

North Molton

North Molton 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 1541 in 1801 1069 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. The lay subsidy of 1524 valued the community at £16/08/02. In 1641/2 341 adult males signed the Protestation returns. It is recorded as a borough from 1249. A market is recorded from 14c.-1600.

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 North Molton 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 15/10
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 15SW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS738298
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS72NW
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 127
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 180
- Geological sheet 293 also covers the area

Illustrations

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



A fair is known from: 14c.-1888. An Extract from **The glove is up! Devon's historic fairs**, by **Tricia Gerrish**, is included by kind permission of the author.

North Molton Fair LOCATION: Off A361 (North Devon Link) and A399. North Devon, on the fringes of Exmoor

ORIGINAL CHARTER: 1270 Henry III to Robert le Zouch. 3 day fair at Feast of All Saints (1st November).

Robert le Zouch was granted the charter for a three day fair for North Molton, later Molton at the feast of All Saints: 1st November, in 1270. By 1822, this fair was being held on 12th November, and another, for cattle, took place on the Tuesday following 11th May. Two cattle fairs were still being held in 1937 on the Wednesday following 12th May and the last Wednesday in October.

North Molton fairs traded in all types of stock: especially North Devon cattle and horned sheep. Cattle was sold for beef: at 10 shillings to 11 shillings and 6d per score in October 1862, or on the hoof. Horned ewes sold at 21 shillings to 28 shillings each in the same year. Principal breeders from all over England were present. The notoriously treacherous weather in the area had a sad effect ten years later, when those standing out with cattle or sheep 'had the appearance of drowned rats.' The chief interest at North Molton fairs was agricultural; pleasure elements are not reported.

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

Molton North is an enormous parish (over 15,000 acres) extending well up on to Exmoor. At Five Barrows Hill it reaches a height of 1,617 ft. A number of barrows, probably all of Bronze Age date, lie on North Molton Ridge, at Two Barrows on Fyldon Common, and at Five Barrows on Western Common.

North Molton was formerly a royal manor and a separate hundred.

At some date it became a borough, though it was never incorporated. The "town" now has a decayed air. There was formerly a woollen industry here: in Polwhele's day the population were mostly combers and weavers, very poor but healthy. This trade vanished as a result of the Napoleonic Wars.

The parish also has a mining history, going back to Elizabethan days when German miners were brought over to develop English minerals. Westcote says that "Iron mines were sometimes wrought near North Molton and Molland" but had ceased work by his time. Iron-mining was resumed in the 18th and 19th centuries at Florence and Marcia Mines; the former was still being worked in the 1890s, and a tramway had been cut down to the railway near South Molton station. The remains of this tramway can be seen above and below Brinsworthy bridge, and of a disused iron mine on Radworthy Down, about ½ m. SSE. of South Radworthy. There are adits in the hillside, on both flanks of the combe towards Tabor Hill, which may be the relics of the Elizabethan iron-workings.

The principal evidences of past working and mining are to be seen in the valley just above Heasley Mill. Copper was worked here in the 17th and early 18th centuries. The mine was abandoned before 1778, but had been re-opened in Vancouver's day (1808) and was later abandoned again. About 1840 a very rich copper mine - Prince Albert's mine was opened in the N. of the parish from which gold was also obtained. Copper-mining seems to have ceased in the 1880s. D.A. 70 (1938), 217; White's Directory 1890.) Silver and lead have also been found in the parish.

The parish church (All Saints) is striking and its contents interesting. The massive tower (100 ft. high) is built of Pickwell Down sandstone, probably from the old quarry at Flitton. The rebuilding of the church was perhaps begun in the late 14th century. A rector of North Molton, by will dated 1398, left 40s. towards "the making of the nave of my church." (Oliver Mon., 451.) On the S. side of the tower is a beautiful image of the Virgin and Child. The clearstoried nave is unusual for Devon. Internally the church has the usual Devon wagon-roofs with plastered panels; a beautiful 15th century font; a good rood-screen and parclose screens; some oak panelling (1609) around the sanctuary walls; one of the finest medieval pulpits in Devon, with a singularly beautiful stem, and a carved early Hanoverian sounding-board; and two excellent monuments.

