

PRICE 35p

## Welcome to the Festival!

This is a Festival of ordinary people in an ordinary place. It is not a particularly highbrow Festival (although Pilton has been called the Hampstead of Barnstaple!) and there are no great names—except from the past.

We are very proud in Pilton of our long history. Anyone would want to celebrate an eleven hundredth birthday! And this is what we do this year. We invite you to share in a monthlong series of festivities arranged by local people: the schools, church, and other community groups.

A list and explanation of some two dozen main festival events can be found in this booklet. Nothing is expensive. Much is free. All events seek to entertain, inform, or celebrate. Most of the people taking part are Piltonians by birth, by tie, or by choice!

So, welcome to Pilton, visitor. Come often, and not just to the Festival. Here in the ancient quarter of Barnstaple you will find a friendly village atmosphere and Piltonians old and new proud of our roots. We believe that understanding Yesterday helps us enjoy Today and prepare for Tomorrow.

Anthony Geering  
Vicar of Pilton



A 14th century  
pilgrim's badge



## PILTON

—established as a Burgh by King Alfred the Great circa 882 A.D.—

Pilton has always had an independent spirit and a strong sense of identity, despite nowadays being just a part of Barnstaple. It began life as one of King Alfred's Burghs—a fortified site and township to protect the borders of Wessex. When its younger sister town of Barnstaple emerged it remained separate, across the River Yeo and the marshlands, with its own Mayor and its own market.

Today, Pilton is five minutes walk from the High Street of Barnstaple, over the Causeway, and proud to be part of the regional capital of North Devon. The large industrial estate of Pottington is located in the parish. So is the new and splendid North Devon District Hospital, the Fire Brigade Headquarters, and four of Barnstaple's principal schools. Nearly five thousand people live in Pilton.

Yet it retains a distinctive character. The oldest site of Man in the locality is found at the iron age hillfort of Roborough. A Nature Trail cuts down into the Beautiful Bradiford Valley.

Ancient names like Littabourne, The Rock, Bull Hill and Lady Well surround the venerable Priory Church. Groups of almshouses and much graceful architecture, together with the quaint and delightful shops of Pilton Street, provide the physical charm and integrity of the township.

As two hundred more houses are planned; as children from the schools fill the pavements at the start and end of each day; as the Pottington Estate bustles; and as Pilton Street shoppers chat and queue—it is clear that the earliest settlement of North Devon is no backwater, but a vigorous and thriving community.



LAMBETH PALACE, LONDON, SE1 7JU

A message from the Archbishop of Canterbury

I congratulate the Parish of Pilton on eleven hundred years of recorded Christianity. I pray that your future may be one of increasing strength and blessing.



NORTH DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

From the Chairman's Office

I should like to offer my warmest and sincere congratulations to Pilton, which was the earliest of North Devon towns, and founded by King Alfred 1100 years ago.

This Festival is to celebrate Pilton's long history and will cover several different aspects of community activities in the area. I wish it every possible success, and hope that you, the reader, will give it your support.

Freda M. Avant  
Chairman, North Devon District Council



Pound House  
Buckland Monachorum  
Yelverton, Devon

from Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant  
for the County of Devon.  
Lt. Colonel the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Morley J.P.

I am pleased to hear of the Festival you are holding in Pilton to celebrate your eleven hundredth anniversary. A great deal of hard work will, I am sure, have been undertaken to arrange and put on the Festival and I hope that it is a great success in every way, and achieves all its aims.

*Morley*



Pilton celebrates a long history and Barnstaple is pleased and proud to think that the town has shared so much history with the twin township across the River Yeo.

As we look back over eleven hundred years so we are glad to be part of the same community and look forward to Pilton continuing to share in the activities of the town.

*John Bosence*

John Bosence  
Town Mayor

Wools, Garments, Haberdashery

## CASHMORE'S



*Exclusive*

*Pilton Tea Towels*

100 Pilton Street, Barnstaple

Telephone 74006

## Pottery Workshop

mugs jugs bowls  
vases pie funnels  
knobs clocks  
casseroles candlesticks



## Coffee Bar

recommended in the  
*Egon Ronay 'Just a Bite' Guide*  
Morning Coffee  
Afternoon Tea

## PILTON STORES

PILTON

STREET

QUALITY

FOOD

FINE

WINE

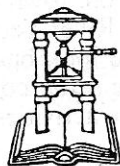
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BARNSTAPLE

Telephone Barnstaple 3301

# FESTIVAL CALENDAR

**JUNE 24th (MIDSUMMER DAY) 7.30 p.m.**

**FESTIVAL CONCERT IN PILTON CHURCH**

with Braunton Handbell Ringers, Sandra Squires (soprano), John Hobbs (Bass) and the Pilton Consort.

