

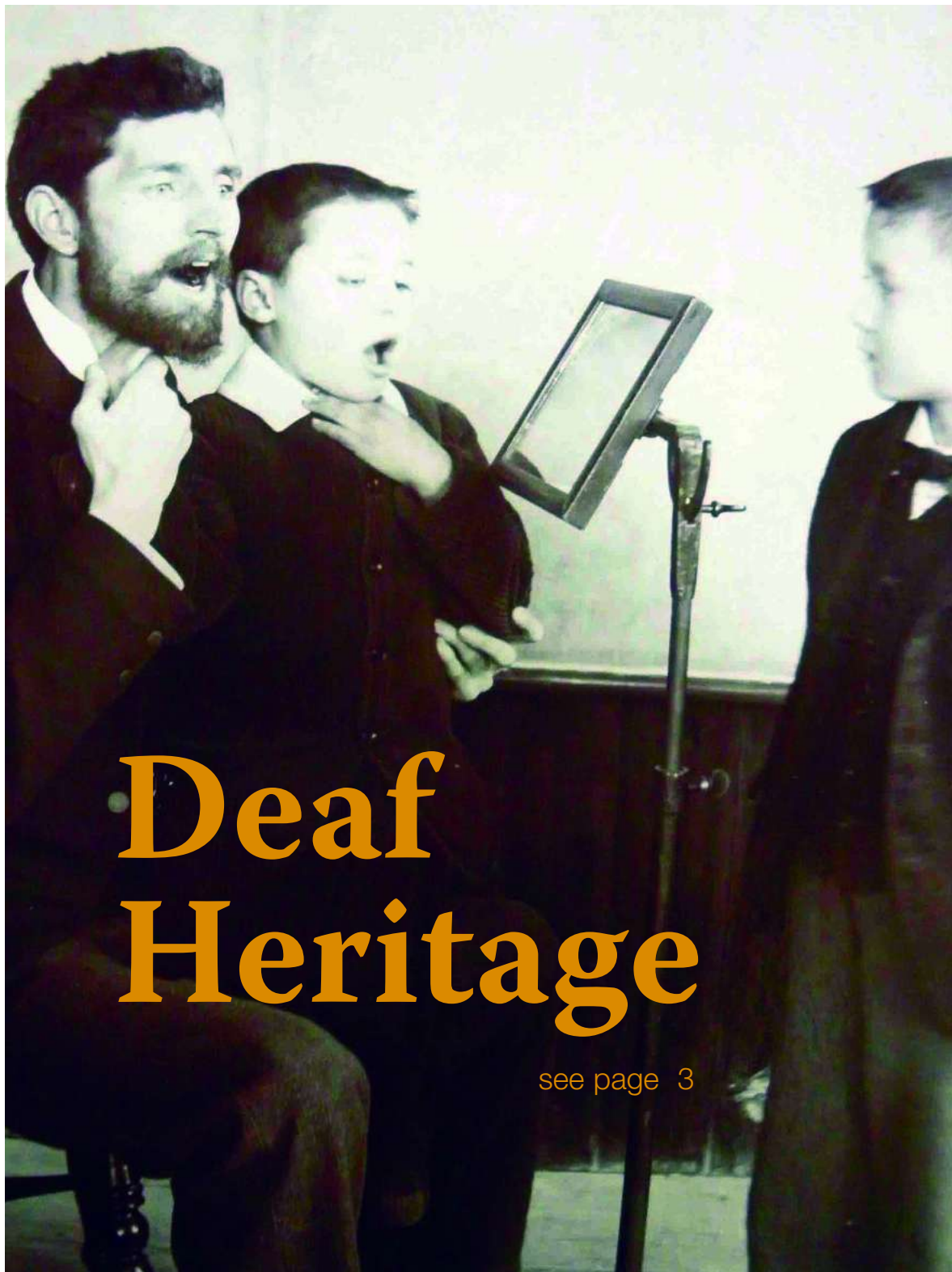


Devon Record Office

Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2010 ■ Issue 42

collect, conserve, inform, inspire...



