

FACTS & FIGURES

Now that we have completed our first full year in the new office in Exeter, we can begin to see how the service is being used. Realistic comparisons with previous years are difficult, because the office was partially closed for most of 2004/5, but some trends are becoming apparent.

The most obvious is that, although we have had some very busy days, the expected huge increase in personal visits has not so far materialized. We can only speculate on the reasons for this, but it is likely that the move out of the city centre, combined with a rise in on-line research, has something to do with it. We also know that some Exeter visitors are using the service point in Castle Street, rather than coming out to Sowton, but so far we have not found a way of counting these visits accurately.

The longer opening hours, and the reduced need for repeat visits to look at records kept off-site may also play a part. It seems likely also that people are staying in the searchroom for longer at a time, but we cannot prove this. Attendance on the Saturday mornings on which the Exeter office has opened since May 2006 has remained steady at around 10-12, sufficient to demonstrate a demand for weekend opening, but not enough to make a real difference to the figures. The removal of the admission charge has had no noticeable effect.

It is certainly true that visitors to Sowton are using many more documents than before,

Statistics 2005/6 (2004/5 in brackets)

	Exeter	Barnstaple	Total
Individual visits	8,859 (5,481)	2,671 (2,232)	11,530 (7,713)
Group visits	28 (2)	12 (12)	40 (14)
Microform issues	89,888 (75,921)	16,238 (14,732)	106,126 (90,653)
Document orders	11,517 (2,876)	1,572 (1,611)	13,089 (4,487)
Postal enquiries	6,751 (4,178)	723 (913)	7,474 (5,091)
Exhibitions	4 (3)	6 (5)	10 (8)
Talks	6 (4)	6 (4)	12 (8)
Deposits	240 (137)	96 (98)	336 (235)

probably because they can now be produced in a matter of minutes, rather than the 48 hours which some Marsh Barton orders took. Personal visits are significantly up at Barnstaple, and microfiche issues continue to rise at both offices.

The large number of group visits to the new Exeter office is not surprising; nor is the sudden influx of records, though the figure for the total number of deposits does not give a true idea of how large some of these are.

It will be interesting to see how use of the offices develops from now on, and in particular whether the many outreach events which have taken place in the past year or so have any effect on visitor numbers. However the figures may vary from year to year, it is clear that the Devon Record Office and the North Devon Record Office are still popular places to visit.

THE MEANING OF CULTURE

We have been discussing the meaning of 'culture' for many years now, especially in the light of the DCMS Comprehensive Spending Review and the regional cultural strategies which were published in the 1990s. Like many words, it has a wide and a narrow meaning, the former being something like 'way

of life' and the latter more connected with what we tend to call 'high culture'.

The word acquired new significance for the Devon Record Office this year with the publication of Devon County Council's new

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Strategic Plan, which has 'celebrating Devon's culture' as one of its five priorities. As part of a general re-organization of the authority, the Record Office moved to the newly-created Environment, Economy and Culture Directorate in April, where it forms part of the Culture Group, sitting alongside colleagues such as the archaeology and historic environment teams, as well as the public library service, which forms a parallel 'cultural' strand.

This emphasis on culture, and on using the County Council's position and influence to enhance and promote Devon's culture (however that is defined), together with the concentration of services with similar objectives in one directorate, is an important

development. Along with other related services, it places the Record Office at the forefront of a new initiative which has as its aim the improvement of everyone's quality of life.

Of course, much of what a record office does is not 'cultural' in the narrow sense, but this does not matter. If our 'culture' is shorthand for the way we live our lives and what is important to us, then the core record office function of preserving the memory of how life was lived in the past, and collecting evidence of present-day life for the future, is central to Devon's culture. This is our mission, and this is what we will continue to do.

Young Cultural Creators in the North Devon Record Office

The *Young Cultural Creators* project is part of an innovative Children's Trust programme funded by Arts Council England and Museums, Libraries and Archives South West. It aims to strengthen connections between schools and cultural services by providing the inspiration for classroom projects led by established authors and artists across a range of age groups and abilities. Devon Arts in Schools Initiative (DAISI) is managing the project in two 'learning clusters': mid Devon (based around Tiverton) and north Devon (based around Pilton). The model has been used successfully in other regions of the country and so there are plenty of examples of good practice available.