*Suggested programme donation 50p  
(accompanied children most welcome free of charge)*

**JUNE 25th, 26th, 27th (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) 8 a.m. to dusk**

**FLOWER FESTIVAL IN PILTON CHURCH**

*"Enter His Gates with Praise"*

arrangements based on Scriptural references to doors and gates for the opening of the Festival.

*Refreshments and Produce Stall in Vestry.*

**JUNE 26th, 27th (Saturday and Sunday) 2.30 to 7.30 p.m.**

**Exhibition in the Bluecoat School, Abbey Rd.**

**"PILTON PAST AND PRESENT"**

clothing, curios, mementoes, pictures, etc. loaned by local people, together with Athenaeum exhibits and a children's art exhibition.

**JUNE 26th (Saturday) 2 p.m.**

**Pilton School & Community College**

**ANNUAL FETE**

(You might like to make a combined visit to the Flower Festival, the Exhibition and the Fete on Saturday afternoon)

**JUNE 27th (Sunday) Pilton Church 6.30 p.m.**

**SERVICE OF RE-DEDICATION**

Old and new Piltonians and visitors are invited to renew their marriage and Baptismal promises; a special welcome to all those christened and married in Pilton Church.

**JUNE 30th (Wednesday) 6 p.m.**

**BLUECOAT SCHOOL MEDIEVAL FAIR**

Costumed entertainment, stalls, sideshows, and multitudinous attractions.

**JULY 3rd (Saturday) Abbey Road, 2 p.m.**

**PATHFIELD SUMMER FETE**

Pony rides, Stalls, Raffles, Fire engine, Police car, Helicopter, etc.

Adults 10p

Children free



**JULY 3rd (Saturday) 8 p.m.**

'QUEST' an all night vigil on the theme of PILGRIMAGE for North Devon teenagers (14+) Workshops on Music, Scripture, Banners etc.

A chance to pray, to think, to enjoy.

Further details from Mrs. Rachel Barratt, High Bickington Rectory,  
tel. 60283

cost 75p (includes supper and breakfast)

The vigil culminates in . . . . .

**JULY 4th (Sunday) 9.30 a.m.**

FAMILY COMMUNION  
for Pilton Church's Patronal Festival

**6.30 p.m.**

FESTIVAL EVENSONG  
Guests: St. Michael's School Choir, Tawstock Court.

**JULY 7th (Wednesday) 1.30 p.m.**

FESTIVAL SPONSORED RIDE  
in aid of Riding for the Disabled  
starts from Pathfield School (Abbey Road). Souvenir rosettes. Come  
and watch  
Refreshments and instant sponsorship!

**JULY 7th**

BROWNIE TREAT  
for older (70 plus) Pilton residents  
6 to 8 p.m. at Bluecoat School  
Supper and entertainment. Please just come!

**JULY 10th-13th BRADIFORD REVELS**

**JULY 10th (Saturday) 2.30 p.m.**

GYPSY FAYRE  
at Bradiford House  
(by kind permission of Miss E. Dennis)  
arranged by Pilton W.I.  
Stalls, Refreshments, Games, Bickington Bluebirds Majorettes, Draws  
(if wet in Pilton Village Hall)

**7.30 p.m.**

GYPSY BARBECUE  
at Bradiford House  
Admission tickets can be purchased in advance from Bradiford Stores  
or at the Fayre, 15p each. (Food and drink to be purchased)  
Proceeds to R.N.L.I. and Festival Funds equally



**JULY 11th (Sunday) 9.30 a.m.**

**BRADIFORD VILLAGE SERVICE**

an outdoor act of Worship and Witness in the garden of Lion House  
by kind permission of Doctors David and Ann Barlow  
(if wet, in the drawing room)

**6.30 p.m.**

**SEA SUNDAY EVENSONG**

in Pilton Church, with Tableaux for Maritime Devon

**JULY 13th (Tuesday) 8 to 9 p.m. Bluecoat School**

**THE WILDLIFE OF THE BRADIFORD VALLEY AND WATER**

Illustrated talk by local naturalist Trevor Beer.

