



Devon Family History Society
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Devon Record Office



TAVISTOCK - A LIST OF MALE PARISHIONERS AND THEIR TRADES

18TH CENTURY

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This list of parishioners living in the town of Tavistock can be found among a collection of miscellaneous 18th and 19th century parish papers in the collection of the Dukes of Bedford. The historic records of their Westcountry estates were transferred to the Devon Record Office from three separate locations in 1963, and this list was among papers from their London Estate Office.

The Dukes of Bedford were one of the major landowners in Devon. Their ancestor John Russell, a close advisor of Henry VIII and Edward VI, had been granted Tavistock Abbey and the Borough of Tavistock [which included the town] by the Crown in 1540, and was granted the title of Earl of Bedford in 1551. In 1694, William III raised the 5th Earl of Bedford to be Duke of Bedford and Marquis of Tavistock.

This list is thought to date from the mid-eighteenth century, when John Russell, the 4th Duke of Bedford, owned Tavistock. This was before the discovery of copper near Mary Tavy, which created the wealth that led to the rebuilding of the town of Tavistock by the 7th Duke.

The list is organised by street, and records male heads of household and their occupations, in numbered order down each side of the street. Those heads of household marked with an asterisk (*) were not parishioners, even though they were in residence at the time the list was compiled. Most (but not all) of these non-parishioners were weavers. The last group of parishioners listed were 14 men living in the workhouse, none of whom had occupations.