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DESPERATE MEASURES?

It is traditional in the May newsletter to give a table of figures representing the use made of the record offices during the last financial year, and some statistics for 1999-2000 (with those for 1998-9 in brackets) are set out below. Most record offices publish figures similar to these, and a very similar set is incorporated in the statistics produced annually by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

By comparing one year's figures with another's, it is easy to see that we are getting steadily busier all the time, and this is a pattern repeated throughout the country. Any number of reasons can be suggested for this (television programmes, the growth of historical research around the Millennium, increased leisure time, and so on), but this growth is something which seems to occur without conscious effort on our part; it is something furthermore over which we have no control, though we can slow it down to some extent by reducing opening hours or introducing a booking system.

Statistics - 1999/2000

Services to the public	Exeter	Barnstaple	Total
Individual visits	10,785 (10,760)	2,973 (2,636)	13,758 (13,396)
Group visits	7 (6)	23 (30)	30 (36)
Microform issues	88,678 (89, 776)	16,867 (15,852)	105,545 (105,628)
Document orders	8,119 (8,969)	1,425 (1,441)	9,544 (10,110)
Postal enquiries	5,902 (5,570)	432 (406)	6,334 (5,976)
Exhibitions	3 (0)	3 (2)	6 (2)
Talks	12 (11)	9 (9)	21 (20)
Deposits	203 (200)	101 (118)	304 (318)
	97 (48%) (74	80 (79%) (92	177 (58%) (166

Collections listed	(37%))	(78%))	(52%))
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The figures in themselves, however, do not give much idea of how the service is functioning. If you know that there are 47 reader places in Exeter and that an average day's attendance is about 43, it is easy to see that we are operating close to capacity, but the full impact of this is only grasped if you are in the searchroom on a busy day. The 13% rise in visitor numbers in Barnstaple over last year speaks for itself. Also, although record offices often make comparisons amongst themselves, it is in fact very difficult to find a unit of measurement which is constant across the country. A record office which has 3,000 visits, 3 staff, and 10 reader places may be working harder than one which has 20,000 visits, 40 staff, and 80 places. On the other hand, the smaller office may have boosted its figures by acquiring surrogate national sources such as the GRO index or the IGI, while the larger one may be producing mostly original documents.

When these arguments are extended to financial questions, things become even more difficult. In these days of Best Value we must be able to demonstrate that we are providing value for money and to compare ourselves with similar services. But this is not as easy as it sounds. A service which is run cheaply is not necessarily operating efficiently, much less providing quality; it is possible to reduce costs by over-working staff and not maintaining buildings, but that is hardly a recipe for long-term success.

The challenge facing the archive profession over the next few years will be to establish some commonly accepted and universally applicable performance measures which can be collected without imposing a burden on staff. It is not enough to feel in our bones that we are providing Best Value; we have to be able to prove it.

ACQUISITIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

EXETER

The past 6 months have brought the usual quantity and range of records into the office, and it is only possible here to pick out a few items of interest.

Public records have been received in the form of an additional set of Board of Trade marine maps and plans for the 19th and 20th centuries (D 5845 add) and H M Customs and Excise records for Brixham (D 3287 add 2), Dartmouth (D 3308 add 2), Salcombe (D 3309 add), Teignmouth (D 3328 add), Exmouth (D 5897), and Torquay (D 5898) for the same period.

Local authority transfers included additional registers of Torquay Cemetery, 1854-1937 (D 4241 add 2), and a group photograph of Devon County Council taken in 1933. Two small 'stray' official collections have also come in: legal papers relating to Tiverton Turnpike Trust, c.1757-1861 (D 5948), and to the South Devon Railway Company, 1844-1854 (D 5875).

Manorial records are represented by court rolls and other records of the Manor of South Teign in Chagford, 1620-1850 (D5919), a bundle of copies of court roll for the Manor of Sampford Courtenay, 1640-1647 (D 5944), and a volume which contains a survey, 1711, and valuation, 1767, of the Manor and Borough of Chulmleigh, together with household accounts of Joseph Wimpey of Bockhampton in Dorset, 1783-1795 (D 5911).

More general family and estate records relate to the Ford family of Branscombe (deeds etc, 1675-1907, D 5915), and the Ley family of Trehill (deeds etc from 1713 onwards, D 2741 add); a deposit of deeds for various Mid-Devon parishes covers the period 1474 to the late 19th century (D 5872). Smaller items in this category are the diary of Barbara Isabella Buller, c.1820 (D 5870), some Trefusis game books, 1865-1909 (D 5885), and deeds and papers relating to the Admiral Hawke Inn, Cullompton, 1722-1853 (D 5912).

