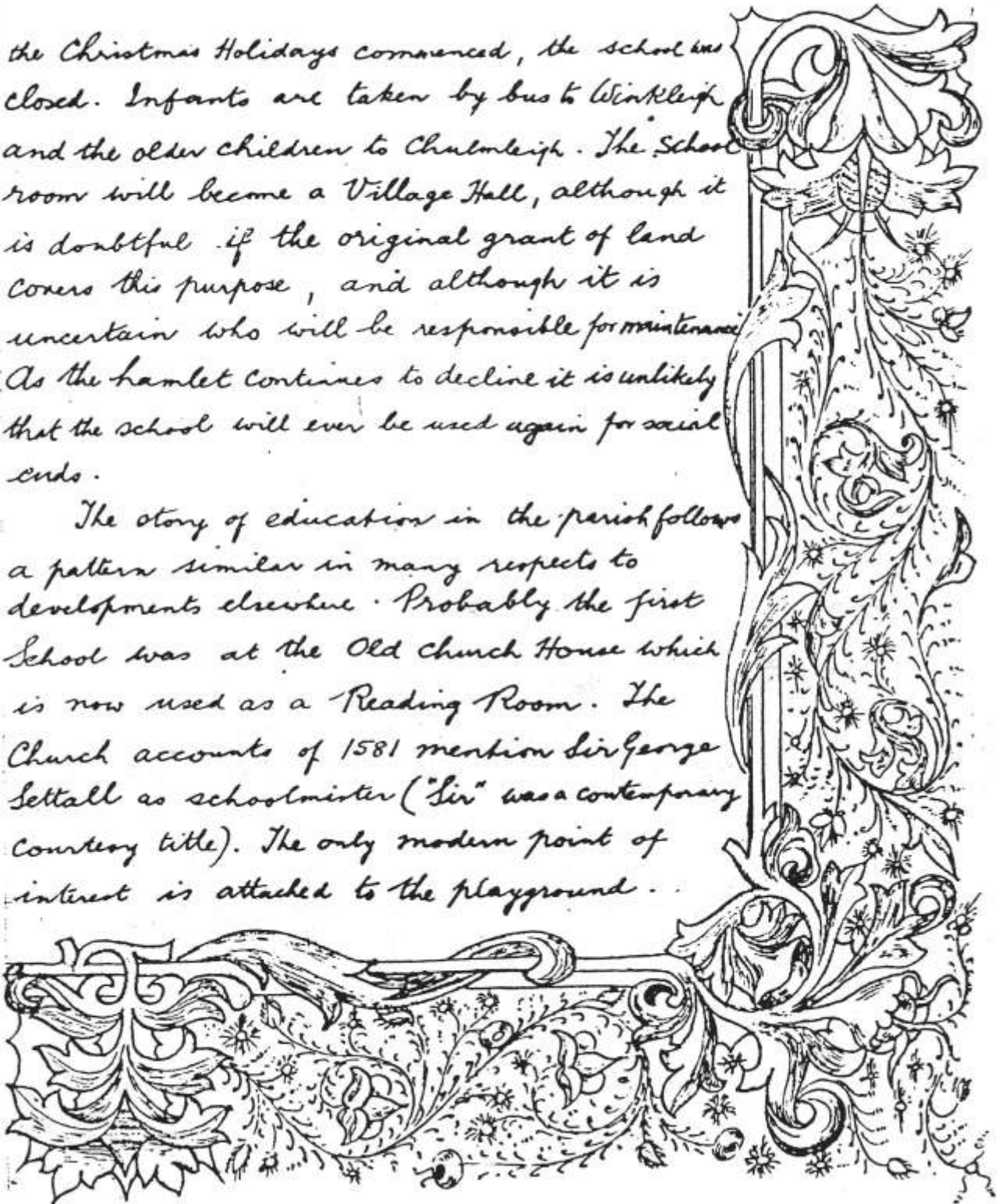
For shall we attempt to give a Guide Chapters, however, will not contain all been collected together. The remnants will the aspects, such as Footpaths, which future

The Butler Education Act has profoundly affected rural schooling. For some years before the 1939-45 war attempts were made by the School Managers and the County Education Authority to close the hamlet school at Hollacombe.

