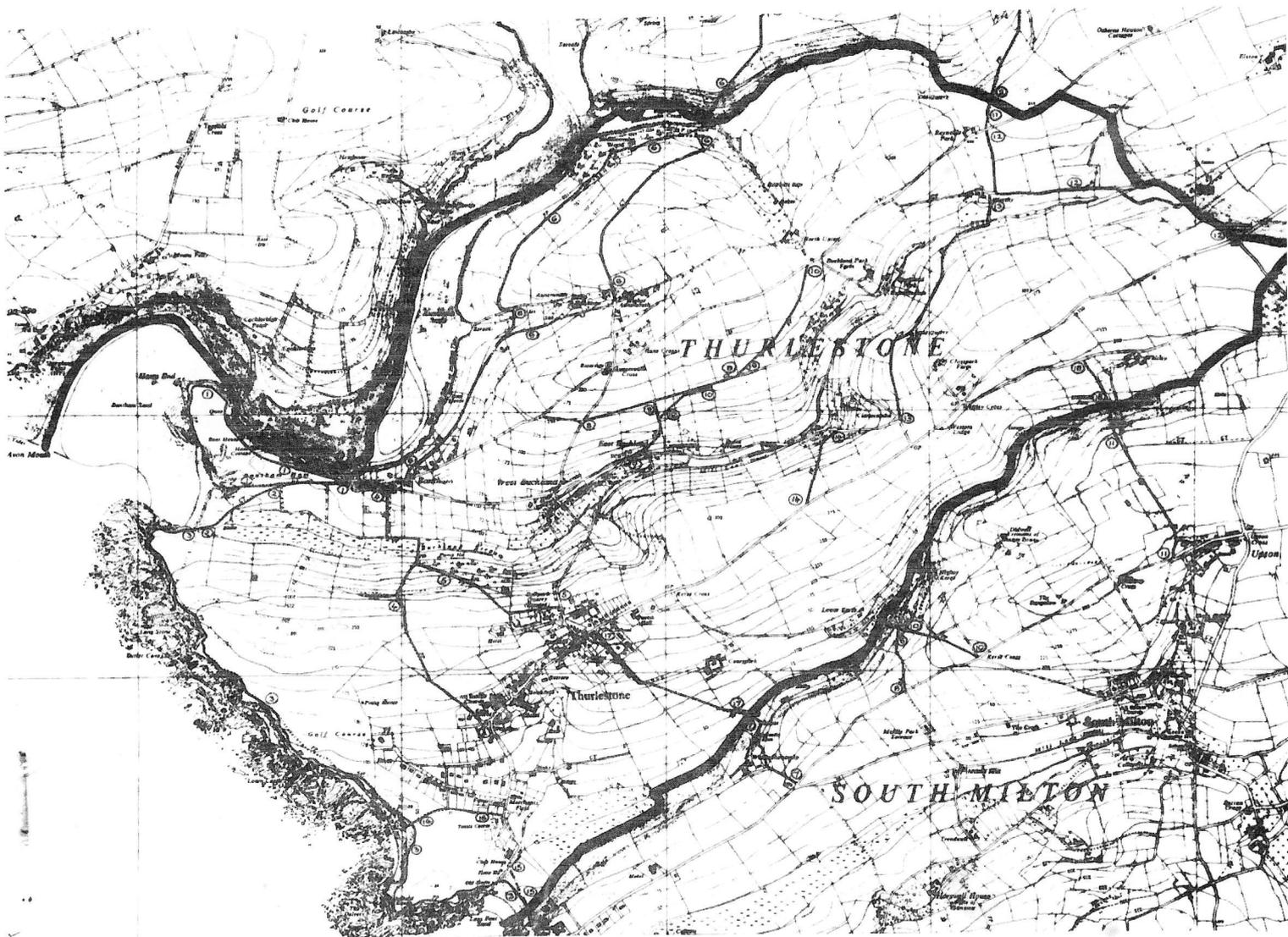


Parish of Thurlestone

Appraisal Report



March 1980

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EXTRACT FROM A LETTER RECEIVED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL FROM SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL

....."Many of you will be aware of the encouragement being given to all local Councils by the Community Council of Devon to carry out village appraisals. My Council has also added its support to this initiative as part of the Council's liaison with local Councils, particularly in respect of the production of local plans. Indeed, a number of parishes have already started their appraisals. This letter is addressed to those Councils who have not.

From my Council's point of view, the appraisals are most valuable in two ways:-

- (a) as a source of local information for this Council's planning processes, particularly at that detailed level where it is so difficult to obtain information.
 - (b) the information gained by appraisals will allow local councils to contribute more fully to the production of policies and plans by this council.
- Views from the parish level are a matter of considerable importance in preparing these plans".....

M.S. Carpenter,
Chief Planning Officer

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THE PARISH OF BANTHAM, BUCKLAND AND THURLESTONE VILLAGE APPRAISAL

R E P O R T

FOREWORD

Over a considerable period Thurlestone Parish Council has become increasingly concerned with regard to the present and future development of the three villages which comprise the Parish. During 1979, after giving a great deal of thought and debate to the matter, it was decided the views of the community should be ascertained.

On 6th November, 1979 a public meeting was called and attended by 150 residents. The meeting unanimously agreed that a village appraisal should be made, as an essential part of any planning for the future. A committee to carry out the necessary work was then elected and very quickly got down to the production of questionnaires for both residents and employers.

Of the 379 questionnaires distributed 230 (61%) were returned. Of the 149 forms not returned many were from 'holiday homes'.

The appraisal committee have devoted a very great deal of time and thought to the project throughout, undertaking the arduous task of distributing and collecting questionnaires and the extremely detailed work which has resulted in the production of this report.

This report is essentially the product of team work - of dedicated people who have given a great deal of their leisure time for the benefit of the community. Besides expressing my thanks to my committee, I would also express the thanks of the committee and myself to Mr Nicholas Hooper, Rural Officer of the Devon Community Council, who has also given unstintingly of his time and been of great assistance in so many ways to the committee throughout the months of work that have gone into this appraisal. Not least, I thank all the residents of the villages without whose response this final report would have little authority or value.

We now plan that a public meeting shall be held as early as possible, to discuss this report with you, at which, we hope to have in attendance representatives from the various authorities who will play a major part in shaping the future of our parish.

