



The Friends of Devon's Archives

www.foda.org.uk

Registered Charity 1107394

c/o Devon Heritage Centre, Great Moor House,
Bittern Road, Sowton Exeter EX2 7NL.

Welcome to the Autumn 2016 Newsletter

As I am sure you have all heard by now, our nomination of the South West Heritage Trust as the Record-keeping Service of the Year, specifically in respect of the work of the Devon Archives and Local Studies Service, resulted in it being awarded that accolade. Wonderful news! Congratulations to everyone who works at Devon Heritage Centre for this achievement. It is heartening that our nomination was received so positively by the team of professionals who assessed the submissions and that so many people voted for Devon in the eventual ballot.

The award is good news in itself. However, there are other positive aspects. First, I hope that fund-awarding bodies recognise that applications made by and on behalf of the Devon Archives and Local Studies Service come with a seal of approval from both the profession and satisfied researchers. I sincerely hope that Devon County Council also takes notice and recognises this partnership with Somerset is an ongoing success story. Standards have been raised, innovation shared and financial risks halved. Finally I hope that everyone at DHC, at the North Devon Record Office and in the SWHT generally recognises that we all value the work that they do. You've all done brilliantly. Every one of you should be proud of this achievement.

Challenges ahead

Despite this award, there is no room for complacency, as they say. (Let's face it, when is there *ever* any 'room for complacency'?) In this case, there is still much to be done at DHC, not least in the listing of records and the online access to those lists. There is also the looming shadow of the next financial settlement for the SWHT. Five year funding agreements are 'medium-term' in local-government speak but, in the context of archives, they are a blink of the eye. And with multiple funding partners, there is a very real danger that councillors and/or officers might seek to claw back some of the grant, hoping other organisations might make up the shortfall. The prime reason that the collaboration with Somerset is a success is because resources can be pooled. If either county council reduces funding for the next five-year period it will damage *two* counties' archive services, not just one.

Two other areas in which there is 'no room for complacency' are born-digital records and property deeds. We have all heard stories of people going up into a loft and finding a cache of old letters or the photograph of an ancestor, or some other serendipitous find. As we increasingly rely on digital gadgetry, our forms of communication and our means of preserving visual images will become digital-only. This *could* mean they live forever, as we migrate them to newer platforms. In reality, they are very vulnerable. How many people have multiple back ups of their data? How many people have lost their email archive when an old computer has crashed? How many people even think to keep an email archive? And after we are dead, who is going to do these things?

The technical means for a record office to take in datasets and email archives exists but in practice people don't know how to deposit them, and most record offices don't have procedures for accessioning them and making them available. And when we ourselves head off to the great recycle bin in the sky, few care to pay to maintain our digital legacy. There will be no caches of letters in the attic for future generations to find. It is important that we remain mindful of this danger, and protect our papers and records for future generations, until such time as digital accessioning becomes routine.

With regard to deeds, the shift to digital is having a dire impact right now. All across the country huge numbers of property deeds are being moved out of solicitors' stores and on to rubbish heaps and bonfires. Once the essential details for establishing the rights and responsibilities of ownership have been established and entered on Land Registry database, these old documents become a liability. But in throwing them out, all the details of past owners and descriptions of neighbouring ownerships are lost. Even if the deeds are sold, they become detached from their property (and often from each other), and lost to the owners of the house. The ever-watchful Graham Parnell has identified several Devon selections of deeds that have come on to the market – and we have been successful in purchasing some of these at reduced prices for the Devon Heritage Centre (see DHC acquisitions) but the fear is that many more are being destroyed.

FoDA needs you!

Finally, I have to say that this organisation too falls into the 'no room for complacency' category. Recently we have had a crisis when too much fell to me to do when I had no time to do it – due to a crushing deadline for my work. The only way I can see that we can deal with this is for other people to take some of the work off the chairman's shoulders. In particular, we need a **Newsletter Editor** and a **Programme Secretary** to help arrange the conferences. We also desperately need a new **Treasurer**. No prior knowledge is needed for these roles: Graham Parnell can talk through the treasurer's responsibilities with the new office holder, and I can do likewise for the other two positions.

