

DEVON'S ARCHIVES - ALL TOGETHER NOW

So much has happened in Exeter in the past eighteen months that it is difficult to grasp the scale of the changes. After years of searching, planning, designing, fundraising, building, fitting out, and finally moving, we are at last in our new home and getting used to our surroundings.

The move, which began on 6 December 2004 and ended on 16 February 2005, went remarkably smoothly (thanks in particular to the efforts of Rose Removals), especially considering the complexities involved in moving the contents of two buildings into one and amalgamating series as we went, and we opened our doors to the public on 14 March.

The warehouse at Marsh Barton was handed back to the landlord in June, and the building in Castle Street, which has served as our headquarters since 1977, is being converted for use by the Exeter Register Office.

For the first time ever, all the records in Exeter are now on one site (there were two separate offices in the city until 1977) and available at short notice. The new strongrooms have sufficient expansion space for twenty years' estimated growth, and the searchroom is almost twice the size of the old ones. The new, large, well equipped conservation studio gives us the opportunity to catch up with the backlog of preservation and conservation work, and the archival staff have room to sort and list documents without having to work in the strongrooms.

The new office has had the unusual distinction of being opened twice. The first occasion was a visit by HRH the Princess Royal on 15 December, just a week into the move. A royal visit had been planned for some time, and it was unfortunate that the new record office was handed over much later than anticipated. Nevertheless, the Princess was given an extensive tour of the building, both the new Record Office and the offices on the other side, and unveiled a plaque on the wall in the searchroom.

The second opening ceremony was performed by



The new searchroom with its famous bridge, connecting one side of Great Moor House with the other.

Councillor Mike Knight, then Chairman of Devon County Council, on 21 March, a week after the public were first allowed into the building. Representatives of local authorities in Devon attended the ceremony, and in the afternoon the Friends of Devon's Archives invited members of local history societies and other voluntary

organizations to see the new office.

A NEW START...

One advantage of the building project taking so long was that we were able to plan the kind of public service that would be offered in the new office with some care. Inevitably, things will change, and we are bound to find that some innovations do not work, but the information which we gained from the questionnaires distributed in the newsletter for November 2001 helped a good deal in assessing what our visitors would like.

We have set the opening hours at 10.00 am to 6.00 pm, and we hope to introduce limited Saturday opening in the course of 2006, though delays in recruiting additional staff made this impossible at the outset. The common room, with its drinks and snacks machines and ICT terminals, is popular and well used. The service point at Exeter Central Library attracts a regular clientele, but it will only be possible to develop this further when alterations are made to the Westcountry Studies Library; we are very grateful to WSL staff for supervising this facility for us. Finally, we were pleased to be able to take off the admission charges, which first came into effect in 1981, and to re-introduce free access to the searchroom.

...AND A NEW PARTNERSHIP

One particularly exciting aspect of the new office is our partnership with the Met Office to house the National Meteorological Archive. Before the Met Office moved to Exeter, the historical records were housed in a separate building in Bracknell, and it seemed an obvious step to extend our new

(Continued from page 1)

building to accommodate them. This arrangement has many advantages: researchers can use the records in our searchroom, there are conservation facilities on hand, and the records are stored in the same conditions as ours. We are enjoying

getting to know Ian MacGregor and Kate Strachan, the two Met Office staff who have desks in our office, and we hope in time to learn much more about the fascinating series of records for which they care.

STATISTICS

It is usual in the Spring issue of the newsletter to give a brief breakdown of the use and activities of the two offices, to allow comparisons between years. As there was no issue this spring, a table is given below. The Exeter office was partially closed between July and March, and was physically on the move between December and February, and the figures need to be seen in this light. However, it is interesting that so many people still came to Exeter to use the microfilm and microfiche, and that the closure did not lead (as we feared at one time) to a big increase in personal visits to Barnstaple. That the North Devon office produced both more microforms and

more documents to fewer people than in 2004/5 quite possibly has nothing to do with events in Exeter, though the large increase in postal enquiries (including emails) suggests that many distance users have been diverting their attention northwards.

