

## The Davie Family of Ilfracombe



This research was carried out by me, Shaun Davey and my wife, Nia Davey. I am a direct descendant of John Davie of Lantern Hill from father to son through five generations.

Throughout my childhood in Cardiff I had been told romantic stories by my father about Ilfracombe, which had been told in turn by his father before him. A photograph of Lantern Hill hung on our living room wall and my father would often recall that his father had been born in that house. He didn't know that it was a chapel. He'd never been there, neither had anyone else in the family who was still alive. We were not sure as to the accuracy of the stories and did not know if Lantern Hill still existed. Our interest in the Davie family of Lantern Hill began in 1981 with a first visit to the chapel of St Nicholas. We were quite amazed to discover that there must be some truth to the stories which had been passed down from my grandfather. It was he, Thomas John Davey, who changed the spelling of our surname from Davie to Davey at some time between 1909 and 1920. So we began our research - the results of which are presented here.

The research is based on evidence which we have collected from a variety of sources, including census returns, parish registers, newspaper articles, and accounts from relatives. We can prove that John Davie's father, George Davie came to Ilfracombe from South Molton between 1788 and 1791 and that George Davie's father was also a George who married Catherine Allin in Barnstaple in 1760. We believe, but cannot prove conclusively, that this George was baptised in 1728, being the son of William and Margaret Davie. We have been unable to find documentary evidence to enable us to trace the family history prior to this.

During our research we have greatly enjoyed meeting other Davie descendants who have helped us in our search. In particular we would like to thank the following, who are also direct descendants of John Davie of Lantern Hill:

Andrew Davie (Llantwit Major)  
Raymond Davie (Australia)  
Sally Capner (Ilfracombe)  
Ann Lloyd (Barnstaple)

We would be pleased to receive any further information which can be added to our research, especially from anybody who is related to the Davie family of Ilfracombe. We can be contacted at:

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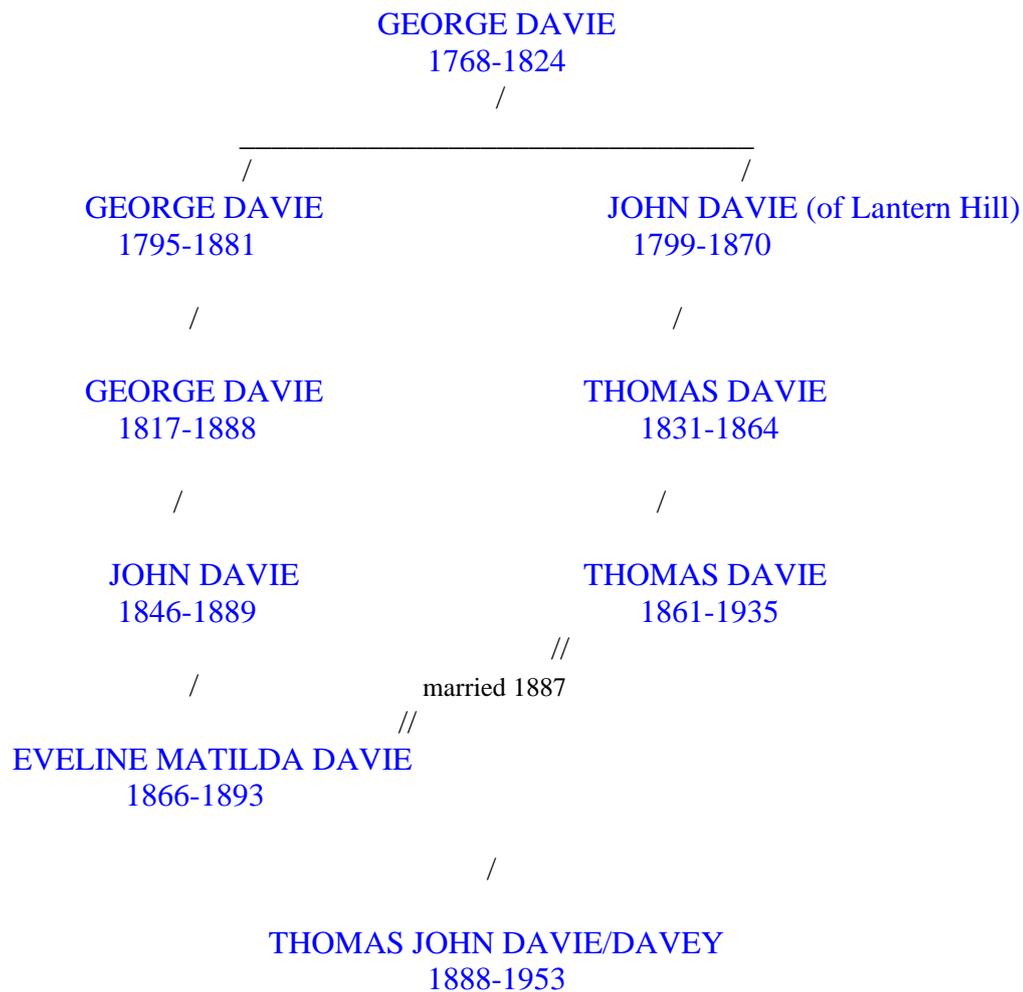
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Shaun Davey  
Revised 2021

## THE DAVIE FAMILY OF ILFRACOMBE

Our search for the Davie family took us first to Ilfracombe, where we found that during the 19th century their lives were focused around the busy quay. Having traced the family back to 1791 we assumed that they had lived in Ilfracombe for many generations previously. It was something of a surprise therefore, to find that George Davie actually married in South Molton. From here the trail led us back to his birth in Barnstaple in 1768. He was the son of George Davie and Catherine Allin. Little is known of the 18th century Davie family. This account, therefore, will concentrate on the 19th century descendants of George and Nance Davie, through a direct line to my grandfather. This line of descent has two direct routes, because in 1887 my great grandfather, Thomas Davie married his cousin, Eveline Matilda Davie, both of whom were directly descended from George Davie (see family tree below).



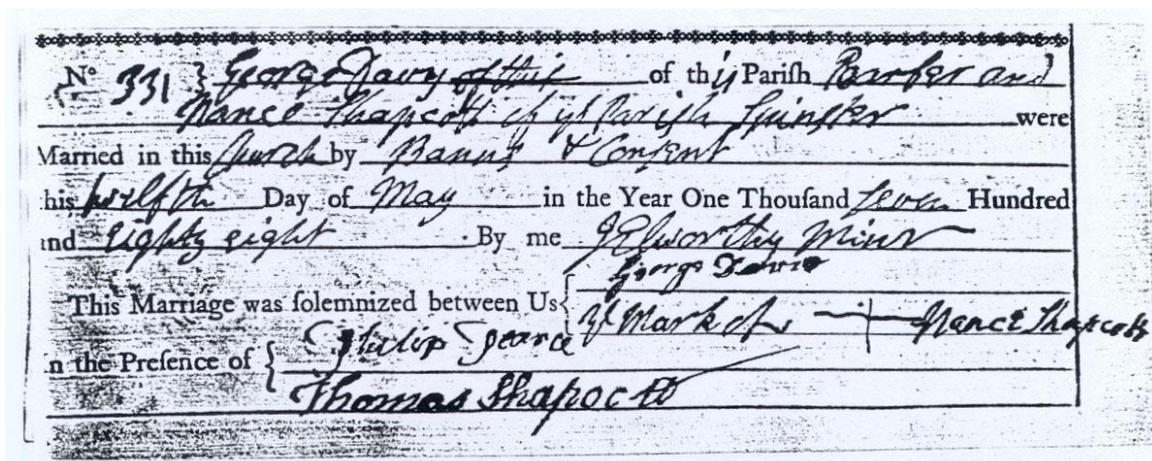
## GEORGE DAVIE 1768 - 1824

Baptised December 1768 at St. Peter's Church in the parish of Barnstaple, second son of George and Catherine.

At some time during the next twenty years George must have left Barnstaple and taken up residence in South Molton, for it is here in 1788 that, upon his marriage to Nance Shapcott (1768- 1849) he is described as a native 'of this parish'. The marriage entry states George's occupation to be a barber and it is interesting to note that he was able to sign his name. His signature, which is easily distinguishable, appears also as a witness on the marriage entries of two of his sons - William, his eldest, who married Rebecca Marshall in 1812 and George, who married Francis Carder in 1816.

George and Nance's first child, William Davie, was baptised in South Molton in 1788. By 1791, however, they must have moved to Ilfracombe for it was here that their second child, Anne, was baptised in Holy Trinity Church. During the 1790's George's name appears in the Parish Poor Relief Book. Apparently his wife and son were ill and he received money from the church.

George continued as a barber and in the years that followed he and Nance, now sometimes referred to as Anne, had a further nine children. They both remained in Ilfracombe for the rest of their lives and were buried in the Holy Trinity graveyard. George died in October 1824. In the Census Return of 1841 Anne was living in Fore Street with two of her daughters, Catherine Davie and Sarah May, together with Sarah's three children. Anne died in 1849.



Marriage entry of George and Nance

## GEORGE DAVIE 1795 - 1881

Baptised July 1795 in Holy Trinity Church, Ilfracombe, second son of George and Anne (Nance).

George married Frances Carder (1795 - 1881) there in December 1816, the entry showing that neither George nor Frances could sign their names. This is strange as we know that George's father, George Davie, was able to write his name, which he did as a witness to his son's marriage. This signature matches the one on his own marriage entry of 1788. Frances was born in Exmouth and from the baptismal entries of their six children we can see that she was known as Fanny.

George was a mariner and from the details in the Register of Seamen we know that he first went to sea as a cabin boy in 1805, aged ten years. The entry also tells us that he was 5 feet nine and a quarter inches high with red hair, blue eyes and a ruddy complexion. His Seaman's Ticket number was 58349 and it was issued in Barnstaple in 1844.

