



Devon Record Office

Spring Newsletter 2008 Issue 38



Details from the 1743 map of Crediton, showing encroachments on the highway and where the fire stopped.

What price history?

By the time this newsletter is distributed, it is to be hoped that the correspondence of Henry Addington, 1st Viscount Sidmouth, and his family, will be safely back in the Devon Record Office. The decision of the Addington family to present the collection to the nation partly in lieu of inheritance tax, and the award of an extremely generous grant by the National Heritage Memorial Fund, to enable the Devon Record Office to purchase the remainder, was reported in the local and national press just after Christmas. Because of the complexity of the tax calculations, it has taken a

long time to establish the exact amount of the cash contribution, but this is now settled, and we await only the completion of the necessary legal documents to transfer the records into public ownership.

Although both the national importance and the purchase price of the Sidmouth papers are exceptional, purchase of documents is not particularly unusual, and it is rare for a year to go by without one or other office buying a few items. Often we are notified by antiquarian booksellers or auctioneers, or by the National Archives advisory service, that items are coming up for sale, but sometimes there

is a direct approach from the vendor. The response to any offer depends on the historical importance of the item for sale and, of course, the price. One of the difficulties is that, as is the case with most local authority record offices, the Devon Record Office has no budget for the purchase of documents. If an item costs more than a few hundred pounds, therefore, some degree of external funding will almost certainly be involved, and this may come from various sources, depending on the kind of document or collection and the asking price.

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In the past few years several important items or collections have come in to the Devon Record Office by purchase, including the Calmady atlas of 1789 (D 6107) in 2001, the Drake of Colyton records (D 1700) in 2005, and a missing portion of the 1743 map of Crediton (D 6850) and the Herbert Read collection (D 6854), both in 2006. In all these cases we have received generous financial support from, among others, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the National Libraries, the Friends of Devon's Archives, the Kent Kingdon Trust, and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

These purchases, however, make up a very small proportion of our total intake for the period. Most records continue to come in, as they always have, by transfer from our parent authority or from other governmental or ecclesiastical organizations; on loan from families, businesses, and other record owners; or by donation. This piecemeal approach to

collecting is part of the way in which local archive services have developed since the beginning of the last century, and on the whole it has served us well. The disadvantage is that many records are lodged with us on a kind of 'gentleman's agreement', with no guarantee that they will remain here. Problems arise when a collection which has been on loan for a number of years is suddenly offered for sale or, worse still, withdrawn completely from the public domain.

There are signs that the archival landscape is changing, and that in the future we shall be accepting more material by gift or purchase and less on deposit or indefinite loan, as has already happened with libraries and museums. The reason for this is partly to do with changes in the structure of society, and in particular in the nature of local government and its relationship to the community which it serves. The scope of archive keeping has also become wider and now encompasses areas of life and society which were less well documented in earlier years.

The raw materials of history do not belong exclusively to public bodies, and important items can come from anywhere, and on any terms. It is not unknown to be offered a medieval deed for sale on one day and to be given several others for nothing on the next. The market in documents fluctuates in ways which have little to do with historical importance, and the archivist is sometimes faced with difficult decisions about whether to buy and where to find the money. Fundraising also takes time and can be a distraction from other priorities. In short, local authority archive services are at present poorly equipped to enter the market place in search of acquisitions, and a change of approach will be required if this is to become their role.

In the case of Lord Sidmouth's correspondence, there was little disagreement about either its financial or its historical value, and the support that we have had from both funding and advisory bodies has been heartening. Financial contributions towards the purchase are coming from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Friends of the National Libraries, the Friends of Devon's Archives, the Kent Kingdon Trust, and Devon County Council. Sometimes, at least, the decision to buy is easy to make, but getting from there to the desired result is rarely straightforward.



Title page of the Calmady atlas, drawn up in 1789 by Richard Davis of Oxfordshire, sometime topographer to King George III.



