

# Dartmouth History Research Group

## A History of Dartmouth in Four Houses

Saturday 18 November 2023  
The Flavel Centre, Flavel Place, Dartmouth

1.30-4.30pm



**DHRG**

### PROGRAMME

Introduction and welcome: Phil McConnell	1.30-1.35
Case study 1: The House on the Corner: Reclamation, Revolution and Restoration 4 The Quay: Gail Ham	1.35-2.00
Case study 2: Bring out your Deeds: The story of a Georgian House 46 South Ford Road: Maureen Harris	2.00-2.25
Question and Answer Session	2.25-2.50
Tea	2.50-3.10
Case study 3: A Mud, A Quillet, An Entrepreneur, and a New Technology Coombe Villa, Coombe Terrace: Jonathan Turner	3.10-3.35
Case study 4: The Doctors' House 20 Crossparks: Brian Parker	3.35-4.00
Question and Answer Session	4.00-4.25
Thanks and farewell: Gail Ham, Chair DHRG	4.25-4.30

The enclosed summaries have been prepared by the presenters to set out the key points covered in their talks and provide information about the sources they have used.

A Guidance Note on researching the history of a house in Dartmouth and the surrounding area can be found on the "Guidance and FAQs" section of our website:

[www.dartmouth-history.org.uk](http://www.dartmouth-history.org.uk)



## 4 The Quay: The House on the Corner: Reclamation, Revolution and Restoration Summary

Date		Source
	<b>Reclamation</b>	
1564	First evidence of New Rente, area of reclaimed land east of Fairfax Place and north of Raleigh Street	DHC DD61430
1578	Town rental shows Thomas Sayer already in occupation of house on plot at NW corner of New Rente	DHC DD61478
1584	Town council decides to build New Quay, construction begins	DHC DD61461
<b>1585</b>	<b>Thomas Sayer takes out new lease for his New Rente property, which now includes “piece of wasteland” abutting the Quay. “Wasteland” forms most of site of 4 The Quay.</b>	<b>DHC DD61530</b>
1592	Thomas Sayer dies. Names grandchild Edmond Plumleigh in his will.	St Saviours parish register Will proved PCC 1592
1614	Edmond Plumleigh marries Alice [nk] in St Clements Townstal	DHRG 100154
1615	Baptism of Robert, son of Edmond and Alice, Stoke Fleming	Bishops Transcripts
1632	Edmond Plumleigh resident in St Saviours	Devon Parish Taxpayers
1636	Privateering attack on Edmond and Robert Plumleigh	CSPD Charles I 1636-7
1638	Robert Plumleigh marries Katherine Sevie, Plympton St Mary	Family Search record
1639-40	Butterwalk and extension of New Quay completed	
	<b>Revolution</b>	
1642-1646	First English Civil War. Robert’s daughter Katherine probably born during this period.	
1649	Charles I executed. Commonwealth government established.	
1650	Edmond Plumleigh dies. Robert inherits his house on New Quay, probably no 9, and a quarter share of a ship	St Saviours burial register. Will proved PCC 1651
1653	Robert Plumleigh joins Commonwealth Navy as Captain of the <i>Sampson</i> . Oliver Cromwell becomes “Protector” (head of state).	CSPD Interregnum 1652-3
1654	Robert Plumleigh becomes Captain of the <i>Reserve</i>	CSPD Interregnum 1654
<b>1655</b>	<b>Robert Plumleigh and his cousin Anthony Plumleigh take out two new leases for Thomas Sayer’s property. Robert takes northern half on which he later builds 4 The Quay. Anthony takes southern half.</b>	<b>DHC DD63221 (RP)</b> <b>DHC DD63222 (AP)</b> (Also DHC 64915 – 1668 survey of town leases)
1658-59	Cromwell dies; Commonwealth Government returns	
1660 Feb	Robert Plumleigh re-commissioned as Captain of the <i>Reserve</i>	HOCJ 1651-1660
	<b>Restoration</b>	
1660 May	Charles II declared king	
1662 April	Robert Plumleigh receives naval back pay	TNA SP 46/138/28/123
<b>1662 July</b>	<b>Robert Plumleigh takes “enlarging” lease to build 4 The Quay</b>	<b>DHC DD 63117</b>
1662 Aug	Dartmouth’s Mayor and other Councillors removed John Flavel and other Dartmouth ministers ejected from livings	DHC DD 63162 John Flavel, Freeman
<b>1664</b>	<b>4 The Quay completed</b>	<b>Datestone, 4 The Quay</b>
1672	Robert Plumleigh member of John Flavel’s congregation (signs letter thanking Charles II for Declaration of Indulgence)	Non-conformity, G Lyon Turner, 1911
1674	Last known record for Robert Plumleigh (taxed for five hearths)	Devon Hearth Tax
1701	Katherine Plumleigh “widow” buried	St Saviours parish register
<b>1702</b>	<b>4 The Quay divided; western part leased to Catherine Sadler</b>	<b>DHC DD63700</b>
<b>1708</b>	<b>Katherine Sikes, daughter of Robert and Katherine Plumleigh renews lease for eastern part</b>	<b>DHC DD63747</b>
1713	Katherine Sikes dies. Leaves her property to her daughter Katherine Horswell.	St Saviours parish register Will proved PCC 1713

