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ANOTHER BUSY YEAR

After holding fairly steady for a few years, the number of visits to the record offices has reached a new high point. Although numbers at Plymouth were slightly down from last year, those at Exeter and Barnstaple were up by over 1,000. Postal enquiries rose at all three offices, and there has been a big increase in group visits, despite the poor facilities at Exeter. The number of deposits has stayed about the same overall. The figures for 1996/7 (with those for 1995/6 in brackets) are:

Statistics - 1996/1997				
Services to the public	EXETER	PLYMOUTH	BARNSTAPLE	TOTAL
Individual Visits	10,563(9,775)	3,222(3,473)	2,570(2,414)	16,355(15,662)
Group Visits	13(0)	4(8)	25(20)	42(28)
Microfilm/fiche issues	123,427*(85,379)	36,000*(29,176)	15,273(14,743)	174,700* (129,298)
Postal Enquiries	5,590(5,064)	452(408)	433(389)	6,475(5,861)
Deposits of Collections	225(231)	86(111)	107(78)	418(420)

*estimated figures

We are of course pleased that people are increasingly aware of what we have to offer, and that there is so much interest in local history, but these increases come at a time of diminishing resources in local authorities, and it is something of a struggle for us to maintain the same level of service as hitherto. We are grateful to all our searchers for their patience at a difficult time.

CARN

The Devon Record Office has now joined the County Archive Research Network, which is a national registration scheme for record office users, linked to a computer database. About two-thirds of local record offices in England and Wales, including Cornwall and Somerset, are now members, and for anyone using a number of offices in the course of research a CARN ticket is a useful asset. The distinctive blue and white tickets, which last for four years, are available on request from Exeter,

Plymouth, or Barnstaple. You will need to show a driving licence or other acceptable proof of identity, but there is no charge.

ACQUISITIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

EXETER:

A number of deposits has been received from parishes and non-conformist churches, although plans to complete the second round of PRR Measure inspections have so far not been fulfilled. One of the most interesting collections came from the Society of Friends (D 874 add 9) and included minutes from the beginning of this century and deeds from 1680.

Not many family and estate collections have come in, though we have received records of the Furse family (D 5521), including deeds, letters, and estate papers from the 17th century to the 20th (some of them relating to Norfolk), and the Wyatt-Edgell family of Cowley Place (D 5553), most of which, unfortunately, relate to counties outside Devon.

Some small collections and individual items of considerable interest have come in, including a 'tutwork setting book' for Whiddon Tin Mine, Ashburton, 1846-1849 (D 5518), and a book of maps of Prideaux property in Farway, Offwell, Northleigh and Southleigh surveyed in 1826 by G.A. Boyce (D 5556). A minute book of the Torbay and South Devon Infirmary, 1844-1850 (D 5555), and minutes and reports of the Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Hospital, 1875-1949 (D 5524), are useful additions to our records of healthcare in Devon.

In May we received an unusual bequest in the form of a collection of seventy-five diaries kept by Mr Robert Henry Rooke, who was mayoral secretary in Torquay until 1968 (D 5564). The volumes begin in 1922 and end in 1983, between which years they give a very full account of Mr Rooke's life and interests.

NORTH DEVON:

Over 100 deposits of records were made to the North Devon Record Office in the year to April 1997. Since the last edition of this Newsletter, additional parish records have been received from Arlington (2005 add 6), Atherington (1562 add 8), Berryarbor (3921 add 4), Bishop's Tawton (1469 add 9), High Bickington (2849 add 4) and Yarnscombe (2979 add 2), together with first time deposits of non-current records of the parishes of East and West Anstey (B 445-446).

Additional records have been transferred from the Barnstaple Baptist Church (B 419 adds 3-4) and Bridge Street Methodist Church, Bideford (2237 add 9).

Parish Council records received include those of Bishop's Nympton (B 391 add), High Bickington (B 447) and Alverdiscott and Huntshaw (B 448).

Further material has been added to the records of the South Molton Municipal Charities (B 429 add). Following the note in this section of the previous edition of this

Newsletter, the trustees have decided that access to these records should be only with their written permission.