The Herbert Read Archive

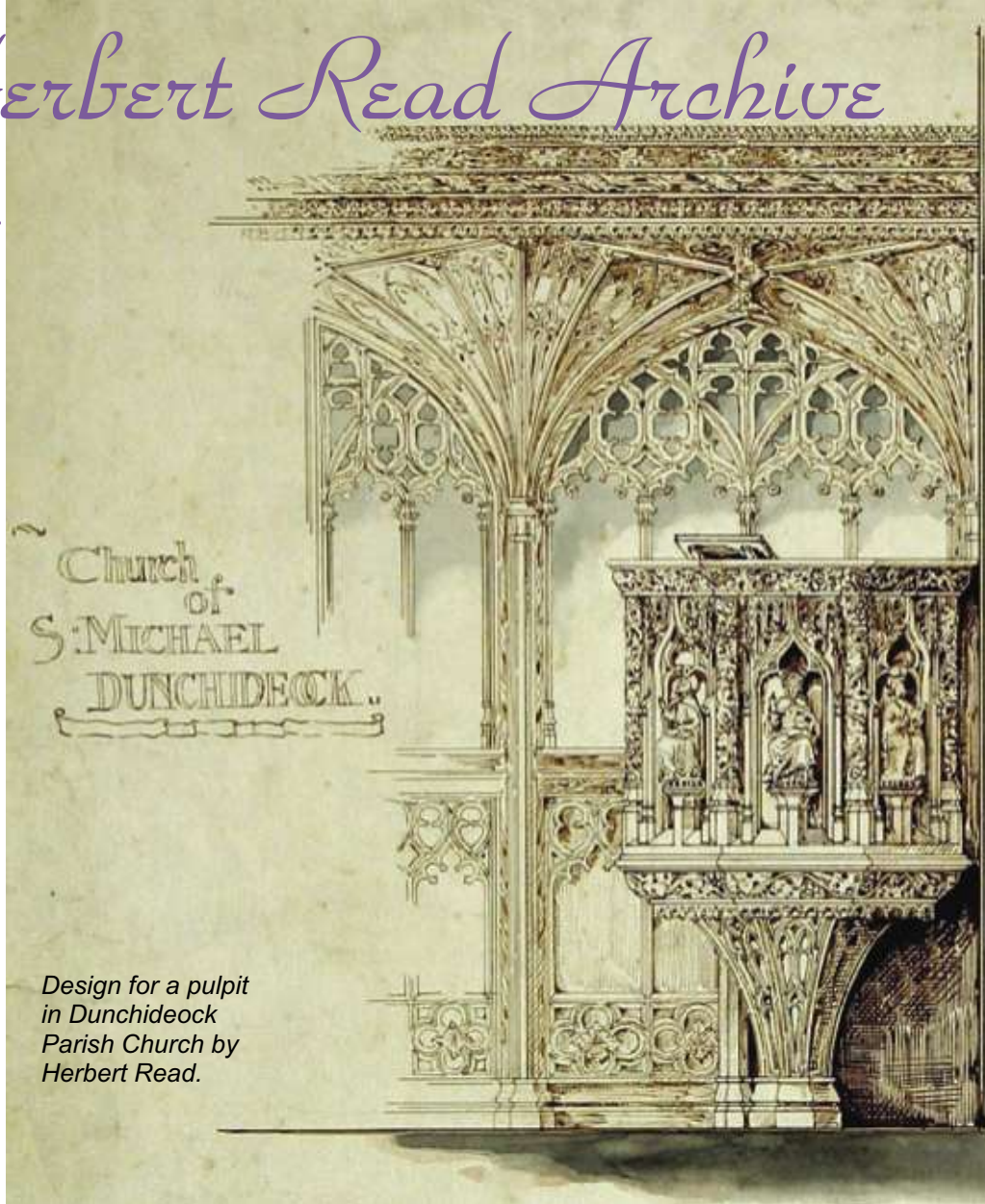
Eliza Newton, Archivist

I was seconded to catalogue the drawings in the Herbert Read archive for three months from the beginning of January. The drawings mainly consist of all types of church furnishings but also include commissions for furniture designs for private houses and other buildings. The collection ranges from the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century and geographically, the collection covers not only Devon but many other counties and locations overseas, including Washington Cathedral in America.

The collection consists of over a thousand drawings and on arrival they were unsorted, dirty and fragile. Luckily we have the Sidmouth branch of NADFAS (National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies) assisting with the preservation project. The volunteers are Diana Nason, Lynn Hooper, Brian Stevenson and Madeleine Pickthorne, who, with great enthusiasm, under the supervision of our conservation team, clean and place the drawings in protective sleeves of Melinex ready for production in the searchroom. As soon as this is complete the drawings can be made available to the public.

The collection was originally stored in order of type of furnishing, so one day I could be cataloguing font covers and the next pulpits, each day being a surprise! The early designs are especially exquisite with intricate details depicted in the decorative carvings and sculptural figures. It would be lovely to visit all the churches to see if the designs were implemented.

Using our CALM cataloguing database, it was decided to organise the collection in descending order of county, place, client, and then project. As time was limited I couldn't sort the collection before inputting on CALM. Luckily the collection had



Design for a pulpit in Dunchideock Parish Church by Herbert Read.

arrived with a brief list of the drawings in alphabetical order of place from which I could check off the drawings, although I seem to have found several more that didn't appear on the list! The drawings have been given a temporary reference number and will be automatically sorted by CALM at the end. Although this isn't ideal, as the references will change, at least we now know what we have and will be able to find them!

The only two difficulties I found were that some drawings had no date or place name recorded. The only clues to dating were in the three different Herbert Read signatures if they appeared on the drawing, or in the writing style of the title or the type of paper used. Consequently a large proportion of the drawings I have dated as early or mid 20th century. Regarding place, I did end up with a large

number of drawings where no place name was given and hope that Mrs Pat Hail, another member of the NADFAS volunteer team who once worked at St Sidwell's Artworks, may be able to locate some of them for us. Perhaps for the rest we will have a 'name that place' competition!

It has been an enjoyable three months and I have been in my element as I love works of art. It was a privilege to catalogue these wonderful drawings; it is a fine collection and I'm sure it will be one of our more popular collections. There are plans to have an exhibition later this year to promote the archive, so watch this space!

