

# THE NEW BOOK OF PORLOCK

Dennis Corner

No one knows the history of Porlock as well as Dennis Corner. Following on from his earlier volumes, *Porlock in Those Days* and *The Book of Porlock*, this new volume offers a further series of explorations of the many faces of the village and its people, and of its maritime, agricultural and architectural heritage.

Dennis, by his generous, patient and inquisitive nature, has become the guardian and custodian of much of Porlock's history and lore. Here he has set down more of the story of this unique Exmoor community, with particular emphasis on the last generation, of much that is still recognizable and much that has changed forever.

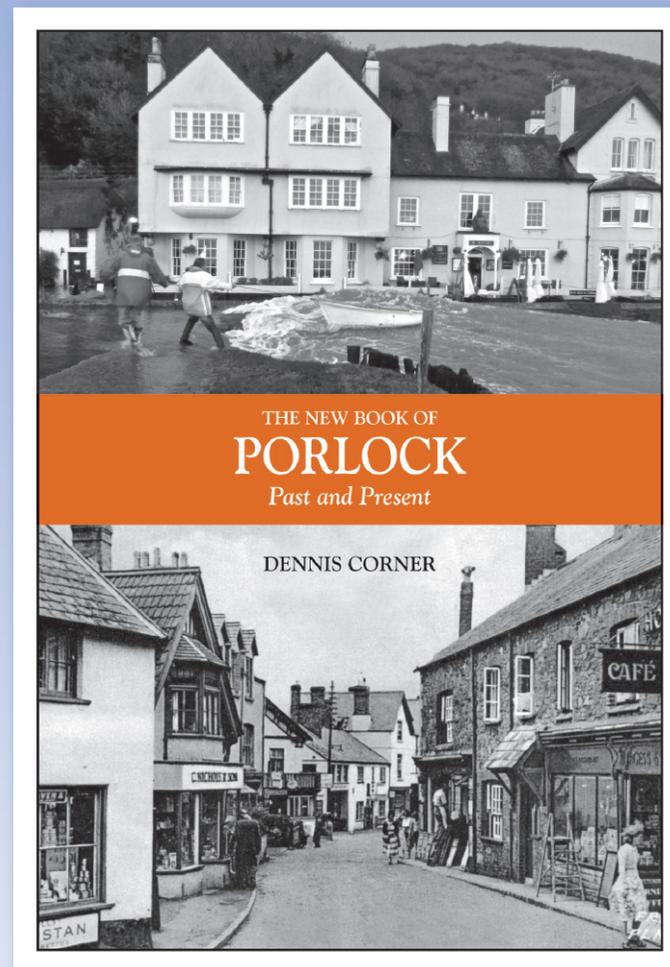
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dennis Corner came to Porlock at the age of six, when his widowed mother moved to live with her parents, Porlock people for generations. In his working life he was a village baker, and subsequently a Keeper of the Porlock Toll Road. Throughout, he was active in many local organizations, including the Scouts and the Methodist Church, and those dedicated to preserving and recording the history of Porlock. He was awarded the MBE in recognition of his services to the community.

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Halsgrove Publishing, Halsgrove House, Ryelands Business Park, Bagley Road,  
Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796  
[www.halsgrove.com](http://www.halsgrove.com) e-mail: [sales@halsgrove.com](mailto:sales@halsgrove.com)

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Local Porlock girl – Tilly Adlington carried the Olympic Torch into the village, and passed it over to the next runner, 2012



The bus to Lynmouth, snowbound in 1937.



Wassail Band.



Porlock School 1940. Many children were evacuees from West Ham. Mr Huntley (Headmaster) on right back. Mr Hadley (Master) under the cottage window.

Example of a double-page spread.

◆ PORLOCK HILL – A RECORD CLIMB ◆

## Porlock Hill – A Record Climb

It is probably well known that in 1900 Mr S. E. Edge a prominent motorist at that time is said to have been the first to climb Porlock Hill in a motor car. Some photocopied cuttings have recently been found in the Porlock Museum from the *Irish Field* magazine of 1900. As well as other motoring items it contains copies of letters from Mr Edge, and three photos taken of the event.

The *Daily Mail* of 28 August 1900 reports:

‘A motor-car has successfully negotiated Porlock Hill, Somerset which has been impossible of ascent by a self-propelled vehicle. The hill is one of the longest and steepest in the country with an extremely sharp rise in the first mile, and a total rise of 1,400 feet in three and half miles. The car was a 10hp Napier which was especially built at a cost of £1800.’

Apparently a hunting sportsman who knew more about hills than he did about motor cars, had backed Porlock Hill as impossible to climb in a motor car, so Mr Edge took up the challenge to test the powers of his new car. He said: ‘The local horse team had got to know of our intention, and thronged around us with pitying smiles, they all thought it couldn’t be done.’

The stagecoach which did it daily in summer time used to shed its passengers and hitch on an extra two horses, making six boxes in all. It is a true no other motor car had succeeded, some failed at the first bend, others ran back and capsized. In such contempt were things that Mr Edge exceeded the term of the £50 wager and carried up a third

passenger: The bucket of the hill, the ostlers, the villagers and sundry spectators foregathered at the foot of the hill and expected to walk up alongside. Every motor that had previously tried the hill, only managed walking pace and had had to stop, but now a sturdy, steadily throbbing engine carried three people up and conquered the hill. So victorious, they returned to Porlock, and were even congratulated by the man who had lost his money, who would, he said, ‘never have believed without seeing it done’.

The 10hp Napier upset all their calculations. It took the worst slopes at a steady even speed, it never shuddered at the corners, and devoured the 1 in 5 section as if it liked it. The pedestrians were aghast, even their six horse coach only walks up.

*Riders unloading the stagecoach arriving at the first bend of Porlock Hill were the lady and gentleman who owned a large riding stable in Carmarthen, Wales, who had arrived for the stag-hunting season together with their grooms. The photo was taken in June 1914. Later in August when war was declared, all horses were commandeered for military service.*