In 1841 George, Fanny and three of their children were living in Water Street. In the Census Return of 1851 they had moved to 2, New Street and had their illegitimate grandson, William Cooper Davie, living with them. In 1861 they were living in Broad Street with another grandson, George Davie, who was also a mariner. In 1871 and 1881 they lived at 2, Hurn's Lane with their young granddaughter, Hannah Rooke. George and Fanny had six children - a son and five daughters.

Both George and Fanny died in 1881, aged 86, as recorded on their gravestone in Holy Trinity graveyard. One of their daughters, Frances, was later buried with them in 1910.

<i>George Davie</i>	of <i>this</i> Parish
and <i>Frances Carder</i>	of <i>this</i> Parish
were married in this <i>Church</i> by <i>Darius</i> with Consent of	this <i>first</i> Day of
<i>December</i> in the Year One thousand eight hundred and <i>thirteen</i>	
By me <i>Paul Ingle</i>	
This Marriage was solemnized between us	<i>George Davie</i> <i>Frances Carder</i>
In the Presence of	<i>George Davie</i> <i>Catharine Greenlade</i>
No. 72.	

Marriage entry of George and Frances

## JOHN DAVIE 1799 - 1870

Baptised in February 1799 in Holy Trinity Church, Ilfracombe, third son of George and Anne (Nance).

John married Elizabeth Marshall (1807-1890) at Holy Trinity in December 1826. In the Census Return of 1841 they were living in Water Street with eight children. In 1850 John appears in White's 1850 Devon History and Gazetteer, and also in The Directory of Devonshire Lists for that year, as a lighthouse keeper. In the Census of 1851, he and Elizabeth were registered as living in the Lantern Hill Lighthouse together with eleven of their children. In both censuses John is described as a mariner. By 1861, however, the occupation of 'lighthouse keeper' had been added and now there were fifteen people living on the hill. The Ilfracombe Parish Council Rate Return of November 1865 records John Davie as the occupier of Lantern Hill and shows that the property had a gross estimated rental of four pounds and ten shillings; a rateable value of three pounds; and the amount collected was one shilling and ten pence-halfpenny.

The Lammas Guide of 1840 states that,

*"The principal room of this building is opened during the summer months, for the accommodation of the public, as a reading room, supported by subscription; where the gentlemen amuse themselves by reading the newspaper, and the ladies by scribbling in a scrap-book kept for the purpose".*

It seems unlikely that in 1840 the building was used as a dwelling. At the last meeting of the Ilfracombe Manorial Court on Saturday 11th December 1858, at which the Lord of the Manor of Ilfracombe, Sir Bouchier Wrey, bart. held the chair, the following was reported:

*"...the gentlemen of the jury then proceeded to the lighthouse, and to the great credit of Mr. John Davie, the careful keeper of that important pharos, they found the lantern, reflectors and everything connected with the service in excellent order".*

This meeting was recalled in the Ilfracombe Gazette and Observer on 17th December 1895 and continued:

*"The building is a very ancient one; was originally a chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas, and a place of pilgrimage - one bishop granting an indulgence of forty days to all who should visit the said capellum Sancti Nicholia. The mark of another superstition still remains on it; the horse-shoe, which our forefathers and foremothers believed would prevent the curse of the witch from taking effect, was there on Saturday, where they nailed it...."*

The Ilfracombe Gazette in 1910 carries an article about Lantern Hill which states 'Mr. John Davie went there to live with his wife having been appointed Lloyds agent in succession to a gentleman named Lovering.'

Between 1827 and 1849 John and Elizabeth had thirteen children baptized - the first of these, Thomas, died aged eight months. We believe another baby must have died before baptism because after the birth of their last child, Matilda, the following announcement appeared in the North Devon Journal, dated 30th May 1849:

*"May 29th at St. Nicholas Chapel Lighthouse, Ilfracombe, the wife of Mr. John Davie, of a*

*daughter, fourteenth child. Two of them in the churchyard lie, and two more are gone to sea, and ten of these olive plants are round about this table, with flattering prospects of an indefinite increase".*

Elizabeth kept a record of her family's births, marriages and deaths in the family Bible (now in the possession of Ann Lloyd, of Barnstaple). She even noted the actual times of the births of her children. Some of the information was copied into a smaller Bible (see copies of both these Bibles on pages 12 to 15).

While the Davie family lived at Lantern Hill, Elizabeth started a laundry. The Census of 1851 tells us that Elizabeth's occupation was laundress together with her twin daughters, Mary and Martha. By 1861 Grace and Ellen had also joined in the work.

John Davie died in 1870, as recorded on the family gravestone at Holy Trinity Church. Elizabeth took over the role of lighthouse keeper, as recorded in the 1871 Census. Two daughters continued with the laundry - Ann Buckingham, widow and Ellen Turner (whose husband also resided there in 1871). However, by 1883 Ann and Ellen, together with their sister, Maria (who had married George Ley) had emigrated to Ohio. Daughters, Mary and Martha (with her husband, John Turner) were in Bristol in 1871 but returned to Ilfracombe by 1881. Two other daughters, Elizabeth (who married John Balley) and Matilda (who married William Summerwill) returned to live in Ilfracombe having moved to Newport and Okehampton, respectively.

Between 1828 and 1872 five of Elizabeth's children died, including Thomas who didn't reach his first birthday; John and Thomas, both mariners who died abroad, of yellow fever; George who died in Bristol; and Grace Marshall Davie who had married William Crang in 1864, but died in London the same year. John and Elizabeth's only surviving son, Samuel Cornish Davie would shortly move away and he died in Newport, Monmouthshire in 1889. His widow, Louisa, wrote to Mary Davie in the 1890s (see pages 16 to 19).

The 1871 Census shows Elizabeth, widowed, at Lantern Hill, her occupation being lighthouse keeper. We think she left there shortly after, when work started on the new pier. In 1878 she appears in Harrod's Royal County Directory of Devonshire as a laundress living at 1, Strand. This is where she was in the 1881 Census with her daughters Mary (a laundress in 1891 who died unmarried in 1894) and Ann Buckingham. Elizabeth died in June 1890 aged 82 years and is buried in the family grave. Her obituary states, "She was an affectionate mother, a sympathetic friend and one who was always ready to assist those who were in trouble."



**THE THIRTEEN CHILDREN  
OF  
JOHN AND ELIZABETH DAVIE  
OF  
LANTERN HILL**

**THOMAS DAVIE** - born 4<sup>th</sup> October 1827; died 28<sup>th</sup> May 1828

**JOHN DAVIE** - born 19<sup>th</sup> March 1829; died 26<sup>th</sup> May 1853 of yellow fever on board ship, "Annie Fisher" at Bahia, Brazil

**THOMAS DAVIE** - born 11<sup>th</sup> June 1831; married Mary Ann BAKER in 1854 in Newport; master mariner; three sons (one being Tom Davie the Towncrier); died 18<sup>th</sup> November 1864 of yellow fever in Georgetown, Demerara (now Guyana) whilst master of the "Ellen Sophia" out of Newport

**MARY DAVIE** - born a twin 19<sup>th</sup> May 1833; laundress; died 18<sup>th</sup> October 1894

**MARTHA DAVIE** - born a twin 19<sup>th</sup> May 1833; laundress; married John TURNER (licensed victualler); lived in Bristol in 1871; kept the Admiral Rodney pub in the 1880's; no known children; died 29<sup>th</sup> July 1892

**ELIZABETH DAVIE** - born 17<sup>th</sup> July 1835; married Captain John BALLEY in 1859; had at least seven children; died 1893

**SAMUEL CORNISH DAVIE** - born 31<sup>st</sup> August 1837; married (i) Fanny ANDREWS in 1858 in Newport; living in Ilfracombe in 1871; married (ii) Louisa NEESHAM in 1874 in Oakham, Rutland; had eight children; shipwright – worked for Messrs. Mordey & Carney, Newport; died 11<sup>th</sup> October 1889 in Newport

**ANN DAVIE** - born 11<sup>th</sup> February 1839; laundress; married Henry BUCKINGHAM in 1861 in Newport; one daughter, Henrietta born 1862 (the lock of hair hanging from the

model ship in the glass case is believed to have been Henrietta's, left as a keepsake when she emigrated to Bryan, Ohio with her husband, Frederick BALMOND and her widowed mother, Ann); lived Philadelphia in 1920

**GRACE MARSHALL DAVIE** - born 28<sup>th</sup> February 1841; laundress; married William CRANG (plasterer from London) in January 1864; one daughter who died aged 11 months; died giving birth to her only child on Christmas Day 1864 in London

**ELLEN DAVIE** - born 5<sup>th</sup> August 1843; laundress; married (i) Philip Henry TURNER in 1869; (ii) George H. CLOGG (farmer from Ilfracombe) in Strongsville, Ohio in 1879; no known children; died 5<sup>th</sup> August 1903 in Ohio

**GEORGE DAVIE** - born 13<sup>th</sup> May 1845; shipwright; married (i) Harriet Tucker (1843-70) in 1866 then (ii) Ann Tucker (Harriet's sister) in Bristol in 1871; had one child who died in infancy; George died 1872 in Bristol

**MARIA DAVIE** - born 15<sup>th</sup> August 1847; married George LEY in 1868; living in Swansea in 1871; had at least four children; living in Cuyahoga, Ohio in 1880

**MATILDA DAVIE** - born 29<sup>th</sup> May 1849; laundress; married William SUMMERWILL in 1867; six children; lived in Okehampton where William was manager of the gas works until his death in 1879 when Matilda returned to Ilfracombe; died in January 1927