Business records are not plentiful this time, but we have received a letter book, 1929-1930, and a book of plans from the 1930s for Hodges Bros, engineers, of Exeter (D 5868) and the account book of a wig maker in Moretonhampstead, 1784-1804 (D 5905).

An interesting recent development is the deposit of the finished products of local history ventures, often in non-traditional media. Thus we have CD-ROMs of the Blackdown Hills Parish Chest Project (D 5873) and Our East Devon (D 5893) and a video tape from the Parish of Thurlestone Society (D 5888).

As usual, there is a group of deposits which defy categorization, and these include the autograph book of Nurse Gater of No 3 Temporary Hospital, Exeter, 1915-1919 (D 5938), a printed advertisement for Ellis's Patent Portable Silo, c.1885 (D 5904), and two identical signed photographs of Jeremy Thorpe, dated 1959 (D 5937). The most unusual items in this group must be two rolls of negative film of aerial photographs of railways in East Devon, 1953 (D 5951).

One deposit in a class of its own comprises the papers of the late Lady Sylvia Sayer (D5952). A separate note will be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The sorting and listing of these records, especially the larger collections, still takes some time, and we ask you to be patient if they are not immediately ready for inspection.

BARNSTAPLE

Over the last six months, additional deposits of records have been transferred to the North Devon Record Office from the Church of England parishes of Bishop's Nympton (596 adds 7&8), Challacombe (1328 add 4), Heanton Punchardon (3361 add 5), Langtree (2971 add 4), Newton Tracey (2978 add 3), North Molton (1786 add 5) and Stoke Rivers (2286 add). In addition, the office has received its first deposits of

records from the parish of Mariansleigh (B564 & add), among which are the original registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, beginning in the eighteenth century (the earlier registers do not survive), and a group of papers relating to the rebuilding of the church following two major fires in the 1930s.

A minute book of the North Devon Congregational Association, covering the years 1827-1863, has been deposited (B560). The continuation volume, for the period 1863-1915, was passed to the custody of the Record Office many years previously (B123).

HM Customs & Excise has transferred to the NDRO a continuation volume of the Port of Barnstaple shipping register for the years 1910-1987 (the register goes back to 1824), together with indices of ships/quote names appearing in the registers of both Barnstaple and Bideford (3318 add, 3319 add 2). The Record Office is intending to compile an additional index of the names of owners and masters of ships appearing in the registers.

A large collection of copy wills and letters of administration, 1829-1983, has been received from Bazeley Barnes and Bazeley, solicitors of Bideford (B127 add 9).

A group of pencil and watercolour sketches of scenes in Combe Martin, Ilfracombe, Lynton & Lynmouth and Torquay has been donated to the NDRO. The sketches, which are of high quality, are by an unidentified artist, and are dated May 1868 (B575).

Further records of John Cock junior, author of *The Ancient Records of South Molton*, published in 1893, have been added to those listed in the previous edition of this Newsletter (B554 add).

Other highlights include a rent account book of Richard Cross junior of Tiverton, 1683-1694, which lists properties in the parishes of Bradninch, Halberton and Tiverton (B 565), a scrapbook containing original signatures of mayors of the Borough of Barnstaple from the seventeenth century onwards (B 144 add 23), and papers relating to the management and activities of the Plough Arts Centre, Torrington, over the past thirty years (B 250 add).

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OF EVERY RACE AND CREED

It is easy to assume that Devon is not a multi-racial society, and indeed, in comparison with other parts of the country, there are few visible signs that the population of the county is not entirely of local origin. However, closer inspection reveals not only that there are significant groups of a variety of races resident here, but that some of these are long-established.

In a county famed for its maritime and trading connections, this is not altogether surprising. In the same way that there are Devonians scattered throughout the world, people from the furthest outposts of trade and empire have made their way back to Devon. Not all this trade would now be considered respectable or moral, and many prominent Devon families made substantial gains from traffic in slaves. The Revd John Swete, the fourth volume of whose *Picturesque Sketches of Devon* is due to be published in August, had inherited considerable wealth from plantations in the Caribbean. In our own century this immigration has continued in the form of refugees from the world's trouble-spots. So we have Hungarians, Vietnamese, and Bosnians, among others, living in Exeter. The Muslim and Sikh communities are now visible, though not numerically large, and the excellent exhibition on the Jews in Exeter on display at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum during May has reminded us of the history of another significant minority group.

