

A HIGHER PROFILE FOR ARCHIVES

Our written heritage has never been more in the public eye. A number of factors have contributed to this over the past five years or so, among them the Comprehensive Spending Review of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, leading to the creation of Resource, the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries in 2000. This year has seen three events which together have an impact on all aspects of our work.

One was the establishment of the Archives Task Force. This was set up by Resource, at the invitation of DCMS, to carry out an in-depth review of the state of the UK's archives. It has held a number of consultation meetings, as well as receiving written submissions from a wide range of groups and individuals, and is due to publish its findings in late 2003 or early 2004. Opportunities to shine a searchlight on archives in this way do not occur often, and the Task Force has been urged to be both exhaustive and imaginative in its thinking. We await the report with interest.

The second was the amalgamation of the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission to form the National Archives. This took effect on 1 April this year, though detailed implementation, including the transfer of all HMC staff from Chancery Lane to Kew, is taking rather longer. There is now one point of contact for both public and private records, which simplifies life for local archivists and removes the rather puzzling arrangement which has existed for more than a century.

The third event was Archive Awareness Month, held for the first time in September this year. Record offices all over the country arranged open days, exhibitions, and other special events designed to attract new users and to fire the public's imagination about what archives can offer. Inevitably, although there was a degree of national and regional co-ordination, the success of the month depended to a large extent on the initiative and energy of local offices, and the level of activity varied from place to place.

In Devon we put on some small exhibitions (including one on the weather, which is now available for loan) and produced a colourful bookmark which was distributed to supermarkets, tourist information centres, campsites, and other venues where it could be picked up by people who might not otherwise be aware of archives and the record offices. We are still awaiting a report from the distributors about how many of the bookmarks were taken at different sites, but first impressions suggest that it was a success, and we shall almost certainly re-print it soon.

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A2A

Lists converted as part of the second phase of the South West region's contribution to Access to Archives are now on line on the new A2A website, <http://www.a2a.org.uk>. This batch features family and solicitors' records and, though it contains only a selection of the collections deposited in Exeter and Barnstaple, includes catalogues for the Courtenay, Fortescue, Petre, Chichester, and Stucley families among others. There is also a description of one of the two earliest documents at the Exeter office, the foundation charter of Totnes Priory (312M/TY1), dated around 1087.

Preparations are now being made for a third phase of A2A. In Devon, at any rate, this will by no means complete the digitization of all catalogues, but A2A as a whole has given us a good start in retrospective conversion. Access to information about archives held in repositories throughout the country is a great deal quicker and easier thanks to this programme.

STATUTORY STATUS

One aspect of the creation of the National Archives is that a change in the law is needed in order to realize the full benefits of the amalgamation of the two former bodies. The preparation of the new legislation creates an opportunity to extend it into a National Records and Archives Act, which if passed will cover all areas of record and archive keeping in public bodies and tidy up some of the anomalies of the law as it stands.

At its most comprehensive the Act would

- update and clarify current legislation to cover managing, preserving, and authenticating digital records in central government,
- reinforce the legal basis of records management in central government, with regulated guidance and standards,
- extend these provisions to regional and local public authorities,
- impose a statutory duty on principal local authorities to provide an archive service, and
- consolidate the amalgamation of the PRO and HMC.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000, which comes into force in January 2005, is already bringing about a change in attitudes to record keeping and records management. It is longer acceptable to hang on to records (whether paper or digital) on the off-chance that they may be useful one day, and hope that we shall be able to find them if they are ever needed. We must now know which records are to be kept and for how long, and they must be kept in good order, so that requests for information can be answered within the prescribed time.

Underlying all these developments is a growing realization that, in the words of the former Lord Chancellor, 'effective records management is essential to good governance', and that the archives sector 'has in its custody many unique and irreplaceable archives of enduring historical value, which collectively represent the foundation collections of the English speaking world'. This will not be news to readers of this newsletter, but it needs to be said loudly and often if the importance of record keeping is not to be forgotten.



ACQUISITIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

EXETER

The Exeter office received one hundred and thirty-three accessions between 1 May and 31 October.