Thanks for all the support of the Devon Record Office staff while on my secondment.

Acquisitions of Special Interest

Exeter

Between the start of October 2007 and the end of March 2008, the Exeter office received a typically varied and interesting range of accessions.

The largest and most significant collection deposited over the past six months relates to the Rolle family and comprises a huge range of estate records, including ledgers, account books, journals, rentals, sale particulars, deeds and maps and plans, ranging in date from the fifteenth century to the twentieth (7140).

Parish records were deposited by Bridestowe (7126), Chagford (7166), Cockington (7179), Cockington St. Matthew (7185), Exeter St. Matthew (7133), Ideford (7198), Jacobstowe (7128), Plymtree (7112) and Widecombe in the Moor (7202).

Collections of church records were also received from Alphington Methodist Church (7113), Brixham United Reformed Church (7160), and the Methodist Circuits of Exeter (7145, 7165, 7191), Kingsbridge and Salcombe (7162), Okehampton (7127), Tiverton (7147, 7163) and West Devon (7148), as well as the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District (7149).

Parish council records were deposited by the councils of Chagford (7222), Clyst Honiton (7125), Mary Tavy (7131), Modbury (7142) and Morchard Bishop (7188).

Other official deposits relating to the old Okehampton (7129) and West Devon (7150) Borough Councils were received, in addition to a large deposit of material relating to road

construction and maintenance from the Engineers' department of Devon County Council (7138).

School records relating to Exwick Middle School (7158) and Foxhayes First School (7159) in western Exeter, which have now combined to form Exwick Heights School, were received, together with a wide range of material from Widecombe in the Moor Primary School, including log books and admission registers dating from the school's foundation in 1876. These have the accession number 7202.

A log book (accession number 7189) covering the period between 1938 and 1956 relating to Bradley Rowe Senior Girls' School, Exeter, which later became Priory School and is now ISCA College of Media Arts, was also deposited.

Very few business records have been deposited, although we have received collections of deeds relating to properties in Chagford, Moretonhampstead (7157), Sidbury (7152) and Witheridge (7151) from three firms of solicitors.

As usual, we have received a small number of records with military connections, including a photograph of the 3rd and 4th Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment, taken around 1916 (7153), and a list of the names of the men serving in the West Alvington militia in the late eighteenth century (7183).

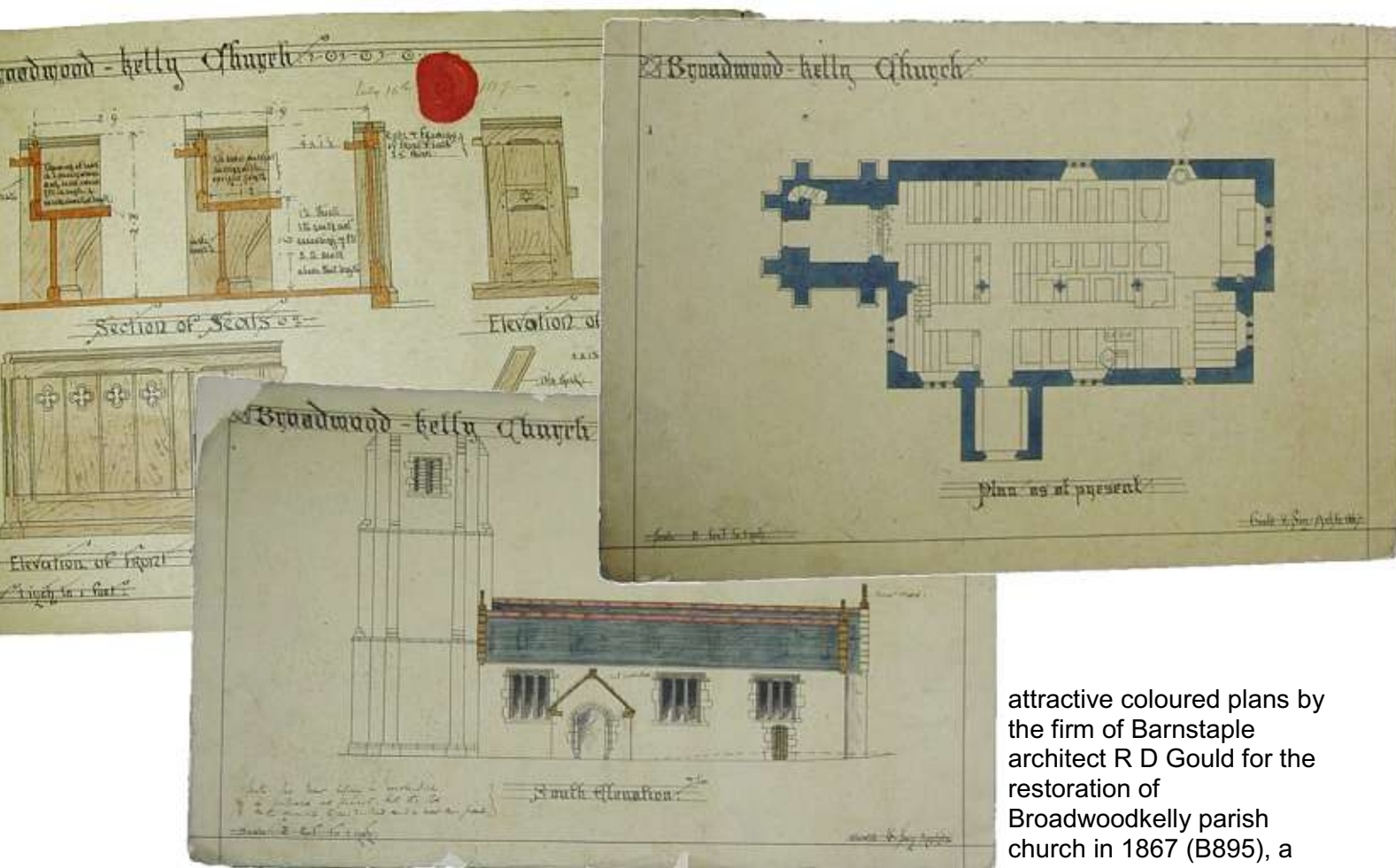
Finally, collections of records were deposited by, and on behalf of, two distinguished local citizens.