**Lantern Hill  
Census Returns  
1851, 1861 & 1871**

Parish or Township of <i>St. Ives</i>		Ecclesiastical District of		City or Borough of		Town of <i>St. Ives</i>		Village of	
House No.	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition		Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born
				Male	Female	Male	Female		
1	<i>Lantern Hill Eight House</i>	<i>John Davie</i>	<del>Head</del>	<del>Mar</del>	<del>52</del>			<i>Seaman</i>	<i>Down Street</i>
		<i>Elizabeth Do</i>	<del>Wife</del>	<del>Mar</del>	<del>49</del>			<i>Laundress</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>John Do</i>	<del>Son</del>	<del>U</del>	<del>22</del>			<i>Seaman</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Mary Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>U</del>	<del>17</del>			<i>Laundress</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Martha Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>U</del>	<del>14</del>			<i>Laundress</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Elizabeth Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>U</del>	<del>15</del>			<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Samuel C Do</i>	<del>Son</del>	<del>U</del>	<del>13</del>			<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Ann Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>-</del>	<del>12</del>			<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Grace M Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>-</del>	<del>10</del>			<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Ellen Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>-</del>	<del>8</del>			<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>George Do</i>	<del>Son</del>	<del>-</del>	<del>5</del>			<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Maria Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>-</del>	<del>3</del>		<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>	
		<i>Matilda Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>-</del>	<del>1</del>		<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>	
<i>Three House Wain</i>									
2	<i>Quay</i>	<i>George Davie</i>	<del>Head</del>	<del>Mar</del>	<del>32</del>			<i>Seaman</i>	<i>Down Street</i>
		<i>Matilda Do</i>	<del>Wife</del>	<del>Mar</del>	<del>31</del>			<i>Seaman's Wife</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>George Do</i>	<del>Son</del>	<del>-</del>	<del>13</del>			<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Samuel Do</i>	<del>Son</del>	<del>-</del>	<del>11</del>			<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>Matilda Do</i>	<del>Dau<sup>r</sup></del>	<del>-</del>	<del>8</del>			<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>
		<i>John Do</i>	<del>Son</del>	<del>-</del>	<del>4</del>		<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>	
				Total of Persons...		8	11		

CENSUS OF 1861

Parish (or Township) of		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the				Parish of		Page 1	
Hfracombe		City or Municipal Borough of				Hfracombe		Hfracombe	
Road, Street, &c., and No. or Name of House		HOUSES Inhabited (U.A. or (B.))	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf and Dumb
No. of Schedule						Males / Females			
1	Lantern Hill Light House	1	John Davie	Head	Mar	62	Boatman and Light House Keeper	Devon	Hfracombe
			Elizabeth Davie	Wife	Mar	53		Do	Do
			Mary do	Daughter	Unm	27	Laundress	Do	Do
			Matthia do	Daughter	Unm	27	do	Do	Do
			George do	Daughter	Unm	20	do	Do	Do
			George do	son	Unm	15	Shipwright & Apprentice	Do	Do
			Ellen do	Daughter	Unm	14	Laundress	Do	Do
			Maria do	Daughter	Unm	11	Scholar	Do	Do
			Melinda do	Daughter	Unm	11	do	Do	Do
			Thomas do	son	Mar	29	Shoemaker	Do	Do
			Mary do	Wife	Mar	29	do	Do	Do
			John do	son	Unm	3	do	Do	Do
			Thomas do	son	Unm	3	do	Do	Do
			Mary Buckingham	Wife	Mar	15	Mariner	Devon	Hfracombe
			John do	Son	Unm	22	Mariner's Wife	Do	Do
2	Quay	1	Thomas Davie	Head	Mar	51	Fisherman	Do	Do
			Thomas do	Son	Unm	22	do	Do	Do
			James do	Daughter	Unm	12	do	Do	Do
3	do	1	Jessie Smith	Head	Unm	16	Dress Maker	Do	Do
4	do	1	Jessie Cook	Head	Unm	19	do	Do	Do
			Isabel do	Daughter	Unm	17	do	Do	Do
			Ann do	Daughter	Unm	15	do	Do	Do
			Mary do	Daughter	Unm	13	do	Do	Do
Total of Houses...		4	Total of Males and Females...			8 / 10			

CENSUS OF 1871

Parish (or Township) of		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the				Parish of		Page 1	
Hfracombe		City or Municipal Borough of				Hfracombe		Hfracombe	
Road, Street, &c., and No. or NAME OF HOUSE		HOUSES Inhabited (U.A. or (B.))	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION	AGE of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	
No. of Schedule						Males / Females			
1	Lantern Hill Light House	1	Elizabeth Davie	Head	W	63	Light House Keeper	Devon	Hfracombe
			John Buckingham	Daughter	W	32	Laundress	Do	Do
			Ellen Turner	Daughter	Mar	27	Laundress	Do	Do
			Philip H. Turner	Son-in-law	Mar	29	Mariner	Do	Do
			Henrietta C. Buckingham	Daughter	Unm	9	Scholar	Do	Do
18	Quay	1	Thomas Davie	Head	Wife	61	Boatman	Devon	Hfracombe
	do		Thomas do	Son	Unm	31	Boatman	Do	Do
			Jessie do	Daughter	Unm	28	Dress Maker	Do	Do
17	do	1	John C. Bowden	Head	Wife	58	Boatman	Devon	Hfracombe
			Ellen Bowden	Wife	Mar	56	Dress Maker	Do	Do
16	do	1	Sarah Lytle	Head	Unm	47	Licensed Victualler	Devon	Hfracombe
			Wendy Lytle	Sister	Unm	16	Assistant	Do	Do
			Mary Parkin	Wife	Mar	54	Hotel - Proprietor	Cornwall	Lambert
			Margaret B. Parkin	Daughter	Unm	19	Assistant	Do	Hfracombe
			Pauline L. C. League	Son-in-law	Unm	2	do	Do	Padstow
13	do	1	John Bassing	Head	Unm	20	General Serv Domestic	Devon	Storrington
			Jessie Bassing	Wife	Mar	56	Mariner's Wife	Devon	Hfracombe
			Sarah do	Daughter	Unm	19	Dress Maker	Do	Do
			Stephen Brown	Head	Mar	46	Mariner	Devon	Hfracombe
			Jessie do	Wife	Mar	46	do	Do	Do
			Ellen Louisa do	Daughter	Unm	20	Servant	Do	Do
			Regina L. do	Daughter	Unm	13	Scholar	Do	Do
			Stephen John do	Son	Unm	7	Scholar	Do	Do
11	do	1	Benjamin Baker	Head	Mar	42	Licensed Victualler	Devon	Hfracombe
			Wendy do	Wife	Mar	39	do	Do	Do

Family Bible from Lantern Hill

John David and Elizabeth Marshall was born  
December 27<sup>th</sup> 1826  
Thomas David was born of the above Parents Oct  
18 27 and died May 20<sup>th</sup> 1828  
John David was born March 19/1829 in the morning  
Thomas David was born June 11/1831 in the afternoon  
Henry David and Martha David was born May  
29/1833 1/25 minutes Afternoon in the afternoon  
Elizabeth David was born July 17/1835/6 in the  
afternoon Samuel Cornish David was born  
August 31/1837 Half past 3 in the morning  
Ann David was born February 11/1839 Half past  
5 in the morning  
Grace Marshall David was born February  
28/1841 Lancaster before on Sunday morning  
Ellen David was born August 5/1843  
6 o'clock in the morning  
George David was born May 13/1845  
Half past Two in the afternoon  
Maria David was born August 15/1847  
5 in the morning  
Matilda David was born May 29/1849  
Half past two in the morning  
The same was born January 28/1799  
Elizabeth Marshall was born December 22/1807  
Thomas Marshall son of John Gale was born  
Oct 29/1800 Samuel Marshall was born  
2/1802 Mary Ann Marshall was born Dec  
19/1804 Maria Marshall was born March 3,  
Grace Marshall was born June 5/1813  
Thomas Marshall was born April 27/182

December 27 1826  
David Was Born of the above Parents  
July 4 1827 And died May 28 1828  
David Was Born March 19 1829 7 In the  
Thomas David Wap Born June 11 1831 5 In the  
Mary David And Martha David Wap Born  
1833 25 Minutes After 5 in the After Noon  
both David Was Born July 11 1835 6 In the  
Himoor  
Samuel Cornish David Was Born August 31  
1837 Half Past 3 in the Morning  
David Was Born February 11 1839  
Half Past 5 In the Morning Grace  
Isaac David Was Born February 28 1840  
Quarter before one Sunday Morning  
Ellen David Was Born August 5 1841  
Clock in the Morning  
George David Wap Born May 13  
Half Past Two in the Afternoon  
Maria David Was Born  
August 15 1847 5 in the  
Morning  
Matilda David Was Born May 29  
1849 Half Past in the Morning

John Lane Was Born January  
1807 Elizabeth Marshall Was Born  
December 22 1807 Thomas Marshall and  
Grace Gould Was Married October 29 1800  
Samuel Marshall Was Born January 5 1802  
Margaret Marshall Was Born December 19 1800  
Anna Marshall Was Born March 5 1800  
Grace Marshall Was Born June 5 1819  
Thomas Gould and Grace Marshall Was Married  
October 21 1833  
Thomas Marshall Was Born April 21 1821  
Queen Victoria Married Feb 10 1840  
Thomas Lane & Mary Lane Baker were  
Married December 15 1846  
Thomas Lane Nov 18 at Seaman in the  
Yellow Fever aged 53 1864

Thomas Marshall and Elizabeth  
 Grace Gould were married October 7<sup>th</sup> 1800  
 Samuel Marshall was born January 19<sup>th</sup> 1802  
 Mary Ann Marshall was born December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1807  
 Elizabeth Marshall was born March 5<sup>th</sup> 1810  
 Maria Marshall was born June 5<sup>th</sup> 1813  
 Grace Marshall was born April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1821  
 Thomas Marshall was born (Grace Marshall)  
 were married October 21<sup>st</sup> 1833.  
 John Davie was born January 28, 1779  
 John Davie and Elizabeth Marshall  
 were married December 27<sup>th</sup> 1826  
 to the above.  
 Thomas Davie was born ~~June 28~~ 1828  
 1827 and died May 23 1828  
 John Davie was born March 19<sup>th</sup> 1829, at Tinian the morning  
 Thomas Davie was born June 11<sup>th</sup> 1831, at 5 in the morning  
 Mary Davie and Martha Davie were born May 18<sup>th</sup>  
 1833, 25 minutes after 5 in the afternoon  
 Elizabeth Davie was born July 11<sup>th</sup> 1835, 6 in the afternoon  
 Samuel Cornish Davie was born August 31<sup>st</sup> 1837 at  
 half past 3 in the morning 11<sup>th</sup> 1839, half  
 Ann Davie was born February 28<sup>th</sup> 1841  
 past 5 in the morning.  
 Grace Marshall Davie was born February 10 in the  
 quarter before one Sunday morning 5<sup>th</sup> 1843,  
 Ellen Davie was born August 5<sup>th</sup> 1843, half past 2  
 morning.  
 George Davie was born May 13<sup>th</sup> 1845, half past 2  
 morning.  
 Maria Davie was born August 15<sup>th</sup> 1847  
 in the afternoon  
 Matilda Davie was born ~~January 29~~ May 29<sup>th</sup>  
 5 in the morning.  
 Matilda Davie was born in the morning.  
 - 1849 half past 2 in the morning.  
 Samuel Cornish Davie died suddenly the 11<sup>th</sup>  
 of October 1859 at 4 in the morning.

