

## THE BIG MOVE DRAWS CLOSER

This will be the last newsletter before the move to Great Moor House, and, because most of our energy is now directed towards getting the office ready for the transfer, it is smaller than usual. By the autumn the move will be well under way, if not complete, and the aim is still to open the office in its new premises before Christmas. The main searchroom in Exeter will close to the public from 5 July, to allow staff to complete the necessary



preparations, and we hope to start transferring documents to the new strongrooms in September. The Met. Office archives will be transferred from their present home in Bracknell after the main Devon collections are in place, and the staff will settle into the new offices and conservation studio. When everything is ready, we shall open the doors to the public, and a new phase in the life of the Devon Record Office will begin.

### INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS IN EXETER

For the duration of the move we shall continue to make records on microfiche and microfilm available in one of the public searchrooms in Castle Street. There will be a basic copying service for print-outs, and we will endeavour to answer questions and give advice, though most of the staff will be devoting their energies to sorting and packing documents. Unfortunately, we shall have to discontinue most of the services which we provide by post, since these take up a large amount of staff time, but the research service will continue to operate, and we will deal with legal and official enquiries as best we can.

### THE FUTURE OF THE CITY CENTRE

Plans for the future development of the present Devon Record Office building in Castle Street have still not been finalized, but it has been decided that they will include the Westcountry Studies Library and an access point for microfilm and microfiche sources from the Record Office – a whole-county version of the local service points. Our intention is to set this up as soon as possible after vacating the building, but at the moment it is not known how much building work will be needed here, or how much disruption this is likely to cause to the public service here.

What we plan to do, therefore, is to begin in a modest way, with a small number of readers (about three will fit into the present WSL without displacing a lot of other furniture) and complete sets of the most commonly used sources: parish registers, early bishop's transcripts, and (if we can obtain them on fiche) Inland Revenue Wills. The intention in the longer term is to offer access in the city centre to as broad a range of records on fiche or film as users require, but the practical issues will need to be dealt with first.

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### SERVICE POINTS

The move will not affect the operation of the service points, except that staff from Exeter will not make their usual monthly visits while the office is closed. The fiche and film normally kept at these points will be available as usual, as will the copies in the North Devon Record Office and the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, though we hope that the closure will not impose a burden on the service points and the other offices.

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We also appreciate that users of Record Office material in the centre of Exeter will need help and advice on the particularly archival aspects of their research, and we are exploring ways of providing this. A video-link to Great Moor House has been mooted (for those who wish to see a friendly face while making their enquiry), and there will always be the telephone and e-mail. Staff from the Record Office will spend some time there, but it is likely that we shall receive many more visits at Sowton

than we do in the present building, and we want to provide the most comprehensive service possible there.

Some of these issues will take a little time to sort out, and we shall be asking for reactions and views after the new arrangements have been in place for a while. This move is the biggest upheaval which the Devon Record Office has faced since 1977, and we want to make sure that it brings the greatest possible benefits for users, documents, and staff alike.

## FACTS & FIGURES

The figures for the past year show a familiar picture, with slight variations. This time personal visits were slightly down in Barnstaple but slightly up in Exeter. Postal enquiries were up at both offices, as were deposits. Unfortunately, the new systems which were installed during the financial year (CALM 2000 and Windows-XP) have made it difficult to count things in the same way as we have previously, though if anything we are now under- rather than over-estimating. Add to this the upheaval which the move will cause, and

Statistics 2003-2004 (2002-2003)			
Services to the public	Exeter	Barnstaple	Total
Individual visits	9,302 (9,239)	2,469 (2,905)	11,771 (12,144)
Groups	5 (6)	8 (10)	13 (16)
Microform issues	92,488 (114,078)	14,465 (20,415)	106,953 (134,493)
Document orders	8,299 (7,165)	1,371 (1,437)	9,670 (8,602)
Postal enquiries	10,084 (9,471)	693 (652)	10,777 (10,123)
Exhibitions	4 (6)	8 (3)	12 (9)
Talks	10 (14)	6 (6)	16 (20)
Deposits	263 (249)	112 (108)	375 (357)

we are unlikely to have consistent or reliable data again until 2005-6. What is undeniable is that both offices are still very busy, and it will be surprising if this is not further stimulated by the new office in Exeter.

## ACQUISITIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### EXETER

The Exeter office received 112 deposits and accessions between November 2003 and April 2004.

The only public records transferred were those of the Exeter and District (D 6477) and Torquay and District (D 6422) Community Heath Councils, which ceased to exist at the end of November 2003. Exeter City Council transferred its most recent charter, dated 26 April 2002, giving the Mayor of Exeter the title and privileges of a Lord Mayor (D 6490). Drewsteignton (D 6431) and Kingskerswell (D 6483) Parish Councils sent in records, including minutes from the 1890s.