Deaf Heritage

see page 3

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for details of opening
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Front Cover

A photograph from the
archives of the Exeter Royal
Academy for Deaf Education
(Devon Record Office:
Acc 7645)



An interest in communities

Ten years ago this newsletter contained some musings on the subject of community, and in particular on the way in which record offices depend on a network of amateur and professional historians to make their collections accessible. The topic was not new then, and the idea of community is part of the mental furniture of the archives profession. However, recent developments have re-emphasised the importance of working with different communities (in the plural) to explore their histories and preserve their records.

We are used to the idea of geographical communities, and locality still plays an important part in the creation and interpretation of records. Our recent work with the Community Council of Devon on the Climate Change Heritage Project, in which groups in nine different areas of Devon studied the effects of extreme weather events on their communities and how they had coped with them, is an example of this approach. It was obvious from the presentations at the summing-up event held at Paignton Zoo at the end of April that the weather in Devon varies dramatically over a surprisingly small area, and its effects are felt particularly strongly by small and isolated communities. We hope that a better understanding of what has happened in the past will help us to prepare ourselves for whatever the climate may do to us in the future.

Another project, *The School Looks Around*, led by DAISI (the Devon Arts in Schools Initiative) in partnership with Devon Library and Information Services and the Devon Record Office, takes its title and inspiration from a publication of 1948. This was the result of a wartime mass observation exercise, in which students were encouraged to examine the ways in which their local towns or parishes had developed, and to contribute to post-war planning. The new project looks at schools in two towns, South Dartmoor College in Ashburton and The King's School in Ottery St Mary, and aims to help students to work with their teachers, voluntary groups, libraries, the record office, and creative artists to gain an understanding of the importance of their local heritage and to strengthen links with the wider community.

Other communities are made up of people with common interests, some of whom have histories which are not readily accessible to others. In 2006 we played host to the Romany and Traveller Family History Society; in 2007 we looked at the histories of the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual) communities in Devon; in 2008 we celebrated community history through *Explore North Devon*; in 2009 we remembered the histories of remarkable women; and this year we are concentrating on the history of the Deaf community, in collaboration with the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, and the stories of the Polish inhabitants of Stover Camp and Ilford Park.

Many of these communities either do not create written records or are only represented incidentally in those of other organisations, for example when they come into contact with the courts or the local authorities. If the record is to be complete, special efforts are needed to capture the histories of these under-represented groups, either by seeking out what written records there already are or by recording memories and reminiscences before they are lost for ever. Every community has a history, and we must make sure that future generations do not only remember those which have traditionally left the fullest written record.

John Draisey

County Archivist

Deaf Heritage

The records of the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, dating from its foundation in 1826, were deposited at the Devon Record Office in November 2009. This collection can be accessed by everyone interested in Deaf Heritage. The accession number is 7645, and a description of the collection can be found in the office's online



catalogue at <http://app-calmview.devon.gov.uk/CalmView>

The collection includes minute books which go back to the meeting at which the school was founded in 1826; account books beginning in 1831; House Visitors' report books from 1880; admission registers which cover the period between 1900 and 1983; log books, pupil lists and much more.



Acquisitions

Exeter Between the start of October 2009 and the end of March 2010, the Exeter office received a wide range of interesting accessions.

Parish records were deposited by the parishes of Aylesbeare (7653), Bere Ferrers (7705), Blackborough (7723), Broadclyst (7707), Clyst Honiton (7653), Clyst St. George (7614, 7622), Culmstock (7657), Dittisham (7613), the parishes of St. Loye's, Wonford (7618) and St. Paul's, Burnthouse Lane (7610, 7617), both in Exeter, Lymptone (7694), Stoke Fleming (7726), Widworthy (7713) and Woodbury (7656).

Abbot Methodist Circuit (7652), Tiverton Methodist Circuit (7641) and Uffculme Baptist Church (7693).

Parish council records were deposited by the councils of Cheriton Bishop (7616), Cotleigh (7701), Musbury (7714), Newton St. Cyres (7674), Poltimore (7677), Sampford Peverell (7717), Talaton (7633) and Woodbury (7722).