There were relatively few official deposits, but these included parish council records from Black Torrington (D 6349), Rewe (D 6368), the Exbourne and Jacobstowe group (D 6393), and Poughill (D 6396) and school records from Tavistock College (D 6360), West Alvington Primary School (D 6371), and Farway C of E Primary School (D 2744 add 2).

The parish inspections have continued to bear fruit, with deposits or additional deposits of parish records from Trusham (D 2014 add 4), Stoke Gabriel (D 1981 add 4), St Mary's, Brixham (D 2203 add 6), Coffinswell (D 73 add 2), Haccombe (D 4784 add), Kingskerswell (D 3119 add), Combeinteignhead (D 3419 add 3), Shaldon with Ringmore (D 1528 add), Brentor (D 3838 add 2), Stockleigh English (D 1003 add 3), Marlton (D 3239 add 3), Sheldon (D 2722 adds 3 & 4), Tipton St John with Venn Ottery (D 2429 add 2), West Hill (D 5928 add), Slapton (D 3040 add 3), Stokenham (D 3031 add 3), Stoke Fleming (D 1342 add 16),

Staverton (D 872 add 3), Woodland (2660 add 3), Littlehempston (D 2217 adds 3 & 4), Lanscove (D 2001 add 2), Broadhempston (2659 add 2), Hatherleigh (D 2917 add 2), Exminster (D 6375), Axminster (D 406 add 4), Membury (D 2845 add 2), Chardstock (D 2590 adds 6 & 7), Tavistock (D 482 add 21), Stoke Gabriel (D 1981 add 5), Collaton St Mary (D 3803 add 3), Buckfastleigh (D 3639 add 3), Blackawton (D 995 add 9), Ringmore (D 1980 add 2), Coldridge (D 272 add 4), Luppitt (D 1302 add 11), Upottery (D 1231 add 2), Broadwoodwidge (D 3421 add 3), Lifton (D 3422 add 4), Harpford (D 1844 add 3), Rousdon (D 3049 add 3), Northlew (D 2895 add 2), Ashbury (D 2896 add 2), Washford Pyne (D 1375 add 5), Peter Tavy (1427 add 6), Halberton (D 4074 add 6), Hockworthy (D 3083 add 4), Burlescombe (D 2513 add 3), Holcombe Rogus (D 3082 add 3), Sampford Peverell (D 1198 add 5), and Talaton (D 4421 add 3), as well as a confirmation register from the chapel of All Hallows' School, Rousdon (D 6382).

The most notable private family and estate deposit (apart from the additional Duke of

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ACQUISITIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

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Somerset's records, which are described elsewhere in this newsletter) consisted of the papers of the late Dick Wills of Narracombe, Ilstington, for many years a depositor and visitor to this office (D 6369). These include historical notes, printed books, correspondence, and photographs collected by Mr Wills throughout a long and active life and complement the records of Narracombe itself, which were deposited some years ago.

Rather unusually, several items and collections were acquired by purchase, including a group of letters, 1841-1857, of the Palk family of Haldon House (D 6399), a sale catalogue, 1887, for the Manor of Tormoham (D 6394), and a commonplace book entitled 'A Collection of Useful and Entertaining Pieces', compiled at the end of the 18th century by someone who seems to have had links with Crediton (D 6372). The 19th-century map of Hatherleigh which was mentioned in the last newsletter has now been transferred to Exeter (D 6414).

An encouraging sign is the arrival of deposits or additional deposits from a number of clubs and societies, among them the Devon Orthopaedic Association (D 6181 add & add 2), the Devon and Cornwall Record Society (D 3774 add), the South Hams Amenity Federation (D 6880), the Inner Wheel Clubs (D 6333 add), Tedburn St Mary Women's Institute (D 6402), and the Awliscombe Conservative Association (D 6417). A history of the Brixham lodge, 'True Love and Unity', of the Society of Freemasons up to 1930 (D 6358) falls into this category, as in some ways do the records of the Newton Abbot GWR Housing Society (D 6428), transferred to us from Wiltshire. The history of many of these organizations is in danger of disappearing without trace, and it is good to know that some record of them will be preserved.