The well-known Exeter local politician David Morrish deposited some interesting records of the

Exeter Liberal Association, including material relating to elections between the 1950s and 1997 (7171), and some photographs from his time at the University College of the South-West, (which became Exeter University) in the late 1940s and early 1950s (7170). We have also received a collection of records which belonged to the late Walter Minchinton, Professor of Economic History at Exeter University and a renowned industrial archaeologist, chiefly comprising papers and photographs relating to watermills throughout western England. This collection has the deposit number 7169.

A significant acquisition which was not featured in the last edition of this newsletter because it had not been accessioned at the time was the records of the Giffard family of Halsbury (7107). This contains a huge range of genealogical, legal and political correspondence and other papers, ranging in date from the sixteenth century to the turn of the twenty-first, and includes references to such diverse subjects as travels in Germany in the late nineteenth century and Arrack smuggling in Ceylon some sixty years earlier. We have also just received an additional deposit of papers from the family (7215), which promises to be equally interesting and which will be featured in the autumn issue.

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.



attractive coloured plans by the firm of Barnstaple architect R D Gould for the restoration of Broadwoodkelly parish church in 1867 (B895), a trust deed of the Barnstaple

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: Ashford (1584), Bishops Nympton (596), Instow (3064), Knowstone (B594), Newport (1721) and Newton Tracey (2978). A large group of records relating to the Deanery of Torrington has also been deposited (B913), including chapter minutes and rural dean's reports dating from the 1850s and a list of rural deans going back to 1615.

Additional nonconformist records have been received from the Barnstaple (2347) and Bideford (2237) Methodist Circuits. The General Register Office has deposited a closed marriage register, 1990-2002, for Combe Martin Baptist Church (B914). A collection of historical records relating to the Congregational movement in north Devon has also been received (B81).

Official records have been deposited by Buckland Brewer

Parish Council (B104), together with a large quantity of nineteenth and twentieth century plans of properties in South Molton produced for planning applications submitted to the Town Council (B891). Valuation lists compiled in 1972 for properties in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, Lynton and South Molton Rural District Council areas have been transferred to the Record Office by North Devon Council (3760). Devon County Council photographs and condition surveys of properties affected by the construction of the Barnstaple Urban Relief Road in the 1980s have also been transferred (B903). Minutes of various north Devon hospitals management committees, 1948-1973, have been deposited by the Devon Primary Care Trust (B901).

Other deposits of note include labour and account books of William Harris, wheelwright of Broadwoodkelly, 1868-1906 (B904) and the Perryman family, farmers of Rose Ash, 1888-1954 (B896), a large quantity of north Devon deeds and family papers, 17th-20th centuries, deposited by a Barnstaple solicitors (B902),

Municipal Charities, 1830 (B908), and an extensive set of estate and family papers relating to the Hall family of Pilton (B899). Townshend Monckton Hall (1845-1899) was a prominent nineteenth century geologist and life member of the Devonshire Association, although, unfortunately, the collection does not contain much information on his work. There is, however, a very nice set of his travel journals covering the period 1862-1874. The North Devon Record Office has received a number of collections of moving images in both old and modern formats, including cine film of agricultural shows in the 1920s (B907) and film footage on 20 DVDs of Chulmleigh Fair taken between 1976 and 2003 (B915).

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.

Volunteering at the Devon Record Office

Deborah Phillips
Senior Archive Conservator

Since the Devon Record Office moved to Great Moor House three years ago, we have had the pleasure and privilege of inviting volunteers to assist us with some of the work required on the collections, and in that time we have had around thirty individuals. In the heritage sector some institutions such as the National Trust are well used to attracting literally hundreds of volunteers. These properties need a great deal of manpower to preserve and present them to the public, but the payoff for the volunteers is usually elegant and healthy surroundings and opportunities to meet people. This cannot entirely be said for working as a volunteer at the DRO, either on the archive or conservation side of the coin, where conditions are civilised but certainly not grand. However, despite this drawback, we have a devoted and steadfast group of volunteers.