I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is that members step forward to help with these jobs. If no one does, the organisation is in peril. And so is the major voice reminding SWHT of the importance of Devon's archives and DCC of the importance of continuing to fund SWHT properly. I cannot carry on devoting as much time as I have done to the chairmanship when it also involves so many other aspects. And when I step down as chairman, my successor will face a similar problem, and have an enormously steep learning curve which, frankly, will be very daunting even if he or she has the same level of historical, archival, publishing and local government knowledge that past chairmen have had. This is, therefore, something of a crunch time for FoDA.

If the Devon Archives and Local Studies Service can be turned around to win the Record Keeping Service of the Year, I am sure we can streamline our own organisation and pull together to work more efficiently. And, in so doing, we can work to support archives, and to remedy the threats, including those to digital records and property deeds mentioned above.

Ian Mortimer, Chairman

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South West Heritage Trust Report

We are delighted that the South West Heritage Trust, and particularly the Devon Archives & Local Studies Service, has been named as the **Record-keeping Service of the Year**. We are very grateful to the Friends of Devon's Archives for nominating us for this award. This is a new award which has been established by the Archives and Records Association, so it is a particular honour to have won it against stiff competition in the inaugural year. It is a testament to the support that we have from the Friends and also to the hard work of staff, volunteers and many others in Devon. The nomination describes the Trust's 'innovation, vision and professionalism in transforming the

archive services in Devon' and of pioneering new methods of collaborative working across Devon and Somerset.

A three year partnership funding agreement is now in place for the **North Devon Archive Service**. Work is underway to finalise the agreement between Devon County Council, Barnstaple Town Council, Libraries Unlimited SW and the Trust. We are now working towards the new service arrangements in North Devon, which will come into being from 1 November 2016. Gary Knaggs has moved to his new role as North Devon Heritage Officer and we are recruiting an assistant role to support the service. The funding agreement enables us to open to the public on three days per week, to introduce a range of volunteer opportunities and to develop a range of community outreach work in the North Devon area. After many years of uncertainty we are very pleased to have such a positive future for the North Devon Archive Service.

Somerset Day on 11 May was marked by the exhibition **Somerset Archive Treasures from Devon** which was held at St James's Church, Taunton, and was very positively received. This enabled us to showcase archives relating to Somerset which are held at the Devon Heritage Centre and North Devon Record Office. Despite torrential rain, two hundred people braved the elements to see the exhibition. The occasion mirrored the similar event held in Exeter Guildhall during 2015.

Following the launch on 21 March of the new online catalogue for the Somerset archive collections, the catalogue for the **Devon archive collections** was launched on 21 July. It makes available about 500,000 catalogue entries, and means that over one million entries are available for Devon and Somerset as a whole

(see www.swheritage.org.uk/catalogues).

The new **Local Studies catalogue management system** is now operational and includes catalogue data for the Westcountry Studies Library, the Devon & Cornwall Record Society, Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society, the Somerset Studies Library and the Somerset Rural Life Museum library. The online

version of this catalogue will shortly be launched and will allow searching of over 200,000 records relating to printed and other secondary sources of West Country history.

To mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme an exhibition called **Seeing the Somme** is on display at the Devon Heritage Centre. To coincide with the anniversary, we have looked at a single collection from the Devon archives to gain a unique perspective on the events. It tells the story of Arthur Hadow of Chudleigh, who led the Newfoundland Regiment on the first day of the battle. A further exhibition, 'Weather at War', concerns the role of the Met. Office during the conflict.

A Devon Remembers Heritage Project event concerning shell shock was well attended at **Seale-Hayne**, Newton Abbot, on 9 June. Seale-Hayne was a pioneering centre for the treatment of shell shock during the First World War.

We are pleased that Mr David Fursdon, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Devon, has confirmed his willingness to become a further **Patron of the South West Heritage Trust**. A meeting with him took place in Exeter on 22 June when he suggested ways in which he could be supportive of the Trust.

And finally, we continue to be indebted to our growing numbers of **volunteers** who are working on a wide range of projects. We will be holding a volunteer celebration and recruitment event at the Devon Heritage Centre on Monday 14 November. If any members of the Friends would like the opportunity to volunteer at the Devon Heritage Centre please do get in touch.

