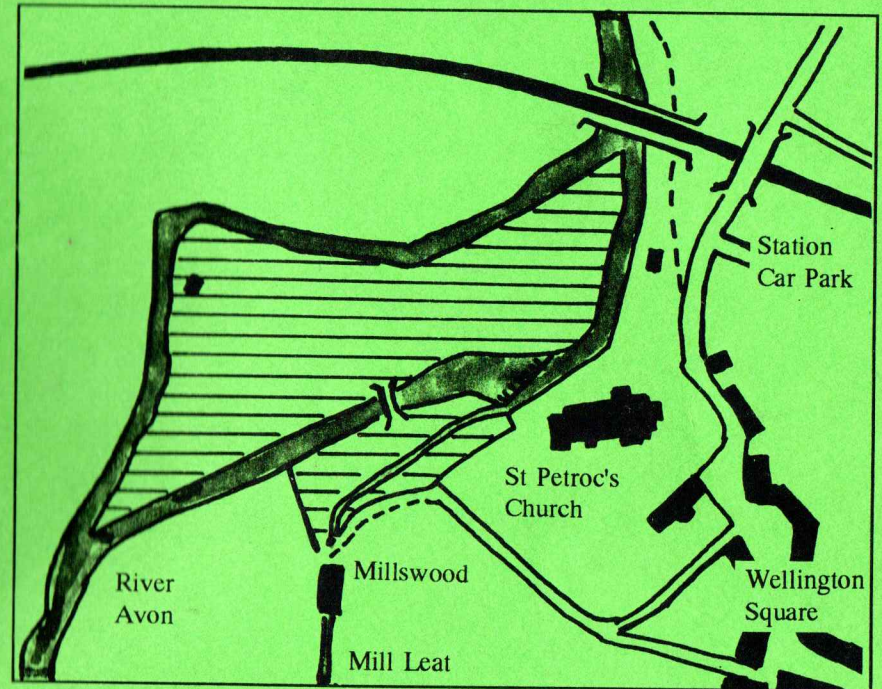


THE ISLAND

South Brent



Purchased by public subscription

**Opened
Sunday 5th June 1994**

SOUVENIR BOOKLET

SOUVENIR
OF
THE OFFICIAL OPENING
OF
THE ISLAND
SOUTH BRENT

BY THE NATURALIST

KELVIN BOOT

AT 2.30pm

ON SUNDAY 5th JUNE 1994

PRICE £1

The Purchase

The Island? What Island? That was the usual response from those invited to venture down Millswood Lane for events such as the memorable church picnics held there in past years. But once visited, the Island is never forgotten, and there were a number of people in Brent who felt that if it ever came on the market it should be acquired for the community. So when Christine Halstead passed on the news that the Island was for sale, and that she was prepared to make a handsome donation towards the purchase, things started moving.

Peter Stevens raised the issue at a Parish Council meeting in September. While a number of councillors were enthusiastic, they were narrowly defeated on a proposal that the council should consider acquiring the Island. Undaunted, those members who supported the purchase agreed to explore the possibility of launching a public appeal and Peter Stevens, Cathie Pannell, David Hewitt and Lorraine Willcocks arranged a meeting with interested parties and local conservation groups, at which there was strong support for the concept. And so a public meeting was called for Monday, 1st November, in the Methodist Hall, with Cathie Pannell, Parish, District and County Councillor, in the chair.

Widespread publicity and eye-catching posters attracted some fifty people to the meeting. After a thorough debate on the merits and drawbacks of the purchase, and with the encouragement of the South Hams Environment Trust, represented by Spencer Keys, those present voted by 42 to 2 in favour of the proposal. A committee of Peter Stevens, Lorraine Willcocks, Mavis Hewitt, Don Stansbury, Rosemary Riddell, Ross Kennerley, Jill Elms and Cliff Bailey was elected, with Guy Pannell in the chair, to try to achieve that aim.

From that point on the campaign took on a momentum of its own. Publicity in the local press brought in offers of help and financial support. Well over 100 people came down to explore the Island for themselves when we arranged a public viewing on the afternoon of Sunday, 26th November. We had been told that the sale

would be by auction. But how do you bid for something at auction when you don't have the money? And how can you start to raise the money when you can't tell people how much you need? So the committee approached the agents and negotiated the purchase of an option to buy Lot 1, the Island and all the land to the east of the garages, for a fixed price of £25,000. The option cost us £1,500 but it was to prove the catalyst in reaching our goal. We had three months in which to raise our target - and if we did the land would be ours. The response from the people of the village, and wider afield, was dramatic. We delivered pledge forms to just about every local address and the offers of support poured in. South Hams Environment Trust offered to try to find £10,000 from outside sources, and we received an important boost with a promise of £2,000 from the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

Sixty people came to another public meeting in January and supported proposals that dogs should be allowed on to the Island, if properly controlled, and that we should explore the possibility of vesting ownership in the South Hams Environment Trust. We had co-opted the trust's Development Manager, Lesley Whittaker, on to the committee and her help and advice was to prove invaluable. A series of events helped boost our funds. We set up our stall outside the Anchor on a Saturday morning and raised several hundred pounds in just a few hours. Items on Westcountry Television and on BBC Spotlight and Radio Devon gave the campaign another boost to add to the excellent publicity we had received from local newspapers. Cheques arrived from many local groups who supported our aims and from sympathetic conservation groups such as the Aune Conservation Association, the South Hams Society and the Devon Wildlife Trust. A local mum, Shruti Gordon, volunteered to raise sponsorship by running the London Marathon.

But with time running out before we had to take up the option in March we were still about seven thousand pounds short of our target. We needn't have worried. The inspired idea of a Yard Sale at the Stansburys, Eldertons and Kennerleys in Church Street raised

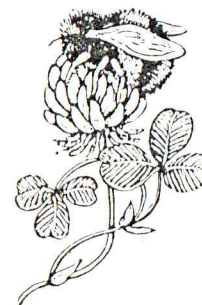
£450. Coffee mornings and concerts brought in hundreds more and then came the wonderful news that meant we were home - grants of £2,500 each from Devon County Council and South Hams District Council. So we signed in March, paid our ten per cent deposit and four weeks later became the proud owners.