Collections come into the office in various conditions and invariably need cleaning; therefore we have a suite of rooms where sorting, de-infestation and cleaning take place. The professional staff are perpetually cleaning new accessions, so any help in this area is always greatly appreciated. The next stages of treatment are accessioning, listing, surveying and packaging. It is in these rooms where archive and conservation volunteers might mingle and where the turnover of material is quite fast by archive standards!

But this is not the whole story. Each volunteer has a personal

reason or interest for coming forward. Our first volunteer in conservation came to help us with a particularly encrusted collection from a local solicitor's office after we appealed for help at the Friends of Devon's Archives annual meeting. She can spare only the occasional morning or afternoon, but, although we prefer a regular commitment, we are aware that not everyone can come every week. But, in this case these arrangements work well and it is being done little by little.

More usually, in conservation we have set aside Tuesdays in the studio as our volunteer day each week, when we gather everyone together to work as teams and make it as sociable as possible. The advantage of this is that more experienced volunteers can assist and monitor new volunteers, which helps us carry on with our regular work on those days and helps with a feeling of ownership for each task. The tasks offered to volunteers must, in the main, be basic, but we try to introduce as much variety as possible, and, as an individual gains confidence and experience, we broaden the possibilities. In conservation, you may be asked to clean documents in several ways with various materials and equipment; prepare packaging materials, e.g. Calico coverings or heat sealing polyester sleeves for photographs; or make made to measure dust jackets for books among other things. We generally have an ongoing collection to survey and package, which gives the opportunity to gain knowledge of a group of documents and how they can be

improved by these processes for presentation to the public.

Our volunteers come in roughly three categories. Firstly, school age children who have an interest in history and are recommended to us for work experience in the summer months. Then there are those belonging to history interest groups such as NADFAS (The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) whose members have free time during working hours or who are retired. Their members usually have a particular interest in an individual designer or company, for example Herbert Read, the company whose collection is being worked on here at the moment. Lastly, a group no more or less valuable than the previous two, but vital to advance both the archive and conservation professions, school leavers, graduates and 'second-careerers' who wish to gain experience in a working record office before commencing a college place or who wish to find permanent work in a local government record office, where full training might be offered. There has been a long tradition of training posts at the DRO, but in recent years this has been supplemented by assisting

A busy day in the co



NADFAS volunteers Lynn Hooper and Diana Nason working on the Herbert Read collection.



conservation studio.



Lydia Stirling surveying the Seate of Dartmouth collection and Angus Gordon-Colebrooke refurbishing the office library bindings.



enquiry or request for work experience. There is no interview, but an informal first visit to see the office and discuss what work you might like from the tasks we can offer at that moment. We ask for a short form to be filled out and for the volunteer to read our volunteer and health & safety

office's work which do not involve conservation. For example, we receive regular visits from two people who are assisting with cataloguing correspondence among the papers of the Fortescue family, while we are also currently being visited by a student at the West of England School and College who is helping with cataloguing and maintenance of the office library. Lastly, we have another volunteer who has been attending the office regularly for more than a year and has just begun studying for a distance learning qualification in Archive Administration. While these people usually visit us on particular days we are happy for archive volunteers to come in on any day of the week, providing, of course, we know in advance!

volunteers to gain relevant experience that they can use as evidence for applications and interviews. We are impressed with how in several instances volunteers have rescheduled and sacrificed other areas of their working lives to spend time at the DRO. This dedication reminds me, and I am sure many of my colleagues, how privileged we are to be caring for our written history as full time paid employees.

policies. Some of the work is dirty and we provide everything needed from dust coats to masks and gloves if necessary and training in the use of equipment and health & safety procedures. In conservation we have a large and airy room, which, on quiet days, can have a calming effect, but on other days when we may have up to six volunteers, plus the three of us in conservation, it can be quite a hustle and bustle, which is partly why we reserve Tuesdays as our main day for conservation volunteering.

At present, we are well served with volunteers, but welcome additional offers. You hear that this country would grind to a halt without the services of volunteers and I am sure this is true. Volunteers are so important in community life that the government has had a minister for volunteers by various titles for some years; it is currently Phil Hope MP, the Minister for the Third Sector.

Often the route to becoming a volunteer is by having visited the office on a tour or organised course and resulting from this the feeling may be 'this is just up my street, I want to join in'. At other times we receive a letter of

Volunteers are also welcome to participate in aspects of the

If you are one of our volunteers reading this... a heartfelt thanks.

Digging a little deeper at the Devon Record Office

In celebration of Devon County Council's 'Devon Rocks' 2008 programme. Celebrating Devon's Geology

Katherine Weston
Heritage Outreach Officer

William George Maton (1774–1835)

The Devon Record Office is fortunate to hold the original journals written by William George Maton relating to his tour of Dorset, Somerset, Devonshire and Cornwall during the summer of 1794. Written during his time at university, the two volumes give a fascinating insight into the region during the late 18th century, at a time when Britain was on the cusp of the Industrial Revolution.