Janet Tall,
Head of Archives & Local Studies, SWHT

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The Plymouth History Centre Project

I am hugely delighted to be able to write that the Plymouth History Centre project has just reached an extremely important milestone. The Heritage Lottery Fund have agreed £15.7m of capital funding in their national committee meeting, which is essentially the green-light for the project to commence. Although the project is costing £34m in total, this major investment from the HLF added to £8m from Plymouth City Council's capital programme enables us to plough ahead with the designs, contractors and, of course, to close the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery to start building works. We have also recently heard from the Wolfson Foundation who have granted £128,000 towards the project and are waiting to hear about our £4.175m round 2 ask from the Art Council. Overall, therefore, the funding picture is very positive and all systems are go!

As mentioned above, the Museum closed on Saturday 3 September to enable staff to empty all the galleries, stores and ancillary spaces by Christmas so the contractors, Willmott Dixon, can take control of the site in January 2017. They will then have a 2 year build programme, handing the building back to the Arts and Heritage team to install all the galleries and place the collections carefully in their new and/or refurbished stores.

In terms of the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, the office will remain fully-functioning throughout the build period. To that end, the office has just taken part in the national Heritage Open Days scheme on Saturday 10 September to raise the profile of the service at this important time. We are keen that the messaging of the Museum's closure is distinct from that of the record office. It is anticipated that PWDRO will shift from its current site in Clare Place to the new History Centre in the last 3 months of 2019. However, this programme will be updated as the build progresses.

We are very excited that both the storage environment and the public access to archive collections will be vastly improved in the new building. Not only will there be a PD5454:2010 compliant store on the

second floor of the History Centre, there will be a gallery called ‘Active Archives’ which will showcase some of the gems of the collection and encourage people to undertake their own research, This gallery will also operate as a self-help research space with access to digital copies of maps, film and photographs and local studies material. At the far end will be the new Cottonian Reading Room which will provide the invigilated access to collections of all types – from archive to object; photograph to painting. We are all very excited about the innovative nature of this space.

The History Centre project will not be possible without all the advice, support and hard work of our Friends, staff and volunteers. We have a huge amount of different projects that we need additional help to achieve, so if anyone is interested in getting involved in this ambitious scheme, then please get in contact with me or any of my colleagues at the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office on pwdro@plymouth.gov.uk.

Louisa Blight, Collections Manager, P&WDRO

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Volunteer Work at the Devon Heritage Centre

As has been the case since the Devon Archives and Local Studies Service became part of the South West Heritage Trust in the autumn of 2014, the main focus of volunteer work over the past few months has been on reducing the backlog of unaccessioned and uncatalogued material. Among the records on which volunteers have worked are a huge and varied collection relating to the Exeter estate agents Force and Sons, which was deposited in January of this year (Collection Reference: FOR) and which contains a large number of sale particulars and other records relating to properties in and around the city from the eighteenth century onwards. Details of this collection, and all the others which volunteers have recently worked on, can be found on our re-designed online catalogue at:
<http://devon-cat.swheritage.org.uk/>

In addition to this, the ongoing specialist projects which particular volunteers are engaged on have continued. These include the detailed cataloguing of the collection of Marriage Bonds and Allegations for the diocese of Exeter, which is being undertaken by John and Melanie Parker, and the continued listing of the Devon Quarter Sessions 'bundles' by John Booker. John's project was begun by our former archivist Bob Bennett in 2012, with the intention of covering the period between 1734 and 1804. John has now reached 1758, and his work is continuing to enhance the availability of this fascinating and important class of records.

The Devon Remembers Heritage Project is also benefiting from the assistance of volunteers. These include Claire Lewis, who is carrying out a review of literature produced by Devon authors during the First World War, and Louise Jackson, who is working on the accessioning of material deposited in connection with the project, and which will go to form the Devon Remembers First World War Collection. A number of volunteers have been trained in oral history techniques and, as the project progresses, they will be interviewing people about the continuing impact of the First World War on Devon communities during the inter-war years.