Several very large deposits of records have been received by the NDRO in recent weeks, and it will be some time before they can be sorted, listed and made available for public consultation. These include title deeds, estate papers and family records from Crosse and Wyatt, Solicitors of South Molton (2309 add 2), similar material from Bazeley Barnes and Bazeley, Solicitors of Barnstaple (B 127 add 6), a series of Barnstaple Town Council files dealing with a range of responsibilities transferred to North Devon District Council upon its creation in 1974 (2654 add 4) and the extensive records of the Chichester family of Hall, Bishop's Tawton (B 459).

WEST DEVON:

The WDRO has received additional records of the Lopes family of Roborough from the 17th-19th centuries (2156), found in the London offices of a solicitor.

A collection of deeds presented by the Treasury Solicitor under Section 3(6) of the Public Records Act 1958 (2171) turned out to include an item incorporating a plan of a small victualling yard only used during the early years of the Napoleonic Wars.

A large deposit was received of records of Devonport Methodist Circuit (2157), together with the private and preaching records of William Whitehead, who was a Methodist Local Preacher for more than seventy-five years (2201). A register of marriages, 1948-1984, is the only known document for the parish of St Michael, West Hoe, Plymouth (2184), and Plymouth NHS Hospitals Trust deposited several series of registers of births, 1934-1977 (2186).

Finally, Plympton Cricket Club is represented by score books from 1923 onwards (2197).

PARKER OF SALTRAM

The extensive family and estate papers of the Earls of Morley were deposited at what was then Plymouth City Library in the 1950s. They lay uncatalogued for many years, but staff at the WDRO have made a concerted effort over the past six years to finish the list. This is now complete and fills three substantial volumes. Arrangements have been made for the formal presentation of a bound copy to the present Lord Morley, who is Lord Lieutenant of Devon, and another to the National Trust at Saltram on 10 June. By the time this newsletter appears the presentation will have taken place. Copies of the catalogue on microfiche will be available for sale; please ask at the WDRO for details.

TALKS AND EXHIBITIONS

The Lymptone Society are hosting an exhibition in Lymptone Village Hall on 12 and 13 July; the weekend will include a talk by Susan Laithwaite of the DRO. Susan will also give a talk on House History at Totnes Museum during her visit to the service point there on 15 July.

Some items from the Exeter City Archives will be on display, along with the sword and cap of maintenance, presented to the City in 1497, in Exeter Guildhall during September and October. On 17 September, Margery Rowe will give a talk entitled 'Into the modern era: glimpses of Exeter's Tudor archives', and on 24 September John Allan of Exeter Museum will talk on 'An archaeological study of Exeter at the close of the Middle Ages'. Both talks will take place in the Music Room of Exeter Central Library, beginning at 1.00 p.m. The same two months will witness Devon Heritage Week (27 September - 4 October). Full details of the week will be published elsewhere, but it will include an open evening at the Devon Record Office in Exeter on 30 September between 6.00 to 7.30, preceded at 3.00 by a talk in the Library Music Room by the County Archivist (the provisional title is 'Is this a Record?'). There will also be a display in the Library foyer, to which the DRO is contributing, and a booklet entitled *In pursuit of Devon's history*. The WDRO will mark the occasion by issuing a list of manorial records, possibly linked with a seminar on the same subject; more details will follow.

EXETER SEARCHROOMS

We are working on ways to make it easier for new visitors to find their way around the searchrooms at Exeter. A start has been made by putting together some of the existing leaflets into a pack, and these have proved popular, but we are also trying to draw up a leaflet showing where the finding aids to different types of record are, possibly incorporating a plan. If anyone has any suggestions as to the kind of information which would be useful, please pass them on to a member of staff, and we will see if we can incorporate them.

STAFF

Two new faces have appeared at the WDRO in Plymouth this year. They are Rachel Broomfield, who previously worked in Plymouth City Museum, and Deborah Watson, who joins us from Plymstock Library. There are now four staff available during the four days when the office is open, and, though the problems of overcrowding in the searchroom remain, we hope that life will be a little easier.

PUBLICATIONS

A new book which makes extensive use of sources in the NDRO has recently appeared. *Mortehoe & Woolacombe on the Record*, by Margaret Reed, is published by the Friends of Mortehoe Cart Linhay and costs £12.99. It is available from local bookshops and from the North Devon Local Studies Centre.