For abbreviations and other source material used in presentation, see over.

DHC "DD"	Devon Heritage Centre Exeter, Corporation of Dartmouth's Deeds and Documents; items identified by "DD" number. Not viewable on online catalogue, listed in typed and bound volumes of Calendar on open shelves.
Parish registers	Original registers for Dartmouth's three parishes held at Devon Heritage Centre. Digitised and searchable images of registers available on FindMyPast. Transcripts available on open shelves at DHC Some images and transcripts available on DHRG website, see FAQs section.
Bishops Transcripts	Originals held at Devon Heritage Centre, digitised images available on Family Search website with some indexation. Not all years survive. Some transcripts on DHRG website, see FAQs section.
PCC Wills	Wills proved at Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Listed on The National Archives on-line catalogue, each item downloadable, fee required. Images available on Ancestry. Also indexed in Devon Wills Index, see FindMyPast and Devon Wills Project on <a href="http://www.genuki.org">www.genuki.org</a>
Devon Parish Taxpayers	Devon Parish Taxpayers 1500-1650, volume 3, Churchstow to Dunkeswell, ed. Todd Gray, Devon and Cornwall Record Society New Series volume 65, 2023. Lists of those paying poor rate in Dartmouth parishes between 1601 and 1649 (not all years in all parishes).
Devon Hearth Tax	Devon Hearth Tax 1674, ed. T L Stoate, 1982, on CD, B D Welchman 2003. Includes Dartmouth and Townstal.
CSPD	Calendar of State Papers, various periods, first published late 19thC, digitised and searchable on British History Online <a href="http://www.british-history.ac.uk">www.british-history.ac.uk</a>
HOCJ	Journal of the House of Commons, various periods, first published 19thC, digitised and searchable on British History Online as above
TNA	The National Archives online catalogue <a href="http://www.discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk">www.discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk</a>

### Naval and Maritime Records

Letters and Papers of the First Dutch War 1652-1654, Volume IV, ed. C T Atkinson, Navy Records Society, 1910.  
The National Archives: Records of the High Court of Admiralty: HCA 32/8A/11; HCA 32/8A/48; 10 April 1655.  
Marine Lives Project: HCA 13/71, High Court of Admiralty, witness statements and depositions, 1656-1657: evidence of Miles Pyle of Dartmouth in the claim of Joseph Cubit & Company for the Palmetree, 25 November 1656, folios 416 and 417. Transcript and digitised images accessed at [http://www.marinelives.org/wiki/HCA\\_13/71\\_f.417r\\_Annotate](http://www.marinelives.org/wiki/HCA_13/71_f.417r_Annotate)  
The Diary of Samuel Pepys, Volume 1, transcribed. Rev. Mynors Bright, ed. Henry B Wheatley, London, 1904  
Memorial History of Newfoundland, Maritime History Archive, Keith Matthews Name Files 1500-1850, "Plumleigh": <https://mha.mun.ca/mha/holdings/keith/plumleigh.php>