The Parkers, a local family who eventually became lords Boringdon (1784) and then earls of Morley (1815), owned and lived at the Court House immediately W. of the church. The Parker chapel contains some medieval glass. The Bampfyldes chapel on the S. contains a striking alabaster monument to Sir Amyas Bampfyldes (d. 1626) and his wife Elizabeth with their 12 sons and 5 daughters. The E. window of this chapel contains some coloured glass, c. 1500.

Court House, W. of the church, is a late 16th century house. Court Hall, E. of the church, was and is the home of the Bampfyldes (created lords Poltimore in 1831). It is a Jacobean house much altered and enlarged about 1835.

North Tawton

North Tawton is located within West Devon local authority area. Historically it formed part of North Tawton Hundred. It falls within Okehampton 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 1436 in 1801 1529 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. The lay subsidy of 1524 valued the community at £Missing. In 1641/2 217 adult males signed the Protestation returns. It is recorded as a borough from 1271. The community had a grammar school from 1684. A market is recorded from 14c.-1600.

A parish history file is held in Okehampton 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

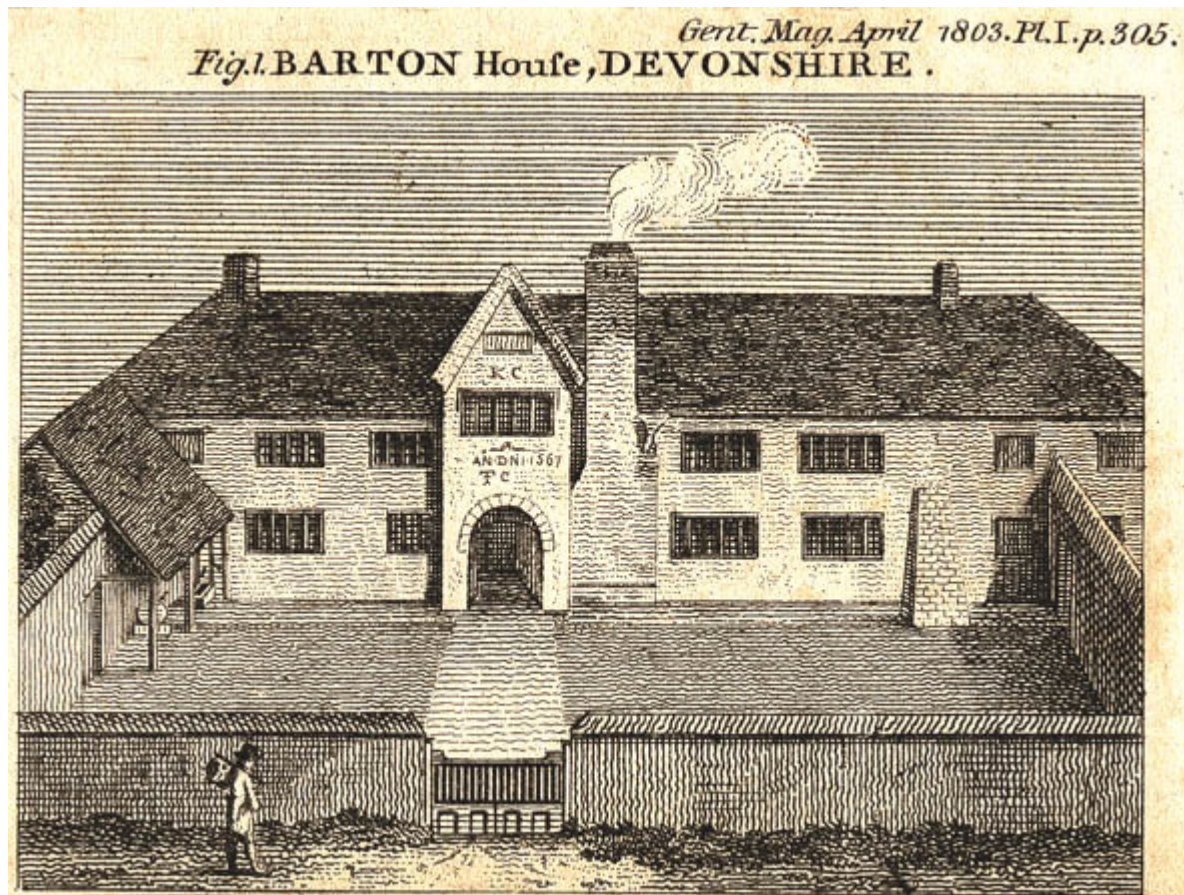
The image below is of the North Tawton area on Donn's one inch to the mile survey of 1765.



