Luffitt Church History Booklet.

A short booklet giving some detail about the various points of interest in Luffitt Church was first published in 1963 and reprinted again in 1971 and 1981, in each case 1000 copies were printed. As stocks were running
1991 low in the autumn of 1991, the P.C.C. asked for a somewhat expanded script in view of the information given on the History tape in cassette form. This was written in similar format to be printed on eight pages plus cover instead of the four in the three earlier prints.

A photograph was selected from a film kindly provided by Mr & Mrs Martin of Luffitt House.

A proof was submitted and carefully checked and corrected, and then returned for printing on 14th July 1992. The full print of 1000 copies was collected at Honiton on 5th September 1992.

A notice had been placed in the Church soon after Easter explaining that a supply of booklets had been ordered and asking that any visitor wishing to have a copy should leave a name and address. By the time that the booklets were available thirteen had been asked for and these were posted straight away.

Among the 'Thank You' letters received was one with some detailed comments about
Font Luffitt font, thought to be interesting enough to copy. from Sir Anthony Ament of

Winston House
14 Sept 1992 Boughton
Northampton

My interest in fonts is recent and knowledge very limited, though I have been looking at church carvings and taking photographs of them for many years in this country and abroad. Especially I am interested in 'Anglo-Norman' carvings, and of course fonts are good subjects because they celebrate the important sacrament of baptism and have often been under cover for centuries and so escaped weathering.

Luffitt's font is certainly fascinating and full of
See I 112 puzzle. I was drawn to it by Francis Bond's
1907 'Fonts and Font Covers' of 1907 but now in 1985

edition. He agrees about the two figures driving a huge nail into a head, the 'fearsome beasts facing one another with grinning jaws' and also the figure of a centaur with spear.

It is always tempting to look for lessons in these stones, and especially scriptural ones. That is easy in later (say 14th & 15th C. carvings) but during the earlier period when Saxon carvers were serving Norman masters, old images and fables survived, and as the carving is crude it often poses great difficulty of interpretation. As someone with such scientific discipline as medicine requires I tend instinctively to challenge other people's theories until wholly convinced, and in this spirit I offer an amateur's thoughts about your wonderful font.

Saxon carvers

Apart from the fact that there are corner masks — as on many square fonts — there seems to be no unifying theme between the four panels, except in showing the style of a single carver (foliage etc.). On the E. side the two figures beside the androphage demon to their right could, I suggest, be engaged in combat, holding shields and weapons. Perhaps that of the left figure looks like a nail because the carver ran out of space above. Certainly the round hammer is odd, with its pointed handle. Might the head between represent a person or a soul being fought for? Bond says there was no room for the body, and he conjured up the possibility of Sisera, but Jael was single-handed with her blow. Those shields bother me if the depiction is a martyrdom.

E side

Is the creature on the N. side an amphisbaena? It seems to lack the symmetry one would expect the tail looks like a tail up to its top and there is no convincing eye to match those other two: on the creature's head and the centaur. Might it be a beast holding its jaws reversed towards its tail with a later defect cut across the single huge toothed jaw? The centaur with the spear is unmistakeable, the body belonging to the head. This centaur could be a primitive representation of Sagittarius, holding a spear in place of the more usual

N side

bow; as such it might indicate a single month (ninth) in the absence of other zodiacal signs.

S side — The collection of perhaps 6 creatures on the S. side certainly looks like a hunting scene, the scale of the animals with the large central one possibly horned suggesting a stag hunt.

W side — The foliage on the W. side seems to have sufficient symmetry to indicate that it does indeed represent a 'tree of life'.

The fact that it occupies a whole side underlines its importance, even though it has no creatures to consume or defend it. The type of foliage is indeed very crude and repeated in decoration elsewhere on the bowl (with what looks like a 'foliate' mask at the NE corner). Such stylised rendering of leaves seems fairly early in the 12th C — it is perhaps the strongest evidence of the early date of this font. — and is paralleled by carving such as the capitals at Souvigny (Allier), in an oak-growing area of France.

