

PROCESS AND SYNTHESIS IN THE RETHINKING OF LOCAL HISTORY: PERSPECTIVES CONTAINED IN ESSAYS FOR A COUNTY HISTORY SOCIETY, 1970-2005

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It is a customary practice to review the work of historical societies and the contribution made by their journals. A retrospective was published on *The Local Historian*, for example, in 1992; others have been produced on the aims and achievements of the Conference of Regional and Local Historians in 1998, and the Local Population Studies Society in 2004.¹ Here the content of the journal of the Devon History Society, *The Devon Historian*, is reflected upon.

The *Devon Historian*, which first appeared in 1970, has been reviewed previously. Two brief articles marked appropriately and respectively 10 years and 25 years of its existence.² In 2005 the editorship of the publication changed – to be passed to the author of this present article. The passing of the 35-year marker, and a review of work to date by a new editor, is perhaps fitting enough. It is a useful exercise to reflect upon the 35 years of work, to celebrate achievements, to champion what can be accomplished by a county history society, and to consider agenda for future activity.

Here, though, a retrospective has been brought to production for a further purpose – a consideration of process and synthesis in the rethinking of local history. The fairly recent turning of the Millennium featured heightened research and publication activity amongst local historians in Devon and elsewhere.³ The years around 2000 also saw the publication of certain significant, even provocative, articles in the *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, *The Local Historian* and *The Devon Historian* itself, which call upon local historians to self-examine their purpose at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this paper a series of articles published in *The Devon Historian*, mainly by academic practitioners, are considered. Taken collectively they offer a set of readings that allow for a stimulating analysis of the changing nature and role of local history.

The first chair of The Devon History Society, the economic historian Walter Minchinton, began what has become an established practice of inviting leading academic historians, both local and ‘general’, to speak to the Society’s Annual

Conference.⁴ With many of their papers reproduced in *The Devon Historian*, the result is a significant set of articles that examine the development and purpose of local history, and more specifically the way in which the work of ‘amateur’ local historians can inform particular areas of ‘general’, regional and local history - social, economic and of landscape. This is not to diminish of course the value of the great body of articles by ‘amateur’ local historians, whose contributions to the journal have added to historical knowledge and understanding, and have sought to further thought and approach in local history – if largely to a regional readership.

It is not possible in this paper to survey in its entirety, and certainly not to do justice to, the range of articles in *The Devonl Historian* that are important for their discussion of thinking and practice in local history – by both academics and amateurs. Selected for examination here are a set of articles from the first decade of the life of the Society, the 1970s; and a number from the two decades either side of the year 2000. Considered and contrasted, the various articles demonstrate the breadth, responsiveness and dynamism of local history, and also point towards some new forms of understanding and approach.

Process and synthesis: some methodological, conceptual and theoretical issues for local historians

The challenges that face thinking and theorising in local history at the beginning of the twenty-first century concern process and synthesis. On process, it is clear that the nature of local history evolved considerably through the second half of the twentieth century. Traditional, antiquarian study no longer dominates now. Taking a greater place for itself has been the relatively more inclusive, ‘bottom-up’ and collaborative, and also less parochially bounded and pre-Reformation orientated, output of the ‘new’ local history. This transition has been accounted for and, moreover, welcomed.⁵ Furthermore, it is conceivable that local history will continue to develop and mutate. In terms of the scale of new work to be undertaken, the impact of globalisation, postmodernity and devolution, and, correspondingly, a heightened appreciation of the political and cultural significance of the local and the regional, is likely to stimulate and demand further research at these spatio-cultural scales.⁶ In terms of advance in theory, Sheeran and Sheeran point to an important way forward as being the embracing of postmodern historical thought, urging local historians to consider the subjective and the phenomenological in their work, rather than being bound largely by custom to objectivity and empiricism. An awareness of the way in which provisional representations of historical pasts are revealed is as significant as the quest for absolute and impartial reconstruction.⁷