BLACK AND ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

A new interest has been awakened in one particular section of society by the activities of the Black and Asian Studies Association, which is concerned with the history of Black and Asian people in Britain. The Friends of Devon's Archives are supporting the Association by collecting references which turn up in the course of research and sending them on to the Coordinators. An article in the Friends' section of this newsletter gives more details of this project and the findings in Devon.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Record Offices are sometimes accused (unjustly) of being 'elitist'. In fact archives are used for research by a wide range of people, but the recent Public Services Quality Group surveys have shown that documentary research is a predominantly 'white' activity. The percentage of visitors from other ethnic groups (in an admittedly small sample) was 2.1% in 1999, while according to the 1991 census these groups make up 5.5% of the population at large.

It may be thought that the reasons for this are obvious: after all, family history accounts for a large proportion of record office use, and this will have a natural bias towards the indigenous races. However, there are many other subjects for research, and the Japanese students who come to Exeter to read documents in medieval Latin show that there are no real boundaries. Perhaps there are opportunities here that have been missed.

The Caribbean Studies - Black and Asian History (CASBAH) Project, which seeks to identify all kinds of research material and is led by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, has been chosen as a case study for the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport's Social Inclusion policy document, a telling example of the central place which records hold in our national identity and culture. When it can be shown that Black and

Asian people have formed a part of the history of Britain for almost half a millennium, there will be no grounds for regarding them as a race apart.

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GREAT MOOR HOUSE

At the end of March, almost exactly a year after our grant application was delivered to the Heritage Lottery Fund, we received the good news that the new record office bid has achieved a Stage 1 pass. This does not guarantee that we shall receive the money, but it does give us leave to work up the proposal in more detail, and from now on there will be more regular contact with the Heritage Lottery Fund, so we shall not be working in the dark.

MEDIA COVERAGE

A press release about the Record Office's Lottery application and building plans gave rise, on a day when there was very little local news, to a lightning visit from Westcountry Television and a brief appearance on the early evening television news.

Following our experiences with the *House Detectives*, the BBC were in touch again this year about a programme on decorative plasterwork in the *One Foot in the Past* series. The result was an early morning dash by the County Archivist to a farm near Dunster in Somerset with the 17th-century pattern book of John Abbott, the plasterer, of Frithelstock.



*'The Triumph of Time' from
John Abbott's sketchbook, c.
1665*

The programme went out on 27 May, and we should be able to see Kirsty Wark comparing a design in the pattern book with an elaborate overmantle in the farmhouse.

HOLSWORTHY - AND BEYOND?

The plans reported in the last newsletter to establish a 'second generation' service point at Holsworthy Museum came to fruition on 9 May, when Councillor Desmond Shadrack officially opened the service point. A small crowd gathered in the Museum

on a very warm afternoon to take part in the ceremony, to be joined later by Councillor Kate Palmer, Executive Chair for Lifelong Learning, who had driven on to Holsworthy after an Executive Committee meeting.

Great interest was shown in the microfiche and reader, and the company was refreshed with tea and biscuits generously provided by the Museum Society. The photograph shows a demonstration of the fiche in progress; more pictures can be found on the Museum's two websites.

At the moment the service point has microfiche of the parish registers and tithe maps and apportionments of Holsworthy, Hollacombe, and Milton Damerel and of the registers of the Holsworthy Methodist Circuit. If all goes well, we hope to extend coverage in the coming years. Access is by appointment, and the Museum or the Record Offices can provide further details.



Councillor Desmond Shadrack (centre) with Mr Russell Dymond, Chairman of Holsworthy Museum Society (right) and the County Archivist at the opening ceremony



An impromptu training session at the microfiche reader

DEVELOPMENTS ON EXMOOR

For some time discussions have been going on between the Exmoor National Park Authority, the Exmoor Society, Devon and Somerset County Councils, and other interested parties with a view to establishing a resource centre for the study of Exmoor. This is still some way off, though the signs are positive that something exciting can be achieved.

Another interesting development has been the launch of the Exmoor Oral History Project, which aims to establish an oral history archive for both the Devon and the Somerset side of the National Park. The copies of the Devon recordings will be housed at the North Devon Record Office, and extracts will be available for use in schools, museums, and elsewhere. The catalogue will be available on the Internet, and there will be links with North Devon on Disk. There are also obvious affinities with the Beaford and Exmoor photographic archives.