NE corner

Finally, it is interesting that the direction of incident around the bowl seems in general to 'flow' from left to right: was that because the carver was right-handed?

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely

Signed: Anthony Alment

(Another letter referring to the font was received from Mr Paul Pettit of Lawn End Whimple

9th September 1992

With regard to your marvellous font: I've always wondered if in the early days of the Norman Conquest the Knights and other warriors used Saxon labour to carry out building works, e.g. the gateway to Exeter Castle with its Saxon windows. When the Norman craftsmen arrived the fonts became better carved, there are many examples in Devon, and an excellent example is at Burnham Deepdale in Norfolk where the panels depict the four seasons. So I think your description is correct, an early Norman font probably carved by Saxons. Anyway it is a splendid artifact.

Saxon carvers

Yours sincerely

Signed Paul E Pettit

Churchyard rail fence

Churchyard post and rail fence

Duffield Parochial Church Council decided early in 1992 that tanalised posts and rails be purchased and erected alongside the roadway of Church Hill by the path leading from the kissing gate below the entrance to the car park to the churchyard. At the quinquennial inspection of 1991 by the architect he had referred to the bad state of this fence in his report.
On 2nd October 1992 the existing posts and single rail were removed, holes dug at 9 ft 1 in centres, the 4" x 4" posts lightly cemented in at the base and a top rail nailed in place. The whole was then straightened up in line, a second lower rail nailed and the posts finally checked for upright and concreted in. Volunteers working on this were Mr & Mrs A Bladh, Mr J Cunningham, Mr D Rome, and the churchwardens Mr B Pulman and J Sage.
The old posts and rails were taken to the Village Hall and included in the 329 lots offered at the Auction Sale on 17th October 1992 to raise funds for Church Tower repairs, and the lot was sold at that sale for £6.

Figures
See also Vol III P. 3. 124

Figures.

Instructing his solicitor a man stated,
"When I'm dead you must divide my
17 sheep between my three sons.
my eldest son is to have half of the sheep,
my second son gets one third,
And my youngest son gets one-ninth."
"How on earth will I manage this?" the solicitor said to his clerk after the man left.
"If I bring my one sheep," the clerk answered,
"We'll have 18 sheep.
Half of eighteen is nine
a third of eighteen is six
And a ninth part is two.
nine plus six plus two is seventeen,
and I'll still be able to take my
sheep home again."

25/10/92

See also VOL II P 148 III P 41-2 Land Tax

The following typed details were an exhibit at Duffitt Village Hall at the Exhibition held there on 24th September 1986, supplied by Devon Record Office.

Land Tax Records — Guide to Sources

Historical Background

The land tax was first introduced in order to contribute towards the financing of the prolonged and increasingly costly war with France which had
1689 begun in 1689. An Act of 1693 (4. William & Mary C.1.) required counties to pay tax under a quota system and this national tax was voted annually by Parliament from 1693 to 1798, the rate varying between 1s. and 4s. in the pound until fixed at 4s in 1772. Local assessors, appointed by tax commissioners for each county and borough, returned assessments based on valuations of land, personal estate, the salaries or profits of public office, tithes, buildings, goods and merchandise. In practice, it soon proved impossible to collect taxes on personal incomes and the burden of the tax fell increasingly on land. Furthermore, although reassessments were supposed to take place, and did, to some extent, in isolated cases, after 1697 it was the assessments of 1693 which for all practical purposes became the basis on which the land tax was raised. In 1798 proprietors were given the option of redeeming or exonerating their land tax liability by payment of a lump sum and two Acts of that year made the sum voted a perpetual charge at the rate of 4s. in the pound. At the same time, owners of property which was valued under 20s. a year ceased to be chargeable. Under the Land Tax Redemption Act of
1802 1802, proof of redemption was required in the form of a certificate and a receipt issued by the Bank of England. The quota payable by each township or parish in 1798, less the amounts subsequently
1949 redeemed, remained in force until 1949 when the Finance Act introduced compulsory redemption in certain circumstances. All remaining unredeemed
1963 land tax was abolished by the Finance Act 1963. For a few years in the mid-18th century and, in accordance with an Act of 20 George III c.17. between 1780 and 1832, land tax assessments were used as the basis for establishing voting qualifications for Parliament

elections and, for this purpose, duplicates were deposited with the appropriate County Clerk of the Peace.

