



An Overview of Diversity in Tiverton

Volunteer Researcher: Helen Booth

Note to readers:

Our research files have been compiled by a committed and diligent team of volunteer researchers.

Please be aware that while our volunteers have received training in basic research skills, they are not professional historians.

We welcome further use of our research-files (with due credit). However, we encourage you to perform your own fact-checking / research processes before relying on any of the information contained here.



Project introduction

Volunteer researcher Helen Booth conducted a comprehensive research process using primary and secondary sources, to determine evidence of diversity throughout Tiverton's history.

England's Immigrants 1330-1550

A fully-searchable database containing over 64,000 names of people known to have migrated to England during the period of the Hundred Years' War and the Black Death, the Wars of the Roses and the Reformation. The information within this database has been drawn from a variety of published and un-published records – taxation assessments, (there were a series of taxes levied on first-generation immigrants between 1440 and 1487, known collectively as the 'alien subsidies') letters of denization and protection (these record the people to whom the Crown granted specific rights that we would today associate with the notion of citizenship.)

Tax assessment of 1524:

A History of Tiverton M Sampson (hereafter referred to as MS) p.59-60

The tax assessment of 1524 lists 289 households in Tiverton parish. ... There were three categories of assessment: land, wages and goods. ...At least four men paying tax in Tiverton may be termed foreigners; probably all involved in Tiverton's cloth trade. They were John a Gaunt, possibly of Ghent in Belgium; John Cleve, perhaps from the town of Cleves or Kleve, on the Dutch-German border; John Frenshman; and Bartholomew Nove who is specifically termed 'Dutchman'.

Agaunt, John	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Bylhole, Simon	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Bampton	Summary
Carver, Peter	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Chaundeler, Michael	-	2 October 1441	- Devon, Tiverton hundred	Summary
Cleve, John	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Frenshman, John	French	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Fuster, Janyn	-	2 October 1441	- Devon, Tiverton hundred	Summary
Harris, Peter	Breton	c. 1542	- 'Tymerton'	Summary
Hugons, Garot	Fleming	20 July 1484	- Devon, Cove	Summary
Iryssh, Laurence	Irish	2 October 1441	- Devon, Tiverton hundred	Summary



Lymyngcote, John	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Nove, Bartholomew	'Dutch'	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Pyirse, John	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Rowland, Jeffray	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Tayllour, Evan	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
Whete, John	-	28 April 1524	- Devon, Tiverton	Summary
[...], [...]	Fleming	20 July 1484	- Devon, Cove	Summary

Low Countries asylum seekers (circa end of 16th c.)

History of Tiverton Book 1, Lt Col Harding (p. 42-42)

“The tyrannical conduct of Philip 2nd of Spain having driven hundreds of artisans from the Low Countries to seek asylum in England, it not only favoured Elizabeth's political views, but was a source of considerable commercial advantage to afford them every protection. Of this circumstance, Tiverton derived its full share of benefits and the town once more shone forth in all its commercial prosperity.”

Historical memoirs of the town and parish of Tiverton, Martin Dunsford

“The bigotted and cruel policy of Philip II. of Spain, towards the inhabitants of the Low Countries, had driven many of the most industrious of them to seek an asylum in England. They were gladly received by the queen's government, dispersed into various parts of England, and encouraged to resume their occupations. The manufactures of Brabant, Flanders, &c. were consequently almost annihilated, and the demand for English manufactures greatly increased. Tiverton had a large share of this additional trade ; so that the state of the town at the commencement of the 17th century was very prosperous. The clothiers settled in their new habitations, went on successfully. The population increased so fast, by the additional number of the workmen, who were daily required in the different branches of the manufacture, that the inhabitants amounted in the year 1600 to about 3600 ; nearly three fourths of the number before the fire and the plague ; so that , the remembrance of those great calamities began to be obliterated.”

Cloth trade (circa end 17th century)

No one questions the strong trade links with Holland. There was at Tiverton, as at Exeter and Topsham, a flourishing colony of Dutch merchants as well as a few Germans. Documentary evidence of them is elusive, but a marriage license was sought in August 1700 for Balthazar Vanhulthen of Tiverton, a name hardly Devonian. [MS p135]

Later 18th century: Sir John Duntze



In the later half of the 18th century a couple of men of German origin were important in Tiverton both as merchants/traders (bringing employment to the town) and political figures.