Although this responsive mutation is positive, the challenge that it poses is that of achieving synthesis in local history - that sense of a bounded whole. How far, for example, should the antiquarian legacy, especially its pre-occupation with history prior to more recent times, be departed from?⁸ It was after all of its time, an exploratory age of local history in which a substantial body of historical knowledge was amassed. Can local history develop into a serious *Annales* school inspired academic activity, while also not distancing itself from the parochial, antiquarian and empirical tradition of much amateur pursuit?⁹ Has a community history emerged that is conceptually and methodologically distinguishable from local history? The former focuses most evidently on people and relationships, the latter on place and the long view.¹⁰ Should local historians be turning their attention to the region? For at this spatial scale they can better realise totality and credibility in their micro-historical endeavours, integrating both various multidisciplinary approaches, and also achieving a bridging of the pursuit of histories of the local and of the national and general.¹¹ Should the problem of conceptualising complex and shifting notions of region, community and the local be made a secondary task? Primary should be sound research method.¹² Can local historians be consciously subjective and postmodern in their thinking, while also attempting to remain objective and empirical in much of their practice?¹³ The ultimate question to be posed is whether local history is distinctive and defensible at all? For are not all the various forms of historical practice merely part of one discipline, that of history broadly defined? Is not the conceptualising of the important historical themes that run through both the general and the local more important than preoccupation with the conceptualising the local itself?¹⁴ Explored in this article are features of a changing local history understood as process, and some of the challenges of synthesis.

Local history in the second half of the twentieth century: essays from the decade of the 1970s

The volumes of *The Devon Historian* published in the 1970s provide an especially rich selection of essays on local history. The 1970s fall within the period in which Walter Minchinton was the chair of the society, 1970-1986. In these years he was especially active in encouraging colleagues from the University of Exeter and academics from other universities to address the Society and contribute to its journal.¹⁵ The content of *The Devon Historian* was also guided through much of the 1970s by Robin Stanes, who sought to follow the brief given to him by the Society, of prioritising 'how to' articles in terms of the thinking about and doing of local history.¹⁶

The first volume of *The Devon Historian* opens with the address of the Society's first president, W.G Hoskins:

There is no need for local historians to assume that the only kind of local history is compiling and writing the history of one particular place. There are many interesting fields that get away from this parochial attitude (valuable though parish histories are and always have been) ... Some of these can be explored by a single individual, others by a small group of kindred spirits. One project that has always interested me - though it is too big for one man to tackle - was the compilation of a Dictionary of Local Biography, brief summaries of the lives and careers of the men and women of note, born or spending their working lives in the county of Devon, or on a smaller scale in the cities of Exeter and Plymouth ... A dictionary along these lines would be an invaluable work of reference for future generations ... Another major project would be a study of Devon surnames. There are said to be a hundred thousand surnames in this country, some common to all parts, others more or less peculiar to one county and even one small part of it. Again this might have to be a group effort along the lines laid down beforehand, and it would have to be selective. It would not be very informative to list all the Smiths and Joneses in say the modern telephone directory or White's directory of 1850; but there are hundreds of names with a more localised significance ... Despite the population movements of the past hundred years or so most families still show a remarkably limited range of distribution. The railways are supposed to have caused us all to move round more freely, but this will be found not to be generally true ... These are merely two examples of the kind of work that could be done by small groups of local historians anxious to get away from the old-fashioned and rather stereotyped parish histories.¹⁷

The piece is somewhat transitional in character. Most evidently, the compiling of a Dictionary of Local Biography - resulting in a 'top-down' reconstruction of regional society - is rather antiquarian in character. For the most part, though, the address discusses ways in which local historians should alter their approach, that is, turn from a focus on the parochially confined towards the incorporation of wider geographical perspectives and the development of explanatory context. Clearly he felt that the surname study would be a mechanism for this - an exercise that would also be more socially inclusive than the local bibliography. Such instructions on the pursuit of local history - in the spirit of the Leicester School of local history - would appear in some of his general texts on the subject.¹⁸

Two years later, a non-academic, professional researcher, wrote on 'The joys and sorrows of writing a history'. Most of the article, by Hugh Peskett, considers the reliability, and often unreliability, of certain sources, such as existing antiquarian texts. The most striking section of the article, however, is the first clear call in *The Devon Historian* for local historians to attend to their neglect of the nineteenth and more especially the twentieth century. Hoskins, for example, would call elsewhere for local historians to work back in time in order to help in addressing this tendency.¹⁹ Peskett, on this matter of chronological perimeters, wrote:

History, however, ends tomorrow; but it is all too easy to slow up and neglect parish history after the Tithe Map. But far more economic and social changes have happened in the last century than in the previous thousand years. For the parish I am writing about, the opening of the railway in 1870 is probably the greatest single event since the Saxon Conquest, in terms of consequences for a small largely pastoral community; and only the Milk Marketing Board prevented, in the years between the wars, a far worse agricultural depression than followed the Black Death. Knowing how the railways changed the face of our village, will our children be recording the consequences of the M5.²⁰

Writing in the subsequent volume of *The Devon Historian* was the demographic historian, Roger Schofield. A year later a piece by the urban historian, Jim Dyos, was published. Extracts from the two articles discuss areas of progress, but also raise issues for the local historian:

Schofield,

Nowadays local population history is practised by both local historians and historical geographers. Traditionally the two groups approach the subject in different ways, for while local historians study their population primarily for the light it may throw on local history, historical demographers are more concerned with the implications of the local experience for national demographic trends. I believe, however, that this difference may soon disappear, for the way in which historical demographers came to be interested in local case studies suggests that further advances in demographic understanding can only come about if demographers involve themselves much more in the stuff of local history ... This search for ever more detailed demographic measurement, culminating in family reconstitution, has brought historical demographers down from the clouds of empirical abstraction to the real life events which

*individuals experienced in the past ... and just as demographers have much to learn from exploring more thoroughly the local context in which people lived, so local historians might gain much from studying in detail the demographic experience of the families who inhabited their parish in the past.*²¹

Dyos,

*The great divide in English local history is the nineteenth century. On the far side of it stretches a seemingly interminable period in which it might be said that history was nothing without its locality. The discovery and pursuit of local history in that period has immensely enriched and clarified not only the meaning of countless individual communities but caused whole chapters of the history of great events to be rewritten ... For most of the places that once stood sufficiently apart for their history to be told as tales in themselves the nineteenth century brought confusion. It was then that the traditional congruency between locality and community began to break down, social networks to spread, and the older meaning of community to be supplemented by a dozen others. To the local historian hoping to begin his quest on his own doorstep and to cope with the changes brought to the locality and the community in the course of the last 150 years the challenge is therefore a formidable one. So much that was once formed by local factors is now subject to less immediately discernable ones. If the heroic period of English local history ended with the coming of the railway, the question for local historians now is how to deal with the burgeoning cities they helped to create ... W. G. Hoskins has taught us how to grapple with the hidden history of the hedgerow; H. P. R. Finberg with the nuances of placenames. There are some social realities in contemporary and near-contemporary urban history which seem barely intelligible except by even less tangible means than these. The literary, artistic, architectural, above all the popular imagery of latterday urban life hold, one feels, a whole series of messages about the general acceptability of urban life and its local idiosyncrasies – but they are mostly still in code.*²²

The articles by Schofield and Dyos consider in positive terms how far local history in the late twentieth century can benefit from the conceptual and methodological advances made in academic history. New sources and techniques, and greater attention to the urban past and the modern historical context, can all be embraced. Moreover, as part of a two-way relationship with academic history, local historical enquiry can not only contribute to this progress, but also pro-

actively address some of the biases in choice of theme and approach. The problem here is that local history is led down the path, or paths, of ever-greater specialisation and fragmentation, an academic trajectory that has troubled 'mainstream' history. Indeed, local history does seem to have taken this course, to the detriment of its sense of integrated endeavour and synthesis.²³

In a 1977 volume of the journal the political historian, Jeffrey Stanyer, promoted the retention of the boundary in local and regional study. For Stanyer, though, parish, county or other boundaries should not be some delimiter, encouraging parochialism. Instead shifting, or non-shifting, political and administrative boundaries are powerful symbols of the interplay between general and local forces. Viewed appropriately, boundaries in historical study should stimulate wider contextualisation not a narrowing of focus. His thoughts are echoed in some more recent commentaries urging renewed consideration of the region and regionalism, and their significance in the playing out of political, economic and cultural trends in the postmodernising, globalising and devolving context of the late twentieth century.²⁴ In 1977, and somewhat foresightedly perhaps, Stanyer wrote for local historians:

All over the world local government systems are created by the confrontation of a downward thrust and an upward thrust from the localities. As the central government searches for ways of dividing the total area which it controls into smaller and smaller areas (often conceived on hierarchical lines) in order to further its purposes, local forces have sought to create a unit that protects and advances local interests and suits the special circumstances of the locality. The balance between central and local needs, demands and interests that these thrusts achieve has varied from place to place and time to time ... Of equal importance have been the forces created by the industrial revolution. Local government areas may and do stand in any one of a variety of relationships to the territorial pattern of daily life, and industrialisation sets to produce a divorce between the two, through urbanisation, rural depopulation and general change in settlement patterns. Unhappy relationships between governmental areas and the society they are supposed to serve are a world-wide phenomenon. The achievement of a 'harmony' between social and administrative boundaries is a major source of pressure for reform ... There is thus great scope for the local historian to study the details of local administrative history, and it can be argued that research into boundaries has a priority, because the drawing of the lines themselves affects the identity and personality of the local community. Should not

*histories of individual towns and villages begin by explaining how and why the areas came to have the shape that it has today?*²⁵

The last of the 'how to' think and do articles of the 1970s is an offering from a planning officer, Peter Hunt. Hunt acknowledged the influence of W.G. Hoskins in promoting new approaches in local history, and crucially in vernacular architecture.²⁶ Its study represents a mode of enquiry that encourages fieldwork activity, rather than the habitual reliance on the documentary record, and also the inclusion of new and relatively more socially inclusive perspectives.

*Local history is rather more about the ordinary man, whether relatively rich or poor, pursuing his daily labour and enjoying his pastimes and humdrum existence, than the national figure however prominent his part in national affairs. Most of us are aware of the grand houses, the writings of the educated and the works of art left by the important and the wealthy, but only in more recent years have we looked at the enormous number of ordinary houses and cottages, the implements of trade and whatever relics remain of the legion of humble folk which complement the inheritance from the rich ... Many of the old buildings we see in Devon are as important for their silent commentary on a gradually changing society, as for their beauty and their interesting construction and furnishings. It is, nevertheless, desirable to recognise all these aspects and to enjoy them as an important aid to understanding the past and to recognise what we are seeing and what it means in human terms.*²⁷

Essays from the 1990s and early 2000s: reflections on a changing local history

The volumes of *The Devon Historian* through the 1990s and into the early 2000s contain articles relating overwhelmingly to the empirical findings of local researchers. There are far less papers by academic local historians and others on the 'how to' than in the opening and instrumental decade of the Society's existence, the 1970s. This said there are a few articles that are quite telling in their describing of and accounting for changing thinking and practice in local history.

In the early 1990s there appeared an article by an amateur local historian, which is arguably the best defence and promotion of amateur practice to feature in the journal. The piece, by a retired medical practitioner, discusses the broadening of authorship, a process described elsewhere as one of 'democratisation'.²⁸ The author of the article, Neville Oswald, proceeds to argue convincingly how the work of 'amateur' historians, employing scientific and empirical knowledge and

experience gained from professional backgrounds, can be used to enrich and further local historical understanding:

The occupational distribution of some of its authors in the past twenty years is detailed in successive issues of The Devon Historian, of whom about one quarter listed their connections with Exeter University and a similar number with other universities and teaching establishments. The remaining half were variously occupied. Five engineers wrote respectively on two distinguished engineers of the past, a floating bridge, a nearby railway and, for good measure, a poet. Farmers, housewives and self-proclaimed amateurs recorded their different interests. Half-a-dozen diplomats and civil servants chose the two most popular subjects, namely biography and a local item from within their parishes ... This motley collection of authors, with professors rubbing shoulders with beginners, gives recorded local history its particular flavour. Academic historians cannot possibly cover the whole range of local history, nor are they qualified to do so, while amateurs, some with specialist knowledge, are free to record opinions which may be scrutinised later by their betters and placed in a larger context ... What qualities are needed for making sensible observations on local history? Rouse's description of Hoskins' books on Devon as being 'learned, graphic and humane', can hardly be improved upon. Learning can only come from years of study of national and, to some extent, international literature and constant association with one's colleagues at work; it may be acquired through diligence. The ability to be graphic is more difficult, whether in lecturing or writing, and needs hardly less study. Without it, historians are not alone in finding they lecture to meagre audiences and have few readers for their publications. Historians, as opposed to antiquarians whose function is primarily descriptive, must be humane in that their principal purpose is to place events of the past in an humane context ... Most amateurs would be well advised to select topics of more general appeal or of more importance to the county's history as a whole. Part of the problem, it seems, is not that amateurs choose unwisely but that suitable subjects often fail to find the best amateurs. Professional and business people such as industrialists, financiers, lawyers, agriculturalist and others, many of them retired, have much to offer given their specialist experience. Most of them have read their appropriate journals for years and know something of the historical background of their subject. Yet few apply their expertise to local