A spirited fight put up by parents resulted in the case being brought before the London department and the County Council were forced to stay their hand. But in 1946, when

the Christmas Holidays commenced, the school was closed. Infants are taken by bus to Winkley and the older children to Chulmleigh. The School room will become a Village Hall, although it is doubtful if the original grant of land covers this purpose, and although it is uncertain who will be responsible for maintenance. As the hamlet continues to decline it is unlikely that the school will ever be used again for social ends.

The story of education in the parish follows a pattern similar in many respects to developments elsewhere. Probably the first School was at the Old Church House which is now used as a Reading Room. The Church accounts of 1581 mention Sir George Settall as schoolmaster ("Sir" was a contemporary country title). The only modern point of interest is attached to the playground.





In 1921 The Charity Commission Committee asserted that the land had been appropriated by "Squire" Luxton in the previous century. It is understood, however, that even if the

SSERTION

was proven, the cost of litigation would have been entirely disproportionate to the advantage to be gained.^{1.} A second school was erected in 1840 adjoining Croft Castle. The National Society supplemented public subscription. A few years later it was reported that the childrens' pence and voluntary contributions kept it going. Seventy children were in attendance.^{2.} After the 1870 Act a School Board was formed. The present building, and third school, was built in 1876 on a site costing twenty pounds. The building and the Masters House cost £1275. The proposal had been that the Castle School should be converted into a Master's House, but the vicar was unwilling to give up his interest in the latter, unless he was given the right to hold a Sunday School and Confirmation Classes in the New Board School. The Castle School would then have been used as an Infants School.^{3.} Today it remains a Sunday

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ENOCRAGES)

School, used also for social gatherings and church work. In 1902 the new school became the Council School. In 1908 it reached its peak attendance with 165 children on the books.

The smallest number was 65 in 1926. The numbers picked up again thereafter.

The hamlet school, which we noted as having been closed, was founded in 1882. Its peak came in 1898 with 58. By 1935 only 15 attended. Children who attended both Hollacombe and Winklergh schools will swear that they were better taught at Hollacombe. When they became parents themselves they used this as one argument against the closing of the hamlet school.

The Church House has been mentioned already as an early school. It was probably built in 1535 at a cost of £28. 14^{s.} 4^{d.} by the eight church guilds. It is a plain building of good stone and has a thatched roof. The upper floor consists of one large room and in this, until a few years ago, the ancient chest of the FOUR MEN stood. It was the meeting place of the guilds and there also was brewed the mild ale, the cakes



and bread baked and the Hoggen stuff prepared for the Hoggen Feast (see p)

In Chapter Four the story of the Village Hall appeared as an incidental. We can now treat it as the second Public meeting Place. It was opened in 1939, four years after the Silver Jubilee. The site was presented by Mr R M Chambers who also gave most of the materials from the demolished mansions of Eggesford House (seat of the late Earl of Portsmouth) and Winscott, Petersmarland (residence of the late Colonel Moore-Stevens). He also built it, at a cost of £1265. Public subscriptions at the time of opening stood at £804 but a grant was made from the National Social Service Council to help. The Hall is the property of the parishioners, managed by a representative of every organisation and denomination and