I hope you will read this report, which I feel should encourage us to think about the future, whilst it expresses current views to the various bodies responsible for steering the South Hams and this Parish into the twenty first century. The committee would like to feel this report is only "the end of the beginning."

Unfortunately due to illness, I have been unable to take the active part in this appraisal I would have desired - and I pay great tribute to the committee for pressing on so ardently and devotedly in its production.

Peter Grose,
Chairman, Thurlestone Parish Council

CHAPTER I

THE PARISH OF THURLESTONE

1. The parish extends over approximately three square miles and is situated on the SW coast 20 miles east of Plymouth and 225 miles west of London - some 13 miles off the main London to Plymouth road. It consists of the Buckland valley and the hill slopes on either side extending to the River Aune (or Devonshire Avon) to the west and to the parish boundaries of South Milton and Churchstow to the east and north respectively. The picturesque and wooded Avon valley opens out into the sea at Bantham, where there is a dangerous bar and where swimming can be fatal near the mouth, as also at the eastern end of Bantham beach.
2. The annual rainfall is about 30 inches, which can be compared with nearby Dartmoor with about 87 inches and Plymouth with 47 inches. Hence the parish experiences very local weather conditions, which may be totally at variance to the forecasts announced by radio for the South West.
3. The prevailing rain bearing winds are from the SW and in the last six years the parish has experienced the extremes of weather changes, with the exceptional flooding of 1974 when the River Avon rose to cover all the land from one side of its valley to the other at Avon Bridge and similarly the valley at Leasfoot; the severe drought of the summer of 1976 and the consequent water restrictions; the snowfalls in 1978 which were followed by a combination of high tides and SE winds which were felt at their worst at Torcross, but which also created extensive erosion of our cliffs, and then in the winter of 1979 hurricane force winds of an intensity unknown in living memory which left many homes in the parish partly roofless and denuded all three villages of many old trees which had been landmarks for years. Heavy seas eroded the coastal sand dunes further at Leasfoot, Yarmer and Bantham and cliff falls were a common sight where the National Trust footpath follows the coast.
4. The villages lie on a bed of schist, slate and sandstone, the red colouring of which is a typical feature of Devon and adds much to the scenic beauty of the area. The parish lies within an area designated as one of outstanding natural beauty and is part of the coastal conservation area. The cliff path, part of the South West Way, has become a favourite walk for local people and for ramblers heading from their Youth Hostel in Bigbury-on-Sea to that at Salcombe, via the ferry service across the Avon which is available during the summer months.

HISTORY

5. The Saxons must at least have visited Thurlestone, since it is they who have given us the name. The parish formed part of Stanborough Hundred, when a hundred cattle were thought to be adequate to support 1000 people. In a Saxon charter of 845, mention is made of a boundary point called TORLESTON a name which derives from the Saxon word THYRL or THYREL which means hole and the verb THYRL(L)IAN which means to pierce. Thus, "hole-stone" or Thurlestone describes the natural arched rock lying 1/4 mile off-shore. The name BANTHAM is derived from HAM, a dwelling, and BENTS, the sea grass (marram) characteristic of the dunes. It has always been considered that the history of a settlement at Bantham dates back to the Bronze age but the earliest confirmed proof of habitation on the ham has been certified to be in the 5th Century A.D.

12. Smuggling was also a profitable occupation for the resourceful and kegs of spirits transported across the channel were sometimes brought up on Varmer or Bantham and transported under cartloads of seaweed to be hidden in some barn or in Dan Whiddon's smithy.

13. The Avon channel has silted up considerably since the building of the Avon Dam, for earlier this century not only did paddle steamers from Plymouth call at the Quay at Bantham on a regular passenger service, but Bantham was a busy port for the fishing industry and up to 50 years ago both sloops and barges would venture right up to Aveton Gifford, carrying lime and coal on the rising tide. The remains of the old lime kilns where the limestone was burned can still be seen on the banks of the River Avon.

14. For centuries the three villages of the parish have pursued their rural existence as the homes of farm workers and fishermen, folk who made their living from the natural environment - the land and the sea. They were attacked and plundered by Irish invaders in 1067 and they then enjoyed times of modest prosperity from their agriculture and trading. They have now heeded to come to terms with the changes which industrialisation inevitably brings. Sadly, only a memory now are the smithies at Buckland and Bantham, the sight of the women preparing the wool in their homes before taking it to the mill for the fullers. The bakery at Bantham, the village shop, post office and chapel at Buckland; the jollity of folk dancing and the toil and laughter when everyone able helped to bring in the harvest; the ton-weight Devon Red cattle - which were harnessed at times to help draw carriages up the hill. Change there has always been - only the pace has increased in recent times. With the advent of the car, the railway, radio, television and the changes in patterns of life brought about by increased wealth and leisure, has come the challenge of compatability - how to live in harmony with neighbours old and new.

15. Gone sadly, in the minds of some, are the quiet idyllic days of rural summers before the trains first ran and those cars first coughed their way at daring speeds about the country lanes. The pace of change has accelerated and once isolated spots like Thurlestone and its neighbouring villages have been discovered and developed as sanctuaries for the holiday maker and the retired. This has meant, to some, the despoilation and scarring of the land; whilst to others a livelihood established; and yet others try to maintain the rhythm of the past as they pursue the old established rural occupations, pastimes and pleasures. To many, the passing of the older established houses is exceeded in sorrow only by the scale and fashion of the building of newer ones. Those with family connections traceable back over the centuries, the advent of the newer householder the holiday home owner, emphasises the irrevocability of the change which continues to challenge us all.

16. Some knowledge of the history of the village in which you live helps you to appreciate your immediate surroundings, to understand the reasons for particular features of the environment, to treat with care and enlightened concern the heritage of the past. Practicalities alone will not always be sufficient reason why this or that feature should be changed or not changed; the legacy of ancestors should not pass lightly from the scene out of ignorance or lack of understanding of the past. Nor should sentimental attachment to times past, to ways approved as "done" or "accepted" to be the sole reason or argument for sustaining them, even artificially. The change which brings such challenge to our lives, observed and charted from both the recent and more distant past, must be monitored so that it serves as much of the community in as positive and balanced a fashion as is possible.