That was the difficult bit - raising the money - but it was very great fun and immensely rewarding. The committee put in plenty of hard work, but it was the tremendous support of the village that made it all possible and ensured the campaign's success. Now comes the exciting time: working to make the Island a place of quiet enjoyment and a haven for plants, animals and insects. But we've got plenty of time for that, and with invaluable help from bodies such as the Dartmoor National Park we are confident we will make a good job of it. With the consent of a further meeting of members we decided to apply for charitable trust status and to vest the land in the Official Custodian for Charities. This will be the best safeguard for the aims we have adopted: to provide for public access; to protect and conserve the natural and historic interest of the land; and to provide for educational use, particularly in the field of environmental understanding. What better gift could our current generation hand on to those to come?

And now everyone knows where the Island is!

Guy Pannell

Chairman Brent Island Group



Contributors to the purchase of the Island on 12th April 1994.

Ian Addison	Malcolm Cox	Shruti Gordon	Graham Jordan	Wally Parsons	Don Stansbury
Jenny & Mike Alexander	Mr & Mrs Crabbe	Brenda Guy	Vera Jordan	Robert Pecover	Martin Stansbury
Vera Allen	Dartington Hall Trust	Jim Guy	Ken Jordan	Stephen Pethick	Peter Stansbury
Ann Anderson	Dartmoor National	Mandy Haley	Mrs H M Kelly	Mr & Mrs Pickett	Rosemary Stansbury
Mr & Mrs Anstis	Park Authority	Tim Haley	Liz, Ross & Bridie Kennerley	A S Platt	John Stanyon
Aune Conservation	Evan Davies	Anne Halliday	Denis Knight	Paddy Pollak	José Stanyon
Association	A E Davies	John Halliday	Nora Knight	Mrs Pollinger	Kathleen Stanyon
Lesley Austin	Carol Davies	A S Hallpike	Juliet Kuhl	Mr & Mrs Poole	Rob Stanyon
Anne & Cliff Bailey	Graham Davies	Christine Halstead	Tony Kuhl	E M Prickett	Gavin Stevens
Bill & Rosemary Bailey	Janine Davey	David Hamblin	Jane Lankester	M J Prickett	Margie Stevens
Mr & Mrs Baker	Brian Dent	Derek Hamblin	Tim Lankester	Alan Prince	Peter Stevens
Robert Barclay	James Dent	Henny Hamblin	M A Leaver	Jenny Prince	Richard Stevens
Mrs D V Beavan	Lynn Dent	Caroline Hancock	Barbara Lodge	Maggie Rainbird	Rory Stevens
John Bevan	Devon County Council	Rupert Hancock	Angela Lyle	Andy Reynolds	Phil Stoneham
Val Bevan	Devon Wildlife Trust	Mrs E Hard	Mr & Mrs Mac Naughton	John Riddell	Beverley Sugden
Dr R Bird	Monica Douglas	Michael Harley	Barbara Male	Rosemary Riddell	Rodney Sugden
Mrs Blacker	Alice Dovell	Unity Harley	Keith Male	Ruth Riddell	Jan Sundt
Eileen Blockley	Jonathan Dovell	Rev John Harper	Mary Mann	Toby Riddell	Bruce Sutherland
Janet Bomback	Grace Dovell	Mr & Mrs Harris	Angela Marshall	Mike Roberts	J P Tapley
Pam Boorman	Richard Dovell	Alison Harvey	Nicky Marshall	Tony Roper	M J Tapley
J C N Boorman	Christina Dykes	Gilly Hawes	Doreen Mason	J Rose	Maggie Taylor
Tricia Boulton	John Eatwell	Mr R Hearn	Roland Mason	Elizabeth Rush	Drew Thomas
Warwick Boulton	Shirley Eatwell	Carolyn Hedges	Shirley May	Adrian Sharville	Sandy Thomas
Ros Bourne	Paul Edgington	Paul Hedges	F J Meikle	Ruth Sharville	Graham Tizzard
Peter Bradshaw	Marjorie Edwards	Dave Hewitt	Steve Melia	Brian Sheppard	Jane Tuson
Mrs D E Bromley	Jennifer Elderton	Mavis Hewitt	Gladys Mercer	Ivy Sheppard	Betty Vertigan
Capt. R. Bromley	Rosemary Elderton	Alison Hill	Sydney Mercer	Debby, Kevin, Alice &	J Wainwright
Joan Brown	John Ellison	Andrew Hill	J Mockett	Thomas Shotter	P Wainwright
Malcolm Bruce	Jill Elms	Gordon Hill	S Mockett	Deirdre Slocombe	Gregory Wall
D Brueton	Jean Elton	Mr T W Hill	Mrs B Morris	Miss L. Small	Jon Ward
Edward Butcher	M F N Etheridge	Natalie Hilton	Graham Morris	Ivy Smith	Philip Ward-Green
Margaret Butcher	Richard, Mardie, Jamie,	Eileen Honeywill	Peter Morris	Norman Smith	Mr G W Walke
Miss F J Carnochan	Romilly, Henry &	Pam Honeywill	Martin Mullard	Chris Snelson	L P Webber
Julie Carroll	Douglas Everett	Kerry Honnor	Rosemary Mullard	Mike Snelson	Jane Wellens
Malcolm Carter	Andrew Farrow	Michael Honnor	Jenny Mumford	South Brent Action &	Susan Wells
George & Avril Chapman	Mrs Farrow	Nell Honnor	Les Mumford	Community Group	Ivan Wiggam
Joddy Chapman	Veronica Ferguson	Susie Honnor	Ginny Murgatroyd	South Brent Amateur	Sue Wiggam
Malcolm Clark	Jack Fisher	Joyce Howitt	Laura Murgatroyd	Dramatic Society	Sue Wildig
Polly Clark	Louise Fisher	Ralph Howitt	Jan Mutter	South Brent & Avon Valley	Lorraine Willcocks
Bernard Cockfield	Mr T L Gardner	John Hunter	Mrs D Nesaule	Society	Clive Willcocks
Anne Collier	Mrs M Gardner	Paula Hunter	R C I Noakes	South Brent Feoffees	Julia Willoughby
John Collier	Marita Giles	Linda Inman	Joan Noble	South Brent Scout Group	Mike Wilson
Lydia Corbett	Di Goodey	P M Inman	Peter Noble	South Brent Traders'	Penny Wilson
Darren Cormack	Noel Goodey	Mr S Jones	Richard Oram	Calendar	Mrs R Worsley
Paul Cotton	David Goodban	Mr T W Jordan	Cathie Pannell	South Hams Environment	Alan Young
			Guy Pannell	Trust	Joan Young
			Samantha Pannell	South Hams District Council	
			Ross Pannell	South Hams Society	

