

NEW CHAIR

Members will have heard me at our last 9 AGMs state that I have wanted to step down as Chairman. It has been 14 years since I first took up this office and it really is time for the society to have a new Chairman/woman who will take us in a different direction. **I have decided that come what may I must step down in October this year.**

This is a good time. The archives at Barnstaple and Exeter have been through some difficult times but have met the challenges with great enthusiasm and spirit. The service at Plymouth is nearing the deadline imposed by the National Archives 14 years ago to rehouse its records and it is now up to Plymouth City Council to finally bring forward realistic plans. We have done what we could and hopefully a new head of FODA will be able to help all three archives with much less campaigning. I am very willing to help whoever takes over in whatever ways are thought appropriate but change has to come in one shape or another. Please get in touch if you feel you would like to know more about what is a very interesting role to play within Devon's heritage community or if you know someone who may be interested.

Dr Todd Gray
Acting Chairman

NEWS

This spring will see our long-awaited publication of the drawings of the Brunel Atmospheric Railway. We are deeply indebted to Paul Garnsworthy for his expertise which will be self-evident to all readers but we are also appreciative of the efforts of the Broad Gauge Society in publishing it with us. This extraordinary book will be offered to members at a discounted price when it becomes available, full details will be promulgated when they are finalised.

FoDA continues to act as the advocate for Devon's archives and we have watched with great interest the exciting developments of the service at Exeter and Barnstaple as well as the tremendous efforts made in modernising the Exeter Cathedral Archive. We all remain concerned about the Plymouth archives and hope that this year Plymouth City Council will finally unveil realistic plans for a new archive building that will meet modern needs and be financially realistic. It has been 14 years since the building was condemned by the National Archives and little progress has been made in that time.

We will be taking a new direction with our autumn conference and your committee hopes we once again have a full audience.

Dr Todd Gray
Acting Chairman

MEMBERSHIP

The good news is that we have had six new members join us since the 1st October 2012. If you know of anyone else who might be interested in becoming a member, please give them a leaflet or let us know.

The bad news is that no reminder that subscriptions were due was included with the AGM papers as is normal. Many apologies for this oversight. Some of you therefore will find a reminder in with your newsletter.

We have also learned that wording on the Gift Aid form has changed. If you are a tax-payer and have not already completed a form, then let me know and I will send you a form with the new wording. If you have previously filled a Gift Aid form in there is no need to fill in a new one.

Clare Greener
Membership Secretary
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ROLL OF HONOUR PROJECT

Since the interest generated when the project was announced and the surge after the AGM in October, transcribing of the Roll has slowed right down again. More volunteers are needed to ensure we can complete this project before the target date of 2014.

The core aim of the project is to transcribe the Roll and present it as a searchable database through the FoDA website. This involves sending to the volunteers images from the Roll for the parish(es) they are interested in. Depending on the parish there may be one name or many hundreds but every one counts. When complete the transcription is returned to me and is entered into the database. I am also after the names on the local memorials and as many details of those named in the roll as possible, however these can be added into the database at a later date. I regret to say that being fairly computer literate is a pre requisite of volunteering for this project.

The question has risen on several occasions about acknowledging those who contribute to the project. My intention is that there will be a page listing all those who contribute in any way, shape or form to the project along with details of their contribution unless I am specifically asked not to add the names.

Please contact me at pete@iscabests.co.uk or through the link on the website if you wish to volunteer.

Pete Best
Project Co-ordinator

FoDA WEBSITE NEWS

A new document transcript by Paul Luscombe has been added to the website – “1715 Militia Assessments and related documents”. To quote from the Commentary and Context, Paul Luscombe writes:

“The Devon Record Office holds a collection of militia assessments for the southern and western parts of Devon recording the names of property owners required to contribute in 1715 towards the costs of maintaining the militia and the proportion of the parish’s liability to be met by each of them. Fewer assessments have survived compared with the much more common muster rolls, which list the names of men who served in the militia rather than the taxpayers who paid for its upkeep. Documentary sources relating to organising and funding the militia may be found among the papers of families whose members served as deputy-lieutenants and in other County offices, in parish constables’ books and in quarter sessions papers. The accompanying transcript will be relevant to those with interests in local history, family history, name studies, the development of local government and the history of taxation. This introductory narrative aims to help those who use the documents to understand why and how militia assessments were produced in both local and country-wide contexts.”

This is an important new addition to FoDA’s document transcripts and indexes, and thanks are due to Paul Luscombe for his work on this project. A link to a pdf file of the transcript can be found at www.foda.org.uk/main/transcripts.htm

UPCOMING EVENTS AT GREAT MOOR HOUSE, EXETER:

Saturday 16 March 2013	Open Day at the Devon Heritage Centre
Saturday 19 October 2013	FoDA AGM & Conference

Sue Jackson
FoDA Newsletter Editor

This newsletter is produced by the Friends of Devon’s Archives, c/o Devon Heritage Centre, Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Sowton, Exeter EX2 7NL.

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Spring Newsletter 2013