Until we have a full year's figures at the end of next March, we shall not know what effect the Exeter move has had. Factors like the increased size of the searchroom, longer opening hours, and the removal of admission charges are bound to make a difference, but the pattern of visits is also likely to change. The old office in Castle Street received many casual callers who were passing by or using the library, whereas a special journey is needed to Sowton, and we expect to see people staying for longer. A Public Services Quality Group user survey is due next February or March, and that should provide useful information on the general reaction to the new office. We are grateful to everyone who takes the trouble to complete one of the survey forms; it is very nice to have informal feedback, but it is much more useful to have a contribution to a survey which allows comparisons across the country and from year to year.

Statistics 2004/5 (2003/4)			
Services to the public	Exeter	Barnstaple	Total
Individual visits	5,481 (9,302)	2,232 (2,469)	7,713 (11,771)
Groups	2 (5)	12 (8)	14 (13)
Microform issues	75,921 (92,488)	14,732 (14,465)	90,653 (106,953)
Document orders	2,876 (8,299)	1,611 (1,371)	4,487 (9,670)
Postal enquiries	4,178 (10,084)	913 (693)	5,091 (10,777)
Exhibitions	3 (4)	5 (8)	8 (12)
Talks	4 (10)	4 (6)	8 (16)
Deposits	137 (263)	98 (112)	235 (375)

ACQUISITIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

EXETER

Between 1 May 2004 and 31 October 2005 the Exeter office received 277 accessions.

Parish records came in from Ashwater (D 2466 add 5), Blackawton (D 995 add 10), Bridgerule (D 2904 add 2), Broadhempston (D 2659 add 3), Buckland-in-the-Moor (D 2150 add 4), Burlescombe (D 2513 add 4), Churchstow (D 3078 add 2), Clawton (D 3577 add 3), Dunsford (D 4572 add 3), East Woolfardisworthy (D 452 add 5), Exeter St David (D 2831 add 4), Exeter St Martin (D 302 add 5 and D 6626), Exeter St Matthew (D 3907 add 5), Halberton (D 4074 add 8), Halwill (D 2898 add 2), Holcombe Rogus (D 3082 add 4), Ideford (D 2453 add 6), Luffincott (D 2897 add 2), Manaton (D 1541 add 5), North Bovey (D 1542 add 3), Pancrasweek (D 2905 add 2), Sampford Peverell (D 1198 add 7), Sherford (D 3033 add 4), Sidmouth (D 1855 add 7), Staverton (D 872 add 4), Tetcott (D 1487 add 4), Thurlestone (D 3037 add 3), Tipton St John with Venn Ottery (D 2429

add 3), Torbryan (D 3066 add 5), Uplowman (D 829 add 3), Venn Ottery (D 2428 add 2), Whimple (D 1418 add 7), Whitestone (D 2947 add 8), and Willand (D 2962 add 3). The Diocesan Registry transferred a large quantity of recent records, following their move to new premises (D 6610).

There were also collections of church records from the Devon Hebrew Congregations (D 6723); Exeter (D 3080 add 39), Newton Abbot (D 1517 add 8), Sidmouth and Bridport (D 2399 adds 34-36), and Totnes (D 2275 adds 13-14) Methodist Circuits and St Thomas Methodist Church (D 5210 add 4); the Thorne collection of Methodist circuit plans (D 2812 add 15); Lapford Congregational Church (D 6664), Sandford Congregational and St Swithun's Cope Church (D 6665), St Thomas Congregational Church (D 6620 & add), and St Thomas United Reformed Church (D 6693); Moretonhampstead Unitarian Chapel (D 6582); the Society of Friends (D 874 add 10); and the Exeter Assembly (D 3542 add).