How the money was raised.

Individual donations:- £15,939

Corporate donations:- 9290

Devon County Council	2,500
South Hams District Council	2,500
Dartmoor National Park Authority	2,000
Devon Wildlife Trust	250
South Hams Society	250
Aune Conservation Society	100
Dartington Hall Trust	500
The Traders' Calendar	670
South Brent & Avon Valley Society	100
South Brent Action & Community Group	100
The Feoffees	300
South Brent Scouts	10
South Brent Amateur Dramatic Society	10

Fund raising events:- 1387

New Year's Eve Party	47
Stall outside the Anchor	208
Concerts at 16 Church Street	200
Yard Sale	486
Hillsiders' coffee morning	65
Lydia's coffee morning	115
Lesley Austin's talk	27
London Marathon	239

Total £26,616

Mavis Hewitt. Treasurer Brent Island Group

The **Dartmoor National Park Authority** has provided and erected the fencing, the new wooden gate and the kissing gate. The Park has also provided a plant survey and management recommendations and a tree survey. Rupert Lane has looked at all the trees and is reporting individually on all those that need attention. Tree work will be spread over years. Disturbance to wildlife will be minimised although safety to the public is the priority. The Park will inspect the bridge and advise about safety. This will mean some clearing and the removal of the trees that are growing out of the masonry. The Park will remove the dead trees that are blocking the bridge. We are very grateful to the Park for all the advice and help that we have been given and for the support that we know will continue. We are in the process of entering into an Access Agreement with the Park Authority which will be a considerable help to us.

The **linhay** has been fenced because it is dangerous. If funds allow it will be restored. **Dartington Tech** is willing to help with the work but we would need money for materials.

The **National Rivers Authority** is advising us about the weir.

A **management plan** will be drawn up with advice from many quarters. The surveys provide the base line. It is our present intention to leave all plants to complete their cycles and to continue identification. It would be very helpful if members could take a special interest in a species or a group of species and report occasionally. It has been suggested that the area between the leat and the lane should be made a haven for birds and that people should be discouraged from going there. The management plan will be publicised and discussed before it is agreed. It will commence in the autumn. Quite a lot of work will need to be done and all offers of help will be most welcome.

All contributors to the purchase are entitled to membership of the **Brent Island Trust**. We are applying for registration as a charity. A meeting of members to discuss the formation of the Trust and the progress of the management plan will be held on Tuesday June 28th at 8pm in the Methodist Hall.

History

The best way to see the history of South Brent is to look at the lie of the land. Stand on the Island and look up at the church and see how steep and high that bank is and how the platform of higher land runs right round from the railway to the end of the churchyard wall. From Church Street or Wellington Square it is not so obvious but go to the edge of the church yard behind the tower and see how suddenly the land plunges down to the weir below and the reason why people chose this place for a settlement becomes very clear. When - perhaps about two and a half thousand years ago - the first people came along this river looking for a place to live, they would have seen this shelf of land offering security but close to the river and the rich grassland beside it. To the east, where most of the village is now, the untouched forest would have been deep and dense.

They probably went down to the meadow by the same way that we follow. As the lane goes by the churchyard, look at the field on the left and see how the level falls away showing that this is a spur of land leading down to the meadows and to the river. At the end of the churchyard the lane comes to the top of the bank and turns to the left to angle down quite steeply across the bank until it reaches the level of the meadow.

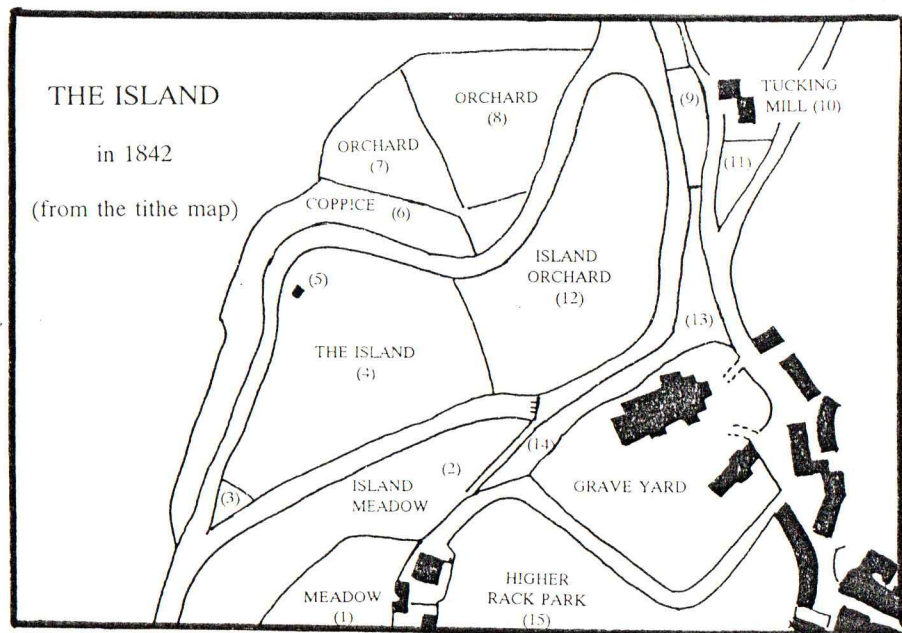
The church is dedicated to St Petroc indicating a Celtic foundation. Petroc was a hermit saint who loved wild places and wild creatures. He sheltered a stag to protect it from the huntsmen. He would have approved of the idea of protecting and enjoying the wildlife of the Island.