*history where, they could speak or write more authoritatively than anyone else.*²⁹

The early 1990s saw the address of Charles Phythian-Adams to the Society. A Leicester School historian, Phythian-Adams brought his 'cultural provinces' thesis to the Society's annual conference. The thesis promotes the value of studying at the regional scale, for community life was lived in the context of the networks of wider societal life in which it was embedded, and it should be seen as such by the local historian. Moreover, this 'societal' history has the integrative potential aspired to by the micro-historian seeking to synthesise local and general perspectives, as well as various conceptual and methodological specialisms; and, also, who is endeavouring to face up to the challenges of historical theoretical thought in a globalising and postmodernising world.³⁰ Although there are undoubtedly merits here in terms of more sophisticating thinking and wider contextualisation, some question the soundness of the conceptualisation and the empirical manageability of the Phythian-Adams agenda.³¹ Notwithstanding, when Phythian-Adams addressed the Devon History Society he called upon local historians to place their studies within the geographical and cultural sphere of the region, and to evaluate key aspects of especially twentieth century change in terms of how far regional identity had been eroded or was being sustained:

All local historians have to start from the premise that it is more appropriate for us to think not of one imagined national society in this country, or even simply of one 'English' society, but as a multitude of regional or local societies all operating in their own idiosyncratic ways within an overall framework of national-shared social convention, economic structures, legislative imperatives and so on. Even today, English society is not wholly homogenized – or not quite! All English regions, and the West Country more than most, still retain something of their distinctive local identities. That said it is also true that most of us working in local subjects tend to characterise such identities by evoking them for periods other than our own. The 100-year rule regarding access to past censuses in particular has too frequently encouraged local investigators to cut their stories short at any point from 1891 backwards – and therefore at a stage before all us were even born. The result? We have come to regard the 'past' as something 'lost' rather than as something constantly 'replaced' and hence uninterruptedly connected to us? Thus has arisen what might be called a tacit local historical fallacy: that the present exists in its own vacuum ... We must guard against the assumption that, within only a few years of its completion, that last century of the second millennium after

Christ still contains no matters of significance to local historians and, worse, that the analysis of it which has yet to be unfolded will merely be to do with the sorry degeneration of regional identity. For, on the contrary, in many respects the twentieth century may be regarded as an immensely exciting object of study not only because of the speed of change within it, but also because it seems to represent the fulfilment of one of those widely-spaced, climactic stages of human history when societies are fundamentally re-arranged in residential terms ... For both women and men, however, ease of transport has increasingly separated residence from place of work, while long-distance mobility everywhere has led to the addition to local societies of new blood from outside, with all that both of these factors may have meant for the displacement of the traditional localized influence of older, native core families and their kinship networks. Are, however, such networks conceivably still in existence albeit enlarged by in-comer connections but now effectively invisible because, thanks to ease of transport and the telephone, they are more broadly spread-eagled over the wider region? This could be a key to the survival of local identity itself?³²

In 1997 an article by Simon Timms, an archaeologist and planning officer, was published: 'Exploring Devon's past: why do we do it'. The piece was based on research conducted by Devon Council Council. The study explored the motivations lying behind the expansion and 'democratisation' of local historical activity:

A sample of 222 local history societies in existence in 1979 found that less than thirty had existed prior to 1946. At one stage in the 1970s it was estimated that a new museum was opening somewhere in England every week. The popularity of local societies and groups raises the question of why people seek to join them as members. Various reasons have been put forward. Kate Tiller, who spoke at our 1995 AGM, has cited the role that local history groups have in the serious purpose of furthering historical understanding, but has also identified other motivating factors such as nostalgia, a wish to resist modern development and a sort of theme-park escapism. Alan Rogers has put much of the popularity down to such factors as a search for roots, identification with community, a sense of exploration, and a concern to slow down the pace of change. He also includes a desire to contribute to scholarship and the chance to make contact with real evidence.³³