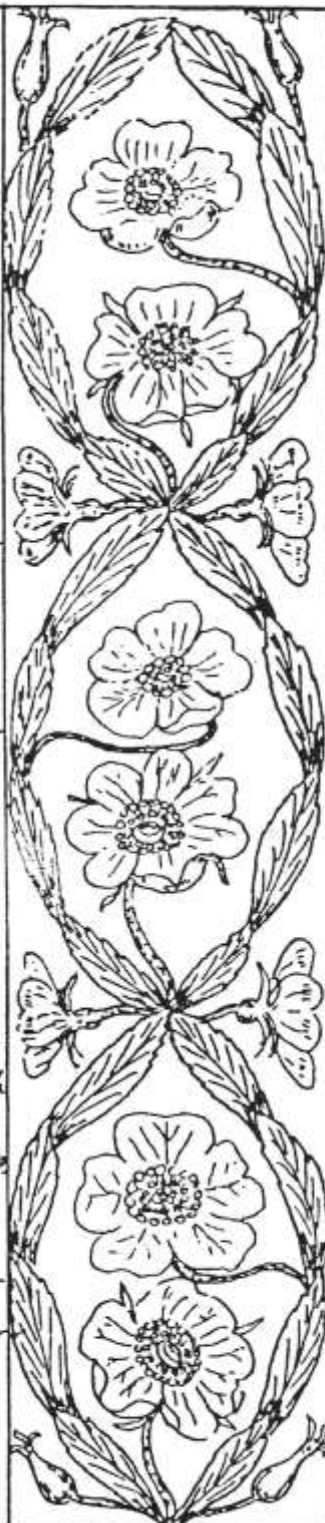
and governed by the Charity Commissioners. The building has a frontage of Stone and Granite Coping, with turfed enclosures on either side. The entrance gates are from Eggesford House, and the marble pillars supporting the gothic arch of the entrance are from Winscott. The Hall floor is made up of maple wood blocks. There are four dressing-rooms, refreshment room and Kitchen, a stage and an operating chamber for Cinematograph shows. If it is viewed separately, the entrance to the Hall and the Entrance gates are works of the Craftsmen's art, but architecturally the whole is incongruous. The attempt to fuse modern work (Eggesford House) with that of a much earlier period (Winscott) can only have one result which time cannot change.

The third Hall, which makes Winkfield a well provided parish is the Church Hall, opened in 1938. It was built on the site originally intended for the **ubilee Hall**, and offered free. When the Hall was finally built a £100 had to be paid for the land. Seven parishioners

guaranteed the whole of the cost of about £700.

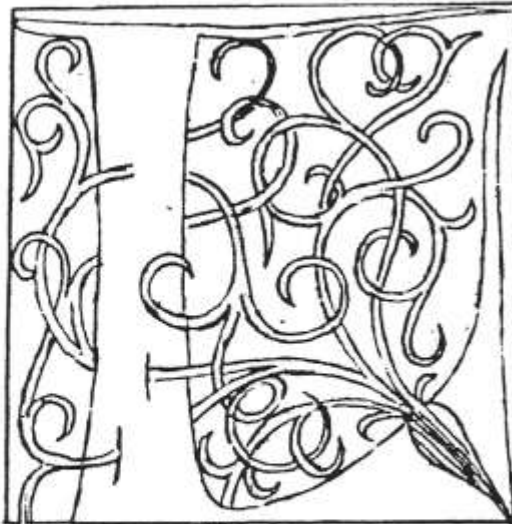
It too is vested in the Charity Commissioners and administered by local trustees. It is unassuming in its concrete and is the largest for the use of all denominations. It is actually an extension of the Castle School which in turn forms a vestibule to the Hall.

As was often the case where the patronage of a Rectory was originally invested in a monastery, Winklergh possesses both Rectory and Vicarage Houses. The former stands on the eastern side of the Church-yard and has been known as the Parsonage as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is



doubtful if the present building was the one referred to in 1310 by Bishop Stapeldon as being almost in ruins, or the same building referred to by Bishop Grandisson (on the same visit as described in page . . .) It has now been purchased from the Dean and Chapter of Exeter by a private individual. The Vicarage is pleasantly situated, at the south west end of the Village, overlooking Croft on the south. Its value has been spoiled by the building of the Village Hall. It is approached by a delightful avenue of trees from the west and there is a footpath from the south.