The North Devon Record Office has been involved in the project planning process for Pilton from the start. In conjunction with the Museum of North Devon and Barnstaple Library, we are working with the four schools in the Pilton cluster, involving ten classes that include infants through to Year 9, as well as pupils with special educational needs. It has therefore proved quite a challenge to identify a theme for the project that would appeal, and be accessible, to all participants. After a good deal of discussion at working party meetings, it was decided that the overall theme should be the distinctive coastal environment of north Devon. The cultural inspiration is the work of north Devon artist and author, the late Brian Chugg,

who produced a series of spectacular abstract paintings based on coastal rock formations from the 1950s onwards. The Museum holds several examples of his work, and in the North Devon Record Office we have a large collection of his writings and notebooks, including copies of the splendid *Country Diary* articles he wrote for *The Guardian* over a period of 23 years. Creative writing, drama and artwork projects using the Brian Chugg material as a springboard will be facilitated by local artists and writers during the Autumn Term of 2006, and participating classes will also be making visits to the coast for a spot of additional, if windswept, inspiration.

The *Young Cultural Creators* project will be fully evaluated using the *Inspiring Learning For All* framework and the resulting evidence will be used to inform and guide future projects of a similar nature. We hope to be able to demonstrate that special projects like this provide added value for young people by introducing them to cultural resources they wouldn't normally encounter as part of the school curriculum, and that, as a result, they may be encouraged to continue visiting and supporting their local heritage.

Perhaps one of our YCC students may even be inspired to become an archivist!

Eighteenth Century Project: Progress Report

The Friends of Devon's Archives "Eighteenth Century Devon: People and Communities" project has made good progress since the last newsletter. The 1723 oath of allegiance rolls have been transcribed in their entirety, and an extensive introduction has been prepared by the Research Officer Simon Dixon. Along the way more relevant documents were discovered covering the city of Exeter and the period before 1723. The result of this is that the finished transcripts contain the names of approximately 30,000 Devonians. This material will be published on the new improved Friends website before Christmas.

Simon has also been busy giving talks to local groups, visiting over 10 local history societies in the Spring and Summer and recruiting volunteer researchers who are currently working on 15 different parishes. The input of these groups will be of great value in providing additional material for the finished project website next year. It is still not too late to become involved in the local research projects. Anyone interested in finding out more about this can contact Simon at the DRO or email simon.dixon@devon.gov.uk

The next set of documents for transcription are the replies to Bishop Clagett's 1744 visitation queries. Local history researchers will be familiar with the printed forms sent out by the Bishops of Exeter at their primary visitations during the eighteenth century and beyond. The questions asked in 1744 relate to such issues as the population of the parish, numbers of dissenters, provision of education and poor relief, and the condition of the established Church. How detailed and accurate the replies

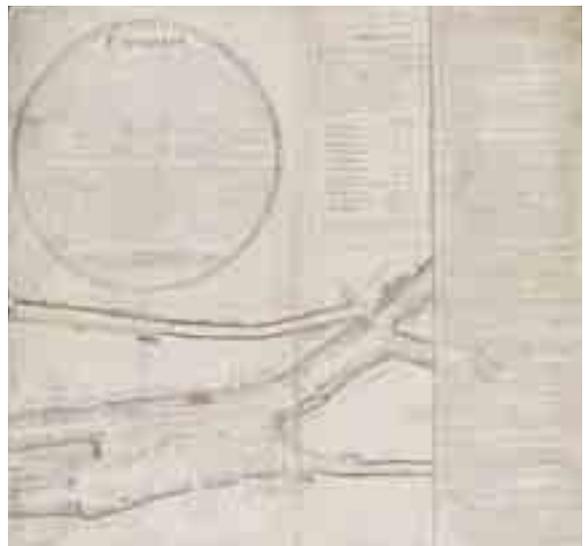
are varies from one parish to the next. According to the replies given by the parish clergy the most dissenting place in the county was Moretonhampstead where half of the 455 residing families were nonconformists. Most of the larger towns had a school of some description by 1744 and regular provision appears to have been made for religious worship. The occasional insight can be obtained into the attitude of parishioners to attempts to bring them to communion. Richard Nichols, Rector of Inwardleigh, complained that only half of the eligible communicants in his parish usually received the sacrament. Among the remainder were some who 'think themselves too young' and others who 'have not cloaths enough'. It seems that the dilemma of simply having nothing to wear is not just a modern complaint!