When Petroc died, the Saxons had been settling in this country for about a hundred years but another hundred would pass before they came into Devon taking this land from the Welsh. By that time they had become Christians too and the life of the village, its work and its worship would not have been very different from the pattern set by the Celts.

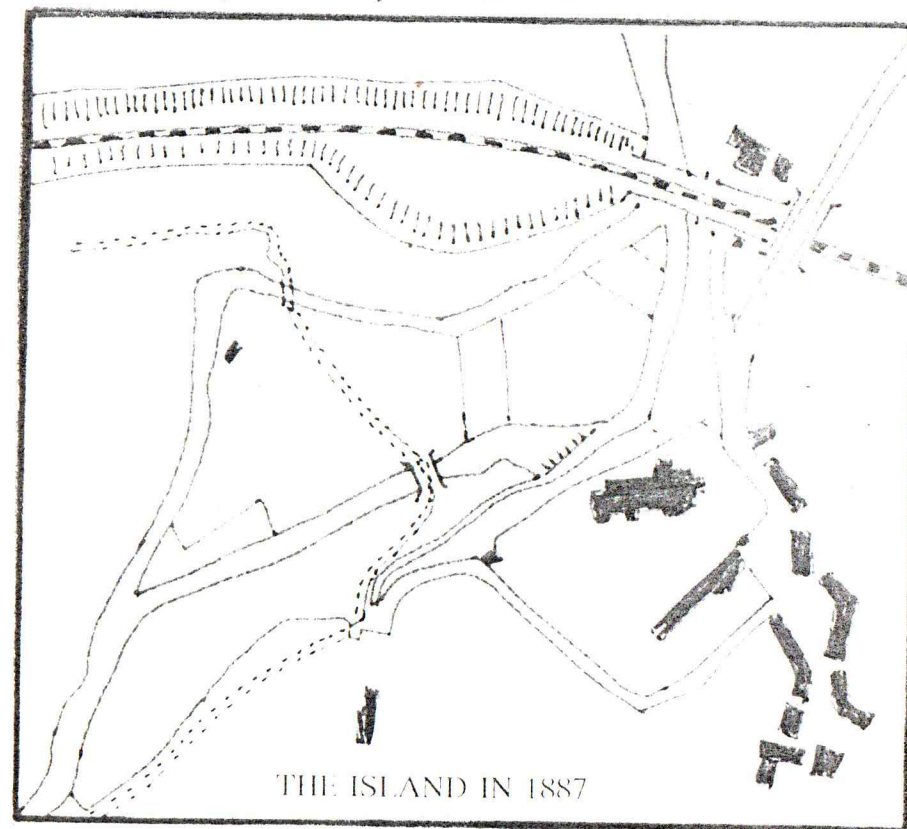
The settlement prospered and grew. The first atlas of England which was made in 1579 by Christopher Saxton marks Brent on the map of England as a second ranking town. The atlas was made because of the danger of invasion - the Armada was expected - so it did need to be accurate. It was designed to give reliable information about the coastline, the rivers, the settlements and the bridges. There were six orders of settlements. Exeter was the only place in Devon that was put in the first rank. Brent along with twenty six other towns was placed in the second rank. The others in this area were Ashburton, Totnes, Kingsbridge, Modbury and Plympton. Paignton was in the third rank and Ivybridge in the fourth. The map also classified bridges as major (in yellow) and minor (in white) and it showed quite precisely where the bridges were in relation to the settlements. It showed the bridge at Brent in yellow and placed it to the north. Lydia Bridge would then have been the only bridge where people from Brent could cross the river at any season and of course it provided access to the moor as well as to the meadows on the far side of the river.

Within perhaps a generation of the drawing of that map a massive work was undertaken on the meadow below the church. It must have been a thriving and optimistic community to do such a thing but the river was divided, the weir built and the leat constructed to power the mill at Millswood and to power Brent Mill. The way the new river bed was cut through the rock can still be seen below the bridge. By bringing half the river round this way, they were able to take the leat off at a higher level and produce more power. They also created the Island. It was a considerable change. It gave Brent the power for industry and it created a new settlement at Brent Mill with a bridge and that encouraged the town to develop towards the south and east. The land between Brent and Lydia Bridge belonged by this time to the vicarage but the path still seems to have been there. In the Glebe Terrier of 1601 it was described as "a walk by the river planted with trees" and in 1679 as "an alley". There was an "alleygate" where the kissing gate to Lawn is now.

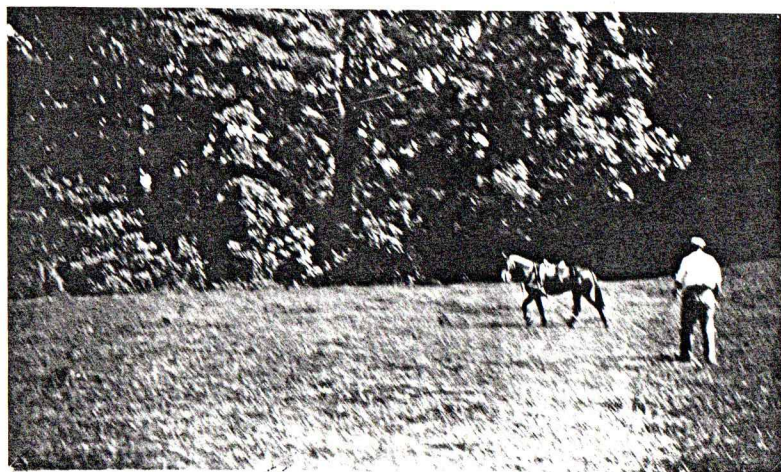
A very clear and detailed picture of South Brent as it was two hundred years later is provided by the tithe map of 1842. This recorded every field and every hedge and every building, giving the names of owners and occupiers and stating how everything was being used. The meadow by Millswood (1) was owned by John Eliot of Barleycombe. The Island was divided between John Hingston who lived in Wellington Square and the vicar who lived at Somerswood and in the vicarage which was then the house that is now called the Manor. John Hingston had the western end of the Island (4) as a meadow and he had the linhay (5) and a garden (3) and Island Meadow (2) and the waste land below the church wall (14). Over the river John Hingston had a coppice (6) and an orchard (7). The Rev. George Baker had the eastern end of the Island as an orchard. He had another orchard over the river (8). He also owned the Tucking Mill (10) and the miller's house and the miller's garden (9) and another garden (11) which was occupied by the railway. The line had not yet come but obviously preparations were being made. The Rev. George Baker also owned the waste (13) and Higher Rack Park (15).