(Collections for the 'Nestbox Scheme' of the Devon Birdwatching and  
Preservation Society)  
The Bluecoat School

**JULY 14th (Wednesday) 7.30 to 8.30 p.m. Pilton Church**

**ORGAN RECITAL**

David Read, M. Mus., F.R.C.O.

Director of Music, West Buckland School  
(Collection)

**JULY 18th (Sunday) 6.30 p.m.**

**ST. MARGARET'S DAY SERVICE**

A Civic and Hospital occasion to celebrate the ancient Foundation of Saint Margaret's Hospital, Pilton and the modern foundation of the North Devon District Hospital, Pilton, in the presence of the Administrator and members of the N.D.D.H., the Prior, Brother and Sister of St. Margaret's, and the Worshipful Mayor and Mayoress of Barnstaple with members of the Town Council.

**JULY 20th (Tuesday) 10 to 11.30 a.m.**

Pathfield P.T.A. invites the people of Pilton to an  
**OPEN MORNING** at **PATHFIELD SCHOOL**  
Abbey Road  
Stalls and Raffle

**JULY 20th (22nd if wet) 6.30 onwards**

**FESTIVAL CRICKET MATCH**

Men versus Ladies

Pilton Cricket Club, Pottington

*All welcome*

*Refreshments*

**7.30 p.m.**

### CONCERT IN PILTON CHURCH

The Pilton Consort

An evening of wine and song. Enjoy a variety of music with this group of singers and instrumentalists. Step out into a summer's evening for a glass of wine.

(Suggested programme donation 85p)

**JULY 22nd (Thursday) 6 p.m.**

Pilton Church Hall

#### TEENY BOPPERS' BALL

and the pantomime 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'

presented by Pilton Youth Fellowship

Admission 15p each

Refreshments available

**JULY 24th (Saturday)**

#### MEDIEVAL MARKET and HISTORICAL PAGEANT

*The Market* opens from 10 till 4 p.m., and stalls continue from Pilton Street, through the Feoffees Archway, along the cobbled churchyard walk into the old school yard. A variety of stalls, crafts, traditional entertainment and Fare.

Mock Mayor Making, Morris, Music, Mummers  
throughout the day

Traders and Peddlars dress in costume

Details and applications from one of the following:

George Oreshko, Bluecoat School. 5952

Margaret Hales, Pilton Fish Shop. 3268

Bill Wilson, Bryony House. 73819

Liz Leitch, Pilton School. 74381

Rob Hart, Pilton Stores. 72418

Albert Linacre, 19 Pilton Street. 75776

(if wet the Market will be in the high rafted Church Hall in Pilton Street)

*The Pageant* is a costumed procession depicting the people and events of Pilton's history. It assembles at 2 p.m. at Pilton Park, walks up Pilton Street to the grounds of Pilton House, and performs through Narration, Mime, Music and Word, episodes from local history. The sole performance begins at approximately 2.15 p.m. and lasts for about 20 minutes.

(If wet the Pageant will be staged in front of the beautiful medieval screen in Pilton Church)

**JULY 24th 8 to midnight Bluecoat School**

#### BARN DANCE and LAMB ROAST

with HAYSEED and AXOLOTL

Licensed Bar

Tickets £1.80 each  
Children 80p

**JULY 25th (Sunday) 5.15 p.m. Pilton Church Hall**  
**PARISH TEA PARTY**

*(bring your own food to share. Drinks provided)*

**6.30 p.m.**

**THANKSGIVING SERVICE**  
Preacher: The Revd. James West  
(former vicar of Pilton)

The Festival Committee expresses its deep appreciation to all who have helped to make this Festival enjoyable, successful and worthwhile.

**PILTON TREASURES**

The PRIOR'S RING dug up in a nursery garden near Pilton churchyard in 1867. It is a large ring of gold inscribed with Hebrew and Latin characters. A large sapphire is held by a rivet of gold. The ring is reckoned by the British Museum to date from 1100. The North Devon Athenaeum holds this priceless relic.

A BOOK OF HOURS, tiny ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches) but beautifully written, now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Once the property of the monks of Pilton.