School records relating to Aveton Gifford Primary School (7725), Canada Hill Community Primary School, East Ogwell (7628) and Whipton Barton First School, Exeter (7729), were deposited,

and we also received some files of school inspectors' reports dating from 1949 to 1963, from Devon County Council (7704). However, the most important deposit relating to education (and probably the most significant of all) received during the period under review was the records of the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, a very large collection which covers the activities of the school from its foundation in 1826 to the present day (7645).

Business records were received from two firms of

Exeter solicitors, Stones (deeds and associated documents relating to land and properties in North Tawton, Kenn, Exminster, Moretonhampstead and other parishes) (7685) and Gilbert Stephens (deeds relating to properties in Sidmouth and Newton Poppleford) (7634). We also received some interesting records which relate to the activities of a watchmaker and jeweller, Cornish of



Map of Thorn Widger Estate, Buckland Brewer (detail) (North Devon Record Office: B1001/1)

Other parish-related material included a full set of issues of the parish magazine of Newton St. Cyres, 'The Newton Wonder', spanning the period between January 1970 and the present day (7673).

Collections of non-conformist records were also received from the Exeter Methodist District (7689), Newton Abbot Baptist Church (7642), Newton

Okehampton, dating from the late nineteenth century onwards (7630), and a somewhat esoteric collection relating to barrows manufactured and supplied to clients throughout the UK and abroad by a firm called 'World of Wheels', of Dawlish and Teignmouth (7662).

There was a typical range of deposits relating to clubs and societies, including the records of Alverdiscott (7624) and Axminster (7720) Young Farmers' Clubs and Alphington (7655) and Tedburn St. Mary (7695) Women's Institutes. More distinctive collections came from Clyst Hydon Bowling Club (7646) and the Friends of Devon's Archives (7650), together with material relating to local activities of the international social and cultural organisation Toc H (7619, 7649).

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. Full details of them can be found on our online catalogue, which can be accessed at app-calmview.devon.gov.uk/CalmView/

Barnstaple Since the previous edition of this newsletter, additional records have been received from the following Church of England parishes: Brushford (1094), Molland (B415), Newton Tracey (2978) and Rose Ash (B678). The latter deposit is extensive and includes church accounts, 1882–1965, faculties, 1912–1987, eighteenth century glebe terriers and papers relating to charitable bequests.

Additional records of Buckland Brewer Parish Council (B104) have been deposited in the North Devon Record Office, together with a series of registers of new dwellings in parishes in the



Capt Slater's XI vs Lee Abbey XI, Lynton & Lynmouth Cricket Club, 25 May 1929 (Jack White is second right in the middle row) (North Devon Record Office: B995)

Torrige District Council area, 1926–1988 (B966).

Other deposits of note include a minute book of the Stevenstone Hunt, 1893-1898 (Stevenstone House near Torrington was the north Devon headquarters of the Rolle Estate) (B999), a comprehensive run of deeds and associated documents for Muckford Farm, Bishops Nympton, 1664–1992 (B1000), a small map of the Thorn Widger Estate in Buckland Brewer, 1797 (B1001), a team photograph and commemorative menu card for the Lynton & Lynmouth Cricket Club in the late 1920s, when the club hosted a guest appearance by the Somerset and England slow left-arm bowler, J C 'Jack' White (B995), a large plan of Barnstaple, undated but probably drawn around 1870, from Barnstaple Bridge Trust (B56) and a Sun Insurance agent's policy book from the Bideford area, 1913–1975 (B1002). Several of these items have been purchased by the Record Office with the generous financial assistance of the Devon Family History Society.

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.

Deaf Heritage Month



Deaf Heritage Month, held during March 2010, was the first of its kind to be organised in the UK. The month was a huge success thanks to the hard work put in by everyone involved.

There were plenty of events taking place. The Devon Record Office celebrated the month by holding its regular Family History Club session for BSL (British Sign Language) users.

The Devon Record Office set up a family history club for BSL (British Sign Language) users last November. Since then, membership has been steadily growing. During the Deaf Heritage Month celebrations, interest in family history was high and the Family History 'drop-in' session was very busy. Membership of the group has now increased to 20.