This project is the first in the South West to receive a Lottery grant under the Local Heritage Initiative, which is distributed through the Countryside Agency. The award

was presented at a ceremony at Dulverton on 18 May, and we look forward to seeing, and hearing, the results.

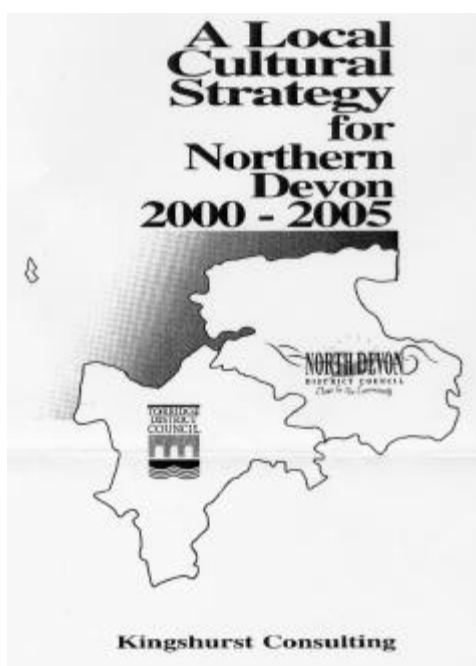
Lympstone Society

The Lympstone Society is holding a Millennium History Display II in the Village Hall on 26 and 27 August 2000. The display will include a talk at 11.00 a.m. on Saturday 26 August by John Allen

The map will be on sale from Lympstone Post Office in December and copies can be obtained from Major C J Smith, Sowden House, Lympstone, Exmouth EX8 5BE, tel: 01395 266113, or from the Devon Record Office.

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A LOCAL CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN DEVON



This new publication, produced as a joint project by the district councils of North Devon and Torridge, was officially launched on the 25th April, and sets the agenda for the delivery of a wide range of cultural services in the area covered by the two councils over the next 5 years. The government Department of Culture, Media and Sport is encouraging all local councils to develop strategies of this kind, indicative of the high priority it places on developing opportunities for all to engage in heritage, artistic, sporting and leisure activities.

The strategy was produced after extensive consultation with local people and organisations, with the support of a number of interested agencies, including Devon County Council.

The document's main theme is that cultural services need to be delivered in a joined up way, involving partnerships and the integration of resources, to increase access, enjoyment and educational opportunities, and this mirrors the approach that we in the Record Office, along with other county council colleagues, are taking.

The district councils themselves have no direct responsibility for the archives service

in Devon, but they have identified its support and development as one of the key aims of their cultural strategy, and, although we have always enjoyed close links with many agencies in the heritage sector, we look forward to extending our range of working partnerships as a result. In fact, the Record Office is already contributing to the success of the strategy through its involvement with emerging community projects, such as the Exmoor Oral History Collection, North Devon on Disk, Landlines and the newly established Service Point at Holsworthy Museum.

A MYSTERY SOLVED

In 1978, a number of pages from a goldsmith's account book were deposited at the Devon Record Office. The pages had been found underneath a layer of wallpaper in a house at Kingsteignton. We removed the wallpaper and cleaned and repaired the pages. They formed part of an exhibition on the history of Kingsteignton later that year, but despite all our efforts, no-one could explain how the account book came to be pasted up in a house as wallpaper lining. The mystery remained unsolved until this year, when Mr Whipham visited the Record Office to research his family, and between us, we were able to piece together the pieces of the story.

The house where the accounts were found was in fact part of the former vicarage which had been sold about 1930 and converted into two houses. The vicarage was built in 1815 for Dr Thomas Whipham, who was instituted vicar of Kingsteignton in 1812. It was an amazing house, designed by Frances Whipham, wife of Thomas, and built to her specifications by John Rendle, a local builder. Mr Whipham has Frances' original plan, and has given the Record Office a photocopy (ref. 5903). It is interesting to compare this with John Rendle's plan which survives among the Parsonage Rebuilding files in the Diocesan Records. Frances drew a curving staircase rising from a central, oval-shaped atrium, with four oval rooms in each corner, so that the outside wall of the house has an undulating effect. John Rendle made the atrium a little smaller and the staircase more angular, probably for ease of building. The house had a thatched roof with a thatched veranda. There is a coloured view of the house in *The History of Teignmouth* (ref. 1919Z) and Mr Whipham tells me that this view is based on a sketch made by one of Dr Whipham's daughters.