During his tour he entered in his journal every phenomenon connected with the mineralogy, geology, antiquities and natural history of the districts he visited. He collected a mass of interesting and new information which was later published and accompanied by a plan that he had drawn, representing the various rocks and sub-soils of which the country consists. This was likely to be the first attempt in England to construct a geological map.

The extract below relates to a visit made by William to the Huel Mexico silver mine in Cornwall.

Huel-Mexico drew us out of the road to St Michael, indeed it would have been inexcusable in us to have neglected visiting the only silver mine in England, when we were so near. ...Having signified a wish to descend into this mine the captain provided me with... a flannel jacket, waistcoat and trousers, a close cap and an old broad brimmed hat. Two candles were put into my hands, one of which was to carry lighted, and the other suspended to a button of my coat. It is advisable to strip off every part of ones ordinary dress even the shirt, the exertion required in mounting the ladders, and the closeness of the interior part of mines occasioning a profuse perspiration, which a flannel dress is best adapted to absorb. No stockings are worn as the water at the bottom of the mine is generally above ones ankles, or even higher. Either in descending or ascending it is prudent to trust more to the hands than the feet and never to take hold of the same spoke with both hands for, if a spoke should break, there can be no chance of safety. The shaft of Huel-Mexico is perpendicular quite to the bottom, and the descent therefore extremely dangerous. In most of the other Cornish mines there are landing places - as they are called, and this one does not descend more than six or seven fathoms before there is a resting place. A person who descends through such shafts does not feel so much apprehension, as in shafts which continue perpendicularly and straight to the bottom of the mine, for if he should unfortunately slip from his hold in the latter he must inevitably be dashed to pieces; in the former he may perhaps escape with his life.

...I was much delighted by a sight of the various positions and groups of quartz crystals around me. Nature seemed to be in the very art of forming them before my eyes; for they shone with their native lustre and I could fancy them to have just sprung out of their shapeless matrix.



Biography

1794 - Graduated with a BA from the Queen's College, Oxford and was elected a fellow of the Linnean Society.

1797 - Graduated with an MA

1797 - Began medical studies at Westminster Hospital

1798 - Gained his MB (Oxford)

1801 - Gained his MD

1800 - Elected FRS.

1802 - Elected a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons

1803 - Goulstonian lecturer

1804, 1813, and 1824 - Censor

1814-20 - Treasurer

1815 - Harveian orator

1800-08 - Physician to the Westminster Hospital

1816 - Appointed *physician-extraordinary* to Queen Charlotte.

1820 - He attended the Duke of Kent in his last illness, and afterwards became physician-in-ordinary to the duchess and to the infant Princess Victoria.

1816 - Maton's father died, deeply in debt.

1827 - Maton had paid off in excess of £20,000 of his late father's debt. The Mayor and Corporation of Salisbury, in testimony of his honourable conduct, gave him the freedom of the city in a gold box.

*Sed revocare gradum,
superasque evadere ad auras,*

-Hoc opus, hic labor est

[But to retrace one's steps
and escape to the air above,
this is a task, this is work]

I might have said, with the
Sibyl.

The effect of so unusual an
excerption to the muscles, as
that of mounting a
perpendicular ladder is
scarcely to be imagined by
those who are not accustomed
to it. My limbs ached
amazingly afterwards, and I
must confess I never surveyed
the wide expanse of the sky,
and the cheerful beams of the
sun with such glad and
grateful emotions as when I
raised my head above the
shaft of the mine.

*Devon Record Office,
Z19/2/10b, p.157-162*

*The Royal Botanic Gardens at
Kew hold the Maton
Collection. It consists of 398
botanical, animal and mineral
specimens, dating from the
end of the 18th century or
early 19th century. A
woodpecker, a shellfish, and a
genus of plants were all
named after him. Most of the
collection is still housed in its
original hand blown glass jars,
with parchment labelled lids.*

The Devon Rocks!
programme is Devon County
Council's range of projects to
celebrate the International
Year of Planet Earth, an
initiative by the Earth Sciences
for Society.

IYPE, Earth Sciences for
Society, aims to demonstrate
new and exciting ways in
which earth sciences can help
future generations meet the
challenges involved in
ensuring a safer and more
prosperous world. The
International year runs from
January 2007 to December
2009. More information is
available from their website:
www.esfs.org.

Friends of Devon's Archives

Jill Drysdale

The Plymouth Meeting at MARJON on 11th November 2007 was very well attended and was very enjoyable and informative. An increase in the number of tables covering all aspects of Devon History made for a sociable and interesting meeting. This year we were fortunate enough to have the heating at a comfortable level. The event was enjoyed by all. Unfortunately we are having some problems with acquiring a venue for this year (2008) but negotiations are ongoing. Members will be advised as soon as the organisation of the event is complete.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The AGM and conference of the Friends of Devon Archives will take place on 18th October 2008 at County Hall, Exeter, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theme of the conference this year is "Devon Place Names" and the speakers include Dr Oliver Padel, Tom Greeves and Margaret Gelling. The cost for the day is £15, to include coffee and biscuits, a buffet lunch with wine, and tea .

Application forms will be sent to members in September.