Transcription of the Family Bible from a smaller bible, probably written by Eveline Matilda, nee Davie

LETTER WRITTEN BY LOUISA DAVIE (nee NEESHAM), WIDOW OF SAMUEL CORNISH DAVIE, between 1890 and 1894, TO HER SISTER-IN-LAW, MARY DAVIE, IN ILFRACOMBE (see pages 17-19)

46 Capel Street,  
Newport

My Dear Sister,

I got your letters alright and thank you very much for your kindness. I am sorry to tell you I have been very bad this last fortnight with influenza and bronchitis. I had to be poulticed my chest and back. I am still in the front room - cannot do anything. There are lots dying with it here. Phil has been bad and Minnie, and Henne had her hand smashed in Mrs Bunt's mangle. It was thought she would have to have her fingers off. Grace takes her to the infirmary this last fortnight. I had a letter from Ann. They are all well - sends her love to you. I wish you was dear Mary a little nearer. We would fetch you to spend Xmas with us. I know you miss your mother and we miss both your mother and poor Sam. It's a sad miss for us. I wish Xmas gone before it comes and every Holiday. I can't write any more now for I am weak to sit up. Will you give my love to Elizabeth Jany (?) Davie. Tell her I write when better. I must close with fond love and many thanks to you for your kindness. Wishing you a happy Xmas and a bright new year.

From your loving sister Louisa Davie.

I should write to you oftener but I know you've got no one to answer it

~~Dear Mother~~  
~~I got your letter~~  
~~all right - and thank~~  
~~you very much for your~~  
~~kindness I am sorry to~~  
~~tell you I have been very~~  
~~bad this last fortnight~~  
~~with influenza~~  
~~bronchitis I had to~~  
~~be hospitalised by that~~  
~~and back I am~~

still in the front room cannot do any thing there lots of things with it here. Philip has been bad and Miss and Heme had her hand smashed in Mrs. Burt's Mangle it was thought she would have to have her fingers off Grace takes her to the Surgery this last fortnight

I had a letter from Ann they are all well sends her love to you I wish you was near May a little nearer we would fetch you to spend Xmas with us I know you miss your Mother and we miss both your Mother and your Sam its a sad miss for us I wish Xmas you

before it comes and  
every Holiday I am  
with my nose nose for  
I am weak to sit up  
will give you my love to  
Aly, Dutton, Jan, David  
I tell her I write when  
better I must close  
with fond love and  
many thanks to you  
for your letters  
wishing you a happy year  
and a bright new year

# St. Nicholas Chapel

A BEAUTY SPOT on the rugged North Devon coastline which is visited every year by countless thousands of holiday makers is Lantern Hill—the little hill which overlooks the Ilfracombe pier and harbour—on the top of which stands the ancient chapel of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors. For centuries its beacon light has been a landmark to ships at sea and the little building has been a shelter for those watching and waiting for the return of a vessel caught in a storm. The following articles have been prepared for the interest of visitors, the first by Mr. Bruce Oliver, who was the architectural advisor to the Rotary Club of Ilfracombe, during the work of restoration, and the second extracted from a Guide to the Chapel written by the late A. T. HUSSELL, 1910.

\* \* \* \* \*

The rocky crag upon which stands the Chapel of St. Nicholas may well have been named "Lantern Hill" long before the Chapel was erected, for a fire lantern or basket placed there would have indicated the entry to the Ilfracombe harbour on a moonless night.

The present building was erected about 1300-1325 and the stone opening of the doorway still survives. St. Nicholas being the patron Saint of Sailors, his chapel would have served the mariners and their families in the little houses around the harbour; its use, however, may have had a far wider field, for St. Nicholas was not only the patron Saint of Sailors but also of scholars, and, as the Chapel of St. Nicholas at Barnstaple, the Priest would have taught the boys of the district.

During the middle ages the Bristol Channel coast was often threatened by sea rovers, pirates on Lundy and Turkish raiders who not infrequently infested the mouth of the channel. At such times refuge for women and children could be found within the stout walls of the St. Nicholas Chapel.

One other purpose of the building may have been to give shelter to pilgrims making their way from the sea to the shrine of St. Nectan at Hartland; their path still marked by ruined chapels along the way.

These various uses may well offer an explanation of the unique feature of this building—the difference found in the levels of the ground floor—for the entrance and chapel proper were excavated when the building was erected, whilst the virgin rock under the room to the west indicates that this floor is

also at its original level, whilst the room above was for the Priest.

In the work of restoration recently carried out by the Rotary Club of Ilfracombe the oriel window of the north wall has been reconstructed on the original base. Here the Priest kept the light of St. Nicholas burning.

At the reformation the chapel was secularised and became a dwelling-house. The need for a light was still appreciated and about 1650 a large lantern was built at the west end of the roof. About this time two porches were added—one on the south and one at the east end. The latter has been converted, in the recent restoration, into a small sanctuary to mark the sacred character of the building.

The font and the stoup were originally found here; a very long tradition of their purpose has persisted and they have been refixed during the recent work.

It will be noticed that much of the original wood is of ancient ship's timber. BRUCE W. OLIVER.

\* \* \* \* \*

The date of erection of the Chapel is not known for certain but experts in dating ecclesiastical buildings have agreed on a date about 1320. The first documentary reference to St. Nicholas Chapel is found in 1416 in the Register of Bishop Stafford, of Exeter, when Hugh Herle was licensed to celebrate in the Chapel on Festival Days for a period of one year.

In 1522 in the Register of Bishop Veysey of Exeter there occurs the first reference to the use of the Chapel as a Lighthouse. Translated the reference reads "In the Chapel of Saint Nicholas erected above the harbour of the Town of Ilfracombe, a certain light is found burning on the summit of the said Chapel year by year throughout the winter at night time like a twinkling star by night." (An indulgence of forty days was offered to all true penitents who should help to keep the light burning). The use of the building as a Lighthouse continues to the present day and the red light of the lantern is a familiar sight to sailors and residents alike; now however Trinity House is responsible for its upkeep.

The appearance of the Chapel has doubtless changed in the course of centuries but the rough rubble walls of thin local stone, possibly from the hill itself, are original as is the South (Landward side) Entrance Archway and Door.

A view of the building in 1789 shows it to have been very similar then to its present appearance although the lantern was higher. The existing lantern has the date 1819 on its vane.

The earliest use of the building was clearly, from the records quoted, ecclesiastical. From its proximity to the Harbour the chapel doubtless drew its congregation from the sea-going fraternity of the town. In early times Ilfracombe was a thriving port as is witnessed by its sending representatives to a Shipping Council in 1344 and by its contributing six ships and 42 sailors to Liverpool's one at the Siege of Calais (1346). In the course of time the port became less used and with the reduction of the numbers of sailors the Chapel lost its ecclesiastical use. The records are silent about it until 1835 when John Davie and his wife took up residence and brought up 14 children there. The family left in 1871 owing to the work on the then new pier. In time the building has served as a Reading Room, a Laundry and even as a place of Band Practice by the Artillery Volunteers. It is now owned by the North Devon District Council.

Chapels on hills are frequently to be seen in Devon. There are remains of one at Braunton nearby but few are of such antiquity and interest as St. Nicholas at Ilfracombe. The Lantern has given its name to the hill on which it stands. The slopes of the hill are assumed to have been a burial ground at sometime since bones and brass buttons have been found there. When it is appreciated that since early times the sea has receded a little from the town it can be assumed that Lantern Hill, Compass Hill and Capstone were all islands at high tide and if so there is ample reason why Lantern Hill should have been used for burials.

A. T. HUSSELL.

## GEORGE DAVIE 1817 - 1888

Baptised September 1817 in Holy Trinity Church, only son of George and Frances. In October 1837 George married Matilda Marshall (1817-1884) there. We believe that Matilda was the sister of Elizabeth Marshall who married John Davie.

George was a mariner and can be found in the Register of Seamen. The entry states that he first went to sea as a boy in 1829. It describes him as being five feet and seven inches tall with light brown hair, blue eyes, a ruddy complexion and with his right leg shorter than the left. His Seaman's Ticket number 58389 was issued in Barnstaple on 23rd December 1844.

In 1841 he and Matilda, with one son were living in Water Street with his sister, Mary aged sixteen, and her illegitimate baby, William Cooper Davie. By 1851 George and Matilda had moved to the Quay with their five children. In 1859, when their last child was born, they were living in Hurn's Lane. The 1870 Commercial Directory and Gazetteer of Devonshire shows George as a fishmonger living at 18, Broad Street. The Census of 1871 shows them still living here, their six surviving children, out of nine, having all left home. In White's Directory of Devonshire of 1878, George is entered as a grocer at this address. Finally, in 1881 we find George and Matilda residing at 71, Fore Street with their grandson, Thomas Barment, a grocer.

Matilda died in June 1884 and an obituary to her appeared in the North Devon Journal. She was buried in Holy Trinity graveyard together with George, who died four years later, and four of their children.