Dr Thomas Whipham, vicar of Kingsteignton, was the son of Thomas Whipham, a London goldsmith, and the names of members of his family appear in the pages of the account book found in the house nearly two hundred years later. Somehow, the book must have found its way to Devon when the family moved here, and perhaps because it was no longer thought important, it was broken up and the paper used to line the walls of the vicar's new house.

RECORDS OF BRITISH SCULPTORS

The Record Office has received a letter from the editors of the revised edition of the

Gunnis Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851, asking to be informed of any major discoveries in this field by researchers working here. Record Office staff are not always aware of discoveries made in the searchroom, and indeed we are sometimes surprised to learn what lines some of our regular visitors have been pursuing. If anyone does come across a significant reference to a British sculptor during this period, therefore, and would like to contribute it to the new edition of the Dictionary, staff will be pleased to pass it on to the editors.

DIGITAL IMAGE ARCHIVE OF MEDIEVAL MUSIC

The Devon Record Office was approached in February by the directors of the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music, who wished to install a digital copy of the 'Dartmouth Magnificat', a 15th-century polyphonic composition written into a Dartmouth Borough Court Book, on their website. Dartmouth Town Council, the present owners of the manuscript, were very happy to give their permission, and in May the project manager appeared at the Record Office with an impressive array of photographic equipment to capture the images.

The Magnificat is now on the DIAMM website (<http://www.diamm.ac.uk/>) and is well worth a look. This manuscript is fairly clear and easy to read, but the site also contains examples in which the musical text has been written over and almost obliterated. With digital technology later accretions can be removed and the original text enhanced without touching the original document. Needless to say, the process is not quick or cheap, but it does offer hope that other almost illegible documents may be coaxed to give up their secrets.

Friends of Devon's Archives

Devon: the Black Connection

Since last Autumn the Friends have been in contact with the Black and Asian Studies Association who are asking for information on the history of black and Asian peoples in Britain. As well as sending them details of black people in this county, we have also sent some references about the activities of Devonians in Africa and the West Indies.

From looking into this subject it soon becomes apparent that there is no single major source where this type of information can be found - haven't we come across this situation before? But, already, by using the widest possible range of sources, many people have come forward with exciting snippets.

With the opening up of Africa to commerce in the late 16th century, many Westcountry traders became involved: firstly, concentrating on items such as hides, elephant ivory and redwood for dyeing. Documents such as the *Exeter Customs Rolls* at this time record many ships entering Topsham from the Guinea Coast. Many native

Africans were also brought to this country - as early as 1570 Nicholas Wichehalse of Barnstaple mentions in his will 'Anthonye my negarre', in 1596, in the same town, Grace 'a neiger servant' of Richard Dodderidge, and Peter Mingus also 'a negor servant', were both buried within a month of each other. At Plymouth the illegitimate daughter of Mary 'a negro of John White's' was baptised in 1594, the reputed father being a Dutchman! The presence of these black servants was not restricted to the coastal ports: the Fortescues of Fallapit had 'a blackmoor named George' in 1577, and from the *Account Book of Blundell's School* we learn that in 1619 the trustees sent a black boy to London on an errand.

From the earliest days Devonians became involved in the slave trade - one fact about the famed 'seaman' Sir John Hawkins that we were not told at school was that his coat-of-arms featured a bound African female. The fortunes to be made from dealing in human cargo became all too obvious and, during the 17th and 18th centuries, many were lured into this line of business. Recently a Web-site has been found containing an article reproduced from the *Augusta Chronicle* relating the story of the descendants of William Cleveland. This man, stated to be a slave trader from Devon, was shipwrecked in the 1730s on the Banana Islands (off the coast of Sierra Leone). He was taken under the wing of the local chieftain who rejoiced in the name of King Skinner Caulker, and eventually married the chief's daughter. The couple had two children, one of whom, Elizabeth, travelled to South Carolina where, looked upon as white because of her fair skin, she herself came to own 30 slaves on a plantation. The journey from Africa to the Americas was often fraught with danger and, more often, disease and death for the slaves. A rare published article 'Extracts from a Slaver's Log' (in the *Mariner's Mirror* of 1920) details such journeys undertaken on the Exeter ship, the *Daniel and Henry*. On one such venture, carrying goods 'at the risque of Messrs Danl Ivey and Co of Exeter', there is the record '6th October 1699, we have now throwne overbord 153 slaves'.