Parish council records came in from Bigbury (6712), Cheriton Fitzpaine (D 6600), Ipplepen (D 5449 add 2), Payhembury (D 3943 add 2), South Huish (D 6646), Thorverton (D 5747 add), and Throwleigh (D 4645 add 2). Other official deposits included planning records from Torbay district councils (D 4582 add 13), a large collection of architectural drawings from Exeter City Council (D 6608), reports and accounts from the Environment Agency (D 6506), a further series of Devon shipping registers (D 6274 add 2), financial and other records from Exeter County Court (D 6510), cremation registers from Torquay Crematorium (D 6641), and a large body of records of the Royal Western Counties Institution, Starcross (D 6696), transferred from Exeter University Library.

There were several deposits from clubs and societies, including the Devon Association of Young Farmers' Clubs (D 2696 adds 85-87), Exeter Round Table (D 4443 add 4), Kentisbeare Women's Institute (D 6219 add), the Devon Women's Cricket Association (D 6518), the Exeter and County Club (D 6597), the Inner Wheel Club of Preston (D 6634), Feniton Tennis Club (D 6638),

the Exeter Geology Society (D 6649), the St Thomas Church, Exeter, Band of Ringers (D 6662), the St Thomas Allotment Holders' Association (D 6667), and the Bishop Blackall Old Girls' Society (D 6699). The Campaign to Protect Rural England also deposited some recent correspondence and papers (D 6570).

The miscellaneous deposits were not as unusual or bizarre as they sometimes are, but among the usual photographs, postcards, and photocopies we received two early 20th-century albums of drawings and poems belonging to Miss Davey of Exeter (D 6531 and add), a letter dated 19 March 1827 from Mary Ayre of Bovey Tracey to her son in Newfoundland (D 6681), a cine film shot by Westward TV of Exeter v. the Red Demons (a speedway fixture) around 1960 (D 6550), and gramophone records of the Torquay Girls' Grammar School choir singing Christmas carols in 1949 (D 6591).

As usual, unfortunately, not all these records are yet available for consultation. We shall endeavour to have them listed and 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: Berrynarbor (3921-5), Bishops Nympton (596-12 & 13), Bishops Tawton (1469-15 & 16), Brushford (1094-2), Dowland (1501-4), Hartland (1201-6 & 7), High Bray (815-6), Horwood (2977-7), Iddesleigh (1500-1), Knowstone (B594-3 & 4), Loxhore (1328-6), Marwood (3398-7), Molland (B415-4), Newport (1721-5), North Molton (1786-8, B762), Romansleigh (B764) and Yarnscombe (2979-5).

Additional nonconformist records have been received from the Barnstaple (2347-29 to 34), Bideford (2237-15), Bude (2926-7), Holsworthy (2638-12 & 13), Ringsash (2405-6), South Molton (2506-7), Shebbear (B607-4 & 5) and West Devon (B668-2) Methodist circuits, and for the Barnstaple Baptist Church (B419-7 to 10). A minute book of the quarterly meetings of the Bideford Bible Christian Methodist Circuit, 1897-1914, was purchased by the Record Office from a private seller on eBay (B759).

Official records have been transferred from the parish councils of Alwington (3676-3), Goodleigh (B775), Hartland, including the parish copy tithe map, recently digitised by the Hartland Digital Archive Project (B732-1 to 3), Iddesleigh (B774), Landkey (B532-1), Littleham & Landcross, including minutes, 1894-1988 (B768), Parkham (B380-2) and Shebbear, including minutes, 1894-1989 (3990-3). Records of Abbotsham (B78-2), Hartland (B730-1) and Oxham (Mariansleigh & Romansleigh) (B765) Primary Schools have also been received, together with a large number of

minute books and councillors' declarations from Great Torrington Town Council, dating from the 1830s to the 1950s (2558-4).

Other notable deposits include 19th century order books and muster rolls of the North Devon Yeomanry (B773), certificates awarded to the Barnstaple Troop of North Devon Scouts, some signed by Baden-Powell (B758), a game book from the Buckland Filleigh Estate, 1885-1964 (B756), a comprehensive group of title deeds for the County Garage premises in Barnstaple, 1705-1936 (B752), a set of oral history recordings and transcripts from Winkleigh (B769), records of Abbotsham (B763) and Georgeham (B790) Women's Institutes and miscellaneous material relating to the history of Lundy (B627-6, B806). The Record Office has purchased an attractive set of around 80 glass lantern slides of local views produced by the Bath photographer, Graystone Bird, around 1910 (B751).