The ANCIENT SEAL OF THE PRIORY. The matrix is in the British Museum. An impression shows, on one side, the Virgin and Child between two angels, and the inscription in Latin "O Holy Virgin, to whom I give myself wholly always, intercede for me." On the other side is the Founder, King Athelstan standing between two trees with shields of arms, and inscribed "I, Athelstan, performed that which this present seals" The seal is very beautiful and quite intricate. It dates from c.1412.

The LADYWELL (Our Lady's Holy Well). Outside the churchyard, set in the wall of the passageway known as 'Ladywell' is an ancient stone bowl. Although it is now disused, older residents remember stories of people still dipping handkerchiefs in the water for its restorative (at one time, its blessed) properties. The sound of water running from Maer Top can still be heard.

**The Foundation of St. Margaret's Hospital**

In an unbroken line from at least 1180A.D. Pilton has had a Prior of St. Margaret's Hospital. The ancient leper hospital stood where No. 122 Pilton Street now stands. The latter house, built in 1880 was given a turret and small garden to remind people of the days when a bell summoned the Prior and brethren across the green to chapel. Metal from the ancient chapel bell is believed to be incorporated in a bell of the Pilton peal of eight. To this day the Feoffees (the dozen and a half men and women who administer the 38 properties of the United Pilton Charities) appoint a Prior, a Brother and a Sister of St. Margaret's who hold office for life.

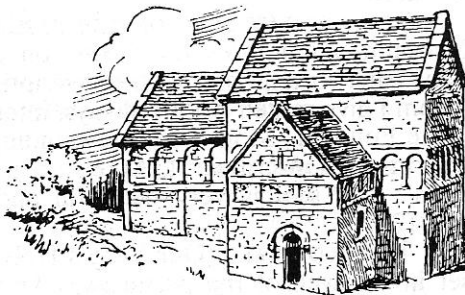
## Potted Pilton History. . . .

### BEGINNINGS

Roborough Hill Fort is a defensive earthwork built by people of the Iron Age, several hundred years before Christ. These folk were of Celtic origin, peasant farmers and herdsmen. They became known as Dumnonii or 'people of the land'. Roborough could have been in use for upwards of one thousand years.

The Saxon occupation of Devon was gradual. The invaders tended to settle below the hill forts. PILL means creek, and a TUN is a stockaded farmstead. 'Pilton' probably developed from such a holding on or near 'The Rock' around 682 A.D.

The Bural Hidage is a document listing 29 burhs (fortified townships) established by King Alfred the Great about the year 882 A.D. These towns were a serious attempt not only to defend the borders of Wessex but to urbanise the country for the first time since the Roman withdrawal. Exeter, Pilton, Lydford and Halwell are the only burhs listed for Devon. It is this Saxon record that provides Pilton's proud claim to eleven hundred years of recorded history.



### CHURCH

A strong tradition links the founding of the Benedictine Priory at Pilton with King Athelstan. At Easter 928A.D. Athelstan held court in Exeter, celebrating his victories over the 'West Welsh' — the natives of Cornwall and North Devon. The king at this time was in his late thirties, grandson of Alfred, virtual ruler of Britain. Ambassadors came from foreign courts, impressed by his excellence and bearing fabulous gifts: the Holy Lance, the Sword of Constantine, a classical vase of onyx 'carved so subtly that the corn sheaves seemed to stir, the vines to sprout, and the figures of men to move' (William of Malmesbury)

The Great Priory Seal of Pilton (made much later, in 1412 or so) depicts the King, and says, in Latin, "I, ATHELSTAN, PERFORMED THAT WHICH THIS PRESENT SEALS."

Pilton Priory belonged to Malmesbury Abbey, Athelstan's principal foundation and the place where he was buried. Two priors of Pilton became Abbots there later. It is reasonable to suppose that the present parish church stands on a site occupied constantly by Christians for over a thousand years.

## TRADE

By the early Middle Ages the Priory and Church at the top of Pilton, and the Leper Hospital by the River Yeo must have been linked by a substantial settlement. In 1344 the Prior was granted a Fair and Market for Pilton by King Edward III. Meanwhile Barnstaple had become a big sister, and in 1394 the Wool Tax showed that the area was producing more wool than Exeter.

