

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND: THEN MEETS NOW

Maureen Attwooll

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND: Then meets Now looks at the borough's history through maps which date from the Tudor period up to the twentieth century.

Early county maps were often decorative and colourful, but although they showed the locations of towns and villages, and indicated features such as hills, woods and rivers, few provided the traveller with any information about routes which would enable him to travel from place to place. It was the Ordnance Survey, set up in the late eighteenth century as the Board of Ordnance to survey and map Great Britain for military purposes, which provided the first of the detailed and accurate standardised maps that we rely on today. It is fitting that this book, which contains extracts of many O/S maps from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is published 200 years after the first Ordnance Survey map of Dorset was produced in 1811.

The majority of the maps included are of Weymouth and Portland and the surrounding villages which now lie within the borough boundary. Also featured are sections of some of the early county maps – these often provide interesting and lesser-known aspects of the area, such as lost place-names and shipwreck sites.

Accompanying each map are pictures old and new to illustrate some of the changes each area has undergone since the map's publication. Together they show just what has altered and what – remarkably – has stayed the same. Presentation and layout is refreshingly different. The past is revisited with renewed vigour. *WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND: Then Meets Now* will be a must for locals and visitors alike.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maureen Attwooll is co-author of several books on Weymouth's history including *Weymouth: An Illustrated History*, *Seaside Weymouth* and *Weymouth and Portland at War: Countdown to D-Day*, and more recently the popular books *Weymouth – The Golden Years*, *Weymouth – More Golden Years*, *Weymouth Century*, *Weymouth Revisited*, *The Bumper Book of Weymouth* and *The Second Bumper Book of Weymouth*.

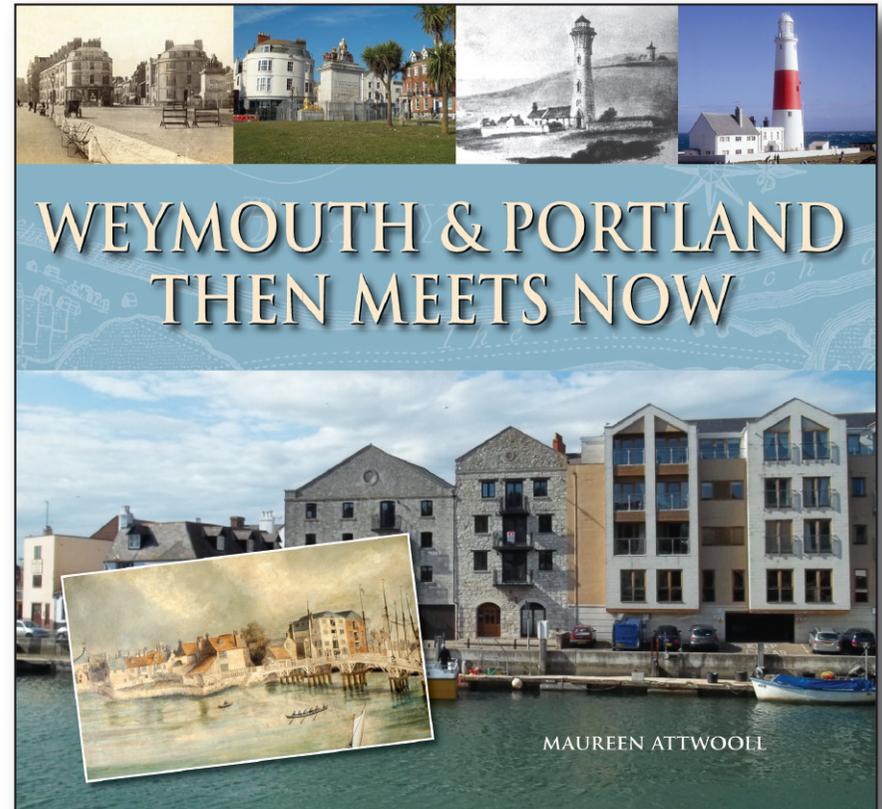
She has also written *Shipwrecks* in the Discover Dorset series, as well as contributing articles on various aspects of local history to a number of magazines.

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Weymouth. A new Town Bridge of 1770 had changed its location and crossed the harbour at the end of St Nicholas Street instead of its traditional spot at the end of St Thomas Street. It was not a popular move, and when the first stone bridge replaced this timber structure in 1824 it reverted to the site we know today. Seen from the present Town Bridge, old warehouses appear on both pictures.



The railway bridge over Chickereil Road at Pye Hill – there are no trains now on the Weymouth and Portland Railway line, only walkers and cyclists on the Rodwell Trail from Westham to Wyke Regis. The scene in 2011. The Railway Arch Hotel has been converted to apartments.



The Jubilee Clock, Weymouth showing the Esplanade widened out around it in the 1920s.

MAP 6 JOHN BAYLY'S MAP OF DORSETSHIRE, 1773

The extract is taken from 'A Map of Dorsetshire from Actual Surveys and a Barometrical Survey by J. Bayly 1773 (the whole country comprising the frontispiece of the first edition of John Haskins' *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, published in 1774. Since that date Haskins' work has become the standard history of the county, but also the Dorset-born cleric and Doctor of Wadham died in 1773 just months before its publication, so never saw his great life's work in print. Eleven years after his mourning had almost been laid to rest when the poet through Wadham, destroying the Rectory and most of its contents. Haskins was among the few who were spared, and it was he who rescued the Dorset research papers before being the blame.

A second edition of the history was published between 1796 and 1815 and regarded the original work from two to four volumes, and a third, four-volume edition was published in a great work from 1848 to 1874, some printings of these two editions also being available in large paper copies. The third edition was reprinted in the early 1970s. A unique geographical version of the large paper second edition is now in the Dorset History Centre, the first of its original four volumes having been

suspended to fourteen leather-bound tomes with the addition of numerous maps, illustrations, letters and other original material collected and arranged in the early 1860s by Alexander Mevick (broader of Trappist, a wealthy collector of Dorsetiana.

Bayly's map shows the steep 'Old Roman Road' which runs from the river from Upton to Dorchester prior to the coming of a new road in 1824, with greater gradients than a slightly angled bypass road (see MAP 9) – this part of the A34 and was replaced by the 2011 B3161 Road. The old road leads up from the coast of the early 1700s (piece of paper the paper version is being too small to show in the larger book). The right on the right is the Royal Oak, demolished in 1904.

Bayly's map only appears in the first edition of 1774 and shows the turnpike road system which by then had been in existence for some twenty years and was still expanding. These 'crosses' towns indicate the number of Members of Parliament elected in each town – two in Dorchester and a staggering total of four in Weymouth and Melbury Bury, a parish which to the date when the Borough had been two separate towns. This naturally, which meant that from some political 'point' and had to agree a deal for voting, did not end until the Reform Act of 1832 when the number of MPs was reduced to ten. In 1835 Weymouth lost the right to elect its own MP and became part of the South Dorset constituency.

(For the town maps of Weymouth which were published in Haskins' *History*, see MAPS 8 and 10, Portland, see MAP 4)

The list of the titles of the buildings, long since considered to be the most accurate and complete in Dorset, is in Dorset History Centre.