

THE BOOK OF ASHBURTON

DIAMOND JUBILEE EDITION

Pete Webb and Stuart Hands

Ashburton is an ancient town, steeped in history and proud of its traditions, and it is easy to see why it developed and grew. The nearby river powered many mills, whilst Dartmoor was rich in tin and wool; and, being midway between Plymouth and Exeter, the settlement made an ideal stopping-point on the coach road. One of Dartmoor's four stannary towns, boasting a market and a strong farming tradition, Ashburton moreover enjoyed a wealthy merchant population which gave the town its rich architectural heritage. Retaining its ancient courts despite the Acts of the 1890s and 1974, Ashburton is also unique in Britain in retaining the office of Portreeve as head of the Court Leet and Baron Jury. And even as a modern centre, it still retains a charm and character loved by visitors and residents alike. Here they find a strong community spirit, rare in this day and age, which is fast becoming a tourist attraction in its own right.

The last 130 years have been a period of unprecedented change for Ashburton. The railway, people, shops, and much more have come and gone. Local authors Stuart Hands and Pete Webb worked closely with the community to assemble *The Book of Ashburton*. Just one of the many contributors to provide a unique local viewpoint to the project was Eileen Egbeare. Having served as one of the very few lady portreeves, Eileen's wealth of historic knowledge relating to the town, and her memories of Ashburton's inhabitants past and present were an invaluable help in putting names to faces down through the years.

First published in 2004 and quickly sold out, this new edition of *The Book of Ashburton*, published to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee, brings the story of the community fully up to date. A new section highlights what has happened since the book was first issued, such as the new Police Station, and new images capture how the Jubilee was celebrated. The underlying sense of community and the pride in Ashburton's history remain unchanged. This unique publication is a vital record of the history and inhabitants of the ancient parish of Ashburton, presented in a single volume for all to treasure.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

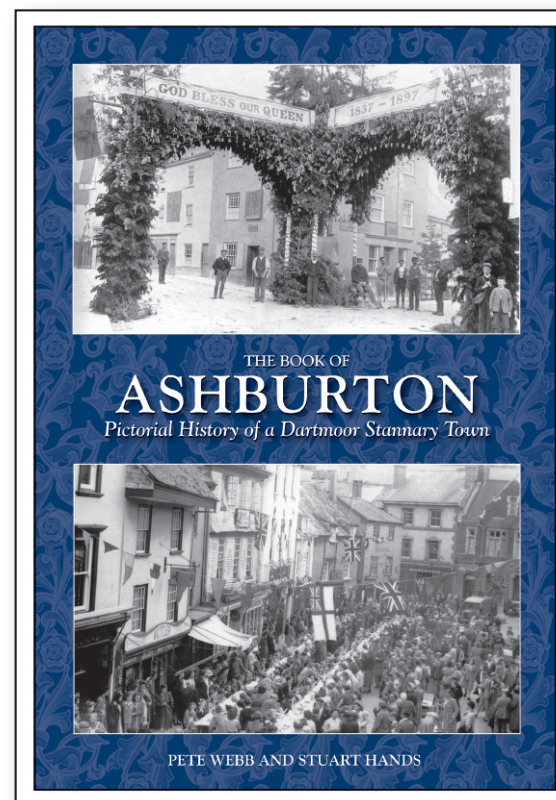
Local authors Stuart Hands and Pete Webb worked together with the townspeople to compile this photographic portrait of this fascinating town and its evolution. Stuart Hands died in June 2011 and so Pete Webb has undertaken the production of this new updated edition alone. Stuart remains named as co-author. The first edition would not have happened without Stuart's substantial input and expertise gained while producing another Halsgrove volume, *The Book of Bickington*.

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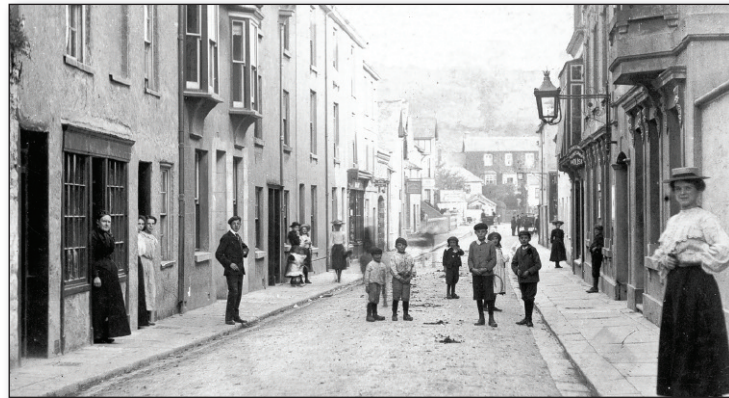
Ashburton Grammar School class in the main room of the chapel, c.1930.



Victoria Inn coach outing, 1969.



VE Day bonfire, 1945.

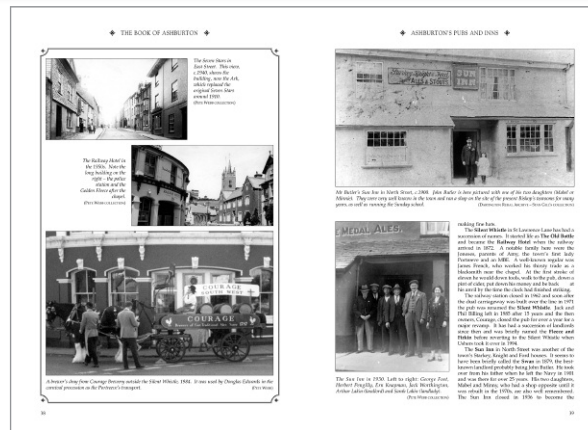


Right: St Lawrence Lane, 1905.

Below: The Ashburton River Festival event, September 2007.



Example of a double-page spread.



The tables laid out for Ashburton's Jubilee Street Party, June 2012.