The club gives Deaf people the chance to come to the office informally to use its facilities and to meet with other family historians and members of staff to discuss research problems they may be having with their own family trees. If the problems are complicated, there's always a nice cup of tea and cake to help calm the mind after a busy session.



(above) Devon Record Office's Family History Club session for BSL (British Sign Language) users



Devon Record Office exhibition

The Devon Record Office is looking after the records of the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education. Throughout March, the office held a small exhibition of records showing how Deaf children were taught in the early 20th century and the expectations that were placed upon them by society. These records are now available for public research.

The British Deaf History Society (BDHS)

The BDHS was set up to promote and advance interest in the discovery, research, conservation and preservation of the histories of Deaf people, their communities, culture and language.

The BDHS supported the month, featuring a large article about the events happening in Devon. They hope to follow this up with a Deaf Heritage Month report for the next edition of their journal, to be released during the summer.

*Katherine Weston
Heritage Outreach Officer*

Explore North Devon: History Hunters and other plans!

'Explore North Devon' began as an Archives 4 All community archives project in 2006 with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Natural England. Project partners working with the Devon Record Office include North Devon and Torrington Museums Service, North Devon Theatres and Devon County Council's Coast and Countryside Service. Since the conclusion of the Lottery funded phase in 2008 the project has been funded by Devon County Council's Culture & Heritage Group, allowing us to extend our work to a growing number of communities in northern Devon.



The Explore North Devon team is applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to establish a new project called 'North Devon History Hunters'. The idea for this grew out of our involvement with a recent pilot project, led by the Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon, called the North Devon Adult Learning Forum. This offered a range of learning opportunities, including archaeological investigation work and an introduction to family history, targeted at particular groups, such as those recovering from mental health problems and people living in isolated rural communities. It was such a success that all concerned expressed a wish to see its good work continued. The 'History Hunters' project will work with ten local communities spread across northern Devon, to

support a range of heritage investigations including oral history recording, Devon dialect, archaeological and building surveying, field name studies and setting up visitor trails. We will establish a forum of partners from both the heritage and healthcare sectors to train and guide local history societies in these communities to deliver their research projects and to encourage the involvement of a wide range of people in their activities. Progress reports and the final results of project work from each community will be uploaded to a new section of the Explore North Devon website at www.explorenorthdevon.org and a grand celebratory event will be held at the conclusion of the two-year project to coincide with the 2012 North Devon Festival. A decision from the Heritage Lottery Fund is expected in the summer and, if successful, the 'History Hunters' will begin their work in the autumn.

Alongside the 'History Hunters', our regular Explore North Devon contributors will continue to post their collections of photographs, documents, audio and film recordings on the project website and we will be looking to expand both the number of our contributors and the range of material accessible through the system over the coming months. We are also planning to encourage the digitisation of objects and archives held in existing museum and record office collections and to make the resulting images and information available through the Explore North Devon database. With all these exciting developments and our continuing involvement with the 2010 Heritage Open Days programme (www.heritageopendays.org) in September, the coming months promise to be an eventful time for everyone connected with the Explore North Devon project!

Tim Wormleighton

Principal Archivist, North Devon Record Office

Cataloguing Exe Vale hospital records

A project in collaboration with Exeter University

What the project is

Since 2007 the Exeter Centre for Medical History has been collaborating with the Devon Record Office in an interdisciplinary project on mental health care and history. Funded by the Wellcome Trust, it aims to catalogue data from individual patient files and make some of it publicly accessible, gain information on linkages between community and institutional treatment and develop a model for sampling and preserving this kind of data.

I was seconded in January 2009, initially working with Dr Nicole Baur from the Exeter Centre for Medical History to help complete a Microsoft Access database compiled from the mental health patient files and index cards we had received. I then went on to catalogue, preserve and box all the pre-1948 patient files and re-box and catalogue all the hospital index cards.