6. In Norman times the Manor of Thurlestone came into the possession of Judnel of Totnes as a gift from William the Conqueror. It was taken from him by William Rufus and given to Roger de Nonant. His family kept it until it passed into the hands of the Buzan family in the early 13th Century and then to the Chiverston (Cheverston) family. In 1337 it passed to the Courtenay family, well known as the Earls of Devon. Their tenure lasted until 1869 when the Manor was sold to the trustees of Mr Stephen Brunskill, who in turn sold it to Commander E. Evans in 1918. Part of the estate in Thurlestone was later sold to the Grose family.

7. Much of the initial interest in tracing the early history of the hamlets of Bantham and Buckland was kindled by the findings of the late H.L. Jenkins of Clannacombe, who explored, collected and catalogued and then ensured the safe keeping of the early finds in the Parish. Similarly much is owed to the Rev. Coope who produced a fascinating history of the parish and its church, parts of which date back to the 13th Century. Through his research into local records, parish registers, land leases, title deeds etc we now have on record for posterity much about the early life of the Parish, the priests, landowner and commoners.

8. Church House was built about 1536, originally for religious celebrations and meetings which were considered unsuitable to be held in the Church nave. Before it was converted to private dwellings it was used as a poor house for a time until the Union Street Workhouse in Kingsbridge was built. The Old Rectory in Thurlestone, was built in 1820 and the gardens were open to the public for many years and provided a beautiful and serene backdrop for the fetes and other events which were held there. The school was founded in 1842 by the Rev Ilbert, and is still a church school. With the development of the Diocese of Exeter, the parish became part of the rural deanery of Woodleigh, and still

9. The Courteney Survey of 1777 shows that the parish had a vineyard and some of the best cider orchards in the country; a rifle range in the Butts field, some quarries which are still to be seen and an old mill by the brook in Buckland. Clannacombe House was believed to have been occupied by monks for a time and it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The Warren was used for picnics and games.

10. The main occupations in the parish early days were fishing and agriculture, the former regrettably becoming less profitable as time passed due partly to over-fishing by deep sea trawlers coming inshore and possibly because of pollution. In former days large quantities of pilchards were caught off the coast, salted and cured at Pilchard Cellars in Bantham and sold in barrels, the surplus being used as a staple diet in the winter. Such was the abundance of fish that excess catches were even used as manure to complement the cartloads of seaweed drawn up from the beaches and ploughed into the land. Salmon are still netted under licence at the Salmon Pool by Jenkins Quay, and off shore with no longer any local fishermen making a living out of the sea, local enthusiasts catch bass, mackerel, pollack, flat fish but no pilchard.

11. The presence of wrecks are a grim reminder of the rugged, treacherous coastline, some, however, having been the result of deliberate acts by the early wreckers(wrackers) luring their prey shorewards with false lights and then looting the vessels. Local inhabitants would join in the plundering before zealous coastguards appeared on the scene (Preventive Officers). Coastguard cottages remain to this day at Bantham but they are now private dwellings; the old look-out tower still faces Bigbury Bay and Burgh Island, from where the fishermen on lookout for shoals would signal for the boats at Bantham to up-anchor and direct them to the fishing grounds.

12. Smuggling was also a profitable occupation for the resourceful and kegs of spirits transported across the channel were sometimes brought up on Yarmer or Bantham and transported under cartloads of seaweed to be hidden in some barn or in Dan Whiddon's smithy.

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CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AT PARISH LEVEL

17. Most English parishes grew out of the manors which were in effect collective farms, administrative centres, police stations and defence headquarters all rolled into one. The inhabitants were bound to each other by a kind of web of obligations and services regulated by courts led by the Lord or his steward. These courts had to be held regularly and all tenants had to attend. Their chief business was the management of the land and those who worked on it.

18. In those early days the land was loosely organised into open fields, common land and the lord's farm, upon which tenants had to work for part of the year. Tenants had strips of land scattered haphazardly over the fields, cattle grazed indiscriminately after harvest and so disputes were common. Several courts were established to administer this arrangement, and sometimes the courts worked on behalf of a group of manors. Priests were often to be found among the early tenants, supported by a distant but powerful church, and at the same time dependent upon the lord of the manor for a personal holding or even a church building.

19. The powerful lords, as time passed, established by force local custom which soon became enforceable local law. But farming progressed and developed, custom was left behind, and with it the manor courts. In its place stepped the wealthy and powerful church, the nave of whose buildings became the parish hall and convenient public meeting place. It had accepted rights and accepted the obligations of Christian charity. Church going was the norm; the parson, paid by tithe, was teacher, registrar and comforter of souls.

20. Gradually, under the direction of the parson, people of the parish met together the better to organise their religious lives. They met in the Vestry, the name eventually given to the meeting itself. By this time the church had taken over the role of the lord of the manor as far as the care of the poor and needy was concerned, and the parson encouraged almsgiving for this purpose by his parishioners. Events like the dissolution of the monasteries amongst other influences made it necessary for the Vestries to be given the power to raise money from the parishioners for the poor. By this time, Vestries were small select groups, established by custom and self-perpetuating. Sadly, they became corrupt and steps were taken to open them by annual elections held to form committees to handle poor relief.

21. Back to the land - and here enclosures had replaced the collective farms and the way they were worked. Private ownership spread, small holdings grew in number and came under the control of the Vestries, whose influence and power continued to grow. They were inefficient and corrupt, and when Methodism arrived often shown to be unrepresentative. The need for reform of the Poor Law too, helped turn public opinion against vestries; but the new arrangements introduced to organise parish life were as inefficient and complicated as the vestries were inefficient and corrupt.

22. By the end of the 19th century the squire, parson and sometimes the school master were very often the village leaders, influencing by their education, wealth and social standing the decisions of the vestry and the ways of thinking of parishioners at large.

23. In 1894 came the parish councils, who took upon themselves the role of the church which was now excluded from local government. Christian approaches were replaced by the more secular ones of laymen, and though trouble was expected as a result, indifference was the actual outcome. By this time agriculture was a declining occupation and the notable acceleration of change which began about this time has continued at a pace which has taken many by surprise, particularly in the way and speed at which social life has changed.

CHAPTER III

PUBLIC SERVICES

24. Water Supply The South West Water Authority state...."under certain extreme conditions the water supply system in the parish is operating at the optimum capacity. Water main reinforcement is planned for the area and provided the committed Mead Development is suitably phased then the present situation should not change significantly. The effect of any further substantial development will obviously depend on location in relation to the water supply network and time related to the works planned".