The map of 1887 shows how the Island was changed when the railway came. The line of the railway would have crossed the Island requiring a viaduct so they shortened the Island. The river could then be crossed by a single arch. The old end of the Island can still be seen from the footpath to Lydia Bridge. Go past the ruins of Town Mill, past the wall of the miller's garden and then look across the river and there is the point of the Island as it was before the railway came. Beyond it the fence still turns showing where the river used to run before it was blocked by the railway embankment. From the north bank of the Island looking towards the railway, the separated part can still be seen sloping down to where the river was before it was covered by the railway embankment.



In 1930, the Island was owned by Ernest Mead of Wellington House which is probably the house that John Hingston owned in 1842. Between 1930 and 1940, Roland Lewis used the Island for horse breaking.



Roland Lewis on the Island in the thirties.



Ready to ride.



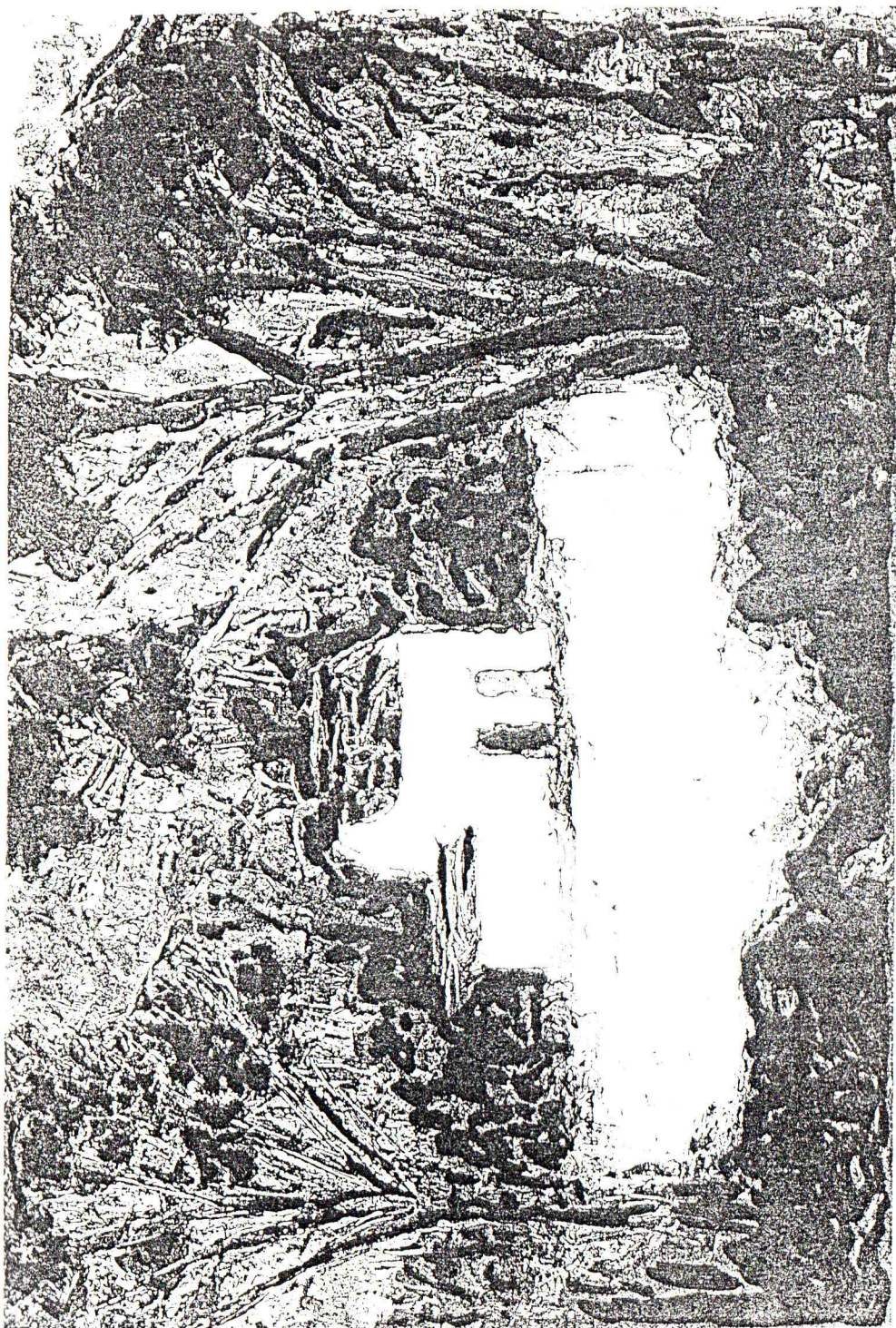
The photographs show the fence between the meadow and the orchard. At that time, the Island was neat and well maintained with the grass closely grazed by sheep.

In recent years the land has not been grazed. Brambles and nettles and bracken have encroached. Dead trees have blocked the river below the weir which has also deteriorated. The linhay has become a ruin.

