

## Meshaw

Meshaw is located within North Devon local authority area. Historically it formed part of Witheridge Hundred. It falls within South Molton Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 135 in 1801 181 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In 1641/2 18 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

A parish history file is held in South Molton Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

## Maps

The image below is of the Meshaw area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 37/2
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 32NE
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS758196
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
  - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS71NE
  - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 127
  - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 180
- Geological sheet 309 also covers the area

**Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954),** included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Meshaw church (St. John the Baptist) was rebuilt in 1838. It contains a monument to James Courtenay (1683), in whose memory the tower was rebuilt in 1691. Irishcombe Farm was a Domesday manor.

## **Milton Abbot**

Milton Abbot is located within West Devon local authority area. It falls within Tavistock Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 862 in 1801 719 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In 1641/2 241 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

A parish history file is held in Tavistock Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

## **Maps**

The image below is of the Milton Abbot area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 97/9
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 97SW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SX408793
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
  - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SX47NW
  - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 112
  - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 201
- Geological sheet 337 also covers the area

## **Illustrations**

The image below is of Milton Abbot as included in the Library's illustrations collection. Other images can be searched for on the local studies catalogue.



**Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954),** included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Milton Abbot takes its name from the fact that it formed part of the original endowment of Tavistock Abbey c. 974. At the Dissolution it passed to John, Lord Russell, as part of an enormous grant of the Tavistock lands, and still belongs to his lineal descendant, the Duke of Bedford. The estate has therefore changed hands only once in a thousand years. In 1810 the then duke built a "cottage" at Endsleigh, overlooking the wooded Tamar valley, from the designs of Sir Jeffrey Wyattville. A statue of the last abbot of Tavistock thoughtfully decorates one of the ornamental gables of the cottage.

Not far from Endsleigh is the original nest of another great family - the Mount Edgembes. They were free-holders at Edgcombe in the 13th century and the senior branch resided here until the 1840s. The present Edgcombe House is mainly late medieval in date, but was refronted in 1719. Leigh Barton was a Domesday manor.

The church (St. Constantine) is mostly a 15th century building in the attractive green Hurdwick stone.

## **Milton Damerel**

Milton Damerel is located within Torrington local authority area. Historically it formed part of Black Torrington Hundred. It falls within Holsworthy Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 469 in 1801 442 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In 1641/2 97 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

A parish history file is held in Holsworthy Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

## **Maps**

The image below is of the Milton Damerel area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 39/15
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 39SE
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS384106
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
  - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS31SE
  - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 126
  - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 190
- Geological sheet 307 also covers the area

**Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954)**, included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Milton Damarel church (Holy Trinity) is an early 14th century building, carefully restored in 1904. The windows retain their Decorated tracery, a rarity for Devon. A N. aisle of five bays was added early in the 16th century. A royal coat-of-arms in

plaster, dated 1664, perhaps marks the completion of much 17th century restoration. There are medieval tiles in the nave, and a rustic pulpit c. 1700.

## **Modbury**

Modbury is located within South Hams local authority area. Historically it formed part of Ermington Hundred. It falls within Plympton Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 1813 in 1801 1330 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In the valuation of 1334 it was assessed at £03/10/00. The lay subsidy of 1524 valued the community at £42/12/10. In 1641/2 468 adult males signed the Protestation returns. It is recorded as a borough from 1238. It had parliamentary representation from 14 cent.. A turnpike was established in 1759. A market is recorded from 14c.-1822.

A parish history file is held in Kingsbridge & Ivybridge Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

## **Maps**

The image below is of the Modbury area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 125/15
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 125SE
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SX658516
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
  - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SX65SE
  - Outdoor Leisure (1:25,000) mapping sheet 20
  - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 202
- Geological sheet 349 also covers the area

A fair is known from: 14c.-1935. [It is intended to include the local section from The glove is up! Devon's historic fairs, by Tricia Gerrish, by kind permission of the author].

An extract from **The glove is up! Devon's historic fairs**, by **Tricia Gerrish**, is reproduced by kind permission of the author.