The Record Office had received just over 8,000 files from the Exeter Partnership NHS Trust and about 30,000 patient index cards dating from 1870 to 1971 covering admissions to Digby, Exminster and Wonford House hospitals. Due to space limitations the files could only be temporarily stored until the research project was completed. The primary aim of the project was therefore to complete a database from the entire collection and then decide on a research topic. It was decided to base the research on readmissions between 1948 and 1970, which would narrow the collection down to just under 3,000 files, with the remainder of the files unfortunately due for destruction at the end of the research project. We decided to keep all the index cards, as they were easily housed in 35 archival boxes and to keep all pre-1948 files because of their age and potential historical research value. Unfortunately, the time

allowed for the secondment did not permit the cataloguing of the 1948-1970 files.

What the patient files contain

The patient files vary considerably in terms of quality of material and quantity of information. Some are fragmentary, with torn pages and with information missing. They can vary greatly in their presentation and degree of legibility, with the nurse's handwriting usually more readable than the physician's! Most of the files contain detailed case notes including personal and family details, a medical history, contact details for relatives, correspondence between different agencies, medicine cards and, what I found of special interest, the social history. The earlier files often have photographs of the patient.

What the database contains

The database was created by Dr Nicole Baur using Microsoft Access. It is arranged as a series of 'tables' headed Patient, Admission, Discharge, Diagnosis, Medical History, Previous Admissions, Family History of Insanity, ECT, Treatment and Documents. Under these table headings brief data was collected from the individual patient files and each patient was allocated an ID which is the alternative reference number on the Devon Record Office catalogue CALM database.

The catalogue

The collection number is 7667A and the ID number is the key finding aid to the collection. The database and the entire collection are subject to restricted access due to the sensitive nature of the files. The catalogue does not contain personal names. Anyone wishing to have access to documents relating to living persons will need the permission of the depositor.

Eliza Newton
Archivist



the Dartington Hall Trust Archives

In March the record office took delivery of the archives of the Dartington Hall Trust.

The DRO is to be the new permanent home of the records, which were previously housed in High Cross House on the Dartington estate in south Devon.

The collection is a major addition to the office's holdings; it contains a wealth of records relating to the estate and the trust, which was set up by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst in the 1920s, as well as a lot of original material generated by their associations with numerous well-known people in the middle years of the twentieth century.

Leonard Elmhirst, born in 1893, was the son of a Yorkshire parson. During the First World War he was declared unfit for military service and went instead to India to undertake missionary work. He subsequently studied at Cornell University in the United States, where he met his future wife Dorothy, and then returned to India, where he worked for the Bengali writer and social reformer Rabindranath Tagore and developed many of the ideas regarding education and social organisation which he was later to put into practice at Dartington.

Dorothy Elmhirst (originally Whitney) was the daughter of an American multi-millionaire, and was married to an American diplomat, Willard Straight, who died in 1918, before she met Leonard Elmhirst.

After the Elmhirsts were married in 1925 they bought the derelict Dartington Hall estate and began restoring it as a base for a collective experiment in educational provision and social and rural living. In part this was intended to benefit

the area by alleviating the effects of rural poverty and depopulation through the provision of small-scale local industries such as forestry, milling and milk production, but also to act as a vehicle for the Elmhirsts' progressive ideas. The most significant element of this was the foundation of Dartington Hall School, which became one of the most radical schools in the world with its emphasis on holistic pupil education and the development of practical and artistic skills through interaction with the local community. Within a few years Dartington had become well-known as a centre of educational and agricultural experiment, and a focal point for artists and musicians from around the world.

The archives contain the records of such aspects of the work of the Dartington estate as its Cattle Breeding Centre, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), and the Michael Chekhov Theatre Studio, in addition to the records of the administration of the trust itself and the personal papers of Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst. In many ways these are the most interesting papers in the archives, and there is correspondence with such individuals as the publisher Victor Gollancz, the Labour politician Sir Stafford Cripps, the writer and humanist Aldous Huxley, the economist John Maynard Keynes, the educationalist AS Neill, the author and poet Vita Sackville-West and the writers George Bernard Shaw and HG Wells.

Further information about the Dartington Hall Trust records, including their catalogue, can be found online at www.dartington.org/archive.

Brian Carpenter
Archivist

Tithe Maps

update

Just before Easter, the digital files of the tithe maps were delivered to us on three external hard drives by ICAM Archive Systems Ltd, the company which did the photography and processing.