## THOMAS DAVIE 1831 - 1864

Baptised in July 1831 at Holy Trinity, third son of John and Elizabeth.

In 1841 Thomas was living with his family in Water Street. During the next ten years the family moved to Lantern Hill Lighthouse. In the 1851 Census, however, Thomas, who would have been twenty years old, is not registered as living with them and it is likely that he was away at sea for in the Census of 1861 his occupation is recorded as master mariner. The Register of Seamen informs us that Thomas went to sea in 1847 and that he had brown hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion. His Seaman's Ticket number is 149796 and it was issued in Barnstaple in 1849.

Thomas married in 1854 in Newport, Monmouthshire. His surname is given as Davies. His wife was Mary Ann Baker whose sister, Emma Eliza Baker was to marry John Davie (1846 - 1889) nine years later. Thomas and Mary Ann had three sons – John, Thomas and Sidney, who were all born in Newport. Thomas must have spent long periods away from home and it was on one such voyage that he died, aged thirty three years. The family gravestone in Holy Trinity states that he died of yellow fever in George Town, West Indies in 1864. A copy of a letter to his widow from the Wesleyan Minister in Georgetown, Demerara (now Guyana) is below.

In 1866 his widow, Mary Ann was a shopkeeper in Fore Street, according to the Post Office Devonshire Directory. In 1867 she remarried and in 1871 was living with her husband, Henry Maynard, a joiner from Stratton, Cornwall, in Portland Street. Her two youngest sons were with them and a daughter, Clara Maynard, who had been born the previous year. In 1871 her eldest son, John, was in the Orphan Asylum for Children of Deceased British Merchant Seamen in Wanstead Essex. He had entered in March 1866 having received 680 votes in the election for a much sought after place. Not only was he at the top of the list that year, but he also received the highest number of votes ever cast. Clara died a few months after the census of 1871 was taken but she and Henry had a son in 1872 in Bristol, before moving to Stratton, where they both died.

### Letter to widow of Thomas Davie

GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA,  
March 25th, 1865.

MRS. DAVIE,

Madam,

It is a painful, though in some respects pleasureable, duty that now devolves on me, for having attended your deceased Husband on his death bed for the purpose of administering to him spiritual advice, and of helping him to prepare for the solemn change, I have been requested to forward to you, for your comfort, a brief detail of the circumstances as they came under my notice.

I had frequently observed your Husband among the congregation to whom I minister, and without being personally acquainted with him, had been pleased with the marked and reverent attention with which he listened to the truths of the Gospel, and was led to make sundry enquiries about him, his regularity at the ordinances of the Sanctuary and the devotion he manifested during the services induced me to believe that unlike the majority in his position he was seriously and religiously disposed. No opportunity presented itself to me for conversing with him till at his own request I was called by Capt. Clement Day to his sick bed: when first I saw him in the Hotel where he died, I indulged in the hope that though suffering from an insidious disease he was in a favourable state and was progressing towards recovery, but fearing lest that hope should be deceptive, I failed not to question him pointedly and advise him faithfully concerning his eternal prospects. To my joy, but scarcely to my surprise, I found that through the blessing of God he had been brought into the enjoyment of inward religion, and could testify of a

genuine work of grace in his heart, he professed simple and saving trust on Christ as *his* Saviour, he spoke very joyfully of his hope of Heaven, which he had obtained through Faith in Christ, and which had been brightened by his spiritual conversation and counsel in this Colony: he told me of his having experienced the pardoning love of God very clearly for some little time, and gave me great satisfaction in believing that whatever might be the will of God he was possessed of a blooming and indisputable hope. All my intercourse with him was of a very pleasing and encouraging character, for my mind was fully convinced of his having been truly converted to God, and of his preparation for Death. Once or twice he seemed disturbed in mind when thinking of his absent family, but when advised and reminded of the promises of God he expressed himself able confidently to commit them to the keeping of his Heavenly Father.

This, Madam, is the brief but not uninteresting acquaintance I had with your Husband, of whose present happiness I entertain sanguine hope. Allow me to offer this as soothing comfort to you in your bereavement, and thus to express my sincerest sympathy with your sorrow. My fervent prayer is that you may be supported in your widowhood by the consolations of His promises and Holy Spirit who is the Father of the fatherless and the God of the Widow, and that you may at length be reunited to him we mourn in that land where blissful reunions shall never be marred by Death or parting.

I am,  
Yours very truly,  
JOHN L. PLEBY,  
Wesleyan Ministry.

## JOHN DAVIE 1846 - 1889

Born June 1846 in Ilfracombe, third son of George and Matilda.

In 1866 he married Emma Eliza Baker (1846 - 1899) at Christchurch, Ilfracombe which was in Portland Street. On their marriage certificate they both declare themselves to be 21 years of age, but both were actually aged 19 years. Emma's father, John Baker, was a tailor, born in Middlesex and her mother was a dressmaker, born in Portsmouth. In White's 1850 Devon History and Gazetteer John Thomas Baker of 69 High Street is recorded as a tailor and proprietor of bath chairs. Two of Emma's older sisters married Davie men.

John was a shipwright and then a fisherman and like many of the Davie men his life must have been dominated by the sea. As a child he had lived on the Quay, but upon marrying he moved to High Street, where his wife had grown up and their first child was born there that same year. When their second child was born, in 1869 they were living in Fore Street. The 1871 Census finds them at 4, Rope Walk, now with three daughters but by the next Census, of 1881 they had moved again and were living at 6, Water Street. The ninth of their ten children was born at 12, Water Street, in 1887.

John met a sad death at sea two years later, aged 42 years. According to an article in the Ilfracombe Chronicle of 12th January 1889 he put out to sea with two other men - James Tucker and George Rudd. Due to bad weather the boat got into difficulties and capsized. Even though John Davie was reported to be a strong swimmer, he and James were drowned. The article stated that John was 'an abstainer and a frequent attendant of Bethal Church'. The people of Ilfracombe set up a fund for the family, called the Davie Subscription Fund and a concert was given by Mrs. S. J. Bridgeman at Victoria Promenade to raise money.

A story has been passed down from Thomas John Davie/Davey (1888 - 1953) that on the very night he was born, 23rd December, his grandfather, John Davie, drowned at sea. In great romantic fashion this was said to be divine retribution, because John Davie had cast out his own daughter (Thomas Davie/Davey's mother) and cut all family ties with her for making a marriage of which he disapproved (see Thomas Davie 1861-1935). The newspaper articles show this to be untrue - the drowning having taken place some sixteen days later on 9th January 1889. The boating accident was reported as follows:

### Ilfracombe Gazette - 12th January 1889

#### SAD BOATING ACCIDENT. LOSS OF TWO LIVES.

*A painful excitement was occasioned in Ilfracombe on Wednesday morning by the announcement that by the capsizing of a rowing boat a little distance from the harbour two boatmen had lost their lives, and a third had narrowly escaped a similar fate. From what has been ascertained up to the time of writing, it appears that on Tuesday evening three boatmen named George Rudd, John Davey (sic) and James Tucker, put off from the harbour in the 'Playmate' (belonging to the first named) for the purpose of bringing a schooner into the harbour, but were unable to accomplish their task in consequence of a large number of tug boats lying in the range (where, by the way, the latter are beyond the supervision of the harbour authorities the range being outside the limits of the harbour). Accordingly the men remained in the range throughout the night, intending to bring the schooner in early on Wednesday morning.*

*After 7.40.a.m. the boat and its occupants were seen off Beacon Point by a young boatman named John Brown, who was standing on Compass Hill. A few minutes later, however, Brown lost sight of the boat and at once raised the alarm. With all possible speed a boat was launched and managed by the following:- W. Williams, snr.; W. Williams, jnr.; William Davie; H. Benoke; T. Rudd; W. Hewitt and C. Slowley. Upon the arrival of the boat off Beacon Point the occupants found Rudd in a sinking condition in the water. Slowley made a grab at his hair, but missed it. Williams however grasped at the jersey of the sinking man and was more successful so that in a few seconds Rudd was pulled into the boat. There was no signs of the other men.*

*Rudd was at once taken into Hele and carried into Mr. Lewis' cottage where Dr. Toller was soon in attendance and was successful in restoring animation. Upon recovering consciousness Rudd made enquiries after his fellow boatmen, and proceeded to give an explanation of the occurrence. He said that the boat was struck by a sea and filled, washing all the fishing tackle out. He became entangled in the lines and painter. The boat having turned bottom upwards, Rudd held on to one end, and assisted Tucker on to the other, Davey meanwhile swimming off towards the shore. Tucker then took hold of Rudd around the neck until his strength failed him, when releasing his hold and crying out, " George, I can hold out no longer. Lord have mercy on me!" He sank. Davey, who was an excellent swimmer, after leaving his companion must have got into rougher sea and the impression is that he struck against a rock and so been stunned. At any rate he sank before assistance was at hand. A second boat subsequently put off containing William Barbeary; N. Barbeary; S. Ley and William Lovering, but no trace of either of the missing bodies could be found. The boat was subsequently washed into Hele Bay.*

*Both the deceased were able boatmen. Davey, who was about forty years of age and leaves a widow and several children, was a regular attendant at St. Philip and St. James Church and we believe for a long time past had been a total abstainer. Tucker, who was about nineteen years of age was also a well behaved young fellow, and much sympathy is evinced with the bereaved friends in each case.*

#### Ilfracombe Gazette - 2nd March 1889

#### LATE BOAT ACCIDENT OFF BEACON POINT - RECOVERY OF DAVEY'S BODY AT CLOVELLY.

*A telegram was on Saturday evening received by the Ilfracombe police from P.C. Broughton stationed at Clovelly to the effect that a body (supposed to be that of John Davie) had been washed ashore at Clovelly. None of the clothes were missing and in one of the pockets was the sum of £10. 16s. 0d as also a Geneva watch and chain. The deceased's widow at once proceeded to Clovelly with a brother and the latter identified the body as that of John Davie.*

*THE INQUEST- Mr. J. M. Bromham, District Coroner, held an inquest on Monday at Clovelly on the body of John Davie who was drowned on 9th January with a companion by the upsetting of a boat off Ilfracombe. The body was identified by the widow of the deceased. The Coroner, having read over the depositions, given at the inquest.....Samuel Harris, fisherman, deposed to finding the body lying among the rocks on the shore at Clovelly on the previous Saturday - P.C. Broughton deposed to searching the body and finding on it a silver watch and chain a purse containing £10. 10s. 0d. in gold and 6/- in silver in another pocket, also a pipe and knife. The brother, Thomas Davie, stated that the deceased was one of the crew that went out to pilot in the ship 'Elm'. He identified the pipe as belonging to deceased.*

The jury returned a verdict that deceased was accidentally drowned through the upsetting of a boat. The body of the deceased was brought home on Monday night.

