

THE BOOK OF NORTH TAWTON

REPRINT

Celebrating An Ancient Market Town

Alison Baker, David Hoare & Jean Shields

North Tawton is a small town located right in the heart of the Devonshire countryside. Situated alongside the River Taw from which it takes its name, it is arguably the smallest town in the county. Dartmoor, only a few miles away, provides a dramatic backdrop to an ancient settlement whose history began before the Romans established a fortification and continued through the heyday of the wool trade to which North Tawton owes its early prosperity. Although agriculture has played an important part in shaping the history of the town, it also enjoys a long industrial tradition. Its central position meant that it was a natural site for marketing the produce from its hinterland which it did successfully for more than 500 years.

The people of the town worked hard but enjoyed their leisure time too. The annual Sunday school outing was a treat not to be missed, as were the carnival and the regular film shows in the Town Hall. For sport there was a golf course and a tennis club as well as the clubs which exist today. At the start of the twenty-first century the town is home to numerous sporting groups and organisations.

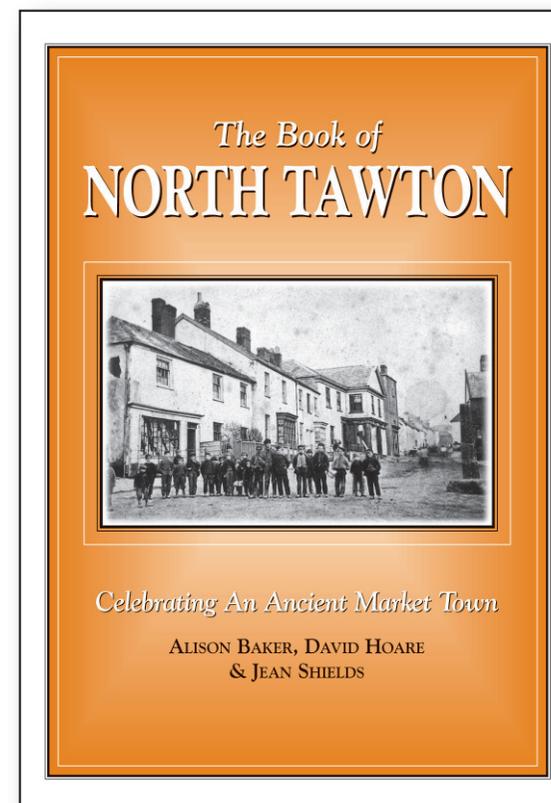
The Book of North Tawton is a celebration of local distinctiveness, an attempt to preserve for future generations the unique cultural heritage which makes North Tawton what it is today.

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Above: Wool factory workers. Left to right, back row: Will Cann, Joe Towell, Will Pollard, Will Gage, Walter Woods; front row: Will Bolt, Charlie Pollard, Edward Butt.

Left: Bill Martin with his taxi in the 1920s.

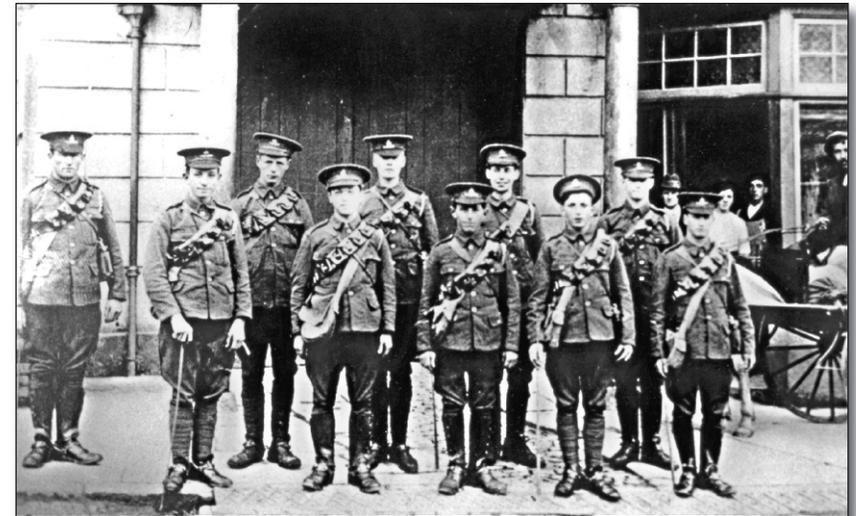


Above: Park Terrace, c. 1914. Vera Knight is the child in the foreground.



Right: North Tawton Ladies Cricket XI at Hatherleigh, c. 1980.

Below: Territorials outside the Gostwyck Arms, 1914.



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as Broad Park Terrace and thought to be Georgian. In a few cases a whole row of cottages has been demolished, as at either end of the park. Originally there were cottages on the south side of Barton Street and the west side of High Street, where the park gates now stand. Cowman's Terrace at the lower end of town was demolished in the 1960s and new houses built on the site. Further down Fone Street there is another modern estate opposite the old woollen factory where the gas works once stood.

A substantial row of houses was built by Chobsonington Rural District Council during the 1920s on Barton Hill, providing inhabitants with spectacular views of Dartmoor.

Arundell Road in Eastington, also commissioned by that same council, was built soon after the Second World War and named after one of Revd Hole's daughters, Mrs Arundell. This estate has recently been extended into Taylor's Field.

New houses have been built on the old backyard site, but at least the name has been preserved in Barker's Way. Other developments include Moor

SETTING THE SCENE

A painting of Market Street looking towards the church, painted in 1894 by Kate Hill.

View on what was known as Clotworthy's, south of the park, which took shape in the early 1970s. At the bottom of North Street is a solidly built row of houses known as Victoria Terrace, dating from the 1890s. Nearby are the large Bouchiers Hill villas, which were built in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and on the opposite side of the road are the new houses and bungalows, built in the former grounds of Barton Hill.

Other big houses with large gardens or yards have had buildings erected therein, as for instance Mellishish in The Square and Stots in High Street. Again the name has been preserved in the latter case as Stots Meads.

Bath Way is on a site where archery was once practised and this was extended into Gostwyck Close, built about 20 years ago on land once belonging to the family of that name.

The Square boasts the Town Hall, built in 1849 as the Market House, and the Jubilee Clock which was erected in 1887. An interesting old property, called Broadhall, is also situated here. All these are dealt with in Chapter 11.

View over town from Bouchiers Hill, before the Second World War.

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Taw Bridge, c.1900.

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Example of a double-page spread.