25. The appraisal committee consider this information gives rise to serious concern and recommend the Parish Council should approach the District Council Planning Officer requesting further development in Thurlestone village shall be at the very least postponed until the proposed works by the water authority on the mains reinforcement are completed, and the work of development of the existing Mead Development shall be suitably phasad as desired by the Authority.

26. Sewerage The water Authority have also advised the committee that...."the South Hams District Council Director of Technical Services states the Thurlestone outfall sewer has adequate design capacity at all stages of tides, to discharge the required volume of foul sewage for all present development before overflow to the stream takes place. A recent inspection of the outfall sewer has indicated the presence of some fat and grit deposits, and these are due to be cleared in the spring. The water authority have undertaken to arrange for regular inspection of the overflow chamber and thus hopefully gain a record of the outfall sewers performance."

27. There is an annual problem of raw sewage fouling Leasfoot beach at Thurlestone and the committee do not feel at all satisfied, that although the sewer is stated to have adequate design capacity, there is no record of the outfall sewer's performance. With the number of dwellings which can still be erected on the Mead development under the consent granted by Devon County Council in 1968 it would appear to the committee that it is absolutely vital no further development receives consent until a properly phased record of the outfall sewer's performance has been made by the water authority.

28. Buckland Stream There is constant concern registered of the potential fouling of the stream from over flow of septic tanks and their soakaways. The water authority state....."that any development has to be dealt with by individual septic tanks, which would have to be so sited that the soakaways would not cause pollution of the stream. Another possibility could be a small treatment plant which would most probably be able to discharge treated effluent, subject to compliance standards....."

29. The committee note that residents do not desire to see any substantial development in either Buckland or Bantham. They understand the Parish Council have made both the District Council and the Water Authority aware of the potential pollution of the stream, and that a test was carried out by the Water Authority in 1978 and proved negative.

30. Highways and Housing The area engineer for Devon County Council advises that....."the South Hams District Council Planning Officer has stated there is unlikely to be any substantial future housing development for Thurlestone village except for the completion of the Thurlestone Mead Scheme, and there are no additional off-site highway proposals to serve the final phase of this scheme. Much thought has been given to the possibility of providing some form of relief route for the main village street of Thurlestone, but in view of the limited scale of future development in prospect it is considered that there is no just-

ification to pursue this matter." "Any future local authority housing development will only be on a very modest scale and would not, materially affect the existing traffic condition...."

31. Under Section 15 of the Householders Questionnaire people were asked to state what groups should receive major consideration in any future building plans in the parish. 52% gave first time buyers on low incomes; elderly people living alone and council tenants received 26% each, 13% housing for people who travel some distance to work, 6% sundry requirements and under 2% supported the development of "Leaside" and "Merchants Field" or similar types of expensive estates. Under section 16 of the questionnaire 60% wanted no further development of any type and 30% elected for "very limited low cost housing".

32. In view of the obvious need shown in the appraisal for low cost or council housing the committee would like to invite the Parish Council to consider whether further housing could be sited at the rear of the present Parkfield estate, with provision made in such a development for an eventual link road to provide a by-pass to the north of Thurlestone village. Under Section 10 there were 84 households who would like to see a by-pass (with differing views for its siting) and 75 were 'not interested' (81 of those in favour were residents of Thurlestone village).

33. Policing in the villages The Devon and Cornwall Constabulary state..... "we are currently carrying out our own appraisal in order to fit our next five year plan, and in particular the location of police stations and personnel. is a matter under review. Whilst these plans have yet to be finalised it is not anticipated by the Police Department that such changes as there are likely to be in the South Hams area will be other than marginal, although it is claimed that the Chief Constable's continuing policy of "community policing" is leading to a much closer involvement and contact between members of the constabulary and the public".

34. The appraisal shows only 77 (33%) of the households apparently satisfied with the policing of the villages and a massive 171 would like to see the return of the real village policeman. The committee consider that if the personnel problem does not at present permit this then it is recommended that the "panda" policeman should leave his car when touring the villages and make a great deal more contact with members of the public. It is felt that the so termed "community" policeman may know his village roads but not the great majority of the village people.

35. Social Services The Divisional Director has told the committee "Government policies are affecting the provisions dramatically, and this may have some implications for the rural areas".

36. The committee are given to understand that the Director would welcome an invitation to state the case for the Social Services at the public meeting called to discuss this appraisal report, and suggests that the Parish Council should consider issuing an invitation. It is believed there is considerable misunderstanding regarding the Social Services and the Area Health Authority and even the Social Security department. The Social Services are operated by Devon County Council and deal with the supply of Home Helps, Aids for the Disabled and so on. Their office is at Pomeroy House, Totnes.

37. Refuse and Litter The District Council Director of Technical Services states....."the ability of the District Council to deal with these two items and other related works is simply one of adequate resources, i.e. money and people".

38. The committee noted that 58 households wish to see additional litter bins, mainly strategically placed on the beaches and outside the public houses. It was recommended that refuse be collected in polythene bags, which are easier for the elderly people to handle.

There was comment on the dirty water supply. This, it is understood, was a matter taken up by the Parish Council sometime ago, when they were advised that the colouring was caused by the water coming off the peat beds and no way had been found to deal with it as yet. It was not considered to be 'harmful to health'.

CHAPTER IV

39. The population of the three villages shown by Census and/or Register of Electors in

1901	was 354
1911	was 415
1979	was 802 (estimated)

It is evident from the current register of Electors used by the appraisal committee in their house calls that a number of the holiday residents have certified the household concerned to be in residence on the 15th October, 1978 when it is highly likely that the same people have made the same declaration in respect of their home residence in another part of the country, thus duplicating all their voting powers and providing a false population figure for the parish.

40. However, the number recorded on the village appraisal questionnaire was 478. The increase has been mostly due to retired people coming to live within the parish. The number of people under the age of 40 174
over the age of 40 304

The number of males and females is equally divided until the age of 65 and then the ladies take over - in the 65/75 bracket the ladies are 2 to 1 and in the Over 75 bracket they are 3 to 1.

41. The wishes for any population growth as shown by those expressing interest are:-

Thurlestone	82% want no further growth
Bantham	86% want no further growth
Buckland	85% want no further growth

Many of those who wanted some growth did remark that they hoped for only a limited increase. A large number wanted any further development to be for "first homes" for the young, living on a lower income.

42. It does seem essential that smaller houses are made available for young couples who may regenerate the whole parish from the present predominately ageing population.