### Other Records

The Visitation of the County of Devon in the year 1620, ed. F T Colby, London 1872, at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)  
Transactions of the Devonshire Association Vol 43 1911, John Flavell: A Notable Dartmouth Puritan and his Bibliography, by Edward Windeatt, at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) (includes lists of those fined for non-attendance at church in 1663)  
Original records of early non-conformity under persecution and indulgence, Vol 1, p207-209, G Lyon Turner MA, London, 1911, at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)

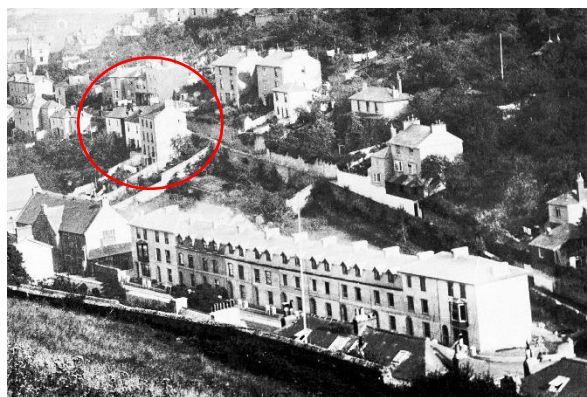
### Key Secondary Sources

**J R L Thorp, No 4 The Quay, Dartmouth: a Devon town-house of 1664, Proceedings of Devon Archaeological Society vol 41, 1983, DHRG website 100015, copy in Dartmouth Library, Local History Section, Buildings folder**

Bernard Capp, Cromwell's Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution, 1648-1660, OUP, 1989  
Rif Winfield, British Warships in the Age of Sail 1603-1714, Seaforth, 2009  
Alison Grant, Devon Shipping, Trade and Ports 1600-1689, in New Maritime History of Devon Volume 1 ed Michael Duffy et al, Conway Maritime Press with University of Exeter, 1992  
Ray Freeman, The Castle Hotel, 1998, DHRG paper 25  
John Flavel, A Famous Dartmouth Puritan, 2001, paper DHRG 29

Gail Ham retired to Dartmouth with her husband and cats in 2013, after a career in the Ministry of Defence and management consultancy. She now enjoys pursuing her longstanding love of history and currently chairs the Dartmouth History Research Group.

## 'BRING OUT YOUR DEEDS': 46 SOUTH FORD ROAD, A GEORGIAN HOUSE... THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY



Building materials and physical changes to a house are part of its story. 46 South Ford Road started as a 2-storey house and became 3-storey. Images: Mansard Terrace after 1874, courtesy Dartmouth Museum; © T. Sellars