Two significant collections of research notes and papers of former Record Office users (both of whom, sadly, have passed away recently) have been received from their respective estates. The first consists of the papers of Michael Wickes, who for more than twenty years was a professional genealogist specialising in research in South West England (B802). The second comprises the personal papers of Brian Chugg, artist, teacher and writer (B804). The collection includes notebooks on a wide range of topics (Brian wrote extensively on many subjects, including a regular 'Country Diary' for *The Guardian*) and a large photographic archive. Please note that these two collections are very large and that it will be some time before they are catalogued and made available for consultation.

Conservation Studio – Home at Last

Now that we have recovered from the shock of the move, which seems to have gone on for an eternity, we can now look back over six months of settling in, setting up new work practices and concentrate on conservation rather than the packing, labelling and cleaning of the years before the move.

What I mean by ‘Home at Last’ is that we are at last all together on one site, the collections and the staff, we can communicate much better, we can react to situations and solve problems more quickly. Gone is the delay of having to transport documents and get hold of archive colleagues by phone or email, remember your notes/tools/umbrella! It is a great relief and much more efficient.

Not only are we together as a staff, but now Conservation is close to hand for advice to the public. Now we can offer our services of advice and practical assistance much more readily, the searchroom is only a few steps down the corridor, and the Great Moor House site is much easier for visits by car or bus. If you want to ask us about the care of family documents, please ask a member of staff in the searchroom to call one of us (Deborah Phillips, Rebecca Gee or Ian Ponsford) and we will do our best to help. Advice is free and packaging materials are very reasonably priced. We sometimes take on private work, but if not, we can suggest local professionals.



We have been benefiting from help in the studio in the form of work experience placements and volunteers. Since June we have had the regular assistance of Angus Colebrooke (seen here working on a book spine) who has ambitions to be a bookbinder and is helping us to refurbish the DRO



Discussions with colleagues from Dorset and Somerset Record Offices (from left, Mervyn Richens, D.P., Rebecca Donnan, Elizabeth Donovan and I.P.) on the best way to remove water stains.

library books while picking up some skills from us and using our technical library.

The Conservation Studio is now very well equipped with *almost* everything a conservator would wish to use in the treatment of documents and already we have hosted training days with local archive conservators so that we can demonstrate to and be trained by more experienced colleagues.

Here you can see the treatment for removing adhesive stains as a result of sellotape use (the curse of the conservator, please don't use it on documents), a laborious, but effective treatment on the suction table using a variety of chemicals.

A cockled/ water damaged parchment Bishop's Transcript undergoing humidification in the new 'Dome' after which it can be flattened on the suction table, making it legible for transcription or production in the searchroom.



Seen here with Ian Ponsford are Daniel Saunders and Katherine Felstead who were here for a couple of days and helped clean documents and a tithe map. Volunteers enrich our working days and keep us on our toes.



Here I am laying down paper pulp to reconstruct the missing corner of this document.

This is a very exciting time for conservation here and we look forward to sharing our skills and facilities with you.

*Deborah Phillips
Senior Archive
Conservator*

CONSERVING DEVON'S TITHE MAPS

Devon has approximately 500 parishes – one of the highest numbers in the country! During the 1840s, every parish in England and Wales was mapped – boundaries were defined, properties marked and fields annotated according to the landowner to whom they belonged. Three copies of each map were made – one copy for the Tithe Commissioners (now held at the National Archives, formerly PRO), one copy for the Diocese, and a final copy for the parish. Devon Record Office now houses virtually all the Diocese copies, and a substantial number of the parish copies.

All of this makes for a great deal of work for conservators! The total count in the DRO comes in the region of 420 Tithe Maps! Almost every single one of these would like some kind of attention, be it simple cleaning and packaging, up to full-scale conservation. I'm not sure how many 'lifetimes' work it is, but it should keep us in a job for quite a while!