Glebe



AND

and a good garden

surround it. There are ten rooms. The building has no particular architectural features, having been built about the middle of the nineteenth century. It is

understood
is now

that the old Vicarage once stood on what
the garden.

discussed
The present
situation
Council.

can be seen,
Darkmoor,
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External
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to be buried.

accustomed to
Edmund Keynes

Plans for a public cemetery have been recently but nothing new has been proposed. The parish Churchyard has a magnificent and is beautifully kept by the Church. Cresswell notes that from the south side on a clear day, a magnificent view of its low crowned height on the far horizon grandeur to the dignity of the situation. interments are of relatively modern times parishioners used to claim, almost as of right, under the particular spot where they had worship. The earliest floor slab is that of and is dated 1456, while the earliest written record is 1564 where mention is made in the Church Accounts





shamed as the devil's side. Even this is now "crowded" and hence the talk of a public cemetery. The

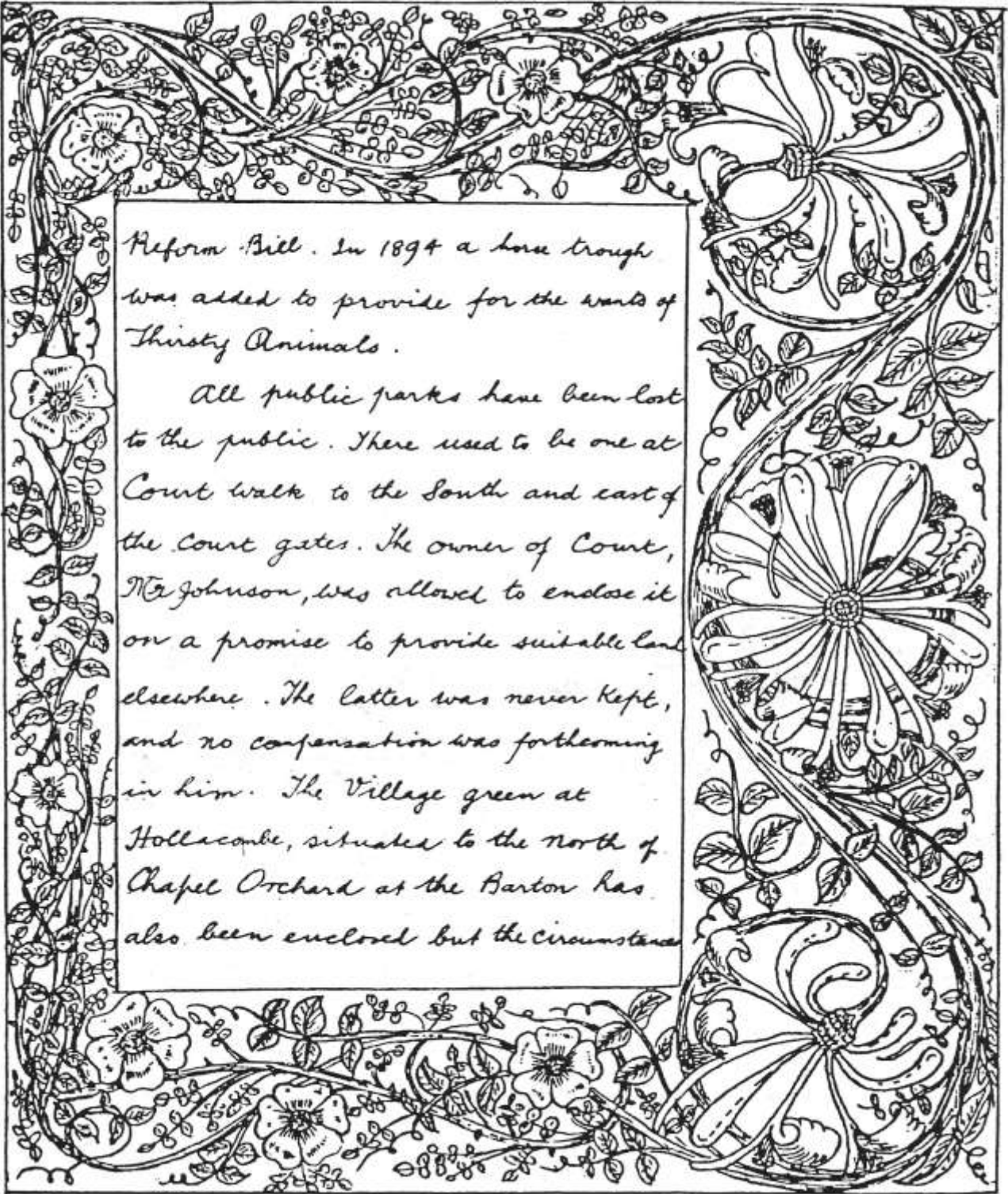
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graveyard in the parish is the one attached to the Congregational