As usual, not all of these new accessions are listed and available. Indeed, preparations for the move next year are having to take priority over work like cataloguing and conservation, and we shall not be able to turn our attention to them properly until after we are settled in the new building.

BARNSTAPLE

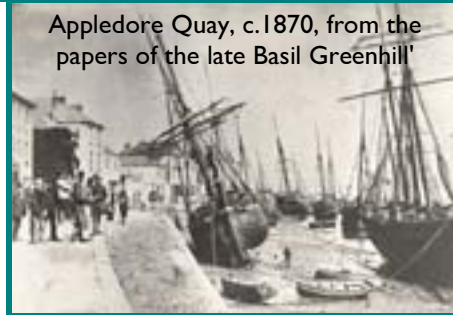
Since the May 2003 edition of this newsletter, the North Devon Record Office has received deposits of records from the following Church of England parishes: West Anstey (B446 add), Bishops Nympton (596 add 10), Burrington (3457 add 4), Georgeham (2567 add 6), George Nympton (3731 add 3), North Molton (1786 add 6), South Molton (3331 add 4), Rose Ash (B678 add 3) and Swimbridge (1621 add 12). Additional records of South Molton Deanery (B533 add) have also been deposited.

Additional nonconformist records have been received from the following Methodist circuits: Barnstaple (2347 add 16), Bideford (2237 add 13), Holsworthy (2638 add 10), Shebbear (B607 add 3) and West Devon (B668 add). In addition, a run of the Proceedings of the Methodist Historical Society for the Plymouth & Exeter District, 1964-2000 (B696), has been lodged in the office.

Additional parish council records have been transferred from Bratton Fleming (1507 add 4).

Other notable accessions include a set of wage sheets for estate workers on Lundy Island, 1966-1969 (B627 add 3), a scrapbook containing news cuttings and other items relating to events in Barnstaple and its local churches, kept by F.J.

Appledore Quay, c.1870, from the papers of the late Basil Greenhill'



Northcote, stationer and printer of Barnstaple between 1897 and 1959 (B711), records from the South Molton office of

the firm of Chulmleigh auctioneers, Hannafords (B703), research notes and photographs of the late Basil Greenhill of the National Maritime Museum, author of many authoritative works on westcountry shipping and maritime trade (B710), a set of CDs containing digital copies of Hartland newspapers, representing the first instalment of material from the Tarka Country Millennium Awards funded Hartland Archive Project (B715), and the records of the Loyal Lodge of Freemasons, Barnstaple (B709), details of which are reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

The North Devon Record Office has also received a generous donation of the Alecto Historical Editions facsimile of the Domesday Book, as described in the November 2002 edition of this newsletter.

Please note that not all of the above deposits are available for public inspection yet, as the detailed listing of large collections can take some time.

PARISH INSPECTIONS

As this second year of the new round of parish inspections under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure draws to a close nearly one hundred parishes have been visited in 2003, and we are still on target to complete this third round at the end of 2006.

On a positive note it is encouraging to see how many of the new accessions of parish records were a result of the visits this year or in 2002. However, it is disappointing to find that a few of the parishes that were inspected last year have still not made arrangements to close and deposit their 1813 baptism and burial registers as required by the Measure, despite the generous offer of the Devon Family History Society to assist with the purchase costs involved in replacing pre-1837 registers.

It is equally disappointing to find that a few registers are still going astray. One baptism register dating from the 1850s and missing at last year's inspection has still not been located. A more recent

20th-century baptism register was also found to be missing at an inspection in another parish this year. But perhaps even more worryingly a baptism register dating from the 1850s, originally deposited in Devon Record Office but withdrawn by the rector several years ago, was not found in the safe at the church during the inspection and can no longer be traced in the parish. Unfortunately this register had not yet been microfilmed.

With the necessity to prune costs the days of a resident minister in every parish are long gone, and a Church of England rector or vicar is likely to find him or herself responsible for several parishes as a large team becomes the norm, especially in rural areas. It is regrettable but perhaps understandable that the amount of time they feel able to devote to ensuring parish records are kept in good order is increasingly limited. Regular inspections as required by the Measure are therefore of immense value not only in maintaining links between the Devon Record Office and the clergy and parish officials but in ensuring the well-being of the records.