Description of Records. Assessments

The most detailed land tax record is the assessment which lists the amounts payable or redeemed by individuals in each town, hundred or parish. The information which may be given in each assessment in respect of each holding liable to tax is as follows: name and status of landowner (but not his occupation or residence (if absentee); name of occupier (at least from the 1780's but prior to this little effort was made to distinguish between owners and tenant occupiers); name and/or brief description of property e.g. house, cottage, wood, garden, orchard, mill, etc; amount assessed or paid; amount exonerated (from 1798) rateable value or rental of holding (unlikely before 1825 and not consistently thereafter).

It should be noted that inconsistencies did occur in the compilation of some assessments; failure to give column headings, insertion of owners and occupiers in wrong columns, careless in keeping the details, e.g. occupiers' names, up to date.

Assessments may be quarterly, half-yearly or yearly. Other records which may be found are various certificates, including those for redemption, duplicates of the assessments giving totals only, receipts and commissioners' papers such as minute books.

Research Use.

Suggested areas of research for which land tax records can be used as evidence are as follows: landownership and occupation (its structure and distribution and the size of holdings), urban development, enclosure, and parish, house and family history.

Records held by Devon Record Office.

Assessments 1747, 1751, (a few parishes only), 1780-1832 (Series I and II), 1798-1952 (Series III, incomplete), all sorted into parishes files, 1816-1865 (Series IV, DD 23883-23999, 35058-35398, a few parishes only). There is a detailed catalogue of these assessments. Series I and II are the assessments which were deposited with

the Clerk of the Peace. Other individual assessments of various dates can be located through the subject indexes. Commissioners' minutes. Black Torrington division, 1872-1893 (178B/4/LT 1,2), Exminster division 1855-1892 (337B add/MS 1550). Certificates, receipts and other miscellaneous records can be located by reference to the subject indexes and Part II of the catalogue of the Series I and II land tax records.

Records held elsewhere.

The Public Record Office holds duplicates of the original assessments which only give the total amounts payable by each township or parish, not the names of individuals assessed (E 181-184). Information about the relationship between central government and the local commissioners and receivers can be found in the records of the Treasury, the most significant of which are published in Calendar of Treasury Papers and Books available in most large reference libraries. The Public Record Office also holds records of the Land Tax Redemption Office (IR 20-25) which include a detailed enumeration or copy of the assessments for 1798 (IR 23)

Select Bibliography

W.B. Stevens, Sources for English Local History (Cambridge, Revised Edition, 1981);
W.R. Ward, The English Land Tax in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1953).
R.W. Unwin, Search Guide to the English Land Tax (West Yorkshire County Record Office 1982).

G.S. 1 Sept. 1985 JB 161085, P.B.

Fire

See III 93

On the afternoon of 19th April 1990 there was a fire at Town Cottage adjacent to the P.O. and opposite Lyphitt Inn. The thatch roof was burnt out but firemen were able to save most of the P.O. roof. Sidney Middleton returning from Honiton was for a while prevented by Police from entering his own house

Duffitt Church Registers.

The following list is an analysis of the numbers given as Baptised, marriages and Burials in the 10 year periods as from the year 1711 in the Duffitt Church Registers.

The complete annual totals are listed and kept with the copies of Church Registers.

10 year period	Baptisms	marriages	Burials	
1711 – 1720	120	60	130	
21 – 30	131	64	129	
31 – 40	151	75	124	
41 – 50	146	62	130	
51 – 60	147	49	121	
61 – 70	158	55	139	
71 – 80	227	66	114	Census figures for comparison. II 152
81 – 90	201	42	126	
91 – 1800	213	46	135	
1801 – 10	166	52	106	675
11 – 20	162	33	115	639
21 – 30	217	70	139	739
31 – 40	216	40	119	702
41 – 50	219	58	121	792
51 – 60	207	52	115	761
61 – 70	154	39	96	714
71 – 80	142	27	83	649
81 – 90	126	23	91	601
91 – 1900	86	32	62	547
1901 – 10	58	28	52	467
11 – 20	41	22	45	441
21 – 30	40	25	27	418
31 – 40	46	26	42	401
41 – 50	61	18	40	War
51 – 60	46	15	54	391
61 – 70	52	29	36	442
71 – 80	43	19	42	395
81 – 90	35	15	36	433
91 – 2000				468 2001 444