One of the wonderful treasures in our new, and vastly improved, Conservation Studio, is a huge map wall. This is two vertical sheets of toughened glass, measuring 4m wide by 3m tall and back-lit by fluorescent tubing. It has already been instrumental in the repair of two tithe maps, and will hopefully see many more over the forthcoming years...

ASHTON – NEW LIFE AFTER YEARS BEING UFP!

Approximately thirty Tithe Maps are currently classified as UFP – meaning they are unfit for production in the Searchroom. Ashton was chosen to be the first map conserved, after a sizeable break concentrating on packaging whilst we moved to the new office. I now can't remember whether it was its early position in the alphabet, its relatively small size, or some other factor that led to its selection but, after decades of neglect, it finally got some attention this year!

This poor map had obviously been stored in less than ideal conditions and was covered in a layer of dirt and dust, with frequent areas of staining.

The first job, having measured it and recorded lots of details about its condition, was to clean the accumulated surface dirt. This is done using soft brushes and a latex sponge which gently removed huge quantities of grime!

Having removed the old linen backing which was also hideously dirty and stained, and separated the map into its six component sheets, the inks were tested to see that they wouldn't run, and the whole lot plunged in warm water! This is actually nothing like as drastic as it sounds, and does

result in a lot more dirt and staining being washed out.

Once washed and whilst drying, the new backing can be prepared. A piece of Irish aero-linen was measured, pre-washed and pasted onto the huge map wall. Onto this each piece of the map in turn had to be carefully pasted and positioned, checking all the overlaps matched up correctly.



One of the lovely things with having a digital camera in the office is that we can take pictures of our work as we go along, and admire how much difference we make. Unfortunately it also means that people take advantage of you whilst up a ladder!

Anyway, back to Ashton... having pasted the map onto the wall, it was obvious how 'frilly' its edges were where pieces had become detached, and often lost.

This resulted in a very frustrating jigsaw puzzle

which included over a hundred small pieces of paper, some with the thick black border on, but many totally blank with no clue to their location!

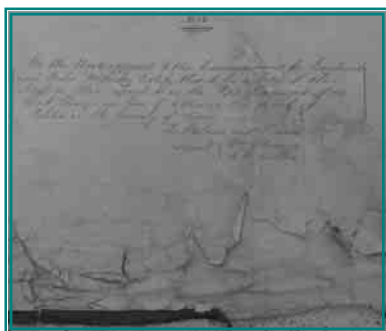
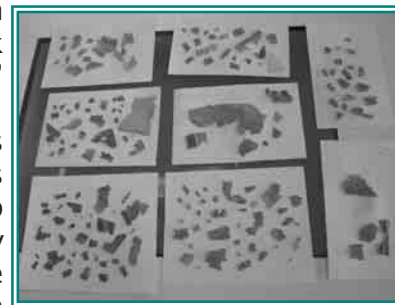
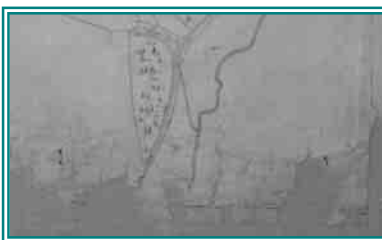
Fortunately it meant no precious information had been lost and, once the majority of the loose pieces had been reattached, the map already looked vastly improved!

But many areas still had no map at all, and instead had to be in-filled with an alternative paper. It is hard to get something that exactly matches, and repairs need to be sympathetic but obvious and not passed off as original.

The advantage of working on a huge light-box is that it is much easier to trace the shape of the missing areas and make their infills.

All the repaired areas and the very numerous tears and other small holes then had to be further supported with very fine, long-fibred tissue to prevent them becoming unstuck and 'pinging-off' again in the future.