BARNSTAPLE FREEMASONS 'LODGE' THEIR ARCHIVES IN THE NORTH DEVON RECORD OFFICE

The history of Freemasonry in Barnstaple stretches back to 1762, when the first Lodge was established in the town, meeting at the *Fleece Inn* on the Quay. This meeting lapsed in 1776, but in 1783 the Loyal Lodge of Freemasons was established, beginning a tradition that persists into the 21st century. The first meetings were held at the *Globe Inn* in Queen Street, Barnstaple, but as the membership grew a number of larger venues were used. In 1868, the Lodge moved to Queen Anne's Walk on the Quay (at present occupied by Barnstaple Heritage Centre) where it stayed until moving to its present location, Trafalgar Lawn in the Newport area of the town, in 1966.

Following a visit to the Lodge by Tim Wormleighton of the North Devon Record Office in response to a request for advice on the conservation and storage of their archives last year, it was agreed that the historic records of the meeting should be deposited for safekeeping in the Record Office in Barnstaple Library. These include a full run of minute books from 1783 to 1954, attendance books from 1900 to 1952, and account books from 1844 to 1954.

The Devon Record Office Conservation Service was also able to offer advice on

three framed 'warrants', which include the Lodge's foundation charter of 1783. Senior Conservator, Deborah Phillips, and

Conservation Assistant, Ian Ponsford, visited the Barnstaple office last month to carry out the delicate operation of removing the original documents from their frames and replacing them with photographic copies for display in the Lodge. The originals will now join the rest of the historic documents deposited in the North Devon Record Office, where this impressive collection of Masonic archives will be made available for all to research.



Deborah Phillips, Senior Conservator, with Ian Ponsford, Conservation Assistant

AN EXCITING DISCOVERY IN WILTSHIRE



Documents bearing the signatures of Charles I, Prince Maurice, William of Orange, and Samuel Pepys from the Duke of Somerset's records.

A telephone call from a colleague in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office last summer brought the news that a group of documents relating to the Dukes of Somerset had been found in the roof at Maiden Bradley while the present Duke was in the process of moving. Because the family have strong connections with both Devon and Wiltshire, their records are split between the two offices, and this was proposed for the new deposit also. Thus it was that a special journey to Trowbridge was arranged for early September to collect two not very large boxes of deeds, letters, and papers which turned out to be the star acquisition at Exeter this year.

Strangely, these records were not entirely unknown, for they had been listed at the end of the 19th century by John Scanes and the list published by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts in 1898 (Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part VII). After that, however, they seem to have disappeared. It is remarkable that they should turn up again over a century later, more or less as Scanes left them (though a few have gone missing, and a few additional ones have joined them) and with his pencilled numbers still on them.

Closer inspection in Exeter revealed that the records, although they include a few items from the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries (including a significant group from the 1590s), date mostly from the period

between about 1640 and 1688. Furthermore, they relate largely to the raising and financing of troops in South Devon and the defence of Dartmouth, subjects which are already well documented in Devon in the correspondence in the Seymour collection (D 1392) and the Dartmouth Borough Archives (DD 60501-68119). Substantial groups of papers illustrating the activities of the Royalist side in the Civil War are comparatively rare, and Dr Mark Stoye has commented that the Seymour papers in Devon, including this new deposit, are probably the most comprehensive in the country.

Edward Seymour of Berry Pomeroy, the 4th baronet, became Governor of Dartmouth when it surrendered to the king on 4 October 1643, a position which he resigned on 24 September 1644, following an uprising in the South Hams. He was succeeded as governor by Sir Hugh Pollard of Kings Nympton, but he continued to serve with the Royalist army. Seymour lived long enough to be appointed governor of Exeter by William of Orange in 1688 but died shortly afterwards. His son Edward succeeded him as 5th baronet, and his grandson subsequently became the 8th Duke of Somerset. He is an interesting and well documented example of a moderate Royalist who lived through the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration and saw the beginning of the Glorious Revolution.