[MS p172]

John Duntze stood to be a burgess in c 1765 and Receiver-General of the Land and Window Tax. Standing against him was John Baring. Both of them were of German origin.

Duntze is thought to have been born c1735 and was the son of John Duntze merchant of Exeter and his wife Elizabeth Hawker, daughter of James Hawker or Hawkes of Luppitt, Devon. The Duntze family had come from Bremen in north Germany,

Duntze was clothier, a wealthy woollen and general merchant at Exeter. He married Frances Lewis (c1740-1801), daughter of Samuel Lewis on 28 April 1757 in Westminster. Children - Elizabeth, Samuel, John (2nd Bt), Charlotte, Frances, James.

He served as MP for Tiverton from 1768 until his death in 1795. He was created baronet in 1774.

He may have been wealthy but he certainly had health issues -

Leeds Intelligencer Tues 17 January 1786

“A correspondent says, he can from the best authority assure all those who suffer from the gout, that Sir John Duntze, Bart. of Exeter and scarce any man has suffered more from that disorder, has been under a course of hemlock and aconite pills the same which affected the cure of Abbe Man, for nearly a whole year, and that they have had the desired effect. Sir John has often taken in five days 354 pills, 43 of wolfsbane and 311 of hemlock”.

17th - 18th century: John Baring

Johann Baring 1697-1748 was born in Bremen in northern Germany on 15 November 1697. He was the posthumous son of Franz Baring, a professor of theology in Bremen, and his wife Rebecca Vogds, the daughter of one of Bremen's leading wool merchants. Following the early death of Johann's father, he was brought up by the Vogds family. At the age of twenty Johann was sent to England to learn the wool trade in Exeter. Originally having planned to return to Bremen after his apprenticeship, he decided to stay in England, where he obtained citizenship in 1723 and anglicised his first name from Johann to John. He married Elizabeth Vowler (1702–1766), the daughter of a prosperous Exeter grocer, who brought with her a large dowry of £20,000. They had 4 sons and 1 daughter - John, Thomas, Francis, Charles, and Elizabeth.

Their son John (1730–1816), was brought up at Larkbeare, his father's country residence just outside the city of Exeter, and was educated in Geneva. Later the family purchased the estate of Mount Radford, and later still Lindridge House Bishopsteigton. The family was to become one of the wealthiest in the West Country.

Black History project research into the Slave Trade

The comparative lack of references in financial papers indicates Tiverton's local economy was never built on slavery, a supposition confirmed by published histories of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Nevertheless wealth created by slavery was used in the town but to a lesser degree than port towns and cities such as Bristol.

Individual merchants as well as members of the middle and upper classes had estate interests in



the West Indies. This is proven in records of reparations made to individuals after the abolition.

In 1999 the Friends of Devon Archives requested researchers using the county's archives to note any references to blacks in Devon's documents. In four years after that several dozen researchers found more than 120 references. In total 80 African servants/slaves were found in 32 places including Tiverton. This includes some men and women listed as Indians, East Indians and Asiatic Blacks.

Tiverton's Slave Trade Connections

In the terms of the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, the UK government agreed to pay a total of £20m - about £300bn in today's money in compensation for the loss of their "property in men", some of which was paid to those with Tiverton connections. The list of slave owners included teachers and frequently vicars, who invested in the trade.

Tiverton does have records of Black residents and furthermore research suggests that at least one of those gentlemen had links to the Trans atlantic slave trade.

From parish registers – (An other source was -3740M/E9, Conveyance of messages and lands in Tiverton, 1828, containing reference to marriage settlement re plantation and estate in the parish of Saint Thomas in Pear Tree Grove, Jamaica, together with slaves, utensils and appurtenances, 1818)

Tiverton (St Peter), burial of John, a Negro, 17 4 1743

Tiverton (St Peter), baptism of Thomas Gallen, aged 18 years, a black boy living with Mrs Hamilton of Bristol, 4 5 1780

Tiverton (St Peter), baptism of Bretton, a native of Africa now resident in the town of Tiverton, servant, 21 7 1813.

[Bretton – is Thomas Bretton. Father's occupation – servant. Parent's name – just says 'son of'.]

[MS p185]: The parish register had recorded the baptism in 1780 of Thomas Gallen, 'a black boy'. The entry states that he was living with Mrs Hamilton of Bristol, who had inherited Gotham House from her father George Davey, so it is possible that Thomas was actually living in the town.

