

THE BOOK OF MINEHEAD WITH ALCOMBE

DIAMOND JUBILEE EDITION

Hilary Binding & Douglas Stevens

The story of Minehead, a harbour town on the West Somerset coast, dates back to pre-historic times. Written evidence begins with the Domesday Book in 1086 and from then on the history of the place is well documented in the de Mohun and Luttrell archives. Most of Minehead once belonged to these lords at Dunster and in medieval times it was primarily a farming and fishing community. By the mid-sixteenth century the people of the town were beginning to find their feet and petitioned Queen Elizabeth I for a charter. Minehead did not last long as a borough although it continued to send members to Parliament until 1832. By then the town was already becoming a holiday resort, the arrival of the railway in 1874 led to further expansion and today Minehead thrives as a centre for both visitors and local people alike. Alcombe, meanwhile, was part of Dunster parish until 1954. In the late-Victorian period the village began to grow and now links with Minehead, but still retains its individuality.

In the last decade Minehead has done much to redefine itself both as a town and a holiday resort with an emphasis on community. New initiatives include the Community Hospital and Minehead EYE, a purpose-built extreme sports skate park and youth centre. The Community College has expanded to provide numerous vocational courses including The College Farm. The start of the 630-mile South West Coast Path attracts many walkers while the sea front with its modern seating designed by pupils at the Community College and David Brown's Golden Jubilee Sundial now has a more up-to-date feel. The West Somerset Railway with its new turntable continues to go from strength to strength.

First published in 2000 and quickly sold out, this new edition of *The Book of Minehead*, 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, and new images capture how the Jubilee was celebrated. This unique publication is a vital record of the history and inhabitants of this remarkable town, presented in a single volume for all to treasure.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Douglas Stevens was born at Minehead in 1908. After his retirement from teaching he devoted much time to the study of local history with a particular interest in Minehead and the Civil War in West Somerset. Sadly he died before the new edition of *The Book of Minehead* was issued in 2000.

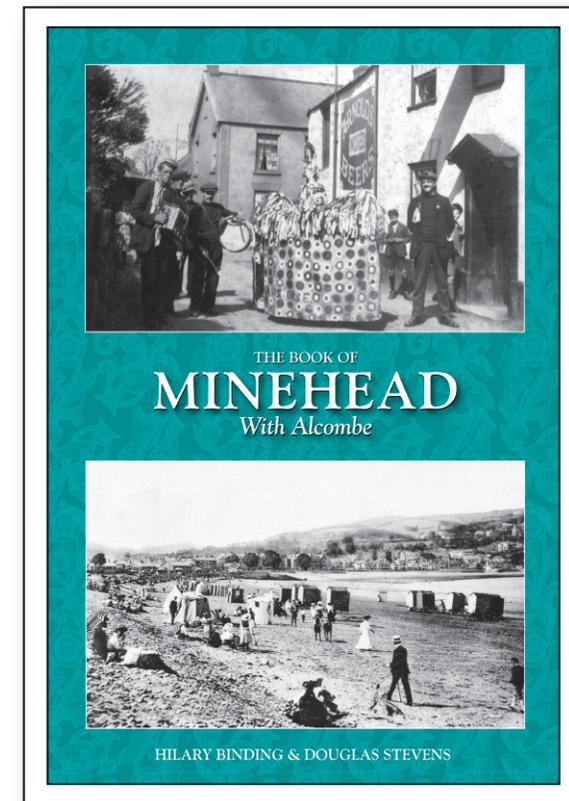
A teacher by profession, Hilary Binding is a past chairman of both the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and the West Somerset Village History Society. She edited the *Exmoor Review* for many years and until recently edited *Exmoor The Country Magazine*. Hilary has written several books on Somerset topics with a particular emphasis on Exmoor.

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