There are plenty of treasures in the collection, and, leafing through them, one's eye falls frequently on the signatures of Charles I, Charles II, James II, Prince Maurice, Samuel Pepys, and William of Orange, among those of members of the Seymour family and the other nobility and military commanders of the time. However, it is the humbler documents – the muster lists, the lists of guns and ammunition, and the correspondence about provisioning the troops – which shed light on the day-to-day lives of soldiers and civilians in the 17th century, and particularly on those who supported the king. As both a local landowner and a military commander Seymour was responsible for enforcing collection of the rates, paying the garrison, and generally keeping order. These papers shed a local and peculiarly human light on the upheavals of the 17th century.

HOUGHTON VISIT 2003

In September Jan Wood visited Houghton, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, USA, to carry out research on ancestors who had emigrated there from west Devon in 1852, and to meet her cousins. In the 1850s, the copper mines which were to make this isolated area of Michigan so prosperous over the next half-century were opening, and many early

settlers were from Devon and Cornwall. Michigan Technological University Archives' Erik Nordberg invited Jan to give an illustrated talk on Devon and its Record Office, which about 50 people attended. Jan is involved in planning a family reunion in Houghton next July which will be part of a larger "Copper Country Homecoming", with an Old Settlers' Ball, talks on the area's history and visits to heritage sites.

TRAFALGAR BICENTENARY

The year 2005, which is also the International Year of the Sea, will mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, and a series of events is planned to celebrate this turning point in British history.

Devon and Exeter have strong connections with the battle and with Nelson: a large proportion of the men who fought at Trafalgar were Devonians, two of the ships' commanders are buried in Exeter, Nelson himself received the freedom of the city in 1801, Lady Nelson is buried at Exmouth, the fleet was anchored off Torbay for some time, and news of the battle and of Nelson's death travelled from Cornwall through Devon on its way to London. The Royal Albert Memorial Museum has two cannon taken from the Victory and also a sword reputed to have belonged to Nelson, which was given back to the city in 1934, though its authenticity is open to some doubt. The Devon Record Office has a number of original letters written by Nelson to Henry Addington, though unfortunately none of them mentions Trafalgar.

There will be extensive celebrations in Exeter throughout the late summer of 2005, including a commemorative dinner, a re-enactment of Lieutenant Lapentiere's famous ride from Falmouth to London with the dispatch announcing the result of the battle (Lapentiere was himself born in Ilfracombe), an exhibition in Exeter Guildhall, and a series of lectures in venues around the city. More details will be published nearer to the time.

THE MISSING BURIALS

One interesting enquiry which arose out of plans for the bicentenary celebrations came from the Archivist of the 1805 Club, a national organization whose main object is the conservation of the graves and monuments of people associated with Nelson. It concerned the graves of two of the captains at Trafalgar: John Stockham of HMS Thunderer and Robert Benjamin Young of HMS *Entreprenante*.

A story that Stockham was buried at Holy Trinity, Exeter, in 1814 proved to be incorrect, but the Devon Family History Society found a reference to his burial at St Sidwell on 15 February 1814, which enabled us to turn up the entry in the register.

Young proved a good deal more elusive. He died in 1846, and tradition had it that he was buried at St Sidwell, but there was no burial entry in the parish register or that of Bartholomew's Yard, the other likely place. The cemetery registers still in the care of Exeter City Council were also searched without success. A death certificate, obtained from the Exeter Registrar, revealed the exact date of his

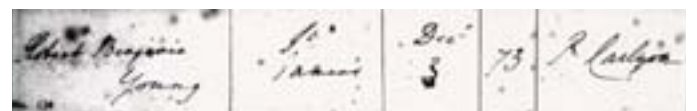
death, 26 November 1846, and his address, 7 Cobourg Place, St Sidwell. Another piece of contemporary evidence was a notice of his death in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1847, which stated that he left a wife, two daughters, and two sons wholly unprovided for but gave no details of his funeral.