Chapel at Hollacombe. Its date is

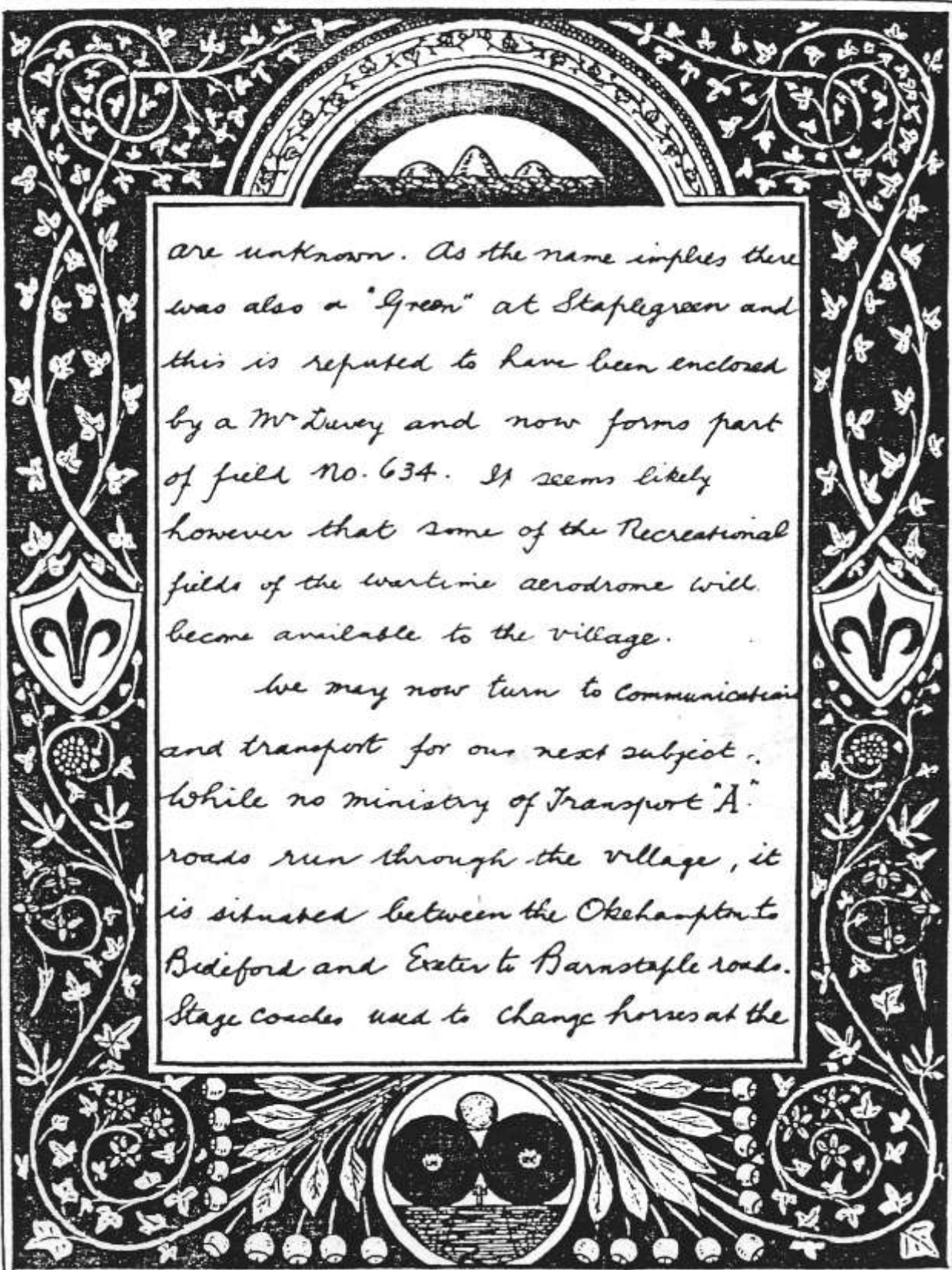
unknown but there is a record in 1853 of a burial ground for Independents.⁸ Recently a portion of "Longland" field was given as an extension. The Established Church had tried to consecrate land attached to the Mission Church, which had been given by Lord Portsmouth in 1888 but the Independents opposed this and the scheme was dropped. In all probability bodies were buried at the ancient Chapel at Hollacombe Barton, for apparent gravestones have been discovered and the floor of the building shows clear signs. The *Portus defunctuorum* were probably buried there.