The Revd John Swete's 'Picturesque Sketches of Devon' are to be published by Devon Books in association with the Devon Gardens Trust under the title *Travels in Georgian Devon*. The Trust have generously funded the transcription of Swete's text and the photography of the illustrations, and these will now appear in their entirety, along with an introduction by Dr Todd Gray which will include the results of new research into the way in which Swete compiled the volumes. A leaflet with a subscription form is enclosed in this newsletter.

EARLY HONITON LACE PRICKINGS

Since our exhibition of documents relating to "Devon Lace" we have encountered further examples, this time of lace pattern prickings. The first was found on a parchment marriage settlement of 1593 and shows a lace edging, perhaps dating from the late 17th century.

The most recent discovery is of five lace patterns in the Carew and Martin Papers (DD 55770-56831). One shows a shield without heraldic symbols, which the maker could insert accordingly. Others depict the initials T,B,J,O. The paper used for the shield pattern has a watermark dating from the 17th century. Some show evidence that a rubbing has been taken to make the pricking. We therefore wanted to know if the lace patterns were contemporary with the paper. Could they be the earliest lace patterns known in Devon?

By comparing the prickings with lace held at the Allhallows Museum, Honiton, it was evident that they were definitely Honiton lace motifs. The "initial" patterns show oak leaves and acorns, common symbols in early examples of Honiton lace. They can be found in a lace edging dated 1661. The patterns suggest from the closeness of the holes that they would have been worked with a fine dense image, which is typical of the 17th century.

We still do not know who would have used these patterns. Could they have been made by the servants of the household for the family or to subsidise their income and sold to a lace dealer?

It may be of interest to know that our "Devon Lace" exhibition is still available for loan. Please contact the DRO at Exeter.

AN EARLY MAP

Amongst the Bideford Bridge Trust documents in the North Devon Record Office is A Mapp of the Tenement of Grange at Bideford West the Water (2379A/Z38/12) which is now recognised to be the work of Joel Gascoyne. The compass rose illustrated here is quite distinctive and makes it possible to identify Gascoyne's work even though much of it is unsigned. This particular map is numbered 28 and thus suggests that there were others drawn, probably for an Atlas, which has now disappeared.

The Manor of Bideford was owned in the late 17th century by the Grenvilles of Stowe for whom Joel Gascoyne compiled the Stowe Atlas, now in the Cornwall County Record Office (DD. X 273). He also drew the 258 maps for the 4 volume Lanhydrock Atlas and was the author of the map of Cornwall of 1699, the first county to be mapped at the large scale of almost 1" to the mile.

If any further examples of Joel Gascoyne's maps come to light Margery Rowe and Mary Ravenhill would be delighted to hear of them.

SERVICE POINTS

The service point at Colyton is set to move again this summer. The main difficulty there has been the lack of permanent premises where equipment could be left ready to use and books and leaflets could be displayed, and this will finally be overcome with

the establishment of a Local History Research Centre on the upper floor of the Sunday School Room, where the service point started in 1989. In addition to microfiche copies of record office sources and general reference books, the Centre will hold data on Colyton families produced by the Cambridge Group for Population Studies in the course of their research programme. We hope to be able to report on the new arrangements in the next newsletter.

DRO AND THE INTERNET

Computer-literate record office users may have noticed that we have our own homepage, which is part of the County Council web site. The address is <http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcc/services/dro/homepage.html>. There is not a great deal on this yet, apart from general information, and progress in developing it has been slow, but there are links to the National Register of Archives and other relevant organizations, and we hope to build upon this in the future. There may in time be a choice between buying our information leaflets and handlists in paper form and accessing them via the Internet, and it would be interesting to know how many of our users would prefer to have these sources 'on line'. It may be possible to put a searchable version of our collections database on the Internet, and this is being investigated. However, making all our catalogues available on computer is as yet a distant prospect.

This newsletter is edited by John Draisey, County Archivist, Devon Record Office, Castle Street, EXETER, Devon, EX4 3PU, UK and is published by Devon County Council.	If you have any comments or suggestions on this newsletter please send to devrec@devon.gov.uk
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