The Timms' article reports findings that highlight the combined contribution of amateur groups and societies, day and evening classes, and most especially the heritage industry in stimulating and developing interests. In the 1990s others signalled, if guardedly, the role and opportunities that an expanding interest in heritage might bring for the local historian.³⁴

Just after the passing of the Millennium, the author of this present article also turned his attention to the increase in local history activity. An article for *The Devon Historian* in 2003 traced and explained the shift from traditional, antiquarian local history to the 'new' local or community history. Contextualised within this shift was a comparative study of four published local histories for a small group of parishes to the north of Exeter. Striking were the differences in their approach, in terms of how far they reflected traditional or contemporary modes of local historical enquiry, or some transitional practice between the two extremes.

This article indicates how parish histories embody multiple and changing meanings. They are perhaps first and foremost collections of local historical information – and valuable as such. In addition, they are constructions, even artefacts, of a shifting rural social structure; and, to some extent related, they are the products of the evolving pursuit of local history, both academic and popular. Such meanings in parish histories are determined by, and conveyed through, the nature of their authorship, the manner of their content, and the interrelationship between the two. It is suggested here that the recent proliferation in parish history writing in Devon and more generally invites further historiographical investigation.³⁵

The article was written with the intention of encouraging the readership of *The Devon Historian* to consider their activity in the light of the changing purpose of local history in the second half of the twentieth century. The article was also produced as a case study for undergraduate students exploring good practice in local history.³⁶ Two years later, on taking up the editorship of *The Devon Historian*, the author brought together the 2003 article with one of 1993, on the Devon author Henry Williamson.³⁷ The intention was again to reflect further on the changing nature and purpose of local history for the journal's readership:

What can be identified in Williamson's writings also points to broader understandings of the main purposes of local history, that is, in terms of its relationship with history and heritage. First, but not necessarily foremost, local history finds a key role as a part of the wider discipline of history, for it is an 'unearther' and conveyor of factual knowledge. Overwhelmingly it is a primary activ-

ity, generating an array of data that contributes to the body of historical knowledge, which in turn has the potential to support or thwart generally held understandings about 'national' history. Second, local history is also heritage, for its pursuit is driven by the urge to, variously, recollect, record, articulate, celebrate or perpetuate understandings of local historical pasts. This is the more emotive dimension of local history, one which helps form identities, whether of individuals, families, groups, communities or regional societies. It is what helps motivate and sustain the activities of, amongst others, the solitary antiquary, the detached academic, family historian, community history group or county history society.³⁸

It is followed up elsewhere that much popular local history is post-modern in its nature and akin to another process, that of heritage formation. For it is an endeavour motivated by the desire to subjectively (re-)construct local historical pasts. In this the phenomenological is essential, for sought after is the creation of various forms of interconnecting individual, family, group, community or regional identity.³⁹

Conclusion

This essay is a celebration of 35 years of valuable work by the contributors to *The Devon Historian*. It is also a championing of the worth of county history society journals. They can act as an interface, disseminating the research and agenda of academe, and publishing the primary and topical findings made by non-academic or amateur local historians at the local and regional levels. Indeed, in the integrating of amateur and professional practice they offer a context in which some synthesis in purpose can be sought after.

It has also been demonstrated how the pages of a journal such as *The Devon Historian* offer a highly indicative textual setting in which to explore the changing nature and role of local history. In this article - and implicitly in the articles from *The Devon Historian* selected for it - there is developed a notion of local history as process, and, along with this, various attending predicaments of synthesis. Towards the end of the article, one primarily of literature review, the significance of heritage is pointed towards. Although beyond the limits set by this present paper, a further consideration of the interrelationship between history and heritage in local history is recommended. For in this can be found much that underlies the openness, dynamism and variation in a local history comprehended as process, but also much of the subjectivity that contributes to challenges of synthesis.