Additional parish records came in from Ashprington (D 2027 add 6), Berry Pomeroy (D 3046 add 2), Broadhembury (D 1324 add 6), Combe Raleigh (D 567 add 3), Halberton (D 4074 add 7), Marldon (D 3239 add 4), Newton St Cyres (D 807 adds 2 & 3), North Tawton (D 2914 add 6), Payhembury (D2974 add 3), Plymtree (D 3636 add 3), Sampford Peverell (D 1198 add 6), Seaton (D 3292 add 5), Sowton (D 780 add 4), Strete (D 3039 add 2), Trusham (D 2014 add 5), and Uplowman (D 829 add 2), and additional Methodist records from the Exeter (D 3080 add 37), Tavistock (D 2276 add 19), Tiverton (D 2514 add 35), and Torbay (D 2330 add 35) circuits.

Among family records there were some 19th-century estate records from the Northcote family of Pynes (D 5657 add), a miscellaneous deposit from the Addingtons of Upottery, including the 1st Viscount's glasses and a piece of cord made of

seal sinew (D 6492), some late 19th-century letters and photographs of the Wrenford family of Shaldon (D 6475), and a collection of documents relating to the manor of Combe Pafford and elsewhere, some of which were 'permanently' withdrawn from the office in 1980 (D 2610 and add).

Club and society records included minutes, accounts, and papers of the Axe Vale Amateur Radio Club from about 1970 (D6474), and minutes and other records of the Devon DA Cyclists' Touring Club from 1930 (D 6250 add). We also received the paperwork relating to the erection of a blue plaque in memory of the late Professor W G Hoskins in St David's Hill, Exeter, by the Devon History Society in October 2003 (D 6419).

One document was acquired by purchase: a probate inventory of George Ford of Plymtree, dated 1702 (D 6472).

As usual, the single and miscellaneous items are among the most fascinating. In this category are a certificate of 3rd prize in a butter-making competition, presented to Master Cecil Michelmores at the Devon County Council Dairy School at Cheriton Bishop in 1915 (D 6464), some photographs of pupils of Dover College during their evacuation to Poltimore House in the 1940s (D 6433), and a copy of the Hatherleigh tithe apportionment made in 1842 by Mr Thomas Roberts, a schoolmaster in that town who had lost both hands in an accident (D 6420).

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Because of preparations for the move, we have listed fewer documents than usual this year, and

many of these items will be available for the first time at Great Moor House.

## 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: Bishop's Nympton (596-11), Bishop's Tawton (1469-14), Frithelstock (3788-2), High Bray (815-5), Horwood (2977-6), Instow (3064-4), Knowstone (B594-2), Loxhore (1328-5), North Molton (1786-7), South Molton (3331-5 & 6) and Roborough (2216-5). The South Molton material includes volumes of churchwardens' and overseers of the poor accounts from 1674 onwards, together with a large group of apprenticeship indentures from 1631 (transcribed and indexed by name by the Record Office).

Additional nonconformist records have been received from the Barnstaple (2347-27 & 28) and Bideford (2237-14) Methodist circuits, and for the combined Methodist/URC Chapel of Christ Church, Barnstaple (B430-4).

Official records have been transferred from the Registry of Shipping & Seamen, including shipping registers for the ports of Barnstaple (3318-2) and Bideford (3319-3) to 1987, H.M. Customs & Excise, including leases and other papers relating to Barnstaple and Ilfracombe customs houses (B689-1), and North Devon Community Health Council (B129-1 & 2). A minute book for Holsworthy Petty Sessions Division, 1934-1939 (B102-2), and a series of volumes, including 20<sup>th</sup> century birth and death registers, for the Barnstaple Registration District (B727) have been passed to the Record Office by the Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon. Records of Hartland Primary School (B730), Harton Town Trust, 1560-1967 (B731), and

Hartland Parish Council, including some parish material (B732), have been deposited as a direct result of the work of the Hartland Archive Project, details of which are reported elsewhere in this newsletter. In addition, the Project has passed to the Record Office further CDs containing digital images of the records of Hartland parish, Parish Council and Primary School and Harton Town Trust, including images of a fascinating series of documents dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century relating to Hartland tithe cases heard in the Court of Exchequer (B715-1 to 7).

Some two hundred CDs of interviews with Exmoor residents forming the Exmoor Oral History Archive, the project featured in the November 2002 edition of this newsletter, have now been formally accessioned and are available to listen to in the North Devon Record Office (B723). There is a detailed catalogue containing summaries of the contents of each interview, compiled by the coordinator of the Archive. Copies of the CDs are also held by the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter and the Somerset Archive & Record Service in Taunton, and there is an informative website at [www.somerset.gov.uk/archives/exmoor](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/archives/exmoor).