John was buried in Holy Trinity graveyard. In the Census of 1891 Emma Eliza was still living at 12, Water Street with seven of her children. Her occupation was laundress. Emma Eliza remained at this address until she died, eight years later. She was buried with John, together with their youngest son William Henry who died in 1898, aged nine years.

Printed by authority of the Registrar General.]

**CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF MARRIAGE Pursuant to the**

 **MARRIAGE Act 1949**

Registration District Barnstaple

1866 Marriage solemnized at the Christchurch Ilfracombe in the District of Barnstaple in the County of Devon

No.	When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
94	Twenty-third April	John Davie	21 years	Bachelor	Shipwright	Ilfracombe	George Davie	Fisherman
	<u>1866</u>	Emma Eliza Baker	21 years	Spinster	----	Ilfracombe	<u>John</u> George Baker	Tailor

Married in the Christ Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Free Church of England by B. Price Registrar

This marriage was solemnized between us, { John Davie } in the presence of us, { Emma Eliza Baker } (X The mark of George Brooks) Jane Conibear Registrar

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody, S. M. Gibbons Deputy Superintendent Registrar

March 10th 1982

CAUTION:—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number G 007328

REGISTRATION DISTRICT <u>Barnstaple</u>									
1889 DEATH in the Sub-district of <u>Ifracombe</u> in the <u>County of Devon</u>									
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
122	Ninth January 1889 Ifracombe u. s. d.	John Davie	male	42 years	Fisherman	Accidentally drowned by the upsetting of a Boat off Beacon Point in the Bristol Channel	Certificate received from Jas. P. Bromham Coroner for Devon (Barnstaple District) Inquest held Twenty Fifth February 1889	Twenty Sixth February 1889	Richard Vicary Registrar

See note overleaf

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

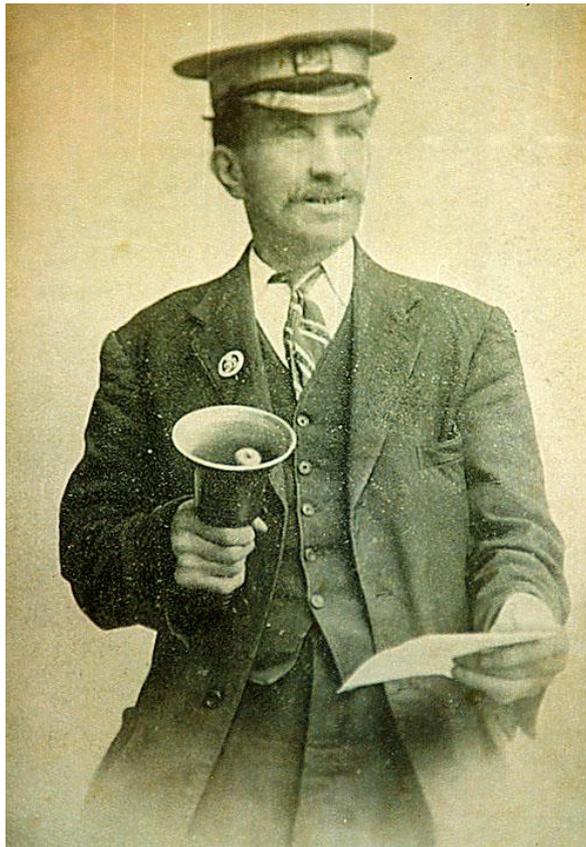
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 11th day of November 1999

DAZ 041195

CAUTION:- It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.



## THOMAS DAVIE 1861 – 1935



Born in Newport, Monmouthshire, Wales on 1st January 1861 at 163 Commercial Road, in the parish of St. Woollos. He was the second son of Thomas and Mary Ann. He was known as Tom Davie.

In 1861, aged three months, he was residing at Lantern Hill Lighthouse, the home of his grandparents. His parents and older brother, John were also living there. In 1864 his father died in the West Indies and three years later his mother remarried. The Census of 1871 shows Thomas, aged ten years, living at 23, Portland Street with his mother, younger brother, step-father and half sister. There is no record of him in the Ilfracombe census of 1881. Evidence from his obituary indicates that he was serving overseas, with the Marines.

In September 1887 he married his cousin, Eveline Matilda Davie. Their marriage certificate shows that they married in Barnstaple Baptist Church and it is believed that the reason for this was that the family were very much against the union. Apart from being second cousins once removed on the Davie side they were also first cousins on their mothers' side, Emma Eliza and Mary Ann Baker being sisters. Perhaps this also accounts for the fact that on their marriage certificate Eveline Matilda's age is given as twenty one, although she was in fact one month away from her twenty first birthday and therefore would have required parental consent to marry.

Thomas and Eveline Matilda lived at 3, Paradise Court where their two children were born in 1888 and 1890. Both children were baptised at St. Philip and St. James

Church which was built in 1857. In the Census of 1891 they were still in Paradise Court and Thomas' occupation is given as general labourer. It is also believed that he was a shoemaker at one time. Eveline Matilda died in January 1893 of tuberculosis and seven months later, in August of that year, Thomas remarried. His second wife was Ellen Smith Abbott, a widow aged 39 years, and the marriage entry records Thomas as being a labourer and living at 6, Waterloo Terrace. Ellen had children from her first marriage but she and Thomas had no children together. She died in December 1897 while resident at 9, Meridian Place.

Thomas married for a third time in 1899 to Alice Isaac of Barnstaple. She already had a daughter called Mabel Isaac and then had four children with Thomas – two sons and two daughters. They lived at 11 Water Street. Their youngest child, Charles died in infancy and their eldest, Alice Maud Tugela never married. Their other daughter, Eva, married Charles Plant in Fulham in 1902. Thomas' other son by Alice, who was named Sidney, married Joan Hilda Quick in 1922 and had two daughters, Marjorie and Pam. He moved to Windermere, where Joan died in 1952. Sidney remarried in 1958 to Elsie May Cleverly, in the Lake District. He died in Ilminster, Somerset. Thomas' two children from his first marriage both left Ilfracombe and went to live in Cardiff.

In the censuses of 1901 and 1911 Thomas's occupation is general porter but in later life he became well known in Ilfracombe as the town crier (1892-1927) and his bell is on display in Ilfracombe Museum. He died in April 1935 aged 74 years whilst resident at 2, Clifton Place and was buried at Marlborough Road Cemetery, together with his widow, Alice, who died later, in 1938, aged 71 years. Alice's obituary appears in the Ilfracombe Chronicle of 29th April 1938. The obituary to Thomas Davie reads as follows:

### **Ilfracombe Chronicle - 3rd May 1935**

#### **MR. THOMAS DAVIE**

*After a life teeming with action and varied experiences in many parts of the world, Mr. Thomas Davie died at his residence 2, Clifton Place on Saturday at the age of 71.\* His chief claim to being remembered by posterity was the fact that for thirty five years Mr. Davie was towncrier in Ilfracombe. His resonant voice was ideally suited to the requirements of this post, and he became so well known that a leading national newspaper published an article about him which alluded to "the voice that rocks Ilfracombe". His voice was certainly a local institution.*

*From the early days of his youth the urge of the sea was in his blood - a heritage proudly handed to him by his father who was a master mariner. For many years, incidentally, his father and mother lived on Lantern Hill. It was not surprising, therefore when the young Davie entered the Marines, in which he served for ten years before being invalided out.*

*This was a great disappointment to him but he found some consolation in superintending the local life-saving apparatus for thirty years. In recognition of his local services in this connection he was awarded a long-service medal.*

*When the Great War broke out he was 57,\*\* and consequently too old to serve. The very thought that other less active men were being allowed to fight for their country filled him with mixed feelings the outcome of which was that, cleverly disguising his age, he enlisted. His patriotic gesture deceived the authorities for some time, but after*

six months the truth was discovered and he was obliged to return to his native town.

Mr. Davie was never so happy as when he was talking about the seamy-side of life, as he had seen it in many parts of the globe, or about his numerous experiences as towncrier. His bluff hearty manner won him a multitude of friends, who will be conscious of a breach in their lives. He was truly a man who could find happiness in work and action.

A widow, two sons and three daughters are left to mourn their irreparable loss. The married daughters are Mrs. Haines (Cardiff) and Mrs. Plant (London).

The funeral took place at the Marlborough Road Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon, the family mourners being: Mrs. T. Davie (widow); Messrs. T. and S. Davey (sons); Mrs. C. Haines, Mrs. Plant, Miss A. Davie and Miss E. Davie (daughters); Messrs. J. D. Summerwill, T. Summerwill, J. Balley and J. Davie (cousins).

Friends present at the funeral were: Messrs. W. E. Slocombe, W. P. Lawler and W. German. The bearers were Messrs. G. Williams, W. Williams, E. Ley and E. Price. Floral tributes were sent from: his loving wife and children; Alice and Eva; Sid, Joan, Marjorie and Pam; Chlora, \*\*\* Tommy and Frank (Cardiff); Charles and family (London); Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Summerwill and family; T. and F. Summerwill; Lydia (Exmouth); Sarah (Barnstaple); cousin Polly (London); S.S.P.J. Old Scholars Assoc. J. Crang; the staff of the Collingwood Hotel; Mr. and Mrs. T. Price; Mrs. Gemmel and family; Mrs. Clements; neighbours at Clarence Cottages, Belvedere and Springfield.