Pilton was a parish full of running water, and thrived as a clothmaking community, related to Barnstaple's role as a woollen port. Despite the Black Death's ravages the twin settlements thrived. By 1506 in Raleigh alone there was one corn mill and five fulling mills. (Bailiff's Accounts).

In 1536 the Dissolution of the Monasteries increased the wealth of the merchant and middle classes. More tenants owned their homes and land in Pilton. Barnstaple provided a ready market for farm produce, animals, cloth and leather: products that would come from Pilton for another five hundred years.



## CIVIL WAR

Barnstaple declared for Parliament in the English Civil War. Taxes like the Ship Money to fight the Dutch alienated the merchants. In 1643 a battle near Torrington was won by the Royalists and Barnstaple, Bideford and Appledore were occupied. Fortunes fluctuated. By 1645 the town was held for Parliament and General Goring's Royalist forces encamped at Raleigh Court, the great mansion of the Chichesters, were given license to forage in lieu of wages. Pilton suffered. In the same year the Royalists pulled down the lead steeple of Pilton Church, presumably to use as ammunition.

## EDUCATION

The monks of the Priory must have provided learning for the district. First mention of a school occurs in Dean Milles of Exeter's Questionnaire of c.1745. A school in a chamber over one of the almshouses was started in 1815. The first account book records:

Paid Barnstaple cryer for putting up advertisements	6d
Paid Pilton cryer for a cry	3d
For cleaning the schoolroom chimneys and pair of bellows	3s
A woman for washing the rooms	4d
For quills, paper and ruler	4s 10d
For $\frac{1}{2}$ doz slates @ 10d	5s

In 1841 a new school was opened next door to the church. Generations of Piltonians remember it with affection, for its doors only closed when the new Bluecoat School was opened in 1968.

Nowadays a 'campus' stretching across the old Abbey fields includes four schools: Pilton Infants, Bluecoat, Pathfield Special, and Pilton School and Community College.



## FAMILY LIFE

It is inevitable to pick on the eccentric family of H. H. Munro, the writer who used the pen-name of 'SAKI', of Bellaire, Pilton.

Hector Hugh Munro was born at Akyab, Burma in 1870. From the age of two he was brought up by his paternal grandmother and two maiden aunts, together with his brother and sister. They lived at Broadgate Villa (now divided into 'Fairfield' and Fairmead').

Saki's biography, by his sister Ethel, gives a detailed, sometimes comical, account of life a hundred years ago under the eagle eyes of maiden aunts Augusta and Charlotte, neither of who seemed to have had any idea how to bring up children, and who detested each other so intensely that they countermanded each other's orders to the children. The biography can be read in Munro's book 'The Square Egg', published in 1924.



## HEALTH

The North Devon District Hospital is a splendid modern hospital built close to the site of the mansion of Raleigh, ancient home of the Raleighs and Chichesters. It is large enough to provide a broad variety of facilities, care, and specialisation, but has managed to retain the warmth and humanity of a Cottage Hospital. Many of the staff have homes in Pilton. The hospital radio, 'TARKA RADIO', recalls the novel 'Tarka the Otter' by Henry Williamson. He is said to have used his knowledge of the local River Yeo and Bradiford Water in his writing.

## LEISURE

Pilton commands a panoramic view of river, sea, hill and dune. Many people live five minutes walk from Barnstaple's shops, and not much more from the start of two nature trails. Pilton Park, built on the great loop of the River Yeo upon ancient marshes, is a favourite haunt of small children. Many holidaymakers enjoy Pilton as a pleasant base. Those who live in the district feel they have distinct advantages in terms of urban facilities and rural space and beauty.

Although Pilton has several nonogenarians who have lived their whole life in the neighbourhood, and a healthy share of true born Piltonians, many younger families have moved in, ensuring continuity. Together we are unashamedly proud that

'PILTON WAS A BOROUGH TOWN  
WHEN BARUM WAS A MARSH'!