- On the County Series Ordnance Survey mapping the area is to be found on 1:2,500 sheet 65/3
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 65NE
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS664017
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS60SE
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 113
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 191
- Geological sheet 324 also covers the area

Illustrations

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



A fair is known from: 14c.-1822. An extract from **The glove is up! Devon's historic fairs**, by **Tricia Gerrish**, is included by kind permission of the author.

North Tawton Fair LOCATION: North of A3072, between Crediton and Okehampton.

ORIGINAL CHARTER: c.1270 A charter was granted to John Valletort, for 3 days at the feast of St Nicholas: 6th December.

North Tawton may have had a fair at the feast of St Nicholas before John Valletort's 1270 charter, and another: granted in 1374. There were fairs on the third Tuesday in April, 3rd October and 18th December, according to Owen's 1824 list. The April fair is given as the same date by 1890, but the other fairs are quoted as second Tuesday in October and the first Tuesday in December: the last of which must have been St Nicholas Fair. This had become a fatstock show by 1923.

Cattle, horses, sheep and cloth were all sold at North Tawton. Cattle were penned in the Square; this practice continued into the 20th century. There was also a fair at South Tawton, which lies closer to Okehampton, on the first Thursday following 9th July, when cattle were traded (*see South Zeal/South Tawton).

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

Tawton, North is one of those ancient, decayed market towns, of which there are so many in Devon. We find it called *Cheping Tawton* as early as 1199 (OE).

cieping=market). At some date also it was made a borough, governed by a portreeve elected annually, an office which lasted until the end of the 19th century. The town formerly had a considerable woollen industry which greatly declined, as it did all over Devon, in the second half of the 18th century. Nevertheless, one woollen mill (at Taw Bridge) survived and gave considerable employment to the townspeople until recent years.

The railway did not reach North Tawton until 1865, and then had its inevitable effect on the economy of the town. The almost simultaneous closing of the woollen mill and the flour mills, which used to employ most of the people, gave the death-blow in recent years. There are fewer people in North Tawton today than there were in the 18th century.

The town has suffered greatly from extensive fires and is now mostly a rather drab collection of mid- and late- 19th century houses, coated with a grey roughcast. There are a few more pleasing houses, the most interesting being a late 15th century building of some pretensions in the Square, probably a small manor house originally. The church (St. Peter) is quite unexciting, with a squat W. tower (13th century) capped by a shingled spire (rebuilt, 1900). The rest of the church is 15th early 16th century with lofty granite arcades, and an inadequate, much restored chancel. Nearly all the fittings are Victorian, except a few vigorously carved 16th century bench-ends in the nave.

There are a number of interesting houses in the parish. Ashridge was a medieval "mansion" and shows some remains of this and of a chapel. Cottle's Barton, near the Taw, is an attractive stone-built Elizabethan "mansion," built in 1567 and somewhat restored (but not spoilt) in 1866.