The purchase of the Island by public subscription on April 12th 1994 has started a new phase in its history. It belongs as it did long ago to the people of Brent and it belongs as it did before that to the wild. We hope that it can be maintained for the benefit and the pleasure of the public and to increase the variety and the profusion of wild flowers, birds, insects and animals.

Don Stansbury.





Christine Raikes
(by courtesy of Pat Johnstone)

The Island

Memories of The Island

Titch Chapple is fortunate to enjoy memories of the Island stretching back more than seventy years. Most of the children living in the Wellington Square area of the village used to play on the Island with very few accidents occurring; their parents did not have the worries expressed by today's parents. The Island, like the recreation field and the children's play park is today, was the main place that the children of the village would play in their gangs, making dens and hideouts, fishing and pinching the fruit growing on the land.

For many years the land belonged to the Meads, a village farming family who kept chickens and cows in the fields and would let the animals eat the fruits either fallen or knocked to the ground by the boys.

Opposite to the entrance to the fields was Heath's factory site, which during the second world war employed many of the local people, especially women, in its manufacturing of tools and aeroplane parts. Before Heath's were on the site the buildings were used as a concert hall and cinema with dances regularly being held. Everybody in the village took part in the drama performances staged in the building with many local people playing instruments to entertain others.

The village women would buy pig's bladders from the many sources in the village and take them down on to the Island for cleaning. They would do this in the leat by the weir; this process required a knack which amazed the children watching. First the bladder would be held under the water thus enabling the water to flow through it, then, with a flick of the wrists, the bladder would be turned inside out with the water flowing through the "outside". These bladders were then taken home and turned into Hog's Puddings.

One of the activities enjoyed by the children, was scrumping the apples from the twenty or thirty apple trees and the few pear trees that grew in the orchard. Before venturing onto the fields the gangs of boys would gather on the bridge beyond the church and look down

to check if anybody was about, and more importantly to see if the river was low enough to enable them to make a hasty retreat across the river and up by the railway bank if they were caught. If the water level was too high then they did not attempt to scrump the fruit because if the owner of the fields should come in over the bridge their exit was blocked and a clip around the ear would be in order. An escape route was therefore essential. One member of the gang would be sent up the tree to knock the apples and pears to the ground, while the rest of the gang would collect the fruits stuffing them into their shirts.

Eggy Male Snr. was the best tree climber in Titch's gang and one day Granfer Mead approached just after Eggy had climbed the tree and before the pears had been collected. Not wanting to run away without any of his bounty Eggy jumped down from the tree and collected as many pears as time would allow, stuffing them into his shirt. Unfortunately the pears contained apple drays, an insect similar to a bee, which stung him around his chest and stomach; he had to drop the fruits before he was able to escape.

The leat flowed under the factory and then round to Brent Mill where it discharged back into the river. Water from the leat was used to drive the turbine which in turn would supply the power for the mill. This power was the only source of energy the mill had to work the machinery producing the flock that was then used as the stuffing material for furniture. The owners of the mill accepted the responsibility for cleaning out the leat and each Saturday the mill used to shut down the leat for weekly cleaning. Buckets would be taken along and eels, brown trout and the occasional salmon would be enjoyed by the families of those doing the cleaning.

Apart from the fish caught during the weekly clean out, many more were caught in the river using a variety of different methods. Snares, similar to rabbit snares were used, first the fish would be tickled then the snare would be slipped over the tail while it was relaxed enabling the "tickler" to hoist it out of the river. Fish are attracted to bright lights and a powerful torch was used to lure them

nearer to the shore before being speared with a gaffe, hay fork or the many different types of spears available.

A river bailiff from the village was employed to keep an eye on the rivers and if the boys were caught poaching the fish would be confiscated and they were often let off with a clip around the ear.

One legal way to catch the fish was to wait for the otters who would feed on the salmon. The otter would kill a fish with a bite to the neck and would then eat it from the neck down. If the boys were lucky they could chase the otters away once the fatal bite had been taken, leaving the fish behind. Only freshly killed fish would be taken home by the boys but if the otters were hungry they would stand their ground and the boys would have to admit defeat and sit and watch the fish being eaten. "Otter Fish" as they were known could be legally removed and didn't require a licence; the water bailiff couldn't get the boys for poaching on these occasions.

Lorraine Willcocks.



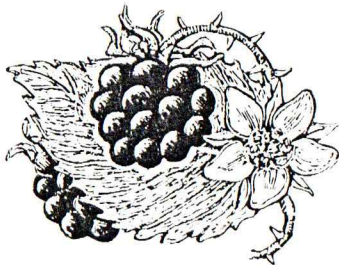
The Bridge in 1988

Deirdre Slocombe

Millswood

"Millswood in the seventeenth century was operated as a teazle mill by Henry Wellinge, a fuller. (Fullers were responsible for finishing off the cloth.) Rock Park was the field in which the fulling racks were kept. In those days it was known as Rack Park. There were lime pits connected with this mill on the Islands. William Willinge (Wellinge) took over the mill from his father, and in 1691, when he died, the mill passed to his daughters Anne and Joan. Although they were millers themselves they were fullers and were required to have their corn ground at the Lord's customary mill, at Brent Mill. Millswood also served as a flour mill worked by Mr W. H. Hawke and Son. The flour used to be ground by Mr Goss the miller and the smell of the flour is still fresh in the minds of Brentonians who as children used to play in the fields below. Three cottages used to stand in the yard below for the employees. After being used for flour, it was taken over as an engineering factory by Messrs. W. H. Heath of Plymouth. During the 1939 to 1945 World War it was used to make aeroplane parts. Heaths remained at the mill until on 8th February, 1948, it was burnt to the ground."

from "A Portrait of South Brent" by Gregory Wall.



The Tree on the Island

by Denis Knight

(dedicated to my sister Monica)

This leaf is different, Monica
From this, the hairs different, each vein.
And of course, your great Tree different
From every beech tree that has ever grown
In forest after forest over Dartmoor,
Over Devon.