CHAPTER V

AMENITIES

43. Among suggestions for amenities the community would like to see are:-

- a. Bus shelters at Thurlestone, Buckland and Bantham
- b. A Saturday bus service
- c. Public conveniences
- d. Car parking facilities at the local public houses
- e. Improved street lighting, particularly at places of public meeting, such as the village hall.
- f. A weekly health centre (this could incorporate other suggestions for chiropody, physiotherapy and a pharmacy)

Other suggestions included a gas supply to the parish, a senior citizen's home,

a new Parish Hall, a take-away food store and residents parking permits.

44. An excellent suggestion was made for 'self-help' in collecting prescription from Kingsbridge. Volunteers could furnish their telephone numbers to the Post Offices in the parish or the Health Centre, and the patients would only have to telephone a volunteer to fetch drugs and prescriptions from Kingsbridge for them.

45. The inability to get prescriptions was commented on several times, indeed the main complaint of the medical service was the difficulty in getting into Kingsbridge Health Centre; although replies indicated a lack of pamphlets regarding the Social Services (only 38 households said they had seen them while 128 said they had not).

46. Most people seemed satisfied with their Parish Church, Public Houses and Village shops using all fairly regularly. Indeed the need to keep the village shops open was expressed several times particularly in the light of constantly rising fuel and transport costs. The appraisal suggested that the large majority of people use the village shops and post offices regularly. It was also stated the parish is particularly well served by deliveries of consumables. Fish, meat, milk, bread, newspapers etc all being delivered where required at regular intervals.

47. Kingsbridge was shown to be a very popular shopping centre with local people, the majority shopping there once or twice a week. Other places used by residents for regular shopping trips were Plymouth, Modbury, Totnes, Newton Abbot, Salcombe, Torquay and Exeter.

48. The community's enterprise and initiative could be developed to improve general amenities in a present day situation where County and local Councils seem less and less able to cope with the basic needs of the community, particularly the young and the elderly.

49. Transport Our public transport is provided by Tally Ho coaches based at Kingsbridge. The Western National buses and National coaches take passengers from Kingsbridge to other parts of Devon.

50. The vast majority of people travel to work in their own cars and a number walk. Only one person found the public transport useful for this purpose. A large number would find a Saturday bus service useful and many would like a longer time to do their shopping in Kingsbridge. Thurlestone village has some daily buses, with others on Wednesdays and Fridays and fare paying passengers on the school bus during term time.

51. The following suggested timetable results from the majority of the appraisal returns:-

<u>Dep. Thurlestone</u>	<u>Dep. Kingsbridge</u>
08.00	12.30
10.00	16.00
14.00	18.00

Bantham and West Buckland have a bus service on Wednesdays only. During the past 18 months the bus has diverted to include Buckland and then swings back right along to Bantham. The following is the suggested timetable from the majority of appraisal returns:-

<u>Dep. Bantham & Buckland</u>	<u>Dep. Kingsbridge</u>
08.00	12.30
10.00	16.30
	18.00

52. A morning and evening circular bus was requested and also that a morning bus could reach Kingsbridge by 08.45 to connect with the Western National bus

Now that Buckland and Bantham can use the school bus on its new route this should be helpful, especially in the morning.

53. We are a small rural community, our public transport is therefore bound to be fairly limited and is dependent on financial subsidies from the Council. However, it is essential that we keep the bus service which we have at the present. Nevertheless we should investigate the possibility of providing and operating a community bus service in the parish.

54. Leisure Amenities Leisure activities in the area are wide ranging and varied. Returns from the parish suggest that large numbers of people enjoy "natural" activities such as walking, swimming, boating, surfing, bird watching, fishing and gardening whilst others enjoy more organised pastimes such as golf, bridge, further education, cultural activities, yoga, W.I., the Church, dancing e

55. The vast majority seemed satisfied with the facilities for leisure activities locally, although quite a high percentage take part in activities which entail travelling to Kingsbridge or Salcombe.

Out of the 59 activities listed, 29 involved travel outside the parish.

56. Suggestions for improving facilities for leisure within the parish were varied and included:-

- a. A permanent football pitch
- b. Public tennis courts
- c. A children's playing field or adventure playground
- d. A cricket pitch
- e. A pitch and putt course
- f. The largest return (24 households or 10.5%) was for the re-opening of a bowling green in Thurlestone.

57. The Thurlestone Youth Club is available for the Over 11's and is run by voluntary help. They meet on Thursdays in the Parish Hall.

58. It was suggested that a senior citizen's club be formed in the parish as travelling to Kingsbridge was often difficult.

59. As no village hall now exists in Bantham a suggestion was made that more be done to encourage people living in Bantham to become involved in activities in the parish.

60. Generally people seem to be satisfied with the leisure amenities but felt that more could be done for the 8 - 17 year olds and the more senior citizens of our community.

CHAPTER VI

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

61. The vast majority of the houses in the parish are owner occupied. There are small council developments and even smaller numbers of houses tied to employment. There are a significant number of holiday homes which cause extensive dead areas in all three settlements during the winter months and a population explosion in the summer.

62. The average house in the parish has four rooms excluding passageways and utility areas. There has been a tendency since the discovery of Thurlestone by the wealthy at the beginning of the century for housing in the district to be of the luxury class: this has mushroomed since the end of the second World War and has aggravated the problems of the imbalance in the community, the population being dominated by luxury housed retired people from other parts of the country. Added to this is the inexhaustible requirement of the wealthy of the Midlands and London for a seaside/country second home, this results in all houses which come onto the market in the parish being priced out of the reach of local working people with too low an income to contemplate a house in their native village. Thus the young leave the district and bring up their families in places where they can afford to both live and work and so deprive Thurlestone of the youth which is so unnecessary to its continuing as a viable living village

63. On the question of further development of the villages in the questionnaire the majority of households expressed the view that development had gone far enough and that Thurlestone itself was, if anything, already over-developed. It was considered that any future development within the parish should be restricted to in-fill only and that these houses should not be of the luxury type which have so dominated the building scene over recent years, but be of small low cost type suitable for first time buyers, or a limited council development, or for elderly local people living alone.

64. It was suggested that the best way to curtail the second home market in the parish would be to set up a Housing Association to buy or build houses to be made available at low, non-profitmaking, rentals to local working people only. This would seem to be the only way to guarantee that houses could never be sold as second homes or summer letting houses.