At Nichols Nymet, which was a Domesday manor, are the remains of an old *barton*; and Crooke, which was also a Domesday manor, has the remains of a manor house and a medieval chapel. Greenslade, now a farmhouse, was a Domesday estate also.

North Tawton now includes, for civil purposes, the ancient parish of Broad Nymet which covered only 52 acres. The present Barton has a plain front of c. 1800 but is substantially a late 16th early 17th century building which originally faced the other way. The church (dedication unknown) is one of the rare ruined parish churches of Devon and is worth a pilgrimage to this rather remote spot. It is a late 13th century building, to which a S. porch was added in the 17th century. It became a sinecure rectory, and the church fell into disuse. It is an interesting little building and should be rescued from its desecration, but no one seems to care about its fate.

Northam

Northam is located within Torridge local authority area. Historically it formed part of Shebbear Hundred. It falls within Hartland 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 2054 in 1801 5355 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. In the valuation of 1334 it was assessed at £05/00/01. The lay subsidy of 1524 valued the community at £08/19/03. In 1641/2 617 adult males signed the Protestation returns.

A parish history file is held in Northam 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 Northam 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 12/14
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 12ASE,12SW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SS449291
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SS42NW,SS42NE
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 139
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 180
- Geological sheet 292 also covers the area

Illustrations

The image below is of Northam 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:

Northam includes Appledore and Westward Ho, and fills the peninsula between the Torridge estuary and Barnstaple Bay. The village occupies the top of a hill overlooking what was once a supremely beautiful scene, now ruined by power lines, pylons, masts, ill-placed bungalows, and much local white brick. It is an outstanding example of what unplanned "development" can do. Yet there are still fine views in the parish and much of historical interest. Northam itself contains little worth looking at. The parish church (St. Margaret) stands well on the edge of a bluff overlooking the Burrows and the bay. Its tall tower has been for centuries a landmark for shipping crossing the dangerous bar at the entrance to the estuary. The church is better outside than in, having been thoroughly restored in 1849-65. The memorials to the Leighs and other local families were either swept away or buried out of sight, and the ancient plate melted down. Risdon says "the well-disposed people have twice enlarged their church" and the N. aisle bears the date 1593. These were the great days in this estuary. Burrough, a little SE. of the village, was the ancestral home of Stephen and William Burrough or Borough, the notable 16th century navigators. Kingsley made Burrough the centre of his epic *Westward Ho!*, which is saturated with scenes from this corner of Devon. No Amyas Leigh ever lived here; but all the same, one cannot stand unmoved in the churchyard of Northam, looking westwards over the foaming bar, remembering how Mrs. Leigh hurried out of the house to this spot and how she stood here to see her son's ship home again

after all those silent years. A barbarian pulled down in 1868 the old house that Kingsley knew and built two semi-detached houses on the site.

Kenwith Castle is an earthwork which has been identified with *Arx Cynuit*, the scene of a decisive Danish defeat in 878, now believed, however, to have taken place at Countisbury (q.11). The general configuration of Ken with rather suggests an early medieval site. About 350 yds. E. is a linear earthwork of unknown purpose.

Appledore is a delightful unspoilt village at the meeting place of the beautiful Taw and Torridge estuaries. The delicate colouring of the estuary, of the Braunton Burrows, and of the hills beyond, is matched by the colour-wash everywhere in the village. The streets are narrow, many of the houses old; some are certainly Elizabethan. The church (St. Mary) was built in 1838 and is dull: everything else in Appledore is fascinating. There is little doubt that a village called Tawmouth existed here in the 11th century. It seems to be identical with the *Tawmutha* referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under 1068 (actually 1069) when Harold's three illegitimate sons crossed from Ireland with 64 ships, landed here and were beaten off with great losses. The scene of this battle may be *Bloody Corner*, just below Northam, where human bones and coins are said to have been found. This site is marked on the O.S. map as the scene of the battle of 878 but there is no authority for this identification.