The visitation returns have now been transcribed and the next step will be to research and write the introduction to these. They should then be available on the project website before Christmas. After this the eighteenth century lists of freeholders will be tackled. These contain the names and often status or trade of individuals regarded as immune from bribery and therefore fit to serve on juries. They are too numerous to be transcribed in full, but at least one per decade from 1711 until 1800 will be published online.

For more information contact Simon at the DRO. He will continue to be available to give talks to local history groups until the project concludes in June 2007.

Crediton in 1743

Part of a rare 18th-century map of Crediton has returned to Devon. Completed in the early part of 1743, not long before the greater part of the West Town was destroyed by fire, it shows public and private buildings in unusual detail. Another part of it has been on deposit at the DRO since 1978, but the new portion, which was purchased at auction in July with financial assistance from the Friends of Devon's Archives and the Crediton Area History and Museum Society, gives new information on when and why the map was made. Unfortunately, the name of the surveyor is still not known, and at least one other piece is still missing, so the story may not be over yet.



Acquisitions of Special Interest

EXETER

Between 1 November 2005 and 30 June 2006, the Exeter office received 139 accessions.

Parish records were deposited by Alphington (D 6789), Belstone (D 343-3), Blackawton (D 995-11), Butterleigh (D 3357-3), Clannaborough (D 6792), Clyst Honiton (D 4023-2), Clyst St.Lawrence (D 5039 add 7), Dean Prior (D 6765), Diptford (D 6824), Halwell (D 6827), Honiton (D 6727), North Huish (D 6823), Ide (D 6839), Ideford (D 6848), Moreleigh (D 6829), Poltimore (D 2810-2), Shillingford St.George (D 6788), Tedburn St.Mary (D 6828), Teigngrace (D 6822), Cove Chapel, Tiverton (D 6830) and Trusham (D 2014-6).

Collections of church records were also received from Ashburton Methodist Church (D 6733), Totnes Methodist Circuit (D 2275-15), Bradninch Baptist Church (D 6785), Paignton United Reformed Church (D 6845) and West Down Gospel Hall, Cheriton Bishop (D 6815).

Parish council records came in from Bradford and Cookworthy (D 6771) and Crediton Hamlets (D 6787).

Other official deposits were received from Crediton Hamlets Parish Council (D 6787), East Devon District Council (D 6790), Exeter City Council (D 6790, D 6804), North Tawton Town Council (D 6772) and Torbay Council (D 6781), while there was also a deposit of nineteen registers relating to Torbay Crematorium (D 6641-1), and a volume of Guardians' minutes relating to the Honiton Poor Law Union (D 6843) dating from between 1894 and 1896 which was rescued from a skip outside Honiton Hospital some twenty years ago.

School records were deposited by Aveton Gifford Primary School (D 6774), Awliscombe Church of England Primary School (D 6722), Denbury Primary School (D 6751), St.Peter's High School, Exeter (D 6797), The King's School, Ottery St.Mary (D 6769), Malborough with South Huish Primary School (D 6775) and Salcombe Primary School (D 6776). Records were also received which relate to Bondleigh National School (D 6779), Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Crediton (now Queen

Elizabeth's Community College) (D 6808), and the former St.Thomas Board Boys' and Girls' Schools in Exeter, which later became John Stocker School, St.Thomas High School and is now West Exe Technology College (D 6847, D 6848).

Business records relating to Salisbury and Chandler, Architects, of Exmouth (D 6777), and F.Parkin and Son Limited, Metal Fabricators, of Exeter (D 6818), were also received.

There have also been several good accessions relating to sport and recreation in the county, including records of the Devon Rugby Football Union (D 6800), Exeter Rowing Club (D 6768) and the Devon D.A. Cyclists' Touring Club (D 6754, D 6807).

Other clubs and societies to deposit records included the Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (D 2696-88) and the Devon Gardens Trust (D 6773), while there were deposits from four Women's Institutes, Cheriton Fitzpaine (D 6806), Chevithorne and Bolham (D 6756), Feniton and Buckerell (D 6757) and Lydford (D 6739).