OWNER/OCCUPIER	DATE	NOTES	EVENT/SOURCE
Did it have an earlier history?	C17th	Devon CC Historic Environment team	Archaeological finds
<b>MARY OUGIER</b> (d. 1808) Married to <b>Peter Ougier I</b> (d. 1754) from Guernsey Their son, <b>Peter Ougier II</b> (d. 1803)	1789	<b>Peter Ougier I</b> , sea captain from Guernsey, 'of Dartmouth' in 1749, traded with the Caribbean, Virginia and the Carolinas. <b>Peter Ougier II</b> , Master Mariner, Newfoundland, estate at Bay Bulls, ship owner, agent as privateer for John Seale of Mount Boone, c 1783 bought Cotterbury estate, Blackawton. Several children died young, committed suicide 1803. Decline of the Newfoundland trade led to many bankruptcies	Deed: lease to the Leathys of a 2-storey house on an undeveloped track south of the Mill Pool, the main pack-horse route from town. Maps: 1619, 1692 Canadian DNB, DHRG Seale letters, Ancestry (family history)
THOMAS AND ROBERT LEATHY, lessees <b>THOMAS LEATHY (1783-1856)</b> occupier of 46 from <b>1841-56</b>	1789  1841	From 'tripe-butcher' to 'ship builder' Apprentice ship-builder to <b>Andrew Bennett</b> , then ship-builder and trader from 1804. Decline of the Newfoundland trade and shipyards, many bankruptcies. Change to coastal trade.	DHRG Ivor Smart, paper, local ship building. Ancestry (censuses, family history), Newspapers (Find My Past)
<b>JOHN GIBBS</b> lessee <b>THOMAS LEATHY</b> occupier to 1856	1835, 1839	From a ship-building family in Sandquay, possibly a relative of the Leathys. Mill Pool filled in, the thriving town (New Road, Market, Charles Street)	Deeds, Ivor Smart paper c 1835 map.
<b>WILLIAM BASTARD REED</b> Occupier unknown	1862- 1865	Pawnbroker, lived in Higher Street with his wife, Martha, he died 1864. Martha also owned No 44	Deeds, DHRG trade directories
<b>ROBERT PALFREY (1814-1876)</b> , at No 46, 1865-1875	1865- 1875	Master Mariner, part-owner of ships, captain of the <i>Onward</i> trading in the Mediterranean. 1860-1880 town expansion: building, railway, port	Ancestry (family history), CLIP (captains & crew) Ray Freeman
<b>JOHN MARSHALL MOLLON (1839-?1905)</b> at No 46 from <b>1887-1892</b>	1875- 1887 Mortgage 1887- 1892	From Cornwall, ? waterbailiff, Torquay, accountant of Newcomen Rd and South Town, widower, mortgaged No 46 to Heath and then Henry Parry. The developing town: Dartmouth business booming, holidays for the wealthy. Daughter Edith a schoolmistress	Deeds, plan 1865 Ancestry, family history, censuses DHRG trade directories
Occupier <b>James Griffiths</b> from Oxfordshire	1881	In 1881, Griffiths, a cook and his family. The town developing for holidays/hospitality	Ancestry, census
<b>HENRY PARRY</b> , wealthy gentleman (d. 1896)	1891-92	Of East London and 'Blacklers' Kingswear. Probably knew the Gills in East London	A London connection.
<b>JANE &amp; RICHARD GILL</b> (Richard c. 1843-1908) Son Richard Gill, Master Mariner, b. 1874	1892- 1914	Of East London, apprentice mariner, floating hospital, Master Mariner probably in the coastal trade, then the Caribbean, part-owner of the <i>Totnes Castle I</i> , paddlesteamer. Made changes to No 46 now 'Hazelmere'. Died suddenly, 1908	Ancestry (family history, censuses, hospital ship), Clammer/ Kittridge <i>Paddlesteamers</i> , Deed plan 1914, Trade drctries

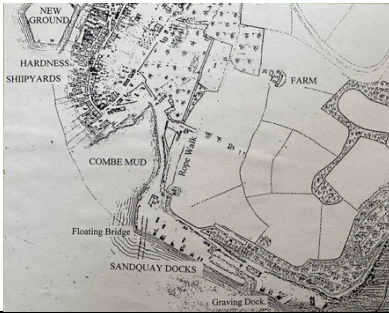
Maureen Harris: retired teacher and Landscape Architect, took a local history research degree in retirement and is still researching Warwickshire's C17th history (currently editing some Civil War documents) as well as the history of Dartmouth since moving here in 2021.