[MS p185]: John Gabriel Stedman lived with his wife and two sons in Hensleigh (House). One of the sons, Johnny, had been born in Surinam to Stedman's first wife, a half caste and the boy of mixed race attended Francis Gloyns' school in Saint Peter Street.

French Prisoners of War (see The [Lamotte family file](#) for further information)

During the Napoleonic Wars a large number of French Prisoners of War were billeted in Tiverton. One prisoner may have been Alexander Lamotte – but it now seems more likely he was here as a refugee.

World War One: Belgian refugees



During WWI over 1 million Belgian refugees left their country to flee the German occupation, going to France, the Netherlands and Britain. Over 250,000 Belgian refugees fled to Britain. Whilst a good many of them returned home after the war, others established themselves in their new country.

Pieter Verlaecke, aged 7 did not survive the rough crossing of the Channel and his arrival in Devon. He is buried in Tiverton cemetery. His family returned to Belgium after the war to Ostend, to resume their family fishing business.

[MS p292]: Local children became actively involved in the war effort; making sandbags, knitting socks, and making jam for the troops. Girls from the Heathcoat School collected 2s 6d each week towards the rent and coal for a Belgian family who had been allocated one of the newly completed Council Gardens houses. The first group of Belgians had arrived in the previous November and by March 1915 there were over 100 in the district.

By the end of WWI 8,000 Belgians had been assisted and cared for by the people of Devon.

World War One: German Prisoners of War

[MS p.292] During the war there was a great shortage of manpower in the countryside. The lowering of the school leaving age to 12 eased the situation....boys were released to work on the land, where the workforce was further increased in 1917 by the appearance of prisoners of war. Local farmers were allocated a handful of German and Austrian captives. (Western Times 22.2 18)

In 1917 600 POWs are known to have been working on Devon farms. Special categories of prisoners were able to live and work on farms. In 1917 80 POWs were billeted on Devon farms. (Public Records Office say official records of Great War prisoners in Devon have been lost.)

The History of Blundell's School

There have obviously been many pupils at Blundell's from overseas (as is still the case)

[MS p72] By 1770 Blundell's was serving the needs of the county of Devon and not just of Tiverton. The out of country boys came from Cornwall, Bristol, London and Somerset. By the later 18th century several sons of colonial officers and traders attended the school. Among these were Robert Hamilton the son of a physician on the West Indian island of Grenada, Edward Darvell whose father lived in Machilipatnam in India, the son of John Short of Bengal and Montague James whose father resided in Jamaica.

[MS p175] In the second half of the 18th century, the islands of the West Indies held potential as markets for Tiverton goods and Tiverton already had some links with them. Blundell's admission registers began in 1770 and reveal two boys, John Audain junior and John Esdaile (the son of Archibald Esdaile soon to become governor of Saint Christopher) from Saint Christopher (St Kitts).

[MS p197] (In WWI) The British government offered 'victims of war the hospitality of the British nation.' Of the quarter of a million people to enter Britain, a handful of Belgian families found homes in Tiverton and some of their sons entered Blundell's. The register contain such names as



Pierre and Maurice van der Meersh, Roger Schittecatte and Alfred van Velsen.

[MS p232] (End of 1930's) Nazi persecution of Jews was forcing many parents to look for ways of getting their sons out of harm's way. The mother of a boy already at Blundell's, Dorothea Waley Singer, was part of a group, of mainly Jewish and Quaker women, intent of placing refugee boys in public schools. This is almost certainly how Walter Cohen the son of a Jewish merchant escaped Germany and found sanctuary in Petergate (a house) where French (a master) was happy to waive his boarding fees. He was soon joined by an Austrian boy, Hans Schidlof who was already a prodigious musical talent.

World War Two Prisoner of War Camp

National Archives Reference FO 939/172

92 Working Camp, Bampton Road Camp, Tiverton, Devon 1945-1948

Hegarty, C. + Knight, S. + Sims, R., 2014-2015, East and Mid Devon River Catchments National Mapping Programme Project (Interpretation). SDV356883.