The War Memorial was erected in 1921 at a cost of £220. It stands in the churchyard, a plain, rough, granite Devon Cross with three steps as a pedestal and an inscription giving the names of the fallen. The only other memorial is a composite one, entirely secular and at once utilitarian as well. It is the Village Pump commemorating the four heroes of the Great



Reform Bill. In 1894 a horse trough
was added to provide for the wants of
Thirsty Animals.

All public parks have been lost
to the public. There used to be one at
Court walk to the South and east of
the Court gates. The owner of Court,
Mr Johnson, was allowed to enclose it
on a promise to provide suitable land
elsewhere. The latter was never kept,
and no compensation was forthcoming
in him. The Village green at
Hollacombe, situated to the North of
Chapel Orchard at the Barton has
also been enclosed but the circumstances



are unknown. As the name implies there was also a "Green" at Staplegreen and this is reputed to have been enclosed by a Mr. Tuvey and now forms part of field No. 634. It seems likely however that some of the Recreational fields of the wartime aerodrome will become available to the village.

We may now turn to Communication and transport for our next subject. While no ministry of Transport "A" roads run through the village, it is situated between the Okehampton to Bideford and Exeter to Barnstaple roads. Stage coaches used to change horses at the

Clotworthy Arms. The village was also a terminal for a carrier service to Plymouth. Joe Ashton, an old folks say, used to carry an assortment of farm produce. He left in the evening, resting and feeding the horses at Okehampton and arriving at Plymouth the following morning. The return journey was made up with a load consisting mainly of barrels of beer and Plymouth Gin!

This is indeed an interesting sideline on the economics of trade but a diversion from an account of Communications.

Parishioners of Winkleigh cared the discomfort of the general state of the roads, in their journeys to the markets, and on trying to trything. According to the Church Accounts consideration was shown in 1588 when $\text{iii} \text{ s } \text{d}$ was paid for

covering over frost ground with stones.⁹ It is only in recent years that we have a second class road to our credit, and, excepting the old Exeter to Bideford road, the others were avoided by motorists for many years. Even today



some are shunned, as from Winkleigh to Hollacombe, when a circular journey is made via Hollacombe Moor.