And if I accept the tree is different
And different throughout its being
In every moment of its growing, dying:
Then this one Island on the river Aune
That branches here, encircling us in these
Two rushing streams

That join downstream the way the heron flew
Is different, utterly. Is, has been and remains
Beyond religion and philosophy, the single tree
Reality. Look at this leaf again: wild universe
Of springing life: the tree, the leaf, words
Fallen on the grass.

Life seems in love with form,
with force:
the earth

One singing atom bathed in time and space.
Your tree, my Ugborough, the heron's feather
Is rock of evidence no life is greater than itself,
Real things not other than themselves: leaf, tree,
Island, loving woman.



Illustrated by Lydia Corbett

Plants.

Children took part in a competition to guess the number of species that the plant specialist from the Dartmoor National Park Authority would find including trees, ferns and grasses. On Tuesday May 10th, Roger Keadle made the survey. Rosemary Riddell's class from the primary school took part with help from Malcolm Pickup, Graham Davies, Nikki Cousins, John and Kathleen Stanyon, Mavis Hewitt and Liz Kennerley. The correct number was guessed by Owen Davies. It was 120. The prize was to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony on June 5th.

All lists are added to as more species are found. The current list of plants is:-

Trees.

Alder
Apple
Ash
Beech
Copper Beech
Blackthorn
Japanese Red Cedar
Western Red Cedar
Lawson Cypress
Monterey Cypress
Elder
Elm
Hawthorn
Hazel
Holly
Juniper
English Oak
Sessile Oak
Rhodedendron
Sycamore
Goat Willow
Yew

Shrubs

Box
Bramble
Flowering Currant
Gooseberry
Honeysuckle
Field Rose
Snowberry
Traveller's Joy

Ferns

Bracken
Broad Buckler Fern
Harts-tongue Fern
Lady Fern
Male Fern
Scaly Male Fern
Water Horsetail
Common Polypody
Spleenwort

Sedges and Rushes.

Soft Rush
Remote Sedge
Field Wood-rush
Greater Wood-rush

Grasses

Common Bent
Cock's-foot
Crested Dog's-tail
Creeping Red Fescue
Meadow Foxtail
Sweet Vernal Grass
Flote Grass
Annual Meadow "
Perennial Rye Grass
Rough Meadow "
Smooth Meadow "
Timothy Grass
Yorkshire Fog

Flowering Plants

Angelica
Wild Arum
Wavy Bittercress
Bluebell
Bugle
Lesser Burdock
Butterbur
Creeping Buttercup
Meadow Buttercup
Red Campion
Common Cats-ear
Celandine
Chickweed
Cleavers
Red Clover
White Clover
Cut-leaved Cranesbill
Daffodil
Daisy
Dandelion
Red Dead-nettle
Broad leaved Dock
Curled Dock
Dog's Mercury
Ground Elder
Enchanter's Nightshade
Figwort
Water Forget-me-not
Foxglove
Autumn Hawkbit
Rough Hawkbit
Hawkweed
Herb Robert
Hogweed
Ground Ivy
Ivy
Black Knapweed

Lady's Smock
Common Mouse-ear
Nettle
Cow Parsley
Hedge Parsley
Wall Pennywort
Pignut
Greater Plantain
Ribwort Plantain
Welsh Poppy
Primrose
Pink Purslane
Opposite leaved Golden Saxifrage
Skunk Cabbage
Sorrel
Germander Speedwell
Wall Speedwell
Wood Speedwell
Greater Stitchwort
Lesser Stitchwort
Wild Strawberry
Creeping Thistle
Ivy-leaved Toadflax
Bird's-foot Trefoil
Tutsan
Valerian
Bitter Vetch
Violet
Hemlock Water Dropwort
Wild Garlic
Broad leaved Willow-herb
Wood Anemone
Wood Avens
Woodruff
Yarrow
Yellow Archangel

Lichens.

To see the micro world of lichens we really do need an expert to guide us. These very ancient and very fragile organisms will tell us about the past environment and about the health of the present. We were very fortunate that Barbara Benfield was willing to come from the other end of Devon to survey the lichens on the Island.

Eighty four lichens were recorded from the trees, the bridge, and a ruined linhay on 18th May 1994. The most interesting habitats were the older oaks, beech and willow. On two old oaks, one on the bank below the weir, and one at the extreme western end of the Island, patches of creamy buff thallus with orange specks indicate the presence of *Arthonia vinosa*, a lichen only found in places where trees have been for centuries. Such lichens are known as "old woodland indicator species".

The most exciting lichens to record were all four of the British *Phaeographis*. *P. lyellii*, and *P. inusta* are very local to the South Western parts of Great Britain, but not common in those areas. *Phaeographis lyellii* is extinct east of the New Forest. Both of these lichens are growing on oak and willow, respectively, at the eastern end near the railway bridge. Growing on the same willow, *Lecidea carrollii* is another uncommon lichen confined to constantly humid situations in the South West of Britain. The pale grey-white crust which is the thallus of the commoner of the two *Phaeographis* can be seen growing extensively on a large beech by the river.

The pale green leafy thallus of *Parmelia caperata* is easy to see on a fallen apple, but grows on many other trees on the Island and elsewhere in Britain. Another easily recognised lichen is at the base of an old oak growing on the river bank just above the water. It is a large patch of one of the "dog lichens" *Peltigera lactucifolia*. The dark brown lobes are crisp and curled over at the edges so that the paler undersurface shows up clearly. This lichen will dry to a pale brown or pale grey colour. Several feet above the *Peltigera* is a large thick

crusty patch of a pale grey-white lichen called *Pertusaria albescens*. Also on this oak, and on an alder beside the river near the linhay is the blue grey foliose "old woodland indicator", lichen, *Parmelia reddenda* which is local in the South West.

Other interesting lichens recorded were *Dimerella lutea*, an "old woodland indicator" with green crust and small orange fruit which only grows in damp slightly shady places, and the pale blue-grey foliose species *Parmelia pastillifera* a light loving lichen which occasionally grows on branches. At the Island it was seen on a branch which had fallen from the canopy of a beech. A 20cm length of *Usnea articulata* had also blown from the canopy. This lichen is exceedingly sensitive to pollution and has become extinct in many parts of the British Isles.