A former military camp of Second World War data is visible as a range of structures on aerial photographs of 1946 and 1947, off Bolham Road, Tiverton. The camp occupies an area of approximately 9.88 hectares of level ground bounded by the River Exe to the west and Bolham Road to the east, from which the camp was accessed. It comprises a cluster of nissen huts within the main body of the camp, with running track and sports field to the southwest, all of which are enclosed by probable fencing. A range of additional huts, possibly for administration and accommodation for guards is visible outside of the main compound, on the northeast side of the camp and adjacent to the main entrance. Possible fenced compounds are also visible to the southwest of the site. The extent of the camp is largely confined within historic field boundaries to the south and west, but with additional fencing defining the northern extent of the camp. The camp remains largely unaltered on aerial photographs of 1947, although by 1966 the former camp has been completely cleared and site occupied by a school and what is now Tiverton High School. Below ground evidence of this former camp, for example, hut bases may, however still survive in areas unaffected by development.

[MS p320] Prisoner of War camp established in 1943 on the Old Race Course where the first inmates were Italian. (Also Germans here later) At first security seems to have been lax. The Western Times reported in October 1944 that the POWs who were allowed 'to exercise within defined limits' in the town, had been abusing this privilege and were distributing 'crude pamphlets bearing Fascist slogans'. (We do not know the category of men detained in this camp but the newspaper suggested on 24.11.44 that they had been taken from other camps 'because of their subversive tendencies'.)

[MS p324] Last of German POWs left the camp in December 1948. Four stayed in Tiverton as they had married local women. (Not clear if these are Germans or any of the POWs.)

1956: Pasquale Salamo

Known as Pat. Also as Saly/Sali.



London Gazette 13 November 1956f

List of aliens to whom certificates of naturalisation have been granted by the Secretary of State and whose Oaths of Allegiance have been registered in the Home Office diary the month of October 1956. Date shown is date of naturalisation.

Salamo Pasquale Italy Textile worker 5 Lime Close, Cowleymoor, Tiverton. 13 September 1956

Obituary notice

Salamo Pasquale 'Pat' died July 23rd 2010 of Westexe South. Aged 89. (Wife deceased Dorothy Winifred)

Son is Pete Salamo. Brentwood, Exeter Road Tiverton EX16 5NZ

World War Two: Americans in Tiverton

[MS p319] As the war went on Tiverton began to feel the effects of a growing American presence. To begin with the US Navy established a small store at Collipriest, with many of the men housed at Howden. For ease of communication (and, probably to keep the troops out of the town as much as possible) a temporary bridge was put up across the Exe between the two camps. Collipriest became the headquarters of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division; the Divisional Signals and Cavalry Reconnaissance troops were encamped here (and visited by Patton and Eisenhower. Also stationed there was J D Salinger.)

The presence of American troops sparked a wide range of emotions, actions, and reactions....Dances were popular and the Tivoli and Electric Theatre cinemas were much in demand. The American appetite for 'movies' and abundant female company persuaded the Borough Council early in 1944 to agree to open the town's cinemas on Sundays (though admission was to be confined to men and women from the services accompanied by one friend only). ... Shortly before the Normandy landings most Americans had left Tiverton.

Children of American GIs

Children of black GI's and white women were known in the contemporary press as 'Brown babies'.

Alan Hunt (deceased 2012). Adopted by Hunt family. Very popular Rugby Club Rotary Club. Wife – Jane Hunt who attended a Rotary talk on the subject of diversity in Tiverton.

Post World War Two: Polish, Ukrainian, Yugoslavs in Tiverton

[MS p324] The immediate post war saw Heathcoats increase its exports and on a few occasions local labour could not meet the demand. Derick Heathcoat Amory was involved in the United Europe Movement and was no doubt influential in the firm's decision in November 1947 to give work to refugees. The company advertised for local people willing to provide board and lodgings for seven Polish-Ukrainian girls.

Tiverton also became the home of a much larger group of refugees a little later, victims of the Cold War. After the POWs had left, the camp was used as an agricultural hostel run by the Devon



Agricultural Executive Committee. The men accommodated there included a group of 74 Yugoslavs who had escaped the Communist takeover of their homeland. They were immediately made welcome, and became a much-respected and integral part of the town's population. In January 1949 they held an Orthodox Christmas celebration in Saint Peter's Church. A Wedding service conducted by a priest of the Orthodox Church took place there in the following May between one of their number to a Ukrainian girl working in the factory.

The Independent 12 April 1995. 'Serbing the Community' Helen Rumbelow

Article about Serbian refugees living in London.