Among the more miscellaneous deposits received during the period under review were some papers relating to the activities of the Devon Emergency Volunteers, an organisation which acted to co-ordinate civil defence arrangements in the county during the latter years of the Cold War (D 6731), the personal diaries of Mr.Arthur Kemeys-Tynte, a veteran of the Anglo-Zulu Wars who lived in Exmouth in the 1930s and 1940s (D 6746), and some photograph and autograph albums compiled by the wife of Roland Glave Saunders, Mayor of Exeter during World War Two (D 6825).

We have also received a large deposit of early records relating to one of the county's Masonic Lodges, the 'Antient Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons' (D 6817).

Not all these records are yet available for consultation. We shall endeavour to make them accessible as soon as possible, and staff will be happy to advise about the accessibility of a particular collection.

BARNSTAPLE

Since the previous edition of this newsletter, the North Devon Record Office has received additional deposits of records from the following Church of England parishes: Ashreigney (2990), Berrynarbor (3921), Buckland Brewer (267), Instow (3064), Littleham (1176), Parkham (1892) and Rose Ash (B678). The highlight of these parish deposits is undoubtedly the re-discovery of the 'Hardwicke' marriage register for Buckland Brewer, covering the period 1754-1812, which had been considered lost for many years. Accounts of the Alwington Church Restoration Fund, 1885-1887, have also been deposited in the Record Office (B812).

Additional nonconformist records have been received from the Barnstaple (2347) and Ilfracombe (2334) Methodist circuits, and for the Barnstaple (B419) and Appledore (B79) Baptist Churches. The latter deposit includes a register of church members between 1883 and 1995.

Official records have been transferred from the parish councils of Alwington (3676) and East Down (B816). The latter deposit includes minutes dating from the establishment of the parish councils in 1894. Minutes and agendas of Great Torrington Town Council, 1974-1992, have also been received (B831), together with building plans dating between 1872 and 1950 drawn up for South Molton Borough Council (3058). Registers of licensed premises in north Devon covering the period 1963-2005 have been transferred to the Record Office as a direct result of recent changes to licensing procedures (B102). Torridge District Council has deposited a large quantity of pre-registration title deeds

and associated documents relating to properties in Bideford (B825). The Maritime & Coastguard Agency has presented a collection of ship registration papers for the Port of Bideford, 1925-1992 (B683), augmenting the main series of shipping registers already held by the Record Office.

Other noteworthy deposits include additional records of the Loyal Lodge of Freemasons, Barnstaple, in particular a list of members dating back to its formation in 1783 (B709), minutes of the North Devon Infirmary Ladies' Association, which was responsible for raising funds for 'extra comforts' for patients, 1942-1948 (B820), staff magazines of the Yelland Power Station (unnervingly titled '*Yelland Blast*'), 1953-1959, a goods ledger of the GWR station at Victoria Road, Barnstaple, 1888 (B826), a medicinal recipe book of a Barnstaple pharmacist from the 1930s (B832), minutes and correspondence of the North Devon Group of the Ramblers' Association (B822), research notes and related material compiled by the *Discovering Landkey* community history group in the early 1990s (B827), photograph albums of the Charbonnier family of Barnstaple and Lynmouth, c.1900 (B838), and a large quantity of business records, mainly financial, from the offices of the *North Devon Journal* newspaper publishing company, some dating back to the 1920s (B643).

Please note that some of the collections listed above have not yet been catalogued in detail and so are not available for consultation at present. We advise that you check the availability of material with staff at the North Devon Record Office.