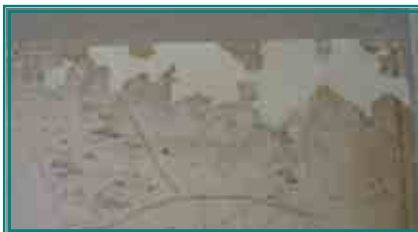
Once all this conservation was complete, the map could be gently removed from the wall, the excess linen cut away and the edge reinforced with a further layer of fine tissue. Then the whole thing could be rolled up around a huge acid-free tube, placed in a calico bag and returned to its proper position in the Strongroom. And lastly, but by no means least, the UFP alongside its name in the finding catalogue rubbed away!



A NEW FUTURE FOR OLD MAPS?

One of the things that did come up in selecting the first maps to receive attention after a few years of 'benign neglect' was trying to decide, "Which one shall we do next?". Although only a selection are removed from public use as being too fragile, most of the Tithe Maps in the collection do need some sort of remedial work, and prioritising is currently very subjective. This is hampered by things being classed only as either 'yes, fine, it can be issued to searchers' and 'oh no, that one's too far gone, UFP-it!'. Definitely not an ideal system and something I hope to remedy in due course.

The hope is to categorise all Tithe Maps by the same five-point condition scale we use in the Conservation Studio for other items. We will also be able to put comments about which ones have



been previously treated, whether they are dirty, separating from their backing, or just badly torn. Obviously this is a huge task and may have to happen as maps go in and out of the Strongroom as Searchers request them, backed up with a survey of the 'less popular' items by myself and the other Conservation staff.

It's a bit ambitious, but should help us assess how much work these highly used, useful and beautiful items need, and attempt to work out an order of getting them all done!



The vast map wall proves its worth...
Ashton (left), Buckland-in-the-Moor (right)

ARCHIVES 4 ALL

This is a central objective of the new *Archives UK* consortium (*aUK*) and the latest phase of the *Access to Archives (A2A)* initiative, which has been successful in making catalogues of archive collections from around 400 record repositories across England accessible via the Internet over the last few years. The *Archives 4 All* project seeks to develop both the content of, and access to, the rich and varied holdings of community archives, with the aims of reaching new audiences, promoting best practice and providing a support mechanism whereby material collected by communities can be digitised and published on the Web, resulting in a fully searchable online catalogue.

It looks likely that, unlike previous phases of *Access to Archives*, there will be no consortium

bids for funding large regional projects for *Archives 4 All*. Instead, individual projects, or groups of projects, will be invited to submit their own bids. In Devon, we have identified the successful *North Devon on Disk (NDOD)* network as an ideal framework on which to base a group bid to develop community archives in that part of the county. As a pilot project, the *Winkleigh House Scouts* will be submitting a separate bid to enable them to enhance their database of photographs and information on individual buildings in the parish and to import that data into the *NDOD* website. Where funding is secured, the *Archives 4 All* scheme will run until March 2008. Further information can be found on The National Archives website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk



DORIS GOES TO HOLSWORTHY



Susan Laithwaite writes...

On 21st September, Jan Wood and I travelled to Holsworthy with Diana Lewis and Roger Keys of the Devon Family History Society to hold a Family History Day in conjunction with Holsworthy

Museum, where we have a service point. We met up with Doris, the Devon in Touch vehicle, and Lisa Wilson and Peter Folland in the car park by the Museum. People were arriving to ask questions about family history long before the Day was officially meant to begin and we were kept busy showing them how to use the computers inside Doris to explore a range of web sites and helping them to use microfiche of parish registers and all the other resources in the Museum. The Museum staff, Janet Mason, Liz Curtis, Shawn Dymond and Diana Green, gave expert advice on researching both family history and the history of the Holsworthy area. We were very fortunate to be able to draw on their extensive local knowledge.

The day was so successful that we have decided to do similar trips with Doris this year, and we have already booked two 'Discovering History Days' in Holsworthy once again and in Kingsbridge.

1805 AND ALL THAT



Guests disembark from the bus outside Great Moor House.

The bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar has dominated the past year in many ways. The celebrations got under way well before the date of the battle itself (21 October) or of the arrival of the news of the British victory and Nelson's death at Falmouth (4 November) or London (6 November), beginning in Devon with the arrival of Alex Price, the actor

portraying Lt John Lapenotiere, in Lifton on 15 August. 'Lt Lapenotiere' then called at Okehampton and Crockernwell on the 16th, amid much rejoicing, before arriving in Exeter on the 17th. The post-chaise carrying the lieutenant and his important news drove down High Street,



The Chairman of Devon County Council, Cllr Des Shadrick, accompanied by 'Lt John Richards Lapenotiere', receives the New Trafalgar Dispatch from the Lord Lieutenant, Mr Eric Dancer.

accompanied by other coaches and marching bands, to the Guildhall, where the New Trafalgar Dispatch was delivered to the Lord Mayor.

After a buffet lunch in the Mayor's Parlour and a brief tour of city hostelries, the official party boarded a park and ride bus to make the journey to Great Moor House, where the Devon copy of the Dispatch was handed over to the Chairman of Devon County Council by the Lord Lieutenant (who had received it at Lifton), and then to the County Archivist for safe keeping in the Record Office. Ian MacGregor of the Met Office recounted meteorological conditions in October and November 1805 and gave a prognosis of the weather on the onward journey to London.

The afternoon's festivities concluded with a cream tea in the Great Moor House dining room, before 'Lt Lapenotiere' and the rest of his party continued their journey to Honiton, Wilmington, Kilmington, and Axminster, and thence into Dorset. Thus was the Trafalgar Way inaugurated in Devon.

DRAKE AND NELSON

In mid-2003 the opportunity arose to buy a small but significant collection of correspondence and other papers of the Drake family of Yardbury in Colyton, which had been in the Exeter office on deposit since 1968, together with some additional letters which had not been seen before. This was a separate branch of the family from the Drakes of Plymouth and Tavistock, but, as with their more famous relatives, most of the males were christened Francis, which makes identification difficult.

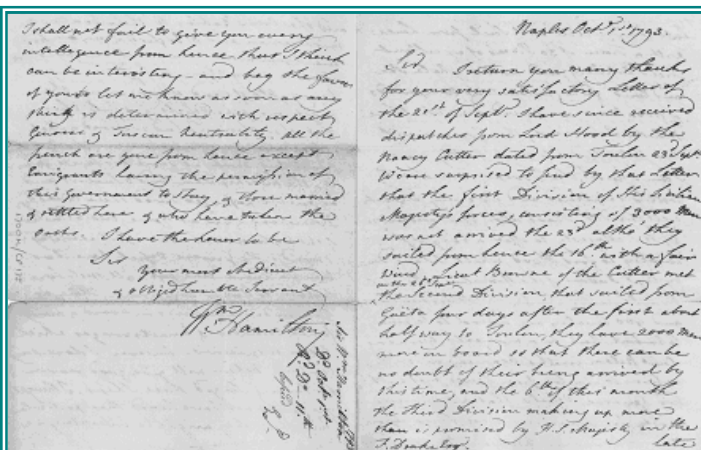
Francis Drake (born 1764) was chargé d'affaires at Copenhagen before moving to Venice and Genoa in 1793. His correspondence includes letters from Sir William Hamilton, Admiral Lord Hood, Lord Grenville, and others, many of them

relating the exploits of Horatio Nelson, then a captain in charge of HMS Agamemnon. Drake married in 1795, and his elder son was christened Francis Horatio Nelson. He died in 1821.

The asking price was well beyond the office's budget, but the Heritage Lottery Fund generously awarded a grant towards the purchase and promotion of the collection. As many of the letters relate to foreign policy at the beginning and end of the 18th century (the War of the Spanish Succession and the Napoleonic War), 'SeaBritain 2005' provided an ideal opportunity to draw attention to this correspondence and what it can tell us about Britain's role in Europe and the part played by Devonians in foreign policy.

Thanks to the volunteer efforts of a local naval historian, Mr Michael Pentreath, we were able to make a selection of the most interesting letters and documents, which were then scanned with the help of a colleague from the library service. Colour prints were made of the digital images, and these were made into a travelling exhibition. Two identical copies of this were made, so that they could tour different parts of Devon simultaneously. The exhibition went on display in Dawlish and Teignmouth libraries and formed part of Trafalgar celebrations at the North Devon Maritime Museum at Appledore, and it can now be seen at Great Moor House and the North Devon Record Office.