'When we arrived in Britain in 1947 the government gave us £1 to put in our pockets. That is all we had,' says Alex Petrovic, the President of the Church Committee and therefore Mr Big around the Serbian Orthodox Church and Community Centre in Ladbrook Grove, West London....

'It was hard to integrate at first,' says Alex. 'I remember being stationed in Tiverton in Devon, and going to a dancehall with 20 other huge, tall Serbs, all unsmiling. The girls were terrified. They ran away'.

Naturalisation Certificate

Milan Petar Rapo. From Yugoslavia. Resident in Tiverton, Devon.

Certificate 015888 issued 4 November 1974

London Gazette Naturalisation Certificates 1949-1981 (all down as Resident in Tiverton)

Carlo Meffe from Italy 3 Aug 1955 Bulldozer driver 15 Lime Close Cowley Moor

Salamo Pasquale from Italy 13 Sept 1956 Textile worker 5 Lime Close, Cowleymoor

Angelo Meffe from Italy 21 May 1959 Farm worker Battens cottage Sampford Peverell

Herbert Wilhelm Blum from Germany 29 April 1954

Karl Domnik from Germany 14 May 1954 Farmer Gloyns Farm, Oakford near Tiverton

Karl Heinrich Trippler from Germany 27 Jan 1956 Labourer Sydeham Farm, Rackenford, Tiverton

Robert Ebi from Germany 15 Oct 1958 Farm worker Middle Curham, Ash Thomas, Halberton, Tiverton

Karl Richard Paatz from Germany 22 June 1964

Franz Joseph Becks from Germany. 6 April 1970

Gerhard Arthur Stricker from Germany. 30 Oct 1970

Savo Djuric from Yugoslavia 13 March 1962 Known as Savo Duric Textile worker (Plastic Coverer) 28 Broad Lane

Danilo Maglov from Yugoslavia 9 March 1966 Queensway Died 31 May 2012 aged 92 Husband to



late Joyce, father of Steven, Alan, Angela and Milena

Franc Rozic from Yugoslavia 12 March 1973 13 Blackmore Road

Milan Petar Rapo from Yugoslavia. 4 November 1974

Andrzej Wieslaw Debicki from Poland 3 Oct 1953 Gaiter overlooker (Textiles) 86 Cotteylands

Kamimierz Klepanda from Poland 29 April 1954 Bricklayer and mason. 13 Martins Lane, Barrington Street.

Henryk Wojewoda from Poland 24 Nov 1954 Textile worker (lace) 1 Heathcoat Bungalows Bolham Road

Stefan Dutko from Poland 15 April 1955

Lukas Lachno from Poland 10 May 1955 Agricultural worker Hone Hill Cottage

Zygfryd Ludwik Schmidt from Poland 9 May 1960 Known as John. Died 30 Nov 2018 age 93 Husband of the late Myrte, father of Gary, Lorraine and John

Jakob Medwid from Poland. Formerly Hilary Medwid. 10 Jan 1966 Assistant weaver (Shuttle loader) 14 Branscombe Road

Joseph Grzenkowitz from Poland 30 Nov 1967 Bricklayer 88 Chapel Street. Changed name by deed poll 14 Feb 1968 to Joseph Grant

Istvan Kiss from Hungary. 6 Nov 1975 10 Leat Street

Wasył Tkachuk from Russia. 15 Sept 1959 Textile operator 30 Cotteylands

Maria Tkachuk from Russia. 15 Sept 1959 Textile operator 30 Cotteylands

Antonio Nunez from Spain. 21 May 1979 24 Coleridge Road

George Gulko of uncertain nationality 31 July 1953

Dilip Kathuradas Popat British protected person. 27 Sept 1979

Angelo Meffe from Italy Resident in Tiverton Farm worker Battens Cottage Sampford Peverell 21st May 1959 Died 10 November 2010. Angelo of Smallacombe Road Tiverton Aged 92. Husband of Nunzia, father of Nicky, Nina and Alan. Grandfather of Ludo.

Carlo Meffe from Italy. Bulldozer driver. Cowleymoor, Tiverton 3rd August 1955

Henryk Wojewoda from Poland 24 Nov 1954 Textile worker (lace) 1 Heathcoat Bungalows Bolham Road. Married Nesta M Gratton in Tiverton 1950.

Mrs Joyce Kiss

Telling our stories
Finding our roots

D Duric
A P Malov
K Medwik