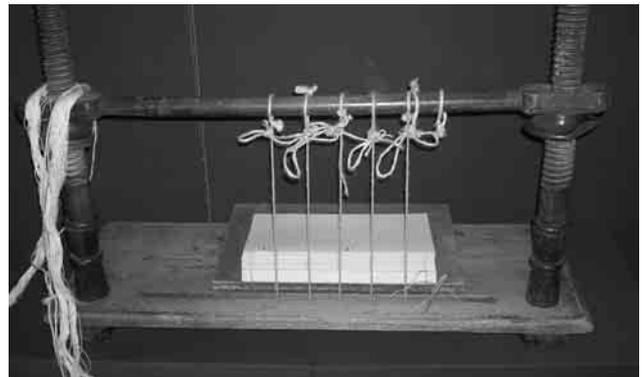
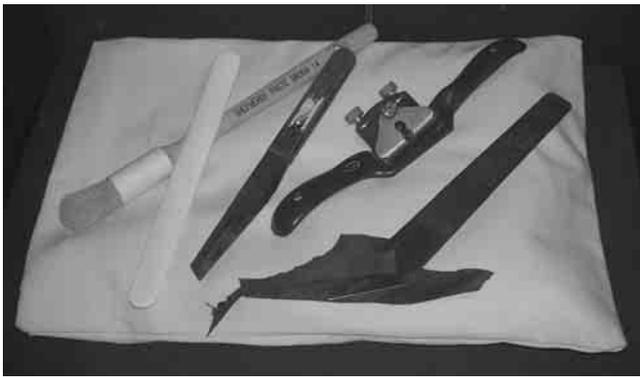
Interior of Barnstaple Municipal Science and Art School, c1900. The School occupied premises at 42 High Street, now a branch of Ottakar's Bookstores.



Theodore Charbonnier, Art Master at Barnstaple Municipal Science and Art School from 1882 to 1906

Aberystwyth, Books and Castles...

MEMORIES OF TWO HAPPY MONTHS "BESIDE THE SEASIDE"



A selection of the tools and sewing frame using in hand bookbinding

When asked to write something for the DRO Newsletter I realised I had a small problem – I've hardly been here recently. Such are the demands of the Society of Archivists' Conservation Certificate I have been away from Devon for three of the last five months!

The training scheme is a fantastic way for people already employed in archive conservation to get the necessary experience and qualifications. It is the way many archive conservators in local government become qualified and certainly not new for Devon – Deborah trained in this way and Sid Dickens had several trainees come to DRO for instruction. The idea is to do about 26 weeks of practical training, one-on-one with different instructors at Record Offices and National Institutions around the country. Each placement focuses on a specific aspect of work – paper, parchment, seals, maps and bookbinding. I spent four weeks in Wakefield in February and March learning all about the cleaning, washing, deacidifying and repairing of damaged paper documents, and have since spent almost two months in Aberystwyth attempting to master the mysterious art of bookbinding...

I first went, with some trepidation, to the National Library of Wales in May. I don't know how anyone can fail to find a book a beautiful and amazing object, and the thought that I would soon be able to actually make one myself was both daunting and exciting. I had looked at the books Deborah had made during her training and was very impressed, but nevertheless doubtful of my own abilities... But I needn't have been – Julian Thomas was an excellent instructor and, once I had progressed from merely folding and collating hundreds of sheets of paper, soon had me sewing sections, cutting boards and starting to produce real books.

One thing I hadn't appreciated was just how many stages go into the production of a book:

1. Cutting, folding and collating paper into sections
2. Measuring and marking the sewing stations on the spine
3. Hand sewing with linen thread on a sewing frame with tapes or cords
4. Preparing and securing endpapers
5. Gluing up the spine and using a backing hammer to achieve a smooth curved shape



Some of the newly bound blank notebooks and re-backed archival material

6. Trimming the edges of the book pages to achieve a neat even finish
7. Hand sewing silk headbands around a core
8. Cutting, lining and bevelling boards
9. Lining the spine with paper
10. Preparation of either a hollow or tight back depending on the finish required
11. Selection and cutting of a piece of book cloth or leather for the binding, the latter then requiring paring to thin down areas to avoid bulky joints or corners
12. Pasting out and applying the covering and working all joints, edges and corners
13. Any finishing, lettering and gold tooling required

If I thought I appreciated books as objects before, I feel it even more strongly now...

I made various notebooks, using case and library style bindings, one on raised cords and one in a limp vellum cover. I also repaired various items from Devon's archive which I had taken with me and are now newly re-backed or re-bound in the library or strong rooms at Great Moor House. Re-backing is a job required by so many leather bound volumes which have

detached boards and degraded spines and corners, a sad but inevitable consequence of poor storage and handling. First the old spine must be carefully prized away, hopefully to be reattached subsequently, then a new piece of leather selected, perhaps dyed, then pared down to size. It is often also necessary to repair the spine, reinforce stitching and paste on new paper or cloth spine linings. But it is well worth the work when a fragile book can be returned to working order again and once more be used by researchers.