Baptisms 3641 — Highest number 31 in 1849. Only 16 years with single figures prior to 1895 and only once at 11 with double in 1965.

Marriages 1242 — Highest number 16 in 1738. Only 10 years with double figure the last in 1827. Only 10 years with no marriage.

Burials 2569 — Highest number 26 in 1712. Only 10 years with over 20. Before 1897 only 24 years with single figures, only in 1931

Luffitt Packet Jan 1993 P12

Luffitt Commons Trustees
Luffitt Commons

Dear

This letter acts as an introduction to Luffitt Commons, with the intention of advising those new to the Parish, acquiring a property with an Agricultural Holding number, who may or may not, as a result have also acquired common rights.

Common Rights

However it should not be assumed that as a result of receiving this letter, that it automatically entitles you to common rights.

Common rights under the Commons Registration Act 1965, must first be registered at the Local Registration Office. In the case of Luffitt Commons, this is Devon County Council, County Hall, Exeter.

Those uncertain of their position, should seek advice from Hon. Secretary, Luffitt Commons Trustee Committee at the above address or the Registration Office at County Hall.

If you have recently purchased a Holding, that has remained intact since before the registration Act 1965, and which property has registered common rights, then it is likely that you also have acquired these rights.

1965

If on the other hand your Holding has changed hands one or more times since the 1965 Act, and that during these changes of ownership, the acreage of your Holding has changed, then, although it may have originally had Common Rights attached, these rights in some instances may have been conveyed with the land to a third party. Otherwise what is known as an APPORTIONMENT should have taken place, and be properly recorded with the Commons Registration Office. In such a case it is a fundamental rule of the Luffitt Commons that no rights of common may be exercised on the Common Land without full registration of such rights, or an apportionment where applicable.

Apportionment

The ownership of the Common Land and all rights thereon in the Parish of Luffitt, are vested in the four annually elected Trustees, who together with the Custodian Trustee (National Westminster Bank Plc) hold the Freehold of the common land, on behalf of all Luffitt Commoners, with properly recorded

registered rights.

An Annual General Meeting is held in October each year (advertised in the Duffitt Packet and Bulmans Weekly News) at which time the Commoners are invited to elect their Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer (the four elected trustees), in addition to a further six Commoners, who form the Trustee Committee, one of whom be a non grazier.

The Duffitt Commons Trustee Committee is responsible for all aspects of the administration of the common land and rights thereon, and to insure that the commons are run and grazed in a fair and equitable manner for the benefit of all commoners alike. It is also responsible for the overall policy of the common land and accountable to the Commoners.

There is in addition, a Commons management Committee, again elected at the AGM and consists of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon Secretary and Hon. Treasurer with nine committee members. The management Committee is responsible for the day to day management of that area of common land under cultivation, but excluding areas of rough grazing (rough plots) and accountable to the Trustee Committee.

Brief History of Duffitt Commons

The beginning of what was later to become known as the Manorial System, in other words the organisation of the Manor, owes its origin to the Saxon period. The Overlord was known as a Thane Thane, later to become a Knight under the Normans and from Medieval to the present day, a Knight was substituted by the Lord of the Manor. In the case of Duffitt the Lordship of the Manor is vested in four Trustees, who hold this office on behalf of all the Commoners.

1921 See I 302 In more recent history, Duffitt Commons, until 1921 had been part of the Combe Raleigh Estate, owned by the D'Eyli Barnard family. When this family sold the estate in 1921 it was broken up and the freehold of the Common land (and manorial rights) were purchased by a Mr Bradge.

Dumpdon It was at this time that Dumpdon Hill Common