Modbury Fair LOCATION:A379 South Hams

ORIGINAL CHARTER:c.1328. St Georges Fair, 23rd April: instituted by Bishop of Exeter in 1310, but confirmed by statute in reign of Edward III. 9 Day Fair

A GLOVE FAIR

Modbury Fair has an early history, with its institution by the Bishop Exeter in 1310. The statute granted by Edward III in the second year of his reign confirmed this and various ceremonies associated with the fair. It lasted nine days at the height of its popularity. By the early 19th century Modbury Fair was being held around 'Old' St George's Day: on May 4th, after the 1752 calendar changes. There was also another fair on St James's Day (25th July) which was described in a memorandum dated c.1795 as 'for many years disused'.

Horned cattle, sheep and horses were sold at Modbury Fair, also cloth and shoes. An 1890 Devon directory lists it as a stock fair, although the fair does not appear in Market Rights & Tolls (1888). In 1875 sheep were penned in front of shops, while cattle were driven to and fro while sold. A horse fair took place at 2.30pm and several fine animals were on offer, including a pretty chestnut from Mr Turpin of Plymouth and several well-bred carthorses. Messrs Coleman of Ermington and Coyte of Modbury both exhibited farming implements. Toll gatherers had to be stationed on all the approach roads to Modbury in the late 19th century – paid to collect levies of two pence per beast.

Modbury had all the old charter fair ceremonies associated with Devon. It opened with a call for silence by the town Crier, using a clapper bell. The proclamation was read: for a 9 day fair, and included the following statute from the reign of Philip and Mary Tudor: a toll taker must sit from 'ten of the clock in the forenoon until sun-setting... on pain of forty shillings'. (This fine was for failing to comply). The person appointed was then named, lest there be any misunderstanding. A doeskin glove, decked with flowers, was raised on the Market Bell case – later on a wall in Main Street - for the duration of fair. The bell was transferred, on demolition of the yarn market, to the Church House Inn, which was later renamed The Bell. On the upper side a wooden structure housed it and the fairs glove. (An event which still occurs. In 1933 it was reported in a paper delivered to the Devonshire Association that the current glove had been in use for 120 years and was now painted silver. This was partly to preserve it and also to make it more noticeable.

A Court of Pye Powder was opened in earlier times; Court Leet, headed by a Portreeve, ran proceedings until the fair ended. Success to the fair was drunk in grog at a supper where bread, cheese and cider were traditional. Beef Eaters and Ale Tasters, Sealers of Leather and Pig Drivers were all appointed at Modbury, to carry out ancient ceremonies. The 'bush' method of identifying temporary premises for serving liquor during a fair was also in use here. Holly bushes placed outside houses

indicated that they had been granted a licence by Court Leet; the town's ten inns were open all day.

Streets in the late 19th century were remembered by an elderly resident of Modbury interviewed in 1933 as filled with people during St George's Fair. By now only two days were celebrated. Church Street was lined with cheapjack stalls, and skittle playing was a popular pastime. A Queen of Fair was chosen. Races took place in and around the streets from the Red Devon Hotel to Market Cross. These were remembered by C E Green in his unpublished Memoirs of a Modbury Man. In the evenings, dancing took place at the inns.

By 1933 only the opening ceremony, a cattle sale and a few roundabouts and swings at the top of town marked Modbury's St George's Fair. Fairs ceased to be held in the streets by the beginning of the Second World War. However, the ceremony of placing a flower-decked glove by the market bell is mentioned in both 1963 and 1971. In the former year this ceremony had to be cancelled: for the first time in many years. A takeover of manorial rights including the annual fair, hanging the glove and the duties of Portreeve and Town Crier by the Parish Council - from the existing holder - was not completed in time.

Modbury's fair has almost surpassed the original charter grant of 1328. It has become a week-plus series of events, including a market and carnival procession, usually held to include May Day Bank Holiday. It seems to be aimed principally at early season visitors to the South Hams. Modbury Fair is still proclaimed and the glove raised.

**Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954)**, included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Modbury is a pleasant little market town, with much good building of 18th early 19th century date, including many of the slate-hung houses which are characteristic of the South Devon towns between Exeter and Plymouth. At the W. end of the town are the slight remains of the Champernownes' mansion. They were lords of the manor and borough from the time of Edward II until 1700; in 1334 Richard Champernowne had a licence for castellating his mansion here. In February 1643 Sir Nicholas Slanning, who had entrenched himself at Modbury with 2,000 men, was defeated by the Devonshire clubmen.