Care should be taken to prevent ivy from growing over important lichen species.

B. Benfield. 26th May, 1994.

Mammals.

Elaine Hurrell, Monica Hazell and Peter Chapman surveyed the mammals on May 5th 1994.

They concluded that small mammals such as short tailed field voles, wood mice, bank voles and the shrews are virtually certain to be widespread. There was evidence of field voles, of a bank vole, of grey squirrels and of moles. There was no evidence of rabbits, brown rats, otters or mink. It is believed that otters do pass by but no spraints were found in the places where otters would leave them.

Peter Chapman felt that the Island was likely to be very good for bats - plenty of trees for roosting and plenty of insects for food over the river and the grassland. Horse shoe bats have been seen over the weir pool.

Spiders.

Peter Smithers of the Devon Spider Group at Plymouth University and Paddy Pollak, resident in South Brent, took a preliminary look at the spider populations on the Island on Thursday May 19th, 1994. It was a cool overcast evening (7 pm) and there was little obvious activity.

Spiders were collected with beating tray and sweepnet from some of the lower branches of the trees within the field proper, from the brambles and from the upper layers of the grassland.

This yielded 17 species:

Brambles

Anelosimus vitatus (M)
Anyphaena accentuata (imm)
Araniella sp. (imm)
Clubiona reclusa (M)
Gongylidium rufipes (F/M)
Hypomma cornutum (F/M)
Kaestneria dorsalis (F)
Lepthyphantes obscurus (imm)

Linyphia triangularis (F)
Linyphia hortensis (F)
Liobunum blackwalli
 (harvestman - Opilionidae)
Meta mengei (F)
Nigma puella (imm)
Tetragnatha montana (imm)
Theridion pallens (M)

Grass-Land (semi-improved)

Meta mengei (F)
Pachygnatha clerki (F)
Clubiona reclusa (F/M)
Tetragnatha extensa (imm)
Dismodicus bifrons (M)

F = female
 M = male
 imm = immature

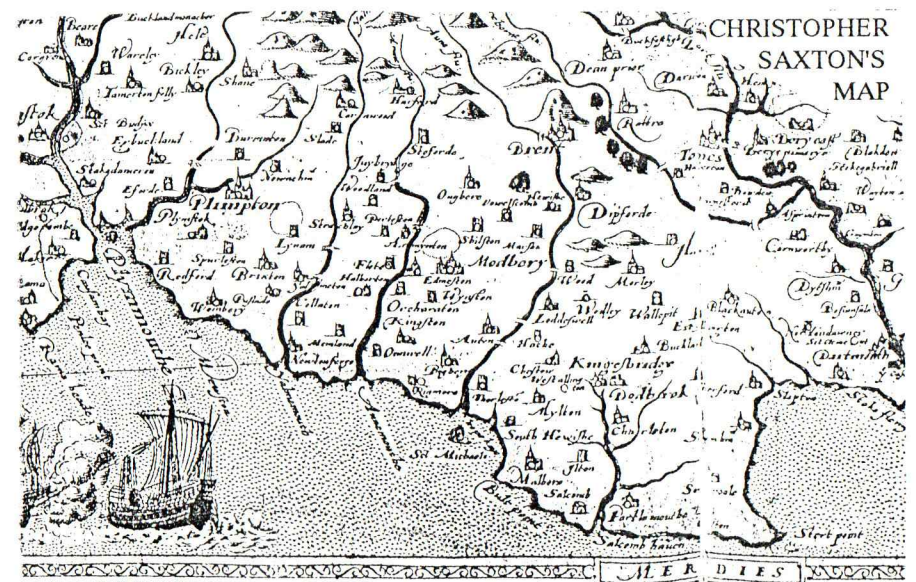
The material from the lower canopy of the trees has yet to be identified.

Comments:-

This brief exercise has shown the presence of a number of species that would be expected - *Anyphaena* (the 'buzzing' spider, so-called from the noise it makes by vibrating its abdomen against the ground; this is one of the few spiders with a common name), species of *Linyphia*, *Clubiona reclusa*, *Tetragnatha extensa*, *Meta mengei*.

Only two sampling techniques were attempted and only three micro-habitats sampled. The cool, overcast evening was not the best time of day - however, this does show what can be discovered under poor conditions. Regular sampling of all the many micro-habitats on the Island, over a twelve-months period, repeated for a number of years, will doubtless increase the species list to many times the current figure.

The specimens captured have been retained at the Biology Department of the University in Plymouth and new species for the Devon Survey have been added to the reference collection. Either of us will be glad to answer questions on this group of animals (telephone Paddy Pollak on South Brent 73457).



Birds.

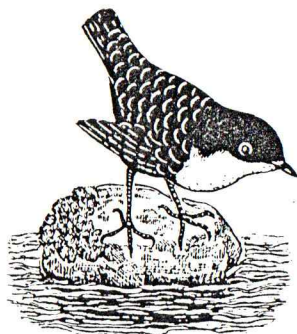
Birds seen or heard or both on or over the Island on Friday 15th April 1994 between dawn and dusk by Peter Morris, Nikki Cousins, Eileen Blockley, Adrian Platt, Denis Knight or John Stanyon:-

Blackbirds
Blackcaps
Blue Tits
Buzzard
Canada Geese
Chaffinches
Chiffchaffs
Coal Tits
Collared Doves
Crows
Dipper
Great Tits
Green Woodpecker
Grey Wagtail
Jackdaws
Jays
Long-tailed Tits
Magpies
Mistle Thrushes

Nuthatches
Robins
Rooks
Starlings
Tree Creeper
Willow Warblers
Wood Pigeons
Wrens

Subsequently added to the list:-

Herring Gulls
Heron
House Martins
Tawny Owl
Ravens
Swallows
Swifts
Song Thrushes



Wildlife Illustrations by Deirdre Slocombe