# Coombe Villa and Coombe Terrace, Dartmouth

A mud, an entrepreneur, a quillet, and a new technology

## Where it is it?



**Coombe Terrace is built on land which was originally part of the Coombe estate**, an ancient estate centred around Coombe House at the bottom of the valley. The estate was bought by Seale in around 1730 and sold to Raleigh Estate in 1873. Coombe Terrace was built above the shore line of Coombe Mud, an area that drained at lowest tides. Mud was dug there and used to ballast empty ships. Shipyards and warehousing were established on the south shore, while the Seale family had invested a large amount in state-of-the-art docks at Sandquay, including a graving (dry) dock. *Image courtesy of Dartmouth Museum*

## When was it built?



**The 8 terrace cottages were built in pairs in 1869** and Coombe Villa would have been part of the build. Originally the Terrace may have been built to provide housing for the captains of Samuel Lake's fleet of 20 trawlers (see below), however, by the time the houses were completed, the trawler venture had not been successful, and the trawlers were up for sale. Coombe Villa was always intended to be for Samuel Lake and his family (see below).

*Image © JCT*

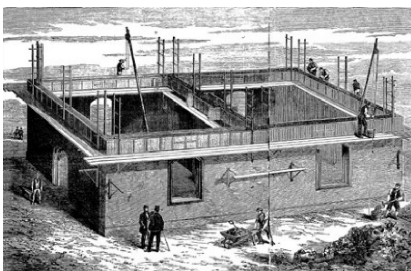
## Who built it?



Samuel Lake 1842-87

**Samuel Lake took on the lease and built the Terrace.** Lake was a Dartmothian entrepreneur who made a fortune in Bombay, working on a land reclamation scheme. He returned to Dartmouth in 1867, still only 25, and invested in many schemes designed to bring prosperity to the town. Lake became an eminent dock construction engineer responsible for large docks schemes at Milford Haven and Felixstowe. Technically competent, he was less competent financially, and died leaving little to his wife but the Terrace. He earned 3 of the highest gallantry medals for lifesaving. Lake's enduring influence on Dartmouth, apart from the Terrace, was his championing of the South and North embankment schemes (see below). *Image courtesy of Dartmouth Museum*

## How was it built?



**The houses in the terrace are built, largely, of unreinforced concrete.** Portland cement was first developed in 1824, and engineers used it in a variety of building applications including marine barriers, warehousing, and housing in the 1850s. In 1865 a technique for building modest houses, quickly and easily, was patented by J. Tall. Concrete walls were created by 'pouring' concrete in between two temporary shutters that were removed after the concrete had set. The floors were wooden. It is one of the first poured, shuttered concrete developments for housing in the South West, though individual houses were built of concrete earlier in 1850s on the Isle of Wight.

## Who lived in Coombe Villa?



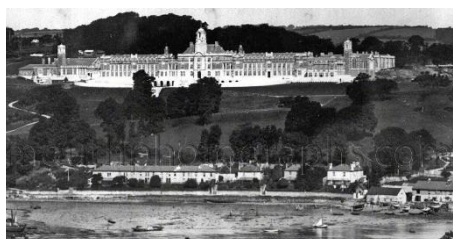
Mary Lake and children, 1886

**Members of the Lake family lived there from 1869-1913.** Lake moved in with his wife, Mary, in 1869/70 and their first child was born soon after. They moved to Milford Haven, Wales in the 1870s. After Lake's death, Mary lived in the house, sharing it with members of her family, until 1913, when it was sold, she moved to live with her daughter until her death in 1918. The house was bought by Harold Philip, manager of the Philip shipyard at Sandquay. During the war it was requisitioned and occupied by US forces personnel. Some time after the war, a number of houses in the terrace were purchased by the Pillar family, who then let and sold the cottages and houses separately. Coombe Villa was purchased by Dartmouth auctioneer Derek Scorer in 1952 who lived there until 2023. *Image courtesy of Dartmouth Museum*

## Coombe Villa and Coombe Terrace, Dartmouth (continued)

### A mud, an entrepreneur, a quillet, and a new technology

#### Changes to Coombe area



Arrival of BRNC 1902-5

*Image courtesy of Dartmouth Museum*

1872 a paved crossing was built across Coombe Road to access the water  
1873 Coombe Estate sold by the Seale family to Raleigh Estates (Seale retained Norton House)