Some checking is still needed, and there are one or two problems to be ironed out, but most of the maps can now be consulted using the special Archangel software developed by ICAM.

The next stage in the programme is to make images of the maps and apportionments available on the Devon County Council website, so that people can consult them without handling the originals. However, there are two further stages which will need to be completed before the results of digitisation are as useful as they can be.

The first is to geo-rectify the digital maps so that they can be used as a layer in a composite map and can be used to view the same field or property at different historical periods. This is done by laying them over Ordnance Survey maps and fixing points on them which are known not to have changed (church towers or other major landmarks, for example). The rest of the map can then be 'stretched' to fit its modern equivalent. When all the maps have been geo-rectified, they can be joined together to form a composite map of the whole county.

The final stage is polygonisation. This involves drawing round each field on the map to create a separate unit which can be linked to the apportionment data. To make the best use of these polygons, the main parts of the apportionments will need to be transcribed and the information which relates to the individual fields linked to the map electronically. This is a formidable task, both for the transcribers and the ICT experts, but when complete it will give us access to information about Devon in the 19th century that has up to now been too laborious to collect.

Annual Statistics 2009/10 (2008/09 in brackets)

	Exeter		Barnstaple		Total	
Individual visits	9,524	(9,662)	2,725	(2,772)	12,249	(12,434)
Group visits	29	(24)	10	(10)	39	(34)
Microform issues	68,196	(84,881)	13,484	(14,324)	81,680	(99,205)
Document orders	9,923	(10,122)	1,576	(1,594)	11,499	(11,716)
Postal enquiries	6,473	(6,836)	599	(690)	7,072	(7,524)
Exhibitions	6	(10)	10	(10)	16	(20)
Talks	53	(31)	9	(15)	62	(46)
Deposits	241	(226)	73	(92)	314	(318)

The figures for the past year show a similar pattern to those of recent years, with a slight reduction in personal visits and distance enquiries, but large numbers of deposits and outreach events.

The reasons for this trend are not fully understood, though in 2010 the very bad weather in January was undoubtedly an additional factor in the

low number of visits. There is certainly no decrease in interest in history and records, and the number of organisations wanting to work with the record office seems to increase all the time.

In the future we may need to find new ways to attach numbers to the office's activities.

Preservation Training for Museum Volunteers

Within the many museums of Devon are housed collections of documents and works of art on paper needing the same standard of preservation care as that offered by a record office.

Museum staff and volunteers are required to have expertise in a vast array of formats and materials, and, to assist them in their work on archives in particular, the Devon Record Office Conservation Studio staff and their volunteers are offering occasional day courses in archive preservation. The training offered consists of:

- an overview of modern preservation practice and materials
- a session on dry cleaning methods
- making a made-to-measure manila dust jacket for books
- Calico packaging for rolled documents and seals
- a look at materials for the care of modern media and photographs

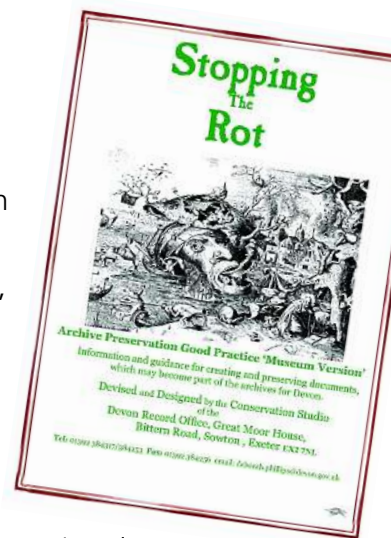
Groups from Dartmouth and Cornwall have attended this course, and the interest and healthy debate benefited us all.

By this June, all museums in Devon will have a copy of *Stopping the Rot*, a publication of archive preservation information and practical advice, which backs up the training days.

Requests from groups for future training events are welcome and there are, in the planning stage, two annual preservation days for private individuals to make personal appointments to discuss their family documents or collections when they will be offered suitable packaging materials at cost price.

Collections of documents do not only reside in official record offices for a variety of reasons, therefore there is a need to spread the correct knowledge on the care and preservation of these items. The culture/heritage community agrees it is advantageous to work together to preserve Devon's written heritage.