But it wasn't all hard work... I was staying with a family friend just near Aberystwyth, which makes a wonderful change from lonely evenings in an anonymous B&B, and did get to enjoy living directly on the coast for two months.

And being very fond of the sea I spent many of my evenings, especially during the very hot July weather, swimming in the sea, building sandcastles and lounging around on the balcony. The latter was particularly enjoyed at sunset with a beverage in hand!

*Rebecca Gee,
Conservator*

(and getting more capably so with each training placement!)



The beach at Borth – sun, sea and sandcastles!

Philippe Planel

The latest recruit in Exeter is Philippe Planel, who joined us at the beginning of September in the new post of Heritage Outreach Officer. Phil has a wide-ranging brief which includes organizing and coordinating the many outreach activities (talks, visits, exhibitions, etc) undertaken by the Devon Record Office and continuing to provide support for Devon's museums



by administering the small grants scheme and representing their interests within the County Council. He has experience as an archaeologist, teacher, local historian, and heritage consultant, and he has previously used the Record Office for research, so he is well placed to promote our services. We look forward to working with Phil to spread the archival message to new audiences.

Friends of Devon's Archives

JANUARY 2006 – MARCH 2007

A visit to the Met Office in Exeter began our 2006 programme on January 16 and was well attended. We were given an excellent introduction to the work of the Met Office and their Archives including the Weather Diaries that they hold. After a guided tour of the building, which is constructed like a miniature village with a main street, lampposts and shops, we were taken to explore the library which we were surprised to learn is open to the general public.

On March 5 a Local History day was held in Dartmouth, a joint event with Dartmouth Local History Society. Over a hundred people attended and we recruited some new members during the day. Dr Todd Gray, Wally Fleet and Jill Drysdale gave talks on "Archive Material for Local History Research", "The Dartmouth Archives Project" and "The Friends of Devon's Archiveswhat we do, who we are" It was agreed by all that this was a very successful day indeed.

On March 18 another successful day was enjoyed by members who attended the meeting in Exeter appropriately called "The Way Forward". This was a meeting with representatives of Friends groups from other counties to discuss various ways in which we all work to help our local Record Offices and to exchange ideas on future projects.

The team, Mike Sampson, John Trott and Judith Farmer, who have been working very assiduously over the last few years transcribing

the whole of Devon's tithe apportionments and preparing them for digitisation, gave a presentation to members on April 24 in Exeter; it has been an arduous job but well worth the effort and will be very much appreciated by many people in years to come.

On July 17 there was a visit to The University of Exeter Library and Archives to view the "Special Collections". In spite of the heat this visit was thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated. We were fortunate enough to be able to handle the literary archives and were taken on a tour of the strong rooms. We were also introduced to the Bill Douglas Centre and given a most informative presentation by Charlotte Berry, the university archivist.

Our AGM and Conference at County Hall is to be held on 21 October 2006. The theme for the Conference will be "Devon Diaries". Six speakers will describe diaries which they have either in their possession or have researched on themes as varied as a Devon thatcher's life, Baring-Gould's diary and the musings of the young daughter of a Major General in 1885. In November there will be four workshops at the Devon and Exeter Institution and a day long conference in Plymouth is being planned. In March 2007 it is hoped to visit the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester. A busy time ahead and application forms for the various events will be dispatched to members soon. Come and join us!

Gillian Falla

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Gillian Falla, Research and Diocesan Archivist in Exeter, on 25 August after a short illness. Gillian came to work for us in 1997 as the senior of the two Research Service staff. Using her archival training and research experience, she developed the quality and scope of research considerably, subsequently taking on responsibility for inspections of parish records under the Parochial Registers

and Records Measure in addition. After a bout of serious illness and major surgery in 2004, Gillian returned to work full-time and moved with the other staff to Great Moor House, but she fell ill again after returning from leave in June. Both staff and the many clients of the Research Service will miss Gillian. She will not be easy to replace, but we will try to live up to the high standards which she set.