The growing British trade monopoly in the West Indies led many investors to buy plantations on such islands as Jamaica, Barbados, Grenada and, apparently especially favoured by Devonians, Nevis. Record Offices often contain references to these plantations among family papers. One such collection, found by John Cochrane of Colyton, concerns the Scarborough family - members of which came to live at Colyford. The papers include a list of 74 slaves on the Scarborough Plantation at St Thomas, Nevis, containing the names and ages of 42 males and 32 females, ranging in age from 5 months to 60 years. Of these slaves just over a quarter had been born in Africa, the rest on Nevis. As Colyton shows, plantation owners could be found in the smaller parishes of Devon - and to take this to the extreme, the Walkers of Burlescombe and Nibbs of Washfield, two of our smallest parishes, owned property (and slaves) in Grenada and Antigua respectively.

Scouring the Tiverton parish registers has turned up one burial and two baptisms of black persons: John 'a negroe', Thomas Gallen 'a black boy living with Mrs Hamilton of Bristol', and Thomas 'son of Bretton, a native of Africa'. The marriage of a black soldier to a local girl has been found at Withycombe Raleigh, and the baptism of a negro girl at Roborough. No doubt fuelling bigotry and reinforcing the stereotypical

views held by many, the black residents of Devon were often to be found in court. Indeed, when the new gaol was built at Exeter in 1795 the dubious honour of being first to be hung 'at the new drop' was 'a black'. Another case which has come to light concerned William Greenwood 'a man of colour', charged with burgling a yacht at Torbay in 1802, and stealing various article from it.

There is clearly a story to be uncovered - regarding both the presence of black persons in this county and the involvement of Devonians in Africa and the West Indies. However, the information is spread very thinly over a vast range of source materials - it will be uncovered in a haphazard fashion, more likely by chance than by specifically seeking it. For these reasons the Friends are offering to collect and assimilate this information. If you only have the reference number of a document, the page numbers of a published article, the date in a parish register, or even anecdotal evidence - we would like to hear from you. You can either post the references to us - c/o of the Devon Record Office - or, if you are in the DRO, put it in the tray on the Friends' desk.

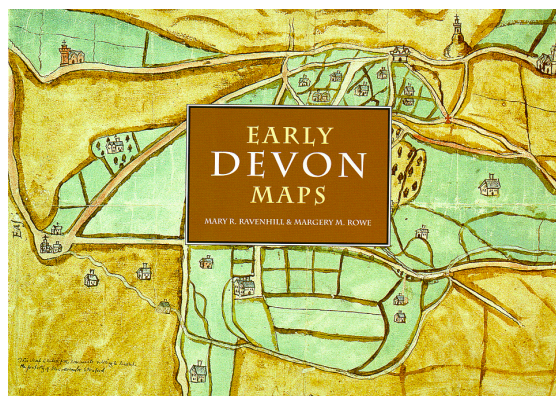
Mike Sampson

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EARLY DEVON MAPS

The book of reproductions of early Devon estate maps compiled by Mary Ravenhill and Margery Rowe, which has been advertised in previous newsletters, was launched in the ante-room to the Council Chamber in County Hall on Wednesday 3 May, at the kind invitation of the then Chairman of Devon County Council, Councillor Ken Turner. The event was attended by about sixty Friends, subscribers, county councillors, honorary aldermen, and County Council officers.

The copies which were paid for before publication but not collected on the day are now at the Devon Record Office in Castle Street and may be picked up from there; if a personal visit is difficult, the Record

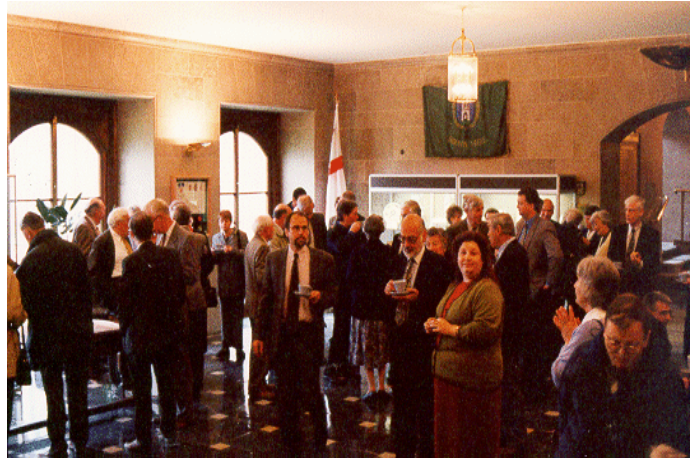


Above: Councillor Ken Turner with Dr Gray and

Office can arrange for them to be posted.