Deborah Phillips
Senior Archive Conservator



Friends of Devon's Archives

The *Friends of Devon's Archives* have had a busy start to 2010 with continuing promotion of the Devon Document Donor Card which is intended to stop the needless destruction of important documents particularly during house clearances. The card is now being taken up in record offices across Britain as well as in New Zealand and Australia. Copies are available through each of Devon's three local authority archives. We have also been active in securing the deposit of individual documents such as the earliest copy of Adam Wyott's Chronicle of Barnstaple. This is one of the town's most important documents and it has been given to the North Devon Record Office. Efforts are also continuing to help Plymouth City Council achieve its aim of finding a new building for the documents housed at the Plymouth & West Devon Record Office. The Friends' AGM will be held on 16 October with the theme **Art in Devon**. Further details will be available via the website (www.foda.org.uk) or todd@toddgray.co.uk or on 01392 272727.

Dr Todd Gray, Chairman

BRIAN'S CORNER


Hello, my name is Brian. I am a Biscuit Beetle.

Most Biscuit Beetles eat documents. They especially like the gooey glue in the spine of books. It tastes like marshmallows.

I don't eat documents any more, I prefer custard creams. Here's why:

I was two years old when I came to the Record Office. I was happily chewing on an original parish register (I'd got to page 11 and it tasted of smoky bacon), when it was taken to the Record Office to be deposited. This means that the register was left at the Record Office for safekeeping and could be studied by anyone who came to visit. Did you know that the Record Office staff take care of thousands of documents which can be looked at by anyone?

Anyway, as I was saying, after I arrived, hidden in the register, I crept out after dark and couldn't believe my eyes. I rubbed them a number of times with all six of my legs. The room was full of old documents. I was in a strongroom; this is a room where all of the records are kept at a cool temperature. It was like a trip to the supermarket. Lots of yummy records for me to eat, and all of them free!

But I didn't eat them. Why, I hear you shout?! Because they were fascinating. I started exploring and reading them and I haven't eaten another document since. 

In this newsletter I'll tell you what exciting documents I have found!

The Devon Record Office is celebrating this year. The office moved to this new state-of-the-art building called Great Moor House from Exeter city centre in 2005.

This week, I overheard members of staff talking about an exhibition of Record Office maps to mark the five-year anniversary!

I managed to peek out, unseen, from behind a book and saw some amazing maps going to the conservation studio to be photographed for the exhibition. I was so excited I thought I might fall off the shelf; I did drop my biscuit though.

**LOOK OUT FOR POSTERS
ADVERTISING THE EVENT SOON!**



MAP MYSTERY

What were maps sometimes used for?

Can you find the words Brian has hidden in the puzzle?

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| Boat | Compass |
| Degree | East |
| Equator | Grid |
| Island | Land |
| Latitude | Longitude |
| Map | North |
| Pirates | Sea |
| South | Treasure |
| West | ----- |

N	L	T	A	V	E	D	I	S	G	A	L	B	S	T
E	A	M	R	B	Q	N	E	I	S	A	E	O	N	S
M	T	S	M	E	U	A	P	B	N	A	T	E	S	O
K	I	Q	P	M	A	L	A	D	T	A	P	Q	U	U
H	T	R	O	N	T	S	M	U	R	F	S	M	A	T
S	U	B	T	R	O	I	U	I	W	Q	R	O	O	H
T	D	F	T	F	R	M	P	R	V	E	V	L	P	C
A	E	W	E	S	T	C	H	Z	E	T	O	P	X	Z
R	H	V	H	A	A	J	Q	R	D	N	T	M	Z	V
S	O	H	G	I	U	V	G	H	G	O	S	E	A	H
E	E	M	W	I	D	E	N	I	H	S	A	F	M	W
W	D	I	R	G	D	H	T	Y	Q	H	E	B	X	N
U	L	L	X	U	J	U	B	H	F	M	S	M	H	L
Q	U	U	E	Y	D	K	N	Q	Y	J	Y	Q	H	L
H	Z	R	O	E	N	U	O	A	C	K	G	Q	H	X