The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. W. Pearce and Son, Wilder Road.

\* he was actually 74 years old

\*\* in 1914 he was actually 53 years old

\*\*\* Clara Haines

Agrafwyd dan awdurdod y Cofrestrydd Cymreolaidd

Printed by authority of the Registrar General

**CERTIFIED COPY of**  
**COPI DILYS O**

**Pursuant to the Births and**



**an ENTRY OF BIRTH**  
**GOFNOD GENEDIGAETH**

**Deaths Registration Act 1953**

Registration District Dosbarth Cofrestru		Newport							
1861		BIRTH in the Sub-district of GENEDIGAETH yn Is-ddosbarth				Newport		in the County of Monmouth yn	
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name, and surname of father	Name, surname, and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
Rhif	Pryd a lle y ganwyd	Enw os oes un	Rhyw	Enw a chyfanw'r tad	Enw, cyfenw a chyfenw morwynol y fam	Gwaith y tad	Llofnod, disgrifiad a chyfeiriad yr hysbysydd	Pryd y cofrestrwyd	Llofnod y cofrestrydd
407	First January 1861 No. 163 Commercial Road Newport St. Woollos	Thomas	Boy	Thomas Davie	Mary Ann Davie formerly Baker	Master Mariner	M.A. Davie Mother No. 163 Commercial Road, Newport	Eleventh February 1861	W.D. Evans  Registrar
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Cofrestrydd

I, Monica G. Scott Deputy Superintendent Registrar for the District of Newport in the County of Gwent Yrwyfi, Cofrestrydd Arolygol Dosbarth yn Sir Gwent

do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the entry No. 407 in the Register of Births No. 31 for the above-named Sub-district, and that such Register is nov yn tystio yma fod hyn yn gopi cywir o gofnod Rhif 31 yng Nghofrestr Genedigaethau Rhif 31 yr Is-ddosbarth a enwyd uchod, ac a gedwir yn gyfreithlon gen

Witness my hand this 29th day of July 1982 Monica G. Scott Deputy Superintendent Cofrestrydd Arc

CAUTION:—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

RHYBUDD:—Y mae unrhyw berson (1) sy'n achosi rhoi manyllion anghywir ar y dystysgrif hysbysu fel un gywir, ac yntau'n gwybod ei bod yn anghywir, yn ago

**EVELINE MATILDA DAVIE 1866 - 1893**

Born October 1866 at High Street, Ilfracombe and baptised at Holy Trinity Church on 21st November, eldest child of John and Emma Eliza.

In 1871, aged four years, Eveline Matilda was living with her parents and two younger sisters at 4, Rope Walk. Ten years later, in the Census of 1881, she was staying at 10, St. James Place with her uncle, Thomas Marshall Davie, his wife, Martha and their five children. Eveline Matilda was fourteen years old and is recorded as a visitor.

In September 1887 she married her cousin Thomas Davie (see previous entry for all the details).

Eveline Matilda died of tuberculosis at 3, Paradise Court in January 1893. Her death certificate indicates that she had been suffering with this illness for eighteen months. There is a burial entry for her in Holy Trinity parish records but no grave could be found.



[Printed by authority of the Registrar General.]

**CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF BIRTH**  
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

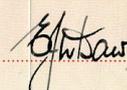
Barnstaple

Registration District									
1866 . Birth in the Sub-district of			Ilfracombe			in the County of Devon			
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name, and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
438	Twentieth October, 1866. High Street, Ilfracombe.	Evelina Matilda	Girl	John DAVIE	Emma Eliza DAVIE formerly BAKER	Shipwright	Emma Eliza Davie Mother High Street, Ilfracombe.	First November, 1866	James Stephens

*Registrar*

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

**CAUTION:**—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

  
 ..... S  
 ...7. Januar

ed by authority of the Registrar General.]

**CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF MARRIAGE Pursuant to the Marriage Act 1949**



TC

Registration District Barnstaple

887 Marriage solemnized at The Baptist Chapel Barnstaple in the District of Barnstaple in the County of Devon

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
Twenty-third September	Thomas Davie	26 years	Bachelor	Shoemaker	Ilfracombe	Thomas Davie	General Porter
<u>1</u> 887	Eva Davie	21 years	Spinster	----	Ilfracombe	John Davie	Mariner

Married in the Baptist Chapel according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Baptists by Certificate by me, J.M. Murphy Minister

This marriage as solemnized between us, { Thomas Davie } in the presence of us, { Thomas Balmert } George Mills Registrar  
 { Eva Davie } { Eliza Goss }

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody, S. M. Gibbons Deputy Superintendent Registrar

10th. March 1982 Date

NOTE:—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

**CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH**



Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number.....

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Barnstaple

1893 DEATH in the Sub-district of Ilfracombe in the County of Devon

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered
99	Twenty fifth January 1893 3 Paradise Court Ilfracombe U.S.D.	Eveline Matilda Davie	Female	26 years	Wife of Thomas Davie a General Labourer	General Tuberculosis 1 year 6 Calendar months Certified by Arthur L. Copner M.R.C.S.	Thomas Davie widower of deceased present at the death 3 Paradise Court Ilfracombe	Twenty seven January 1893

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.  
 Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 2nd day of July 1984.

DA 774822

This certificate is issued in pursuance of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953. Section 34 provides that any certified copy of an entry purporting to be sealed or stamped with the seal of the General Register Office shall be received as evidence of the birth or death to which it relates without any further or other proof of the entry, and no certified copy purporting to have been given in the said Office shall be of any force or effect unless it is sealed or stamped as aforesaid.

CAUTION:—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

### THOMAS JOHN DAVIE/ DAVEY 1888 - 1953

Born Thomas John Davie on 23rd December 1888 at 3, Paradise Court, Ilfracombe, only son of Thomas and Eveline Matilda. Contrary to family belief he was not registered as being born on Lantern Hill.

In the Census of 1891 Thomas was still living in Paradise Court with his parents and sister, Clara. Thomas' mother died when he was four years old, in 1893 and seven months later his father remarried. The St Philip and St James' School admission registers of 1896-1898 show Thomas living in Water Street and then Meridian Road, Ilfracombe.

The 1901 Census has Thomas at 11, Water Street with his father, step-mother – Alice, his sister – Clara plus his half-sister and his step-sister.

Thomas left Ilfracombe as a young man and found work as a miner in the Ogmere Valley, south Wales. His first marriage was in 1909 to Annie Maria Shaw (1880-1947) at Bridgend Register Office. His age is given as 22, however he was actually 20 and Annie was 28, not 27 as recorded on their marriage certificate. Thomas is recorded here as living at 3, Park Street, Nantymoel and his occupation is coal hewer.

The 1911 census shows Thomas and Annie living at 18, Waun Wen Terrace, Ogmere. It is understood that they parted sometime after this, without having children. Thomas left the area and changed the spelling of his surname to Davey (between 1911 and 1920) - the reason is still somewhat unclear. Postcards from the 1920s show that his sister Clara always used to address him as Davie. Annie also left the valley and returned to her home city of Leicester.

After 1911 Thomas met my grandmother, Margaret Horne (1893 – 1972), whom he had previously known in Ogmere, and they settled in Cardiff. They had three children - Thomas Francis Davey (1920 - 1961) who, with his wife, emigrated to America in 1948; Margaret Eva Davey (1924 - 1997) who lived in Cardiff all her life and Ronald John Davey (1930 - 1995) who also lived in Cardiff. Ronald John Davey was my father.

Thomas John Davey died in October 1953 and is buried in Western Cemetery, Ely Cardiff, together with his wife, Margaret who died in 1972.



CA 865642

Printed by

**CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF BIRTH.**  
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Acts, 1836 to 1929.

The Statutory Fee for this Certificate is 2s. 7d.  
If required subsequently to registration, a Search Fee is payable in addition.

Registration District Barnstaple

1889 Birth in the Sub-District of Iffracombe in the County of Devon

Columns— No.	1 When and Where Born.	2 Name, if any.	3 Sex.	4 Name and Surname of Father.	5 Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	6 Rank or Profession of Father.	7 Signature, Description and Residence of Informant.	8 When Registered.	9 Signature of Registrar.
230	Twenty third December 1888 3 Paradise Court Iffracombe U.S.D.	Thomas John	Boy	Thomas Davie	Eveline Matilda Davie formerly Davie	huson's Labourer	Thomas Davie Father 3 Paradise Court Iffracombe	Thirty first January 1889	Richard Vicary <i>Registrar.</i>

I, Marshall Vincent, Superintendent Registrar for the District of Barnstaple, in the County of Devon do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the Entry No. 230 in the Register Book of Births No. 19 for the above-named Sub-District, and that such Register Book is in my custody.