NOTES

1. J.D. Marshall, 'Opinion: Some items for our historical agenda: Considerations old and new', *The Local Historian*, Vol.22, No.1 (1992) pp.14-17; Nigel Goose, 'Local Population Studies: History, demography and locality', *The Local Historian*, Vol.34, No.1 (2004) pp.39-40; and Edward Royle, 'Local history in context: Twenty years of the Conference of Regional and Local Historians', Vol.28, No.3 (1998) pp.176-180.
2. Robin Stanes, 'The Standing Conference for Devon History: The first ten years', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.20 (1980) pp.2-3; and Robin Stanes, 'The Devon History Society – Twenty-five years', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.50 (1995) p.3.
3. Andrew J.H. Jackson, 'Published parish histories: A starting point in research, adult learning and the retheorising of local history', *The Local Historian*, forthcoming; and Kate Tiller, *English Local History: An Introduction*. (Alan Sutton, 2nd ed. 2002) pp.232-252.
4. Robin Stanes, 'Walter Minchinton, 1921-1996', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.55 (1997) p.40.
5. For example: David Dymond, *Researching and Writing History: A Practical Guide for Local Historians*. (British Association for Local History) pp.1-11; W.G. Hoskins, *Local History in England* (Longman, 3rd ed. 1984) pp.18-30; Jackson. 'Published parish histories', op cit. forthcoming; Philip Riden, *Local History: A Handbook for Beginners* (Batsford, 1983) pp.13-20; and Tiller. op cit. pp.12-23.
6. Neil Evans, 'Think continentally, research regionally: Reflections on the rise of regional Europe', *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol.14, No.1 (1994) pp.6-7; Pat Hudson, 'Regional and local history: globalisation, postmodernism and the future', *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol.20, No.1 (1999) pp.16-18; Royle. op cit. p.178; and Michael A. Williams, *Researching Local History: The human journey* (Longman, 1996) p.265.
7. George Sheeran and Yanina Sheeran, 'Reconstructing local history', *The Local Historian*, Vol.29, No.4 (1999) pp.256-262; and George Sheeran and Yanina Sheeran, 'Reconstructing local history: the Sheerans reply', *The Local Historian*, Vol.31, No.1 (2001) pp.49-50.
8. Hoskins. op cit. pp.18-30; and Marshall. op cit. p.15.
9. Royle. op cit. pp.177-178.
10. Bernard Deacon and Moira Donald, 'In search of community history', *Family and Community History*, vol.7, no.1 (2004) pp.15-16; and Dennis Mills, 'Defining community: a critical review of 'community' in *Family and Community History*, vol.7, no.1 (2004) pp.8-11.
11. Lyn Gorman, 'Regional and local history in the 1990s: into the mainstream?', *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol.14, No.1 (1994) pp.10-24; Hudson. op cit. pp.5-24; and J.D. Marshall, 'Communities, societies, regions and local history. Perceptions of locality in High and Low Furness', *The Local Historian*, Vol.26, No.1 (1996) pp.36-39.
12. Deacon and Donald, op cit. p.17; and Hudson, op cit. pp.14-17.
13. Sheeran and Sheeran. 'Reconstructing local history', op cit. pp.256-262; and Sheeran and Sheeran, 'Reconstructing: the Sheerans reply', op cit. pp.49-50.

14. Kevin Schurer, 'A future for local history: Boom or recession?', *The Local Historian*, Vol.21, No.3 (1991) pp. 99-108.
15. Stanes, 'Walter Minchinton', op cit. p.40.
16. R.R. Sellman, 'Robin Stanes: An appreciation', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.17 (1978) p.2.
17. W.G. Hoskins, 'Welcome from the President', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.1 (1970) pp.1-2.
18. See Hoskins, *Local History*, op cit. pp.18-30.
19. Ibid. pp.32-34.
20. Hugh Peskett, 'The joys and sorrows of writing a history', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.4 (1972), p.16.
21. Roger Schofield, 'Population and local history', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.5 (1972) pp. 23, and 25-6.
22. H.J. Dyos, 'Images of urban life in the nineteenth century', *The Devon Historian*, Vol.7 (1973) pp.3-4.
23. Marshall, 'Some items', op cit. pp.14-17.
24. Evans. op cit. pp.6-7; Gorman. op cit. pp.10-24; and Hudson. op cit. pp.5-24.
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