### Acknowledgements:

Mr. Reginald Norman of Ladywell

Local Historian and Prior of St. Margaret's Hospital

Mrs. Margaret A. Reed of Bradiford

Town Councillor and author of PILTON—its past and its people

Mr. Clifford Davies of Yeo Vale

Author of THE PARISH and PARISH CHURCH of PILTON

## BULL HOUSE

ancient home of the Priors of Pilton

*Conducted Tours (£1.00 per head)*

for parties of about a dozen by previous arrangement with the owner

**Mr Malcolm Corney M.A.**

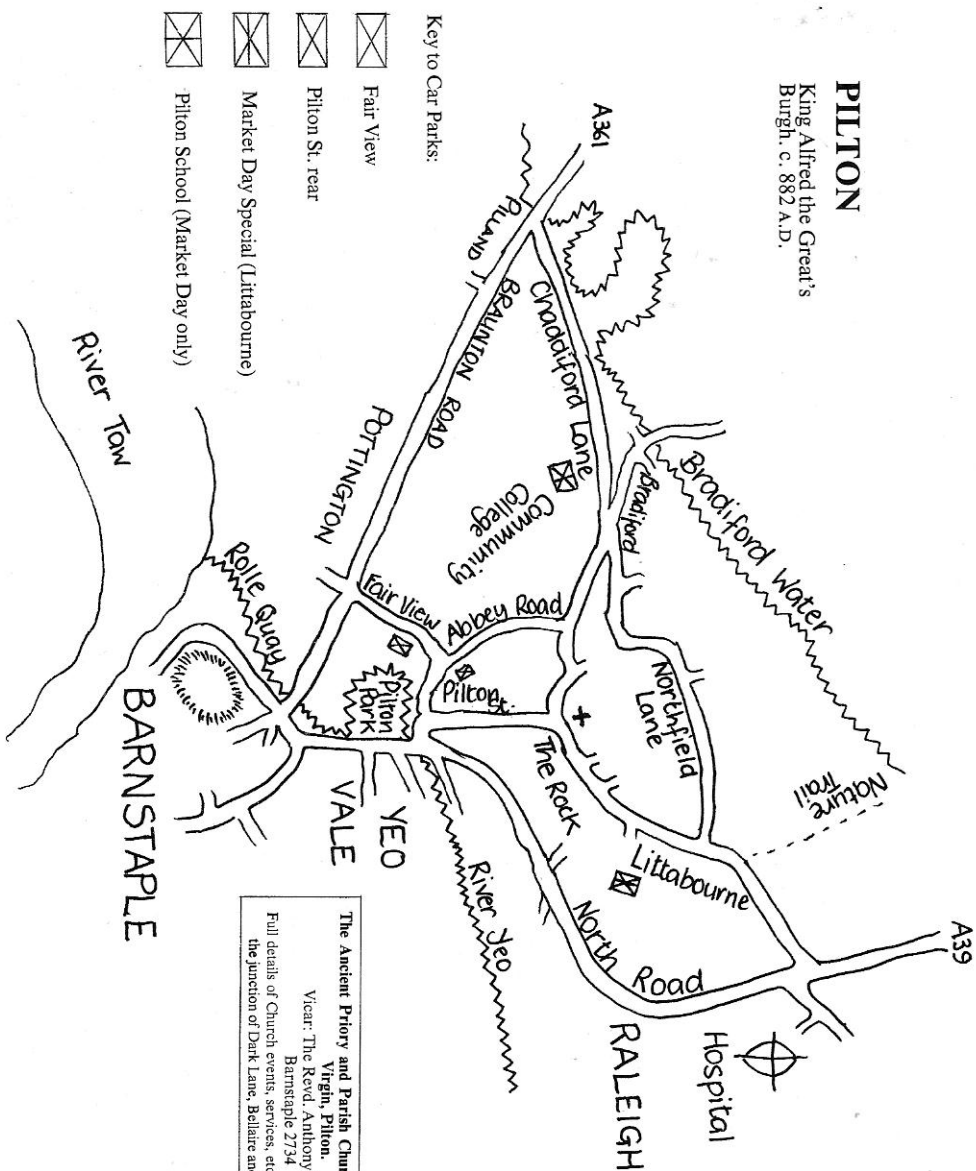
The tour lasts rather over an hour

NOTE. Additional information and other Festival Events as advertised  
in the local press and shops



# PILTON

King Alfred the Great's  
Burgh, c. 882 A.D.



The Ancient Priory and Parish Church of St. Mary the  
Virgin, Pilton.  
Vicar: The Revd. Anthony Geering  
Barnstaple 2734  
Full details of Church events, services, etc. from the Vicarage at  
the junction of Dark Lane, Baltaire and Northfield Lane.