

# EXMOOR BY THE WAY

Hilary Binding

Thousands of readers who eagerly await their copies of the *West Somerset Free Press* turn first to Notes by the Way. Instigated by Clement Kille in 1881, at first it was personal, political and critical; but over the last eighty years under the authorship of first Herbert Kille, succeeded by Jack Hurley and then Glyn Court, it has become a forum for local history, tradition and reminiscences.

Hilary Binding took over the column fifteen years ago and this book contains a selection of her most memorable and intriguing pieces. They range over a wide area from Old Cleeve, Watchet and Stogumber in the east to Culbone, Challacombe and Lynton in the west. Memories recorded include those of the late Fred Partridge of Luccombe, of Sydney Whitehead who visited Porlock first in the 1920s and Will Widden of Ilfracombe, a regular correspondent for many years.

The book investigates Minehead in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, recounts the tale of Farmer Nicholas Snow's acrimonious meeting with R. D. Blackmore, tells the story of the restoration of Dulverton church and records seasonal customs. George Hosegood, farmer at Rodhuish; John Bennett of Cutcombe, carpenter and dentist, and Parson Froude of Knowstone all feature plus sheep-stealing at King's Brompton and Dunster's hidden depths.

All this and more – including a number of photographs which have not been reproduced before – come together to produce a fascinating cornucopia of "Exmooriana", which can be dipped into or read from cover to cover, with huge pleasure again and again.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hilary Binding has lived in West Somerset for more than forty years, her maternal family originating from the Quantocks. After teaching History and Outdoor Education in Oxfordshire and Somerset, Hilary became a freelance educational consultant working for clients such as Exmoor National Park Authority, the National Trust and Somerset Record Office. She is keen to make history accessible to both adults and children and has written a number of local books, most recently a children's book, *Big Drips from Bath and Wells*, as part of the Diocesan 1100 celebrations. She is also the Editor of *Exmoor The Country Magazine* and has contributed Notes by the Way to the *West Somerset Free Press* since 1994.

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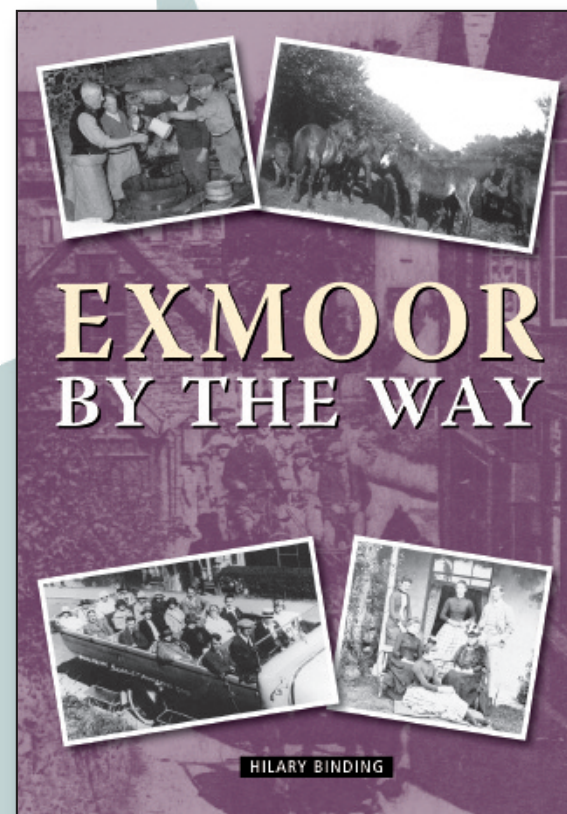
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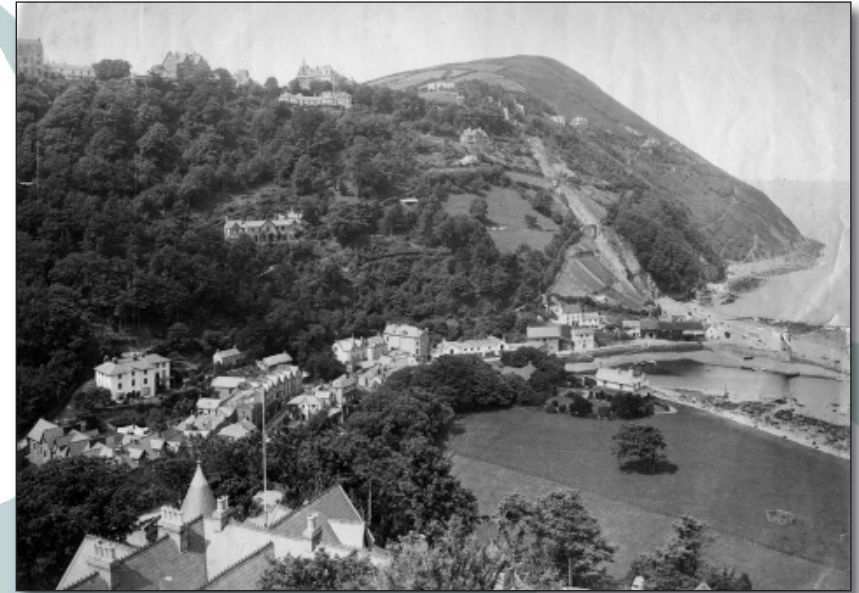
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Ivy Hooper with her elder sister Dora in Carhampton c.1916.



Parlock Hill on a very busy afternoon c.1930.



Lynton c.1890.

## EXMOOR BY THE WAY

objected had he seen it. Such a valley, with a few houses nestling in the hollow, the hills each side clothed in pines. In the early morning light, with the sun just touching them, they looked perfectly lovely. 'The clock in the Parish Church at Lynton struck seven as we walked through the sleepy town, nobody astir but the milkmen and a few shopkeepers sweeping out their shops.'

### Lynton and Clovelly

Straw hats steam into startled Lynton



Lynton c.1890.

Madge, columnist for The Freeman's Journal, stayed for a few days in late August, 1904, at Saxtoncombe, Chardcombe. One day they visited Clovelly. Madge and her friends reached Lynton so early in the morning that few were astir. 'They gazed at us as if we were from another hemisphere. I wondered if they thought we were the messengers from Mars,' wrote Madge.

The three young women were probably in their twenties and, coming as they did from northern towns, were doubtless dressed in the height of holidaying fashion: long skirts, ornate-trimmed blouses and straw hats trimmed with ribbons and flowers. No wonder the

## AROUND THE VILLAGES

inhabitants of Lynton gave them a second look as they made their way from the station.

The girls decided to have a second breakfast in a hotel before descending to the harbour, somewhat scornfully, by the cliff railway. 'It quite gave me the creeps looking down the steep slope.'

As soon as the steamer rounded the point, Madge and the other passengers put out to sea in a little boat. There were only six passengers, all told, from Lynton and they didn't waste any time getting us aboard. We had to make a mighty stride just when the boat rode atop of a wave and then a burly sailor caught us and hoisted us up. Here tired those sailors must be of clasp women. There are not so many to clasp at Lynton, but at Clovelly they took hold of us like so many sheep, and dumped us down in the boats, and hardly were the oars fastened in the rowlocks before the hat went round and we were asked to remember the poor sailors. . .

The steamer had picked up 'hundreds of passengers' at Ilfracombe so Clovelly was seen 'simply alive with people'. Madge admired the little town very much, although she bemoaned the steep, cobbled street for her feet seemed to pick out all the sharp stones there were. They passed 'the baker delivering bread at the dozes, and dragging his



Clovelly c.1885.



Clovelly c.1885.

Making cider, reputedly at Higher Moor Farm c.1910.