Another unusual project involves the cataloguing of a series of photograph albums and scrapbooks which belonged to a Teignmouth fish merchant named Pike Ward. He worked in Iceland for twenty years from the early 1890s, establishing a significant reputation within the fishing industry and beyond, and was awarded the Cross of the Order of the Icelandic Falcon. He introduced new ways of preparing fish that enabled Icelanders to sell to Britain and helped bring new sources of income to the fledgling nation.

Ward was a keen photographer and collector of professional photographs and postcards. He recorded images of ordinary people in the fishing industry, as well as middle class merchants, landscapes, life at sea, picnics with friends, and explorations and adventures all over the country. He was often present at prominent events such as visits from Danish royalty but was just as keen to take photographs of

quotidian details such as children sledging, shopkeeper's dogs, women's hairstyles, drunken ship captains and street barbers.

The albums, which cover the years 1893 to 1909, were deposited with Exeter City Library at some stage in the mid-20th century but had never been catalogued before being transferred to the Heritage Centre from the old Westcountry Studies Library in 2014. Now a small team of volunteers is engaged in the cataloguing and digitisation of the volumes, with a view to a possible exhibition. Indeed, as a result of its national team's unprecedented success at the recent European Football Championships, the profile of Iceland has rarely been higher in this country, and we like to feel that we are doing our bit for Anglo-Icelandic relations.

We are very grateful to all the volunteers who have contributed to this work, and we look forward to it continuing over the next six months. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me via email (brian.carpenter@swheritage.org.uk) or telephone (01392 380573).

Brian Carpenter, Community Learning Officer, SWHT

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New archive deposits at the Devon Heritage Centre and North Devon Record Office

Between January and the end of August this year, Devon Heritage Centre and the North Devon Record Office have between them received about 250 new deposits.

FODA assisted in the purchase or donation of several notable items and small collections. These are:

- **Cullompton Fire Insurance Map, 1830s:** Ground plan of the town and environs of Cullompton from a survey made July 1831, measured and mapped by R.P. Davey, apparently produced for insurance purposes and probably copied or added to after a fire

(possibly the 'Great Fire' of 1839). (DHC ref ZAHS acc D2016/130)

- **Medieval deed relating to Ferers of Kingston family, 1384:** Grant, John Ferers to Thomas Ferers, estates in Kingston, with handwritten and typed translations. (DHC ref ZAIN acc D2016/204)
- **Deeds relating to Tunnel Estate, Exeter, 1893-1972:** Conveyances and abstracts of title, relating to plots 8 and 9 of the Tunnel Estate, subsequently No 9 Mansfield Road. (DHC ref ZAIE acc D2016/169)
- **Deeds relating to Holbrook Estate, Ilsington, 1831-1914:** Conveyances, mortgages, transfers of mortgage and other property documents. Those dated prior to 1864 refer to lands known as Olditch and Woodwalls in Ilsington. Documents from 1864 onwards refer to the Holbrook Estate. (DHC ref ZAIF acc D2016/170)

Other new collections, or accruals to existing collections, include:

- **Exeter City Football Club, 1930-2010:** Minute book, 1930-1935, club records relating to legal cases and other administrative matters, c. 2000-2010. Some of the more recent records are under restricted access. (DHC ref EFC acc D2016/16)
- **Force of Exeter, 18th-20th century:** Additional records of Force & Sons, Estate Agents (and formerly valuers and undertakers) of Exeter, including deeds, documents and correspondence, Acts of Parliament, two undertaker's record books, sale particulars and accompanying papers, Exeter, Devon and neighbouring counties, three photographs, "Half Moon", Andrew Brice's "Exeter Journal", mid-18th century. (DHC ref FOR acc D2016/24)
- **Reed Bible Christian Collection, 1822-1956:** Records previously held by the Reed family of Holwell, Buckland Brewer, Devon, early Bible Christian pioneers. (DHC ref REE acc D2016/36)
- **Spicer of Wear, Topsham and Exeter, 17th -19th century:** Estate, family and official papers, Spicer family of Exeter and Wear, Topsham, merchants and landowners. William Spicer (b. 1733-d. 1788) was a glover and member of an Exeter merchant family. He was a Justice of the Peace, Member of Parliament for the City of

Exeter and High Sheriff of Exeter. Spicer purchased The Wear Park estate in 1760 from the Rodds of Cornwall. (DHC ref SPI acc D2016/31)