65. There was a suggestion that the South Hams District Council should exercise its powers of compulsory acquisition of holiday homes in the parish to enable these to be lived in all the year round as an alternative to building more council houses due to land scarcity and high building costs; and that, that Authority should purchase and convert larger houses into flats for the elderly or single people.

66. If the figures on the returns for low cost housing, council housing and houses for people working away are added together, a total of 87% show great concern for the lack of balance in the community which can only become worse if the present trend continues.

67. The appraisal committee therefore recommend that the Parish Council bear in mind the concern of the people about the continuing growth in the imbalance of the population in the parish when considering future planning applications.

CHAPTER VII

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

68. The word conservation is commonly used to mean the preservation and maintenance of both the natural and man-made features considered to be a necessary and integral feature of an area, be they landscape, woodland, river, estuary, coast, buildings, trees, hedges, footpaths, roads or atmosphere and way of life.

69. We all know our environment, and have different views of it, as a place of work, recreation, relaxation, somewhere to live, a place of beauty to be protected and kept alive. It belongs to us, the local inhabitants but at

the same time, we must find room for the many people who want to share it with us, without it being spoilt for everyone and everything.

70. We have to recognise that certain aspects of our environment are changing, and in some instances, this may be inevitable - Dutch Elm Disease, coastal erosion by the sea, weather and people, storms which bring down trees and damage buildings - but we can counter these with tree planting, coast protection works and the restriction of access to threatened areas.

71. Some changes we seem to have had little or no control over. While at present any plans for building luxury and retirement homes in the area are likely to be resisted, this has not always been the case, and this development, together with the second/holiday homes trade has had a definite effect on our environment, changing both the appearance and nature of the landscape, as well as the character of the villages. We must be careful to conserve our villages, so that they are places for families to live in once again.

72. In responding to the questionnaire on the matter of conservation, 7% said please keep the status quo, 7% were concerned with tree preservation, 8% wanted to see tree replanting and a few, under 2%, were concerned about tree removal, either dead trees or just indiscriminate removals. There are preservation orders on certain trees in the parish and anyone concerned about the preservation orders can apply to Mr Alan Cheetham at South Hams District Council. There is also a Landscape Officer at SHDC who is able to advise on the matter of tree replanting.

73. We recommend a tree replanting programme to fill the gaps left by storms and felling, bearing in mind the fact that our landscape is made up of mature trees which are nearing the end of their lives, and there are few young trees coming on to replace them. Our grandparents looked after the landscape as an accepted part of their responsibilities and we should do the same...

74. Hedgebank preservation, repairs to hedges and old walls caused concern to several people. Devon County Council are obliged to keep the hedgebanks on public highways in good order, whereas walls are usually the responsibility of the landowner, as are some of the hedgebanks. South Hams District Council are responsible for certain verges, hedges etc. Landowners/tenants are required to keep hedge growth trimmed back. Perhaps they could keep the cutting to a minimum so as to conserve the growth of wild plants as an attractive feature of our landscape, and a habitat for wild life. There would seem to be a good reason to accord hedgebanks, copses and other "wild" areas the same protection as trees, and we should be on our guard against road widening, the removal of hedges and the spraying/clearing of wild land.

75. A small minority suggested the erection of kerbs around the village green in Thurlestone and also foreshore preservation by the planting of marram grasses etc. South Hams District Council are the coastal protection authority, and it seems clear that some coastal protection work is necessary, together with the restriction of access to certain areas; concern was also shown of the damage caused by motor cycles and old cars on the dunes at Bantham and a request that these should be banned.

76. It was suggested that the use of non-natural building materials should be restricted; that telephone and electricity cables should be placed underground and that restrictions should be placed on the conversion of existing old buildings into holiday homes.

77. Particular concern has been shown for the effect of the motor vehicle on the environment. There is no doubt that the extra traffic in the summer months makes a great impact on our villages, with speeding, parking and congestion being the main problems.

78. On the matter of parking 66% of the households have private garages and 24% have off street parking places. 107 households are satisfied with the public car parks but it is noted that they are also worried that car parks are not used by the summer visitors. Perhaps something could be done to encourage visitors to use the parks. Requests were made that better car parking facilities at the public houses would ease the congestion in these areas. Several households considered that more parking restrictions are required in the parish but that residents should be able to park in all the car parks which carry a charge during the summer at a reduced rate. 20% considered that a speed limit should be introduced and enforced through Thurlestone village. Suggestions were made that the use of "sleeping policemen" could help cut the traffic speed. Speed limits through Bantham and Buckland would also be effective.

79. It has been suggested that weight restrictions and size restrictions should apply to lorries in Buckland, these restrictions could apply throughout the whole parish. Representations were also made for the banning of coach tours and touring caravans through our narrow lanes. If weight and size restrictions were imposed these points would also be covered. Strict enforcement of the 28 day rule by the local authority for touring caravans was requested and so was the use of more direction and hazard signs.

80. Eight households expressed a desire for a speed restriction on the River Avon and the noise of speedboats there was commented on. On the River Avon controversy, a suggestion was made that a Leisure Committee be set up to make certain that all users of the river had a say, and a chance to carry out their activity with no annoyance to other river users. Mention should be made here of the probable impact of such use on the natural environment, and care should be taken to protect the estuary from the depredations of humans, as the balance of nature in this estuary is so delicate that the ecology of the whole area could so easily be upset if groups were allowed to have their fun "with no annoyance to other river users" and without concern for the habitats of wild life and plants.

81. Seven households commented on street cleaning, especially in farm areas. Devon County Council, as the highway authority, are responsible for this, road surface maintenance and the maintenance of the footpaths, whereas the Parish pays for a road sweeper and the South Hams District Council are responsible for certain areas.

82. Dogs excreta was complained of by a small minority; a bye-law already exists making it an offence for a dog owner to allow a dog to foul the footpath and the South Hams District Council are the authority for complaints with the name and address of the offending owner. Mud and muck are an unavoidable part of agriculture, but dogs can be guided to do it at home, or owners could take a plastic bag and small shovel with them on their walks.

83. Noise from speedboats and helicopter landings was complained of, and two households suggested the banning of chainsaws on Sundays; once again the SHDC are the authority for complaints on matters of noise and nuisance.

84. 134 households said they were satisfied with the parish boundaries and three were not, the remaining households did not know the boundaries. Of the three dis-satisfied, two households regretted that the rock and sands from which the parish takes its name are not within the parish boundary.