The digital images will be mounted on our website as a permanent resource for anyone who wishes to know more about the Drakes and 18th-century history. A detailed catalogue is already available on-line on the *Access to Archives* website.



A letter from Sir William Hamilton to Francis Drake, dated at Naples, 1 October 1793, relating how Captain Nelson has fired on two Genoese vessels, for which he will no doubt give good reason.

FRIENDS OF DEVON'S ARCHIVES

"People and Place" was the theme of the AGM and conference in October 2004. Aspects of population lists from the 13th century to the Victorian census were presented by John Draisey, Ian Mortimer, Todd Gray and Jill Drysdale. In November there were joint workshop events with both the Devon and Exeter Institution and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.

In March 2005 the new Record Office at Great Moor House was opened and members of the Friends were invited to view the new premises, have a conducted tour behind the scenes and enjoy a cup of tea afterwards. This event was very well supported. In June Steve Hobbs came to tell us about the Hartland Project and gave a Powerpoint presentation about the mammoth task of digitising 300,000 archival documents from Hartland and the surrounding district. The AGM and conference in October 2005 was a joint venture with the Devon Buildings Group. Three

members of the group, John Allan, Michael Laithwaite, and Nat Alcock, together with Tim Wormleighton, gave presentations on varying subjects from "Documents for House History" to the intriguing history of "King Johns House" in Exeter.

Future events include a visit to the Met Office in January 2006, a joint event with Dartmouth Local History Group on 4 March 2006, a meeting with other Friends groups on 18 March 2006 and a presentation of the "Tithe Map Project" now completed by members on 24 April 2006. In July we hope to take a group to visit the Archives held in the Library at the University of Exeter, and in September we hope that David Hawkings, author of *Criminal Ancestors*, will give a presentation on "Criminal Records in Devon". Our next AGM and conference on 21 October 2006 will have the theme "Devon Diaries". Why not come and join us?

CALLING ALL LOCAL HISTORIANS

The Friends of Devon's Archives are currently coordinating a major two year research project entitled "18th Century Devon: People and Communities". This project will see the online publication of a series of documents relating to the history of the county during the eighteenth century, starting with the little known 1723 oath rolls. These contain the names of approximately 28,000 Devonians, and when complete the transcripts will provide a major new research resource for the county. Other documents will

follow, including replies to Bishop's visitation queries and lists of freeholders. Thanks to a £50,000 Heritage Lottery grant the Friends are employing a dedicated research officer, Simon Dixon, who is supported by project co-ordinator Ian Mortimer.

The core aim of the project is to encourage research into local communities in eighteenth century Devon. Individuals and groups interested in getting involved can contact Simon at the Devon Record Office, or by email at s.n.dixon@ex.ac.uk, for more information.

STAFF CHANGES AT EXETER

We have been delighted to welcome four new members of staff to the Exeter Office. Rebecca Gee joined the conservation team in August 2004 as Conservator, in the place of Margaret Burgess, who retired in April 2004. Gill McCairns has joined us as Research Assistant, replacing Sybil Cudlip, who retired in August 2004. Renée Jackaman has been appointed to the new post of Archivist (bringing the compliment of archivists here back up to six). Finally, Simon Dixon has arrived as Research Officer, a two-year post funded from a Heritage Lottery Fund grant secured by the Friends of Devon's Archives for the transcription of 18th-century names and their publication on the Internet.

RESEARCH SERVICE

The cost of an hour's research, which has been £18.00 for several years, goes up to £20.00 from January; the half-hour charge will also go up from £10.00 to £12.00. This service remains very popular, and the new on-line request enquiry forms, in spite of some difficulties in processing payments, have been used quite extensively. Now that we have two research staff again, we are concentrating on keeping the backlog of enquiries down.

Aptly named entry found in the Barnstaple St Peter parish register:

'The Lord is Neere Priest buried the 27th of September 1621'