- **Loyalty & Virtue Royal Arch Chapter of Freemasons, Barnstaple, 1829-1869:** Minute book and return of members. (NDRO ref B958 acc ND/2016/52)
- **Devon Remembers First World War Collection:** This is conglomerate of the various World War One-related items that are being sent to DHC or NDRO as a result of the Devon Remembers Heritage Project. It is ever-growing as new deposits are being regularly received and catalogued. (DHC ref DRP)

In terms of searching our collections, a new, much improved, version of our online catalogue was launched at the end of July. This can be found at <http://devon-cat.swheritage.org.uk/>.

Stuart Tyler,
Archivist, SWHT

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Accessions to Plymouth & West Devon Record Office

The following is a 'selected highlights' list of accessions to PWDRO for the period 1 January – 31 August 2016:

FODA assisted in the donation of the following item:

- **Rhoda Ann Jarvis:** Manuscript list of air raids in Plymouth, Aug 1940-Apr 1941, collated by Rhoda Lane (nee Jarvis), giving dates and times; biographical details relating to Rhoda Ann Jarvis (later Lane) of Plymouth and details of her father Thomas Lane. (4111)

Other new collections, or accruals to existing collections, include:

- **Plymouth Public Dispensary (1903-24):** 'Abstract of Reports, Clinical Laboratory', gives records of pathology for individual patients. Tuberculosis, diphtheria and diabetes figure prominently

and 'chloritic rather pernicious' types of anaemia abound. (4094)
[Note: this item has a 100 year restriction on access]

- **Tamerton Amateur Football Club, Plymouth, Photographs (1930s):** photographs. (504)
- **Devonport, George Street, Deeds (1873-1965):** Deeds, 1873-1965; land searches, 1934 and 1961; letter from the City Engineer regarding renumbering of the street, 1958. (4098)
- **Alfred Baker of Plymouth, Ballroom Dancer (c1922-1967):** Scrapbook including brochures, newspaper cuttings, photographs and his obituary. (3994)
- **Plymouth Freemasons, Tamar Lodge (1921-2015):** Minutes and other papers. (4099) [For access please enquire as the written permission of the lodge Secretary must be obtained].
- **History of Parliament Trust (2015):** 15 recordings on CDRom of interviews (or oral histories) with councillors and political activists in the Plymouth and West Devon area. With recording agreements (1748) [closed access]
- **Ordnance Survey (1856-7, 1892-3):** Two editions of OS maps for Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse areas at 1:500 scale, equating to 10ft to a mile. [Please note these maps are available in digital format and a key sheet is available for both editions].
- **Lydford Parish (1883-1914):** Three maps (1) showing the changes in the parish boundary, 1913-14; (2) Watervale in Mary Tavy to Fernworthy Down (including Lydford village), 1884; (3) showing land owned by the Radford Family, 1883-1884. (402)
- **Howard Family, Royal Marines, Plymouth (1854-1948):** Service records and associated papers for Henry Howard (1854-1876) and Frederick Howard (1871-1926), both Royal Marines in the Plymouth Division. (4101)
- **Crymes of London, Devon and Surrey:** Booklet (2015) entitled 'Crymes of London, Devon and Surrey' by Philip A Crimes. Details Crymes family of Buckland Monachorum. (1579)
- **Ethel Mary Eastwood [Bladon], Nurse (1901-1915):** Autograph books, 1901-3, 1905-9, 1914-5, with notes of soldiers from the Western Front, and photographs. (1586)