85. The feeling was widely expressed by long standing inhabitants of the parish

P. missing!

committed either way. The following were suggested as suitable occupations:- market gardening, rural crafts, marine engineering and boat building.

93. Employers questionnaire Of the 40 copies distributed 26 (65%) were returned, most fully completed. The employed population shown by the returns were males, 136 and females 92, nearly all of whom travelled to work by car or motor cycle.

94. Ten employers expressed a wish to expand their businesses if facilities were available, particularly suitable low cost housing for their employees, whilst ten other employers saw little prospect of expansion mainly because they were in restricted circumstances e.g. guest houses.

95. Representations were made for small areas of land to be made available for tradesmen to make provision for their own expansion within their craft operation.

96. The details on employment in the district show a disturbingly high proportion of the population to be retired and those persons of working age to be predominately in the professions. This trend is also borne out in the type of housing to be found in the villages and will have to be reversed if the villages are to survive as entities. The committee feel that as there are many positions in the parish which are filled by non-residents, some of these may decide to live within the parish were suitable housing to be made available so helping to restore the balance in the population.

CHAPTER IX

TOURISM

97. The following quotation comes from an ancient guide book and is used to show that for many years the parish of Thurlestone has been discovered as a "tourist" attraction.

"Lying just off the eastern end of these sands is an arched rock of triassic conglomerate resting on Devonian clay slates and it is the most remarkable and peculiar rock on the south coast. From this singular natural arch, as the thirled or pierced rock is called, Thurlestone took its name. The hamlets of East and West Buckland are situated in a beautifully sheltered vale, with the fine mansion of Mannacombe a short distance in-land. There is a tiny little fishing village -... whose name has been corrupted over the centuries to Bantham."

98. Visitors have enjoyed the natural beauty of the cliffs, fields, woods, beaches with fine sand, sea and river; with fishing, sailing, water sports, golf, tennis, squash, badminton and horse riding as well for many years.

99. There are hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfasts in private houses, holiday chalets, camping and caravan sites and a large number of houses which are used as holiday homes.

100. To-day people are still enjoying healthy energetic holidays, and the problems arise with the numbers which arrive here. Hundreds of day visitors come from Plymouth and inland areas, and this causes traffic congestion and parking problems.

101. Unfortunately, the question on summer visitors in the questionnaire was not fully answered and from the answers gained it would appear that the tourist influx in the summer months increases the population by only 170 at peak season. However, taking the hotel, guest house, commercial bed and breakfast,

that people who move here from the cities should adjust to rural ways; smells farmyards, bonfires etc, are a part of our lives - and not that local people should adjust to city ways.

86. However, we must not forget that we have a duty to conserve, tend and care for the man-made and natural environment that we find here. The indigenous flora and fauna have a right to their place in it, and we are the only ones who can protect that right. We have a duty to ensure that this is a good place to grow, live, work and play in and our children and young people have the right to expect this of us. We must remember it is their future.

CHAPTER VIII

EMPLOYMENT

87. From ancient times through to the advent of the Annual Summer Holiday by the sea in the last century, the people of this parish earned their living by farming, fishing and allied trades and the lucrative, though illegal pastime common to all coastal settlements - wrecking and smuggling!

88. With the arrival of the annual family holidays a new form of employment became known in the district, catering for holidaymakers, now known as the tourist industry. At the present day therefore the main employment is still to be found on the land but with the complete demise of the fishing and its allied trades and an increase in the tourist industry. The answers to the questionnaires bear this out, although in many cases the questions were not fully answered, therefore it is difficult to form any real conclusions; but from the figures received it appears that farming employs the largest number of the male population in the parish with hotels and guest houses a close second. The remainder of the male working population, mostly in the 19 -65 age group, consist of the following occupations:- building trades, shopkeepers, newsagents, publicans, gardeners, milk roundsmen, salesmen, managers, coal merchant, priest, company director, architect, joiner, estate maintenance, vet, painter, feller, butcher, boat builder, beach safety officer and one self-employed.

89. Of the male population working outside the parish company directors comprise the largest number with students next and teachers third; there are three self-employed and the remainder have the following occupations:- quantity surveyor, mechanic, deepsea diver, armed forces, agricultural consultant, forestry consultant, social worker, market gardener, architect, ship master, maintenance engineer and a manager.

90. Of the female population in the 19 - 60 age group the hotel and guest house trades employ the largest number with the shops second and the school third. Caravan sites and farms employ about an equal number and others working within the parish include a post office assistant, a home help and a publican. Teaching and nursing appear to be the main occupations of women working outside the parish with secretaries and hairdressers next and the remainder consisting of a social worker, physiotherapist, computer programmer, shop assistant, caterer, receptionist and a student.

91. The seven people who work part-time are mostly employed outside the parish and, according to the questionnaire returns we have 91 retired ladies and 52 retired gentlemen residing here. There are three currently unemployed and seven registered as disabled.

92. In the section on rural industries, 94 (40%) were in favour of some form of light industry and 24 (10%) were definitely against, the remainder were not

camping, caravan sites, holiday homes (either used by their owners or let) and the personal visitors to private households, the committee estimates that during the peak weeks of the summer season the population of the parish doubles, all of which adds to the congestion in the village streets and the pressures on the water supply and sewerage systems.

102. From the appraisal returns, approximately 50% of the local residents support tourism in some form and the summer visitors do provide employment for local inhabitants. Many households would be happy to see more bed and breakfast facilities together with private hotels within the parish and a few (3%) would welcome an increase in camping, caravan and holiday chalet sites

103. As nearly all the parish of Thurlestone is within the Coastline protection area we must take care that nothing spoils the natural beauty we have here and which brings the tourists to the South Hams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

104. This report would not have been possible without the co-operation of those households who took the time and trouble to answer the respective questionnaires and provide the data which has formed the basis of this report, and the recommendations contained therein. It is hoped that the effort that went into the completion of the appraisal will be given due cognisance by the authorities concerned with its contents and that they recognise that the inhabitants of this parish have great interest in and knowledge of their environment and its future development.

APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS OF THE HOUSEHOLDERS QUESTIONNAIRE

379 questionnaires were issued to households in the parish. 230 questionnaires were returned but not all had been fully answered. Of the remainin 149 many were holiday homes.