The road to Uxbridge has been greatly

improved. Awkward corners have been rounded off, three at Hollacombe, and some on the North Tawton and Chulmleigh roads, but not with that thoroughness which is essential for present day locomotion. Many of the so called roads (lanes) have been neglected, both by the authorities and residents. There are times when the lane from



Hollacombe to Ashreigney by way of Head Combe is covered with long grass. This would not have been possible fifty years ago when there was more traffic between Hollacombe and Ashreigney. Other roads are the same deplorable condition and on them no stone has been laid in the memory of the oldest inhabitants.

Much the same can be said of the numerous paths. There are fewer labourers than formerly and owners of cycles have no use for the old paths, which have fallen into disuse.

This has certain dangers. A hundred years ago, the inhabitants would resist any attempt to close a path, however slight the diversion from an established footway. Trouble usually arose when a farm labourer changed masters, but a threat to use a saw if the gate was locked, usually resulted in a satisfactory conclusion to the dispute. One path in particular is remembered, over which two farmers clashed, on this thorny subject. One declaring he would spend £200 to close it, the other accepting the challenge with a vow to double the amount to prevent the closure. There was no law suit, and the path remains to this day. (Wood Terril).

Disputes regarding right of way are not confined to the Victorian age. In 1235 Wermundas (de Porta Mortuo) and Robert Courtenay

in Dyvilton (Dolton) were appealing to the Chancery Courts regarding a right of way on their boundaries, probably in the region of the old turnpike road, which divides the parish.¹⁰ In modern times it is as well to have some record of rights of way and a list of such¹¹. paths are given in a further note.

There are still few fords in the parish where the road or pathway dips down to the freshet.

The least ambitious construction over other small streams is the Clapper bridge. There are eleven of these, of which the one at Claypits is of unusual size for the district. It is 18½ feet long and over 2 feet broad, made, it is understood, to allow the passage of perambulators. The Rural District Council would have been wise to have built a stone bridge here. The Course of the stream would have to be slightly diverted but the length of the ford, about 200 feet, would be considerably shortened.

Of the many small bridges in the parish, all are classed as arched bridges and are built of local stone. Leach Bridge is a good example of this, and, as with all the others, has one arch only. It was built in 1834 by Simon Brook who had previously moved from Idlesleigh to the parish.



Durdou and Cox's Bridge are similar, having a fourteen foot span and an arch which sweeps gradually to a height of four feet from the level of the buttresses. Some have steel railings at the sides, as at New Bridge, Hollacombe where the footway was also reinforced. The

^{12.}ridge at Pensford in 1795

was made of wood, but it is now built of stone, with a wooden rail

Graduating to larger bridges, perhaps the best example is the new bridge over the Taw, Completed in 1937. A girder bridge of granite and reinforced concrete was erected above the old one. It was designed as part of a road improvement. A winding lane has been converted into a good road as a result. It is low pitched and has a rather low segmented single arch but it is sufficient for the maximum flood water. If it is observed from the line of the river bank the greatest possible economy in material will be noted. The road is not at right angles with the river and the consequent curve is very pleasing. The granite voussoirs add strength and beauty to the structure. The side walls are also granite capped. There is a paved footway ^{13.} on the up side and a little course on the opposite side. Page

described a former bridge at this site, perhaps the one dating from Queen Elizabeth's day. A church account probably refers to this bridge and in the next century two more payments to the constable for upkeep are to be found. Domesday calls the place *Brisforda* and *Brigeforda* which might indicate a bridge even at that remote time, or at least a ford.¹⁴

Fires have done little to destroy the old shape of the village. But in the last fifty years something of the old world charm has been lost by this agency. "The Butcher's Arms" and two houses were destroyed in 1896; the Winkleigh Arms which replaced them is not over beautiful. The loss of the Police Station in 1899 could be borne with, no doubt. But the fire which destroyed the medieval Hollacombe Barton destroyed something really historic¹⁵. Likewise the fire¹⁵ at windmill Cottage was a blow to all beauty lovers.