At this point the trail seemed to have gone cold; there was no burial entry to be found, and if Young died in poverty it was unlikely that his

grave was marked in any way. However, a check was made to ascertain whether any other Exeter parishes had burial grounds or registers which could contain Young, and it was quickly discovered that the church of St James (built in 1836 near what is now the football ground as a chapel of St Sidwell) kept a series of burial registers from 1842, rather surprisingly, since contemporary maps show the church surrounded by buildings, with no obvious space for a graveyard. A brief search of the registers turned up Young's burial, on 3 December 1846. Cobourg Place was on the south side of Blackboy Road at the lower end, very near St James's church.



St James's church, Cobourg Place, and the burial ground on the 1876 OS maps



Robert Benjamin Young's burial entry in the St James register

The location of the grave remained a mystery. The parish of St James was formed out of St Sidwell in 1838, but the original church was destroyed in the Exeter Blitz in 1942, to be replaced later by the new building on the Stoke Hill roundabout. Beatrix Cresswell's book on Exeter churches describes the old building without mentioning a graveyard, but White's 1878-9 directory states that a burial ground

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was consecrated in 1846.

By good fortune the diocesan patent books, which record the consecration of churches and burial grounds, are deposited at the Devon Record Office. Two entries for 27 April 1846 record the consecration of a 'piece of land situate on the north side of the church yard of the parish of St Sidwell part of the site of the tithe barn of the rectory of the said parish' as an additional burial ground for the parishes of St Sidwell and St James, the two sections being divided from each other by a straight line. The volume contains no maps, but the 1:500 Ordnance Survey maps of 1876 show an S-shaped piece of ground to the north of St Sidwell's church marked 'Grave Yard'.

This piece of land, which served the two

parishes for most of the 19th century, is now covered by Wat Tyler House and part of the King William Street car park, so any hope of finding Young's grave has gone for ever. Nevertheless, we have located its position closely enough for the 1805 Club to put up plaques to both Stockham and Young on or near St Sidwell's church.

This story is a good illustration not only of the way in which the participants in great events in history can end their lives in obscurity but also of the difficulty which is frequently encountered in tracing comparatively recent events. Without the St James registers (which were long thought to have been destroyed in the bombing, until they were discovered and deposited in 1988) and the patent books, Young's last resting place would have remained a mystery for ever.

FRIENDS OF DEVON'S ARCHIVES

This has been another busy and productive year for the Friends. In July FDA joined together with BAfM for a conference on Artefacts and Archives, their use towards Exeter's History, hosted by the Friends of Exeter Museums and Art Gallery. Speakers included John Allan who talked about Exeter artefacts held in the museum; Margery Rowe and Mary Ravenhill talked about their map project which included the production of their book of maps published by FDA; and Stuart Blaylock from Exeter Archaeology Unit discussed the use of archives when looking at buildings. Lunch was followed by a brief visit to the 'Exeter Unveiled' exhibition in the Jury Room of the Guildhall. There was then an opportunity to have a guided tour around a choice of museum exhibitions and finally a talk by Deborah Boden and Camilla Hampshire on the future of museums in the region in the light of new funding.

The Autumn workshops this year, organised by Margery Rowe on behalf of the Devon & Exeter Institution, Devon History Society and the FDA, had the theme of Visual Images of Devon. Over the four weeks there were opportunities to learn about historical photographs, prints, and other visual images including the Devon Etchings Project. Speakers included Todd Gray, Tim Wormleighton and Ian Maxted.

The culmination of the year was the AGM and the interesting and thought-provoking conference entitled Courteous to Strangers. Frank Gent talked about the early Jews of Plymouth, Andrew Spicer about the Huguenots and Todd Gray brought the conference up to date on the Black History project.

This was followed by a lively debate about racism. During the afternoon session Peter Towe from Plymouth related some history of Germans in the town, and Philip Bujack introduced a Gentleman called Tadd from the Polish settlement in Newton Abbot, who gave an entertaining and moving view of what it was like to be a 'stranger' in Britain in the twentieth century.

Future events to look forward to include a Joint Family History Day with the WI in the Autumn.

The Black History Project has been a great success with more than 125 references to black people reported. A printout of the results to date can be obtained at the DRO, as also can new forms for new findings. Many thanks to the dozens of researchers who have already contributed to this important aspect of Devon's history.