QUESTION	SUBJECT	FINDINGS	
1	Housing	151 owner occupier 26 Council House 8 tied to job	17 rent from priv landlord 10 holiday homes
2	Accomodation	Average number of rooms in each house 4	
3	Population	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
		Under 5 40	Under 5 6
		5 - 10 years 10	5 - 10 12
		11 - 14 15	11 - 14 6
		15 - 24 34	15 - 24 30
		25 - 39 25	25 - 39 26
		40 - 64 67	40 - 64 59
		65 -74 51	60 - 74 92
		Over 75 9	Over 75 26
4	Employment	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
		Under 18 4	Under 18 1
		19 - 40 36	19 - 40 29
		41 - 64 39	41 - 60 15
		Over 65 1	Over 60 6
		Unemployed 1	Unemployed 2
		Retired 52	Retired 91
5	Part-time work	7 people carry out part-time work	
6	Registered disabled	7	
6	Transport	Travelling to work: Own car 58, Bus 1, cycle 3, on foot 17, Other means 3.	
7	Bus service	Saturday service Yes 96 No 24 Longer shopping time Yes 40 No 17	
8	Parking	Private garages 151 Off street parking 56	
9	Public parking	Satisfied 107 Not satisfied 62	
10	Thurlestone by-pass	Yes 84 No 75	
11	<u>Amenities (Adults)</u>	<u>Regularly</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>
	Parish Church	42	101
	Village Hall	42	102
	Post Office & shops	150	50
	Village Inns	34	104
	Local bus service	15	66
	Golf course & clubhouse	56	34
	Beaches	4	
	<u>Children</u>		
	Village Hall	9	7
	Youth Club	8	2
	Playing field	5	4
	Beaches	27	10

QUESTION	SUBJECT	FINDINGS	
12	Activities	See attached list	
13	Shopping	Kingsbridge 171 Plymouth 15 Modbury 1 Totnes 5 Newton Abbot 2	Thurlestone 65 Salcombe 2 Torquay 1 Exeter 2
	How often	Weekly 77; Twice weekly 40; 3 times weekly 9 Four times weekly 3; Fortnightly 2; Monthly As necessary 19.	
14	<u>Amenities (New ones)</u>		
	Sporting	Permanent football pitch 5 Public tennis courts 4 Children's playground 4 Public bowling green 24 Pitch & putt 2	
	Non-sporting	Bus Shelters Thurl. 15; Bantham 1; Buckland Public conveniences 15 Street lighting Pharmacy 5 Health Centre Chiropodist 3 Physiotherapist Hydro-therapy pool 1 Old peoples home Old people's Club 1 New parish hall Gas supply 2 Cafe Take-away food 1 Unilateral pkgng Residents parking permits 1 Pub car parks	
15	Building in the future	First time buyers on low income 120 Elderly living alone 61 Council tenants 60 Retired people from other parts 14 People who travel to work 29	
16	Development	No further development 140 Limited in-fill low cost 72 Housing Association 2 Luxury development 4	
17	Tourism Tourist Accomodation	In favour 65 Bed and breakfast 62 Caravan sites 9 Camping 10 Holiday chalets 8 Private Hotels 54	Against 80
18	Visitors in private houses	Friends and relatives 81 Paying guests 21 Extra people in any one week 170	
19	Rural Industry	In favour 94	Against 24
20	Population growth	Thurlestone To grow 27 Bantham " 17 Buckland " 13	Remain static 1 " 1 " 1
21	Policing	Satisfied 77	Not satisfied 117

APPENDIX B

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	5 - 10 yrs	11-14	17-30	31-64	Over 65	Total
Dancing	5	.		2	2	9
General sports	2	1	2	2		7
Walking	2	2	3	18	1	26
Swimming	1	2	5	5	1	14
Boating		1	5	19	1	26
Surfing		3	4			7
Water-skiing	1	1		2		4
Golf		1	4	30	20	55
Disco		1				1
Music		1			1	2
Further Education		1	4	10	4	19
St John's Ambulance		1				1
TV		1		2	1	4
Moped/MCycle			1			1
Squash	1		2	3		6
Badminton		2	3			5
Table tennis				1		1
Tug o War			1	2		3
Cultural Activities				9		9
Pottery				1		1
Yoga				3	1	4
W.I.				29	8	37
Crafts				2		2
Antiques				1	1	2
Choral				1	1	2
Bird-watching				3		3
Tennis		1	2	7		10
Bell-ringing				1	1	2
Gardening				7	5	12
DIY				2		2
Church Activities				4	2	6
Bridge				4	9	13
Darts			3			3
Bingo				1		1
Reading				2	2	4
Fishing		4	1	14	6	25
Art				4	2	6
Youth Club		3				3
Keep fit				2	1	3
Local history					1	1
Probus					1	1
Model Engineering				3	1	4
Town Hall project				1	2	3
Scouts/guides	4	1	2			7
Fur & Feather				1		1
Riding & Show jumping		1	2	2		5
Bee keeping		1		1		2
Rifle				1		1
Dog training				4		4
Upholstery					1	1
Caravanning				1		1
Freemasons				1		1
Restaurants				2		2
Devon Association				1		1
Camera Club				1		1
Cycling		1		1		2
Embroidery				1		1
Conservation of game fowl				1		1

QUESTION	SUBJECT	FINDINGS
21	Policing (cont)	Return of Village Policeman Yes 171 No 29
22	Medical Services	No difficulty 166 Difficulty 21
23	Health Care	15 considered they required care under this heading and 103 did not.
24	Social Services (pamphlets)	38 households had read these and 128 did not know of them
	Parish boundaries	Satisfied 134 Not satisfied 3 Dont know

EMPLOYERS QUESTIONNAIRE

40 questionnaires were issued to local employers and 26 were completed.

	Male	Female
Self-employed	21	15
Living in premises	36	17
Resident in parish	26	17
(part time)	2	7
Resident outside parish	36	16
(part-time)	5	4
Seasonal (in parish)	8	9
Seasonal (outside parish)	2	7

Transport

Walk to work 7; Car or motor cycle - Male 43; Female 21.

Of the 26 returns made there were:-

Guest houses or holiday letting employers	4
Farmers	4
Building & allied trades	4
Shops	5
Public houses	2
Hotels	1
Golf Club	1
Day nursery school	1
Hairdressing	1
Nurseryman	1
Boatbuilder/ Ferry service	1