The pre-publication price of £10.00 continued until the day of the launch, and members of the Friends of Devon's Archives may still buy copies at this price. For everyone else the book is now on sale at £12.00 (plus postage if necessary) and may be obtained from the Devon Record Office, the North Devon Record Office, or the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office. We need hardly remind readers that *Early Devon Maps* is still very good value and makes an ideal gift for anyone interested in local history or cartography.

the
authors launching *Early Devon Maps*



Above: Guests at the launch enjoying the Chairman's hospitality

The Chairman spoke of the importance of maps and the hold which they exert over people's imagination and congratulated the Friends on the production of the book. Dr Todd Gray, Acting Chairman of the Friends, then thanked the Chairman, the National Lottery and the Scouloudi Foundation for their financial support, Mr Alan Bacon, the former Head of Lifelong Learning, who acted as referee, and the authors. The County Archivist thanked Mr Mike Sampson, the Secretary of the Friends of Devon's Archives, for all his hard work towards the production and promotion of the book, and Mrs Margery Rowe thanked Dr Mike Dobson, Professor Roger Kain, and the copyright owners of the maps for their contribution to the final product. She ended by saying that, in the words of one of the cartographers featured in the book, she and Mrs Ravenhill had 'done their best', and there was general agreement that their best was very good.

After the formal proceedings of the launch, the company remained in the ante-room for some time conversing, collecting copies of the book, and buying extra copies for friends or to give as presents.

Friends are respectfully reminded that subscriptions are due on 1 October each year. There are several subscriptions still outstanding for this year, and the Membership Secretary will be pleased to receive these at any time. A banker's order saves the inconvenience of writing a cheque and posting it each year, and forms are available on request.

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LADY SAYER AND DARTMOOR

An important May addition to the collections in Exeter was 130 boxes of papers created and accumulated by the late Lady Sylvia Sayer (1904-2000) in connection with her campaigning activities to preserve Dartmoor as a natural wilderness. For over 50 years, through work on the National Parks Committee and Council for National Parks and association with such organisations as the Commons Preservation Society and Ramblers' Association but, particularly, as a leading and long-standing member of the Dartmoor Preservation Association, she campaigned tirelessly, with the full and active support of her husband, Guy, to prevent potentially damaging encroachment on the moor by road and reservoir construction, the army, mining, afforestation and much else.



The papers include her research notes and presentations for the many public enquiries affecting Dartmoor over a period when it was under considerable threat from many directions.

It will be difficult to make the papers generally available until they are catalogued in detail. Resources to do this will be investigated as one of our priorities over the next few years and, in the meantime, as the papers are partially sorted, we will sympathetically entertain requests to view material in the collection as long as it can be easily identified.

A new face at Exeter



Visitors to the Exeter Searchroom this year will have noticed a new, though not unfamiliar, face amongst the staff. As part of the preparations for our transition to the electronic age the post of (Information) Archivist has been created, and Jan Wood arrived in mid-February to fill it. Jan is no stranger to Exeter, however, for she has been with us before, first as a searcher, then as a volunteer, and eventually in two part-time posts as both Searchroom Assistant and Research Assistant.

Since that time she has completed the MA course in Archive Administration at Liverpool University and worked for a time in Doncaster Archives. We are very pleased to welcome her back to Devon.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION



Staff at the Cornwall Record Office and the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office have already taken this qualification, and it is coming to be accepted as a standard for semi-professional archive staff.

Mandy Caine and Mike Dowell, who are both regularly on duty in the searchroom at Exeter, have recently heard that they have passed NVQ Level 3 in Archive Services. The course is run through the Somerset College of Arts and Technology at Taunton, and Paul Brough, City Archivist at Plymouth, has acted as Assessor.

The course has lasted around 18 months, and Mandy and Mike have collected a formidable array of evidence to demonstrate their understanding of the working of an archive service. This has involved a considerable commitment of time and energy in an already busy schedule, and we congratulate them on their achievement.

<p>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.</p>	<p>If you have any comments or suggestions on this newsletter please send to devrec@devon.gov.uk</p>
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