- **Devon Area Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (1637-2013):** Deeds, committee minutes, accounts and other papers, 1637-1992. (4103) [Note: there is a 50 year restriction on access]
- **Devon County Constabulary, wartime casualty book (1939-45):** Totnes, Budleigh Salterton, Exmouth, Plympton, Seaton, Okehampton, Honiton, Tiverton, Newton Abbot, Torquay, Totnes, Tiverton and Barnstaple police stations. (1732)
- **Cole Family (1887-circa 2013):** Photograph of Jubilee bonfire pile in Devonport Park, 1887; photograph of rate office staff at the 'Old' Guildhall, late 1930s; photograph of the interior of Plymouth Guildhall during an election count, 16 October 1939; photograph of St Peter's Rugby Football Club, 1913-1914, and other family photographs. (1434)
- **Western Torrs Cottage, Yealmpton, Plans (1982-3):** Two plans of proposed conversion of cottage into a museum [for Kitley Caves], showing elevations, floor plans, sections and drainage plans. (4106)
- **Charles Church, St Luke's Church [later Charles with St Luke] and Charles with St Matthias, Plymouth (Early 20th century-1964):** Album of photographs of exterior and interior views of the buildings, church services and clergy. (4108)
- **Royal Naval Hospital, East Stonehouse (Jul 1918):** Photograph showing the staff assembled outside the hospital building. (4112)
- **Black and white photographs (c. 1945):** ruins of St Andrew's Church; Derry's Clock and ABC [now Reel] Cinema; ABC [row Reel] Cinema, Derry's Clock and National & Provincial Bank [now 'The Bank' public house]; Union Street (looking east); aerial view of Plymouth; Sunderland Flying Boat (number 10 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force) in flight around the Eddystone Lighthouse. (4113)
- **Alfred Ife (1900-14):** Sheets of black and white photographs of vessels, buildings and scenes at Plymouth, Devonport, and other places. (4114)

List supplied by Alan Barclay, edited by Ian Mortimer

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2016 Barnstaple Conference

The Spring conference in the historic Barnstaple Guildhall was attended by about thirty members. I have to say, it was a pity not to see stronger support for this event. For it brought together a great line up of speakers and was both extremely informative and enjoyable. And the environment is inspiring, presided over by a portrait of the poet and dramatist, John Gay (1685-1732), who was born in the town.



Peter Christie talking to the Friends at Barnstaple Guildhall

Dr Todd Gray MBE started us off in his inimitable velvet-voiced manner with a talk on ‘Taxation and revolt in Elizabethan North Devon’. Peter Christie continued the Elizabethan theme, entertaining us with ‘The Church, sex and slander in Elizabethan North Devon’, drawing from his edition of the Barnstaple archdeacon’s court records. Dr Janet Tall, then led us through the wartime imprisonment in China of Lewis Burfitt, an Ilfracombe man, whose wartime diary was purchased for the Devon Heritage Centre by FoDA and the Devon Family History Society last year. Two social history talks then rounded off the day: Mary Siraut on ‘The social history of Exmoor since the

eighteenth century’ and local man John Bradbeer on ‘Cod and pottery: the real basis of North Devon's eighteenth century prosperity’. I believe some of my own ancestors were involved in the North Atlantic cod industry: hearing about the nature of their work only served to remind me how grateful I am not to have to spend half the year at sea, gutting and salting down every catch in the hold, before returning to European waters – for the winter. Oh joy.

Ian Mortimer

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South West Heritage Trust Supporters

The South West Heritage Trust is delighted to introduce its new Supporters’ Scheme: a unique opportunity to be part of the protection and conservation of heritage across Devon and Somerset. Becoming a Supporter will provide opportunities to enjoy, protect and celebrate Devon’s rich history, its people and places.

Supporter benefits include The South West Heritage Trust newsletter, exclusive early bird priority booking for selected events, and discounts on South West Heritage Trust publications and in our shops. Your support will help the Trust to enrich archive and museum collections through new acquisitions and contribute to archaeological discovery and the protection of historic buildings.

Chief Executive of the South West Heritage Trust Tom Mayberry said: “We’re proud to be custodians of so many Devon and Somerset stories and to share them through our research facilities, museums, exhibitions and events. By becoming a Supporter of the Trust you will be making a vital contribution in helping us to protect and celebrate the region’s remarkable heritage.”

The Trust cares for 20 million historic documents relating to Devon and Somerset and makes them accessible to the public at the Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter, the North Devon Record Office in Barnstaple, and the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton.

Organisations such as the Friends of Devon's Archives are essential to the Trust in delivering its vision to celebrate and protect our rich heritage, helping everyone to enjoy it now and in the future. We look forward to welcoming new Supporters to the South West Heritage Trust with membership starting at just £25 for an individual or £40 for joint membership. Visit swheritage.org.uk/supporters to download an application form or call the Trust on 01823 278805.