A new project is now under way to find references to people with disabilities in Devon. One example is that of James Rabbage, a gardener aged 37 at Mamhead who was deaf and dumb [Census 1881]. Forms to record references are also available at the DRO.

The Devon Family History Society are organising coach trips to Kew on 11 March, 17 June and 14 September. They leave from Kingskerswell at 5.50am, Newton Abbot at 6am, Exeter at 6.20am and Taunton at 6.45am and return at 5pm. Further details from Mr D S Bramble on bramblehoo@hotmail.com or Karnten, Mill Lane, North Whilborough, Newton Abbot TQ12 5LW. The price is to be fixed, but will be approximately £17.

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LATEST NEWS ON GREAT MOOR HOUSE

Work is progressing well at Sowton, in spite of the usual hold-ups and set-backs, and we still hope to take over the completed building in July or August 2004. The new front entrance and most of the internal walls and mezzanine floors are complete, and the building is changing all the time.

Moving the documents from Marsh Barton and Castle Street to GMH will take about two months, and of course the Met. Office archives will be moving in at around the same time. This part of the move cannot be rushed, but we still hope to open at Sowton during next autumn. Exact dates and details of the closure period will be published as soon as we know them.

CALM 2000

Development of our new Archive Collections Management System (ACMS) is almost complete with the basic system being tested at the record office sites. All staff have now been trained in its use and its full implementation now awaits completion of work on the transfer of the data in our existing systems and the settlement of a few outstanding technical problems. When it goes live and as more data is added, it will be an essential source of information about our collections and a significant improvement over our existing finding aids. Initially, it will be used by staff only but, later (hopefully, towards the end of 2004), catalogue information will be made publicly available on-line. However, paper catalogues will continue to be produced for some time. The ACMS will also replace our existing searcher registration system and, as staff may take a little time to get used to this, there may be some delays in this process for a short time after it is introduced for which we apologise in advance. Document orders will also be dealt with by the ACMS in due course.

NEWS FROM THE SERVICE POINTS

Two new 'second-tier' service points, at Cookworthy Museum in Kingsbridge and Brixham Heritage Museum, were officially opened during the summer, and another, at All Hallows' Museum in Honiton, is to be launched on Saturday 3 April 2004. The service point at Okehampton is closed during major building work at the museum but will re-open with improved facilities in the spring. The Annual Service Point meeting this year is on Wednesday 17 December in Exeter Central Library.

'CIRCLED WITH STONE'

Many readers will have seen or bought copies of the splendid book of this title by Dr Mark Stoyle, published by the Exeter University Press last July. In 2004 this is to be followed by an exhibition featuring many rarely seen maps, documents, and illustrations of the city walls, which will be on display in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum between 31 January and 17 April. There will also be a series of lectures and events:

- Friday 13 February, 1.10-1.55 - 'Circled with stone: the life of Exeter's city walls', Dr Mark Stoyle (£1.50)
- Thursday 19 February, 1.10-1.55 - 'The city walls and the ancient manuscript maps of Exeter', Margery Rowe and Mary Ravenhill
- Thursday 26 February, 1.10-1.55 - 'Archaeological studies of Exeter's city walls, 1972-2003', Stuart Blaylock
- Thursday 4 March, 1.10-1.55 - 'Town Walls and their Context: an Overview', Dr Robert Higham and Dr Oliver Creighton
- Saturday 20 March, 11.00-1.00 - Guided Walk of the City Wall (£1.00)
- Saturday 3 April, 10.00-1.00 - Meet the Experts.

VEITCH AND PHOTO' SYNTHESIS

In 2004 the Royal Albert Memorial Museum is also celebrating the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Horticultural Society with two exhibitions, one on the Veitch family and their contribution to horticulture and the other featuring the work of 20th-century artists who have drawn their inspiration from plants. Preliminary discussions have taken place, and further details will be published when they are decided.

A NEW FACE AT EXETER

We welcome Suzanne Brown, who joined us in November as a Clerical Officer, taking over from Gill Maudsley, who left in the summer to take up a post with Social Services. At the moment you are more likely to talk to Suzanne on the telephone than meet her in person, though after the move she and Helen Mason will spend some of their time manning the main record office reception desk.