Modbury was a borough before 1238, with a weekly market and two annual fairs. Down to the 1880s St. George's Fair was a great nine-day fair and a holiday for all the townspeople. The ten inns kept open all day long, the streets were filled with people and stalls and there was dancing at the inns after 6 o'clock each evening. (For reminiscences of St. George's Fair at Modbury, see D.A. 65 (1933), 128-30.) Now it lasts one day and is chiefly a cattle market, with a small pleasure-fair at the top of the town.



The church (St. George) is a spacious building, mainly of early 14th century date, but enlarged in the 15th to early 16th century. The N. transept was the Orcheton chapel and contains mutilated Prideaux effigies; in the S. transept (the Champernowne chapel) are Champernowne effigies. The church is unusual for Devon in having a medieval spire.

Scattered over the large and fertile parish are a number of ancient mansions, or remains of them. Just NE. of the town is Old Traine, a picturesque house partly 15th century in date.

Great Orcheton was a Domesday manor. It was held by the Prideaux family in 1224 and they continued here for thirteen generations. Their mansion, now a farmhouse, retains some early work, notably a granite fireplace of 11ft. span in the kitchen.

At Oldaport Farm, S. of Orcheton, are remains of buildings of unknown age on a tongue of land between two streams. They may represent a site of the late Roman period or of the succeeding Dark Ages; but only scientific excavation can give an answer. The present farmhouse appears to be chiefly of 16th century date.

Whympston is interesting as the oldest known home of the Fortescues. It is said by Pole to have been granted to them by King John in 1209, but they were in this district c. 1140 when Ralph Fortescue of Modbury gave lands to Modbury priory at or soon after its foundation. (I owe this information to Mr. Noel Blakiston of the P.R.O. who has transcribed the early 14th century cartulary of the priory now in possession of Eton College.) Nothing remains of their ancient house, and the estate now belongs to the Plymouth Co-operative Society. Shilston Barton, Spriddlescombe, and Leigh were all Domesday estates. There are remains of former mansions at Edmeston and Yarnicombe. Along the N. boundary of the parish runs one of the best examples of a pre-historic ridgeway in South Devon, commanding splendid views along its entire length of the Moor on one side and the South Hams on the other.

## Molland

Molland is located within North Devon local authority area. Historically it formed part of South Molton Hundred. It falls within South Molton Deanery for ecclesiastical purposes. The Deaneries are used to arrange the typescript Church Notes of B.F.Cresswell which are held in the Westcountry Studies Library.

The population was 473 in 1801 397 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In 1641/2 112 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

A parish history file is held in South Molton Library. You can look for other material on the community by using the place search on the main local studies database. Further historical information is also available on the Genuki website.

## Maps

The image below is of the Molland area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 16/13
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 16SW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS806284
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
  - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS82NW
  - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 114
  - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 181
- Geological sheet 294 also covers the area

**Extract from Devon by W.G.Hoskins (1954)**, included by kind permission of the copyright holder:

Molland is a large parish in beautiful, unspoilt country, running N. from the Yeo valley up to Molland Common, over 1,200 ft. up on the S. edge of Exmoor. Beyond this great ridge Somerset begins. In the S. of the parish are many delightful wooded combs.

West Molland is an ancient mansion, now a farmhouse, with the Courtenay arms over the entrance. It is probably medieval in part, but visitors are discouraged. Champson is another ancient house, mainly 16th century, with some original windows and contemporary panelling. At Great Champson the Quartlys perfected the breed of red North Devon cattle in the late 18th century and kept a fine herd here for some generations.

Molland church (St. Mary) is of outstanding interest. It is a simple 15th to 16th century building, replacing an older structure of which the Norman font alone remains, together with two medieval bells. But it escaped the Victorian "restorer" and its atmosphere is wholly that of the 18th century - rustic, plastered and whitewashed throughout, with box-pews and canopied three-decker pulpit (plate 49), ceiled roofs, and leaning arcade, and a chancel completely enclosed (like Parracombe). The quasi-screen is of the same period as the pews, with folding gates and open framework on either side, surmounted by a plastered tympanum which completely fills the chancel opening. There is, too, a fine series of monuments to the 17th and 18th century Courtenays, together with a curious double heart-stone, railed off, a receptacle for the hearts of a Courtenay and his wife. In this delightful little church, in the foothills of the high wild moor, one breathes again the tranquil air of the Georgian countryside.