Other notable deposits include additional records of Barnstaple Water Company, 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (B234-5), plans of north Devon railway workings, 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (B733), notes on inscribed stones on Lundy (B627-5) and business records of John How & Company, general merchants of Bideford, 1914-1980s (B741). The Record Office purchased at auction a coloured plan of the administrative boundaries of Barnstaple, probably drawn up in connection with the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 (B719).

## FRIENDS OF DEVON'S ARCHIVES

On Monday 15 March 2004 the Friends were very privileged to be able to play host to Peter Pope, who gave a very interesting and informative talk "On the track of an extinct economy: the Newfoundland Trade in Devon records". During a sabbatical in this country Peter had been advised by Dr Todd Gray to consult the Dartmouth Corporation records, which mention the connections between Dartmouth and Newfoundland. As Peter had not known of the existence of these documents, he was astonished both by the information they contained and also by how much it enabled him to further his research.

Another interesting talk was given by the Revd John Scott on 24 May entitled "Devon Bells on Record". The Revd Scott has had an interest in church bells for the last 50 years. During that time he has amassed a wealth of knowledge and

documentation about Devon bells. In a very entertaining talk he described the documents that he has consulted and illustrated his comments with slides of the originals. Churchwardens' accounts have provided a rich source from which to trace the founders of the bells and the incessant demands on the church funds to keep them in good condition.

The AGM and Autumn Conference will take place at County Hall on 30 October. The title of this year's event is 'People and Place: Parish Lists from Medieval Subsidy Rolls to the Victorian Census'. Speakers will be John Draisey, Ian Mortimer, Todd Gray and Jill Drysdale. This should be a very interesting day, and we are looking forward to meeting everyone there. Please contact Jill Drysdale for further information on 01803 863816 or email [jill.drysdale@btinternet.com](mailto:jill.drysdale@btinternet.com).

## 100 YEARS OF RECORD PUBLISHING

The Devon and Cornwall Record Society, which has done excellent work in making historical texts of local interest available in modern editions, is 100 years old this year. It celebrated its centenary at its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 15 May at Great Moor House. About 70 delegates attended, and the guest speaker was Mrs Sarah Tyacke CB, Keeper of the Public Records and Director of the National Archives. The business meeting in the morning was followed by a visit to the National Meteorological Library across the road, where Record Society members were impressed by the



wide range of publications which are available there. After lunch Mrs Tyacke spoke on the future of archives, provoking a lively discussion, especially around the area of digitization. She also found time during the day to look around the new Devon Record Office rooms, suitably kitted out in hard hat, protective shoes, and fluorescent jacket, and to have a preview of the future of archives in Devon.



Above - Sarah Tyacke (left), Margery Rowe, and John Draisey confer in the new conservation studio.

To the left - DCRS members listen to a talk on the future of archives in the dining room.

(Photographs by John Houghton)

## HARTLAND DIGITAL ARCHIVE

### Mr Stephen Hobbs writes:

We have been fortunate in gaining an award from the Tarka Country Millennium Awards. This is to allow archive materials to be digitally recorded, a) for preservation and b) for greater access. This archive now extends to in excess of 14,000 picture images and 124,000 pages of document images.

The materials cover the period from 1400 until the present day and include the archives of: the old Borough of Harton, St Nectan's Church, the Parish Council, the Harton Town Trust, the Prust and Gregory papers, MSS of Richard Pearse Chope (the local historian) and many public and private papers of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This work is ongoing and we are at present looking for further funding.

The register of the Parish of Hartland, complete from 1558, was used as a resource by CAMPOP as one of its primary resources, and the accounts of St Nectan's Church, complete from 1597, have been published. Hartland material from the Lay Subsidies of 1331 and 1524, the Muster Roll of 1569, the Protestation Roll of 1641 and Hearth Tax of 1674 have been utilized by recent researchers, while individual documents were studied by R P Chope.

We are fortunate in that a substantial body of documents from the 16th to 19th centuries has now come to light as a result of our programme. This includes a number of complete rate and tithe books with details of persons and holdings from the 16th century onwards, poor relief books in detail, overseers' book, numerous settlement and bastardy papers, and land conveyances, to name but a few. It seems to us that the amount of material now available from this exceptionally large parish warrants a substantial investigation, especially, perhaps, in the general area of the social history of the 16th and 17th centuries. The history of Hartland Abbey, and the complexities of the transmission of the post-Reformation Abbey estates, together with that of the Manor of Hartland, also merit attention.

The materials are available on CD ROM at the North Devon Record Office and (shortly) the Westcountry Studies Library at Exeter. Copies can be purchased on request. A basic index is available also on request.

We would be interested to hear from anyone who has materials related to Hartland within their own archives or research and would be happy to offer materials for such related studies.

Any  
Comments?

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