Perhaps others will deplore the passing of the cobbled pavements just before the Second war when Mr. Barber provided concrete paths. At least visitors were spared sprained ankles. It was about this time too (1937) that electric light lit the streets and houses. This did away with the oil lamps installed at the time of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria (1897) by the generosity of a Wankleugh expatriate. (He was then suitably rewarded by the Committee with a silver medal and an illuminated address.) Hollescombe will wait for some time for a similar set of utilitarian improvements.

A. Ambie Telephone Postoffice was only allowed by the Postoffice Department when two villagers stood bond in case it proved a non-paying concern - a most remarkable condition when we remember the immense profits of the Postoffice. Electricity is only known in some of the larger farm-houses which have been able to install diesel oil generating sets to give them their own supply, financed by the prosperous war years. The ordinary folk could watch the twinkling lights of the outer Aerodrome ring circuit, but what was possible in war time has proved as yet impossible in peace time.

Even the attempt made by the Rural District Council to supply cottages below Chapel Wood with tap water seems a mockery.

The taps are fixed on the opposite side of the road in most cases. Since the "well" is too shallow and the pipes only lightly covered with soil the first heavy lorry which passes usually ruptures the pipe. Surely a Gilbertian state for the twentieth century.

Some of the older guide books to Devon are not enthusiastic in their descriptions of.

the Village. Henry Besley's book states that "Winkleigh consists only of a few mean houses,



admitting that there had been an Inn built within the last 15 years, Called Clatworthy Arms, which affords a somewhat better accommodation for strangers than formerly existed.¹⁶ Another writer was of the opinion "that all the cottages should be pushed over the hillside"! Salmon, in his guide states that there were two Castles which have not been traced¹⁷; whilst King, in his handbook for travellers, gives Winkleigh - Keynes and Up Hollarcombe, as the two castles in the parish.¹⁸

Writing on Norman Castles, Rowe in his Perambulation of Dartmoor includes Winkleigh.¹⁹

The Moderns are more appreciative. Mais

says, "we are cut off from the outside world, in the midst of rich colours with no crowd to despoil nature in her beauty. We are unlikely to meet a passer by all the way from Torrington to Winkleigh, or down the long gentle slope²⁰ from Winkleigh to Morchard Road. L. du G. Peach and Gyrth Russell, after climbing the rolling hills to Winkleigh, declare it to be a pleasant little village, with fine views of Dartmoor to the southwards. They are full of praise for the magnificent view which awaits for whomsoever has sufficient perseverance and energy to climb to the top of the Church Tower.²¹ Winbolts "Devon" has a good account of Winkleigh for a "guide", and, after suggesting that Winkleigh may have been a signalling

station in pre-historic times, ends with a note on the site, which, he states is interesting. "It is difficult to resist the impression that it has a very long history."²²

Indubitably so, as these pages show. Arthur mee, in "Shadow and Dust" has more to say about the beautiful Church, including "the quaintest things to be seen outside, - the trumpeting angel up aloft, and the remarkably fine gargoyle dogs".²³ The "Penguin" Devon also has a few words about the Church.²⁴

This book has been about a book Winkleigh that is past or is rapidly passing. The greatest "vogue word" of the rural planner today is the word "amenity". He means a little of what the guide books describe by

way of "scenery", or "buildings" or "historic interest". These things are important, for no planner, if he wishes to correct the defects of the past, wishes to murder the unique contribution which the past has given to his new vision. This final chapter has attempted to pull together those elements of the past which are worth preserving and in indicating those subjects which awkwardly refuse to be classified with the eleven historical chapters, perhaps points to the needs of the present and the future. Being an historian and not a planner, being in fact one who has



long been lost in the passion of his love for Winkleigh and therefore relatively blind to its defects, this question of amenity can be posed but not answered. Let us hope that a future historian in his new perspective will see the good wrought in our tomorrow.