Staff Changes at Exeter

We welcome Roz Williamson to the staff as an archives assistant. Roz has previously worked at Shropshire Archives and joined us at the beginning of April. She is on duty in the searchroom on Wednesdays and Fridays and will be here until the autumn, when she will take up a place on the archives course at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. We hope that Roz will be happy with us, and that she will enjoy training to be an archivist.

Annual Statistics

Statistics 2007/8 (2006/7 in brackets)

	Exeter	Barnstaple	Total
Individual visits	9,752 (10,117)	3,165 (2,605)	12,917 (12,722)
Group visits	24 (34)	11 (10)	35 (44)
Microform issues	90,535 (98,184)	17,646 (16,139)	108,181 (114,323)
Document orders	9,995 (10,868)	1,752 (1,653)	11,747 (12,521)
Postal enquiries	6,798 (7,867)	702 (979)	7,500 (8,846)
Exhibitions	5 (6)	6 (7)	11 (13)
Talks	26 (19)	9 (4)	35 (23)
Deposits	188 (172)	78 (90)	266 (262)

The past year has been one of consolidation, rather than significant growth, though many of the Barnstaple figures continue to rise. Individual visits are down in Exeter, but the talks and visits are still in demand. The combined attendance at outreach events adds almost 1,000 to the number of people who have made contact with the Devon Record Office during the year, and that figure rises to around 3,000 if we include the Community Roadshow visits and big events like the Family History Fair at Plymouth in March. It is also difficult to get an accurate idea of how many people use the service points, rather than the main offices. The pattern of record office use seems to be changing, but at the moment the direction of the trend is not clear.



Explore North Devon: as one door closes...

Tim Wormleighton, Principal Archivist,
North Devon Record Office

Explore North Devon is an Archives 4 All project funded by a Your Heritage grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund with additional funding from Natural England through the North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Project partners working with the Devon Record Office are North Devon and Torridge District Councils museums service, North Devon Theatres Trust, Devon County Council's Coast and Countryside Service and The National Archives. For the past year and a half we have been working with five community groups in the northern Devon area to develop their collections of local history information, encourage the involvement of residents in contributing new material and digitise the resulting data to populate a web-based resource linked to the popular Access to Archives (A2A) website at www.a2a.org.uk. The communities involved in the project are Bratton Fleming, Hartland, Morteohoe, Parracombe and Winkleigh.

We have now reached the conclusion of the HLF funded phase of the project and we are pleased to report that we have a fully functioning website at www.explorenorthdevon.org capable of receiving uploads of digital images, sound files and moving images from our participating communities. Once

uploaded to the website, the data can be manipulated to create individual stories or map-based heritage trails using software developed as part of the project. The individual communities have been working hard to collate and transfer their data to the project website and we now have an ever increasing amount of fascinating images and information on a wide range of subjects on view. We are presenting a selection of this work in our Showcase Exhibition, on view at the Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon from 29 March to 19 April and at the North Devon Library & Record Office from 6 to 16 May. The Exhibition will also be touring the participating communities and other venues during the North Devon Festival month in June 2008. Full details will be available on the project website.

To mark the formal conclusion of the Archives 4 All phase of the project, we launched our Project Showcase at a private view for around 70 invited guests at the Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon on the evening of 28 March. This brought together volunteers from the participating communities, other groups who have expressed an interest in joining the project and representatives from our major funders. Tim Wormleighton, Principal Archivist at the North Devon Record Office and leader of

the project steering group, opened the formal speeches by giving some background on how the project has developed and outlining future plans. Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Officer, Veryan Heal, representing the Heritage Lottery Fund, spoke of the value of community based heritage projects and their benefits to society. Brian Greenslade, Barnstaple councillor and Leader of Devon County Council, stressed the importance of preserving local heritage and culture through such projects and emphasised the positive impact a greater awareness of heritage can bring to the tourism industry of the region.

We are very pleased to report that additional funding for a new phase of the Explore North Devon project has been awarded by Devon County Council as part of its culture development programme for 2008/09. This will enable us to extend our community archives work to many more parishes in the northern Devon area, as well as developing our existing projects further.

For more information on the Explore North Devon project, or if you have something you would like to contribute, please contact Tim Wormleighton at the North Devon Record Office.

Service points

Annual Service Point Meeting

In March we held the annual Easter meeting for all those involved in running the service points.

The meeting featured a talk by Dr Todd Gray, local historian and author, who gave a fascinating insight into Devon's 'Ugly History', including a look at the slave trade and the rise of Sir Oswald Mosley's 'Blackshirts' in Devon in the 1930s. The meeting concluded with a round up of reports from volunteers and staff running the service points, who noted a number of successful visits from members of the public both from this country and abroad.

Discover your Local and Family History in 2008

The Devon Record Office Archivists have teamed up with the Westcountry Studies Library and members of the Devon Family History Society and are visiting venues across Devon in 2008!

Use our on-board computers to discover how to trace your family tree, learn how to research the history of your house and discover the range of information available to researchers at the Devon Record Office and at Service Points throughout the county.