The name Appledore first occurs in the grant of a shop or a stall (*seid*) "next the strand at Apildore" in 1335, but it seems to have decayed almost to nothing during the 15th century if Westcote's statement c. 1630 is correct. He says, speaking of Northam: "This parish is grown very populous lately, for in the memory of man, at a place called Appledore ...stood but two poor houses; and now for fair buildings and multiplicity of inhabitants, and houses, it doth equal divers market towns, and is furnished with many good and skilful mariners." On the other hand, Leland, writing about 1540, calls Appledore "a good Village" and it is plainly marked on Saxton's map of 1575. It certainly became a populous place in Elizabethan days, rising with Bideford, having the advantage of being the first place within the bar where ships could lie up.

On Staddon Hill, the summit W. of the village, is an earthwork, thrown up during the Civil War, which commanded the two estuaries and commands today a magnificent view towards Exmoor and Dartmoor. In Ogilby's day (1675) the main road from Bideford to Ilfracombe passed over Staddon Hill, crossed the estuary by a ferry to St. Ann's chapel (now gone), and continued across the Braunton Burrows. A small shipbuilding industry is still carried on at Appledore, which has two dry docks. The salmon fishery in the estuary has been carried on continuously since Saxon days. In 1086 the abbot of Caen had a fishery in the manor of Northam (probably here at Appledore) worth 30 pence yearly.

Westward Ho is an entirely modern settlement. Following the publication of Kingsley's book in 1855, a 'company was formed to develop this site as a watering place. The Westward Ho Hotel was built, a church (Holy Trinity) followed in 1870,

and by 1872 there were two or three rows of terraces, many scattered villas, and a single line of shops. A golf course was laid out on the Burrows which became known as one of the finest in England. The United Services College for the sons of officers was opened in 1874, and is the *mise en scène* of Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* Within the next thirty years much more building took place in a planless way, but worse came in the 20th century. Today Westward Ho is a sad spectacle of what uncontrolled speculative building can do with a fine site. Many of the buildings are alien to Devon, and most of them could be anywhere else. The golf course remains superb. The Pebble Ridge is a remarkable natural phenomenon nearly 2 m. long, about 50 ft. wide, and 20 ft. high.

Northcott

Northcott is located within Torrington local authority area. Historically it formed part of Black Torrington Hundred.

The population was 71 in 1801 115 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website.

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.

Maps

The image below is of the Northcott 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 74/10
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 74SW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SX336923
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SX39SW
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 112
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 190
- Geological sheet 323 also covers the area

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

Northcott is a hamlet of the Cornish parish of Boyton, across the Tamar, but is constituted as a separate civil parish in Devon.

Northleigh

Northleigh is located within East Devon local authority area. Historically it formed part of Colyton Hundred. It falls within Honiton Vol 1 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 180 in 1801 161 in 1901. Figures for other years are available on the local studies website. The lay subsidy of 1524 valued the community at £02/15/10.

A parish history file is held in Colyton 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 Northleigh 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 71/13
- Six inch (1:10560) sheet 71SW
- The National Grid reference for the centre of the area is SY197958
- On the post 1945 National Grid Ordnance Survey mapping the sheets are:
 - Six inch to a mile (1:10,000) sheet SY19NE
 - Explorer (1:25,000) mapping sheet 030
 - Landranger (1:50,000) mapping sheet 193
- Geological sheet 326 also covers the area

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

Northleigh lies remote among the luxuriant valley scenery of East Devon. The church (St. Giles), built largely of local flints in the 14th and early 16th centuries, was too well restored in 1869; the chancel rebuilt about 1858. The font and S. doorway are Norman. A fine series of carved bench-ends, and the chancel screen, date from the

early 16th century, and there is a good Caroline pulpit. Smallicomb farm is recorded in Domesday.