WITNESS MY HAND this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1942

Marshall Vincent  
Deputy Superintendent Registrar

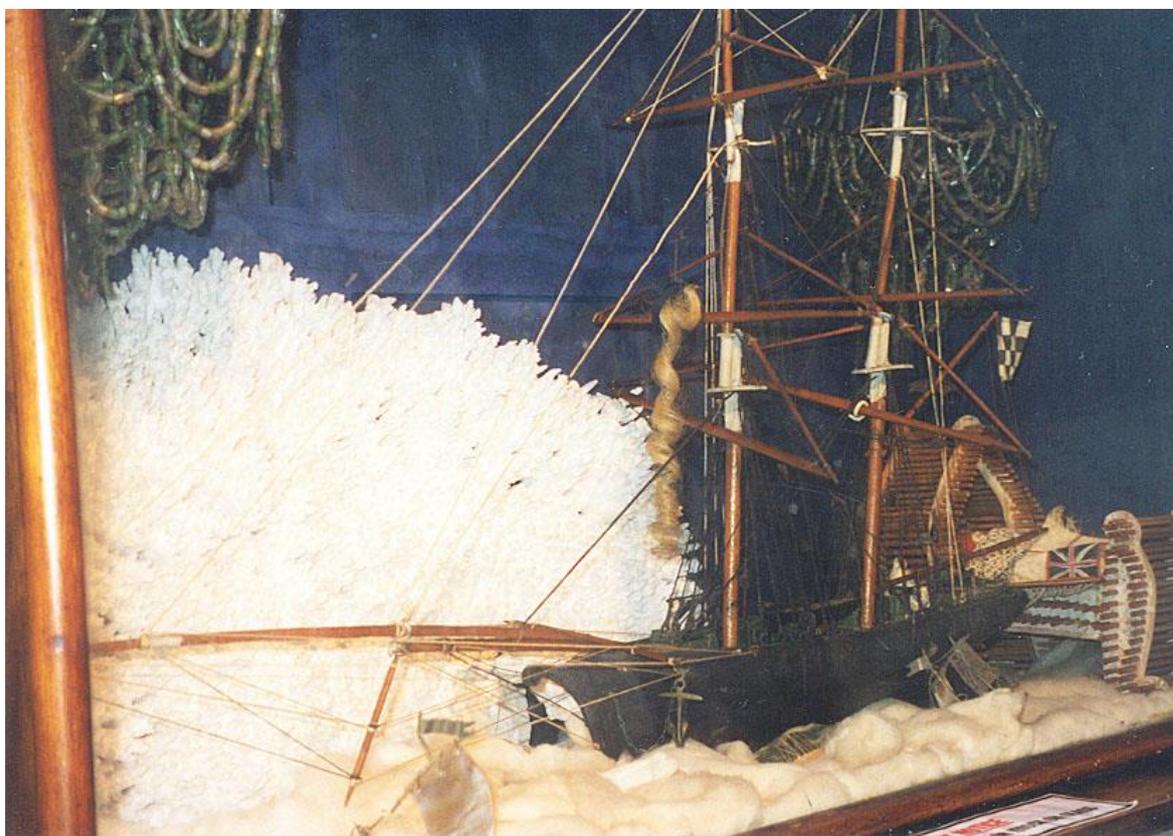
**CAUTION.**—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this Certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be falsified, is liable to Prosecution.

## Family Tales, Other Stories and Incidents:

Many romantic and, no doubt, exaggerated tales have been passed down the generations. Most of these tales were told by my grandfather, Thomas John Davie/Davey, but some are from other sources.

*Thomas John Davie/Davey always claimed to have been born on Lantern Hill and he said that there was a lock of his mother's hair hanging from a model of his grandfather's ship in a glass case placed in the chapel on Lantern Hill.*

On our first visit to Ilfracombe in 1981, we knew none of the family history which we have since discovered. We did not even know if Lantern Hill still existed and whether the Davie family had ever lived there. My father always said that his father, Thomas Davie/Davey told tales of Ilfracombe, but he did not know if any of them were true. My mother said that he was a proper romantic story teller and his tales were too tall to be believed. As we approached Ilfracombe, by sea, we were amazed at what we saw. The chapel of St. Nicholas, Lantern Hill dominates the entrance to the harbour. When we went into the chapel we found, incredibly, that a John Davie had lived there. And there, in a glass case (below) was a lock of fair hair, attached to a model of a ship. Thomas John Davie/Davey's birth certificate shows that he was born, not on Lantern Hill, but in 3, Paradise Court.



Sam Summerwill, grandson of Matilda Summerwill (nee Davie) the youngest of the Lantern Hill children, told us that for many years the glass case had been kept in a house in Northfield Road, where his grandmother, Matilda Summerwill had lived and that it was **her** lock of hair!!! Who is right? I thought Sam, because old photographs which we believe to be Eveline Matilda Davie show her to be dark haired, however:

Our meeting with Sam Summerwill was very interesting. We had never met before and when his wife opened the door to us she looked quite taken aback and we wondered what we could have done to have upset her. She invited us in and then apologised for being a bit reticent on the doorstep. She then explained, that she had indeed been shocked, because she said that I was the image of her husband, Sam, when he was my age. That was quite amazing, considering that we are quite distantly related - his great grandfather, John Davie of Lantern Hill, was my grt. grt. grt. grandfather. Sam told us that his daughter had just had twins, which was wonderful, but he knew of no other twins in the family. He was surprised and delighted when we told him that there had indeed been twins on Lantern Hill, Mary and Martha Davie. So there were twins in the Davie genes.



In 1999 we visited Ann Lloyd, a descendant of Matilda Summerwill (nee Davie - youngest of the Lantern Hill children). She lives in Barnstaple and told us that the lock of hair on the model ship in Lantern Hill came from the head of Heany and was left there as a keep-sake when she emigrated to America with her widowed mother in the 1880s. It was left for her aunt Matilda Davie, who was said to be her best friend. Heany would be Henrietta Buckingham, daughter of Henry Buckingham and Ann Davie (eighth child of Lantern Hill). Ann Lloyd was given this information from her grandmother and we believe that this is the correct version of events.

*Thomas Davie/Davey's mother was rejected and despised by her parents and family for making an unsuitable marriage to Tom Davie, (later to be town crier). This tale he told in great romantic fashion, claiming that Eveline Matilda, his mother, was told by her father to "never darken my doorstep again".*

Why would Eveline Matilda's father, John Davie, have been so against the marriage? There was good reason - not only were Tom's and Eveline's fathers cousins, but their mothers were also sisters!!! Her father appears to have been a person of morals and principles. He was a regular church-goer and an 'abstainer' (as can be read in the newspaper report of his death by drowning). It is quite likely that he didn't think much of Tom Davie as we have heard from various sources (George Irwin, an elderly character who we met in Ilfracombe) that Tom Davie liked his drink and even his obituary tells that he loved to talk about the "seamy-side of life". Mr. Longhurst, curator of Ilfracombe Museum (1981) believed Tom Davie to have been a bit of a rogue, but he didn't say why he thought this. The evidence suggests the above story to be true. Tom and Eveline were married in Barnstaple, away from both of their family homes (Ilfracombe). Eveline claimed to be 21 years old when she was only 20. At only twenty years of age she would have needed her father's permission to marry. He was obviously unprepared to give it. The tale, however, does not end there .....

*Thomas Davie/Davey would always say that the very night on which he was born, (on Lantern Hill, of course) his grandfather, Eveline's father, John Davie was drowned off Ilfracombe with his whole fleet of ships. His body was washed ashore at Blue Anchor Bay, Somerset, and then laid out on a table at Moon Inn. Thomas Davie/Davey believed this to be 'divine retribution' for casting out Eveline Matilda.*

This makes a great story and it certainly has an element of truth to it, but it is not quite as Thomas Davie/Davey told it. His parents certainly went to Barnstaple to be married and this suggests that Eveline's family were against the marriage. As far as we know her father, John Davie, never owned a fleet of ships, but he did drown at sea, though not on the night Thomas Davie/Davey was born. It was, however, only sixteen days later!!

*Thomas Davie/Davey had a very poor childhood and according to him, he and his sister were severely mistreated by a woman. They were not given enough food and Thomas and his sister Clara often slept 'rough' and even begged food from people. One day they were very hungry so Thomas stole some cake from the kitchen. He knew he would be found out and punished, so he hid on the landing at the top of the stairs. The woman came up after him and as she approached the top Thomas picked up one of his father's boots and hit her on the head with it. She fell down the stairs and died. Everybody thought she had slipped or tripped.*

Thomas Davie/Davey's mother, Eveline Matilda died when he was just four years of age. His father re-married within seven months of Eveline's death. Thomas Davie/Davey and his sister Clara now had a stepmother, Ellen Smith Abbott who had been a widow. It was during this period of time that Thomas Davie/Davey claims to have been mistreated and poorly looked after. Where was his father? Could Ellen Smith Abbot have been the woman who mistreated the children and might Thomas have killed her with his father's boot? Ellen Smith Abbot died when Thomas was just nine years of age but her death certificate states she died of 'Phthisis Pulmonarlis'

*Thomas Davie/Davey's wife - my grandmother, "Nanna Davey" told me that my great grandfather (Tom Davie the town crier) had served out in India and he and his fellow soldiers had suffered under a terrible sergeant who made their lives hell. One day when they were out in the wilds they agreed to shoot him and blame it on bandits. This they did and got away with it.*

This was the first I had heard about any of my Ilfracombe Davie family having anything to do with work other than the sea. When we began our research we discovered that Thomas Davie had indeed been in the Marine's and that he had served around the world (see his obituary). So he had probably had been out in India!!!

*The Davie family of Lantern Hill were said to have been involved in the slave trade.*

John and Thomas, brothers on Lantern Hill were mariners and both died of yellow fever in the West Indies, in the 1860s. We have no idea what their cargo was so there could be some truth in this. We know also that a Mr Shapcott, of an ex-slaving vessel, was the company's agent for the first ships to take convicts to Botany Bay. This information is from "The Fatal Shore", by Robert Hughes. The mother of John Davie of Lantern Hill was Nance Shapcott.

*Mr. Longhurst, curator of Ilfracombe Museum told us that the Davie girls were the prettiest in the 'Combe, but that some of the Lantern Hill girls had been 'ladies of the night'. Sam Summerwill also told us that he had heard that some of the Davie girls used to frequent a 'house of ill-repute'.*

On one of our visits to Ilfracombe, Mrs. Crang from the chemists in Broad Street, showed us where Paradise Court was - opposite Britannia row. Only one house remained and was in the process of renovation. The owner asked us in and told us that he called it Paradise Cottage. Inside were old beams and the owner told us that there had been a well in the kitchen. We think that it must have been a small courtyard with the residents of Paradise Court sharing the well. It was here at No 3 that Thomas Davie/Davey had been born, not on Lantern Hill as he had always believed.

If you have any family tales please pass them on or they will be forgotten. No matter how fanciful, they may have a grain of truth in them.



**END**