26th April	Dawlish Dawlish Museum
30th April	Colyton Colyton Local Studies Centre, Market Street car park, Colyton
21st May	Bovey Tracey Heritage Centre
4th June	Modbury Poundwell Meadow car park, near White Hart Hotel
19th July	Widcombe Village green

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Launch of the new Dartmouth Service Point



Local and family history enthusiasts in Dartmouth and the surrounding area welcomed the new service point opened in March. The facility is based in the Flavel Centre which also houses the town's library.

We have been opening service points across Devon since the late 1980s in order to make it easier for people who find it difficult to travel to the Exeter or Barnstaple offices to access

records. These points hold microfilm or microfiche copies of parish registers, tithe maps and apportionments (showing land ownership and use in about 1840), nonconformist registers, and some other records for the local area.

The service point was officially opened officially by local author Ray Freeman, and the event was attended by more than 400 people. The Mayor of Dartmouth and local councillors were also present.

Executive Member for Culture Councillor Sheila Hobden said: "This is yet another example of how we are improving our libraries service and increasingly meeting the needs of local people. Now those who live in Dartmouth and the surrounding area do not have to go all the way to Exeter. They can access a wide range of historical records through the new Dartmouth service point".

The Devon Community Roadshow Bus was on hand with a team of archivists from the Devon Record Office, staff from the Westcountry Studies Library and family historians from the Devon Family History Society. Onboard, local people were able to find out how to research their family history in Devon and discovered how to research the history of their house or parish.

Other exhibitors on the day included the Met Office, Dartmouth Museum, Salcombe Museum, Britannia Royal Naval College, the Dartmouth History Research Group and Kingswear Historians, while a free tour of the Britannia Royal Naval College and Museum was also offered.

The day was a great success, with the new service point becoming the fourteenth to open in the County.

Events

FAMILY HISTORY ADVICE



The Devon Record Office and the Devon Family History Society were on hand to offer advice to family historians at the Federation of Family History Society's stand at the Creative Stitches and Hobbycraft event at Westpoint, near Exeter, which attracted people from all over the country.

Highlights included a life-sized knitted 'Hansel & Gretel' style Gingerbread House (10' x 16') featuring everything you could find in a house, including a full size bed, Welsh-dresser, stove and cuckoo clock as well as the '[Shaun the Sheep's PicKnit Challenge](#)', asking members of the public to knit something towards a life-size picnic.

The Federation of Family History Societies stand was very popular, with over 1000 people asking for advice and sharing their research stories with the team.

RECORDING MEMORIES WEST OF THE EXE

On Wednesday 20th and Saturday 23rd February, staff from the Devon Record Office were on hand to offer advice about house history and family history at two 'West of the Exe' Events, organised by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. During these events, members of the local community were also able to bring along their old photographs and memories to add to the growing online archive on the 'Living Here' website. Additionally, original footage of Exeter during World War Two (from the South West Film and Television Archive) was shown. For more information about the project, please visit www.livinghere.org.uk

LGBT MONTH

During February, the Devon Record Office teamed up with the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) and the Intercom Trust, a body which supports Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities in the South-West, to promote the record office as a place for LGBT research. The first event, on the Community Roadshow Bus, took place at Cowick Street in Exeter. Members of the local community were able to find out how to access the archives and research LGBT history at the Devon Record Office.

A lunchtime lecture also took place in Exeter Central Library, exploring LGBT heritage and the difficulties of researching them through archives.

The Real McCoy Café, Fore Street, Exeter hosted an informal evening, giving people the opportunity to have a coffee and meet other people interested in accessing and discussing LGBT history. The evening included readings by Author Caeia Marsh and a talk from staff at the Intercom Trust, entitled 'The way forward for LGBT History Month here in the South West Peninsula'.

As a result of the project, a searchroom guide to LGBT sources has been produced, in addition to a school pack which gives advice to teachers and young people and an insight into the heritage of LGBT communities.

SCHOOL VISITS

- The Devon Record Office has been working with schools to help pupils develop a greater understanding about the history of their local area. Drake's Primary School, from East Budleigh, visited the office to look at their local tithe map and to see how land use had changed between 1840 and the present day. One child could trace his entire bike ride to school following the road on the tithe map but noted that the orchards had now been replaced by farmland or houses.
- Members of staff and pupils at Hayward's Primary School in Crediton are researching the history of their town with the help of the Devon Record Office. The pupils and teachers are producing an interactive DVD of the town which can be used to teach children about the census and occupations of the people in Crediton during the Victorian period. The DVD also features photographs of Crediton 'then and now', memories from local people, film footage and archival material from the Devon Record Office.
- DAISI (Devon Arts in Schools Initiative) teamed up with the Devon Record Office and the library service to encourage schools in Teignmouth to access archives and research the topic of 'the sea'. Pupils from the local schools used resources at the Devon Record Office for inspiration, after learning about smuggling in the area and pirate raids. A ransom request, written around 1700 by a woman in Kenton, whose husband had been taken captive by Pirates, provided a great deal of enthusiasm for the topic, after she noted he 'remained in the most cruel and barbarous slavery and was ready to eat his own flesh'. Pupils wrote their own letters after marbling paper and displayed them in a Pirate's treasure chest at the final sharing event, open to parents and teachers, in April.