1885 South Embankment reached the south edge of Coombe Mud

1898-05 Coombe House and Mount Boone Farm were demolished; BRNC was built

1925-29 North Embankment was built, a bridge over Coombe mud, preventing access for ships, effectively ending shipbuilding there

1932-39 Coombe Mud was filled in and turfed over. It became known as Coronation Park (to mark the coronation of George VI in May 1937)

1937 The warehouses and shipyards were demolished around Coombe Mud

1943 The American Forces arrived. The XI Amphibious Force, in charge of US preparations for and the operations of D Day, were headquartered in BNRC & Coronation Park

1969 the outer relief road was built and was named College Way

#### Sources

- Dartmouth Museum archives – photographs & material for the life of Samuel Lake
- Dartmouth History Research Group website, archive section: 1840s tithe maps, original records, DHRG publications, and access to Dartmouth Chronicle to 1884
- Dartmouth Harbour Papers 1-IV and Sandquay, by Ivor Smart, published by South West Maritime History Society, available on the DHRG website, with permission
- The Chronicles of Dartmouth: An Historical Yearly Log 1854-1954, by Don Collinson, published by Richard Webb, 2000
- A new history of Dartmouth, by Ray Freeman, published by Harbour Books, 1983
- Genealogy and census material: Ancestry & Findmypast (1870-1911 transcribed by Mel Trent from Ancestry)
- Findmypast – for newspaper archives
- National Library of Scotland for old O/s Maps
- History of cement: internet searches and Prof. Chris Burgoyne, Professor of Structural Engineering, Cambridge University
- Coombe Terrace residents:
  - Coombe Villa – Chris Scorer
  - No 15 Coombe Terrace – Mel and Tim Trent
  - No 21 Coombe Terrace – Sue and Paul Morley
- Sarah and Nik Green, Raleigh Estate

## The Doctors' House (1952)

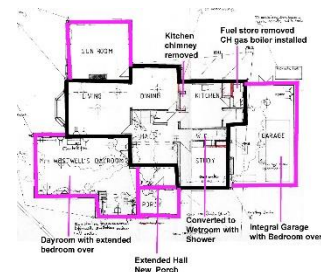
### 20 Crossparks

It may be reasonably thought that a house built less than 75 years ago would not be of much interest in terms of history, which accumulates with the passage of time. However, it may be that a modern house offers one or more of the three areas of historical interest. These are its setting (its prehistory), the building itself and the people who have occupied it. The Doctors' House in Crossparks offers something in all three categories.



The **Setting** begins with an incident in the English Civil War when, in 1643, the Royalists, led by Prince Maurice, stormed upon Dartmouth but were repulsed. The Prince stood off, set up headquarters at Milton Farm and laid siege to the town. It is likely that the Doctors' House is on land on which the Royalist army of '1500 Horse and Foot' encamped.

The **House**, as originally built in 1952, was of an above average standard for the time, five years after the War, with a doctor's consulting room and fourth bedroom. It was substantially extended (purple) after 40 years, largely to accommodate a living-in mother-in-law.



The first **Occupants** were Dr Giles Keane, the lead doctor in Dartmouth Medical Practice until 1981 and his first wife, non-practising Dr Vida Keane, Mayor of Dartmouth, who died in 1986, and his second wife Jill, a nurse. The second owners, since 2012, are Brian Parker, a science lecturer at Britannia Royal Naval College and Sally Parker, a retired teacher at Dartmouth Primary School.

The research for this exercise was very greatly assisted by having original deeds and other documents saved by the Keanes and passed on in the sale. These included the original land sale with its copious covenants, the initial plans, the conversion plans, and a host of photographs. Historical information about the Civil War was taken from readily available literature, such as Ray Freeman's *Dartmouth and its neighbours*. Less widely available historical information was sourced from the Dartmouth History Research Group and its web site. Historic mapping was based on the 1841 Tithe map and other OS maps.

Brian Henry Parker

One-time environmental scientist, history researcher in retirement.