Beth Jerrett,
PR & Communications Lead Officer, SWHT

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News from SWHT Conservation Studio, Exeter

Devon has more than 500 tithe maps. Since the major project to digitise them all, in 2008/9, we have had little need to work on one. As part of the original Tithe Map Digitisation Project, here in Conservation we naturally cleaned and made localised repairs to the surfaces, to be sure the information would be clearly caught by the scanner. Many staff and volunteers helped us, the task was done and we rested on our laurels. Until last year when new projects to promote the history of Dartmoor 'Moor than meets the eye' and 'Know Your Place' made a suggestion that they would fund an improved scan of the Bovey Tracey tithe map as it was missing from the digital 'mosaic' due to the misalignment of many of the panels.

Bovey Tracey tithe map is 5m x 4.5m in size, the largest in our collection and maybe in England. When made in the mid-19th Century this enormous map was not given the care it should have in construction and many of the 41 panels are out of alignment, by as much as 2.5cms. Devon conservators over the years had carefully avoided tackling this gem of mapmaking, but now we were asked to take it back to basics and restore it to a better standard. I had hoped that the digitisation process would have been able to find a way to correct the joins, but we had to concede that full conservation was the only way.



Ian Ponsford removing the backing cloth of the Bovey Tracey tithe map

It was decided to treat the map as four quarters, as even our substantial lighted map wall is too small for even half of this giant. Since June we have completed the first quarter and have the second ready to go. Removing the decayed, filthy backing cloth, softening and removing the old adhesive from each panel, preparing the new cloth, applying the map panels and infilling losses. The warm weather in the summer is not ideal for map conservation, so we are hoping to finish the four quarters this milder autumn.

Large scale work like this always attracts attention and it is satisfying for us to be encouraged by visiting Bovey residents and needless to say the support of the Dartmoor projects. The map will still be available in the searchroom later this year, along with a newly accurate digital copy.

Deborah Phillips ACR, Senior Archive Conservator



A quarter of the map, with the infilling of missing areas and surface consolidation complete, ready to be taken down and trimmed

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Hele and Bradninch History Society Visit: Station Building

Brian Carpenter and I were invited to visit the Station Building, near Hele Paper Mill, to meet members of the Hele and Bradninch History Society, who are in the early stages of converting this rail-side outbuilding to an exhibition and research room for the material named ‘The Nicks Archive’ (Mr William Nicks of Bradninch), with the hopes of support from The Heritage Lottery Fund. (For background information on this archive see the 2009 article by Mr Warwick Knowles on pp. 9-10 of the Devon History Society *Newsletter*, issue 4 http://files.devonhistorysociety.org.uk/dhn_04.pdf).

David Abrahams showed us around the present shell of the building and while there, asked about the possibility of our cleaning and refreshing their framed illustration of the paper making machinery (Devon Valley Mill, showing three stages of the development of the machinery from 1913 to 1936 by John Ewart, Engineer Jan. 1937), which we have undertaken to do, with pleasure – not least because conservators are particularly interested in preserving the history of paper mills.

We subsequently visited the builder's yard in Bradninch where The Nicks Archive is stored. Despite the large room being in romantic dilapidation, the archive is in reasonable heart. Most documents are boxed and away from the floor, light and dust, without the usual fustiness in the air, due to the 'natural' ventilation. Volunteers have clearly worked very hard and there is a look of good preservation and labelling within their limited means.

Given the enthusiasm and energy of the members, we feel sure that in time, this collection of documents will tell the remarkable story of the Bradninch paper industry.

Deborah Phillips ACR,
Senior Archive Conservator

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Conference Dates

- The 2016 AGM and Autumn Conference will be held in the Plymouth Athenaeum on **Saturday 15 October 2016** (papers accompany this newsletter).
- The 2017 Spring Conference will be held in the Devon Heritage Centre on **Saturday 25 March 2017**

NB. It is proposed at this year's AGM to revise our constitution to widen the window for our AGM to 1 Sept. – 30 Nov. At present it has to be in October, which is too restrictive, and clashes with the AGMs of other Devon organisations.