

PINTS AND PULPITS

Devon's Historic Church House Inns

Terry Townsend

Distributed across the county, the collection of intriguing inns featured here has been described as one of the glories of Devon. This book presents a way of exploring them which enhances the enjoyment of a pub lunch by providing additional food for thought.

This is the story of the seemingly improbable marriage between the village pub and parish church. At the heart of many Devon villages you will find an ancient inn nestling in the lee of a lofty church. Not many sights evoke 'Englishness' more than this timeless tableau. The scene is so familiar, yet few stop to wonder how the unlikely union came about.

In direct contrast to a pub's general reticence to reveal its secrets the whole fabric of a village church displays its detailed antiquity. A church can teach you not only about its own history, but also about the history of England. How changes in attitudes to religious practices impacted on social history; how people lived and thought and consequently what topical events were being discussed over a pint of ale in the inn next door.

For centuries churches have been custodians to momentous events in village life like birth, marriage and death but the inn has also had its role. Glasses were raised in the pub to celebrate weddings conducted in the church. Babies' heads were wetted traditionally in the font and metaphorically in the village bar. The majority of memorials in the church and churchyard remember local people who knew both institutions throughout their lives.

Terry Townsend takes a tour of some of the most fascinating of Devon's inns in this entertaining guide to an unexpected aspect of the county's hostelries.



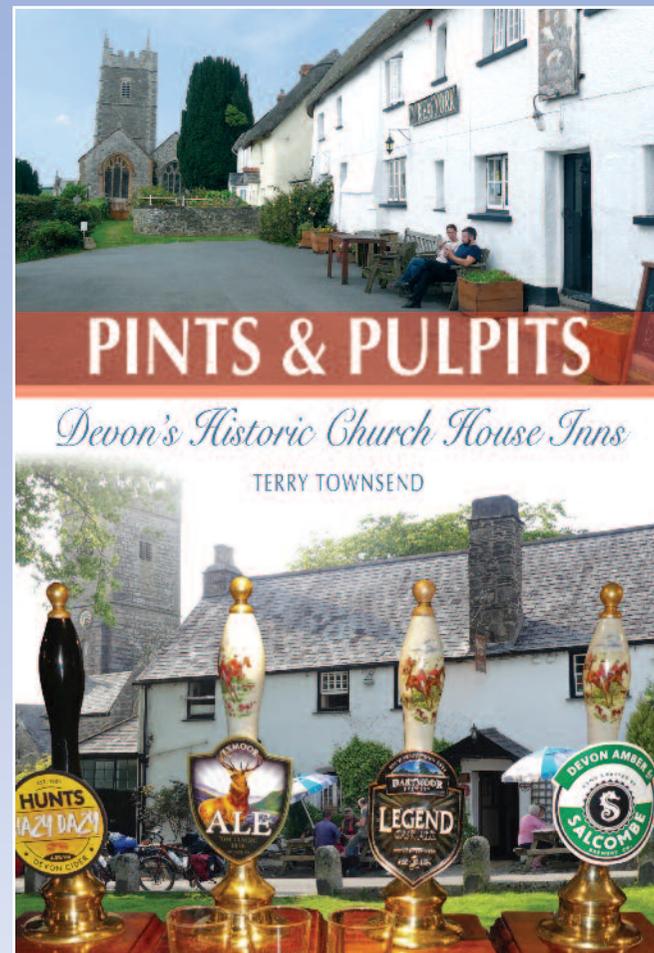
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Terry Townsend, who lives in the West Country with his wife Carol, has written extensively about the social history of English pubs and inns.

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Rattery's Church House Inn, dating from 1028, is one of the oldest pubs in Devon.



Above: The Half Moon at Clayhidon is squeezed between the lane and churchyard of St Andrew's.



Left: The Drake Manor Inn was originally rebuilt in the fifteenth-century to house the skilled workers rebuilding St Andrew's church.

Left: The Masons Arms. Knowstone is not only renowned for its high quality cuisine, it also functions successfully as a village local.

Below: The church of St John the Baptist stands on a grassy knoll above a brook with The Tally Ho just below at the heart of the community.



The Royal Oak, at Meavy takes its name from the famous thousand-year-old tree growing by the churchyard lychgate.



Example of a double-page spread.

