

Somerset Snippets

The Newsletter of the Friends of Somerset Archives

Issue 19

March 2011

Welcome to issue 19 of the Somerset Snippets. As you know, there was some doubt as to whether the Friends were going to be able to continue so it is really good to be editing the 19th issue. So that you know what has been happening the first article is a copy of the draft minutes for the AGM held in December.

The Snippets wouldn't normally be this size – but we are catching up on the accessions received by the Heritage Centre over the past few months.

If you receive the Snippets by post but now have an email address, could you please let me know if you would be happy to receive it by email? With postage, printing and paper costs ever increasing, it would free up funds for the purchase of items for the Heritage Centre.

Another plea, if you have an item you think might interest other members please do send it to me for publication.

My email address is now:

editor@friendsofsomersetarchives.org.uk

One article I would like to include sometime in the future is on all the different programmes people use for their trees and research. Is there anything you like or dislike about the software you use?

Talks for 2011

Events confirmed so far are:

A tour of Dunster (village, not Castle) with Hilary Binding on Sunday 17th July, meeting in the Yarn Market at 2.30. This gives people time for a leisurely lunch beforehand if they wish.

On the following Wednesday, the 20th July, Mary Siraut will talk about the Luttrell family documents, with special reference to Dunster, at the Heritage Centre. The time is yet to be confirmed, but either 7 or 7.30pm.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Wells Museum on Saturday 3rd September from 2.30 onwards. Light refreshments will be served. We hope that the Wells archivist will give a talk/display of the city documents – but is this is not possible the museum will put on a tour for us. People can lunch first in Wells or have a trip round the Cathedral in the morning if they wish.

Events to be confirmed

Bob Croft, the County Archaeologist, has been asked if he will give a talk on the 25th May at 7.30 at the Heritage Centre. Sue is also hoping to get Prof Ronald Hutton to talk on the History of Christmas in the afternoon of 20th November at the Heritage Centre - but this will depend on costs. In the afternoon at the Heritage Centre. Christmas refreshments will be served at this meeting.

2012 – Sue is hoping to get up to eight events organised.

Extracts from the draft minutes of Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 4 December 2010 at St. Paul's Church Hall, Weston super Mare

1. Chairman's Report

Sue Berry, the acting Chair due to Anne Leamon's recent resignation, gave the Chairman's report. She started by paying tribute to Anne and Robin Leamon, who were instrumental in setting up the Friends and had served on the Committee ever since. Anne and Robin also set up the tithe award project, investing huge amounts of energy in photographing all of the apportionments and in administering the project. Many of the Friends' past AGMs and committee meetings were held in the Leamons' home at Chilliswood, and their hospitality was remembered with great gratitude. Sue concluded by proposing a vote of thanks to Anne and Robin, which was unanimously approved.

Sue then gave an update on the tithe award project: about 106 completed awards have been deposited at the Somerset Heritage Centre on CD-Rom, and 30 are being worked on at present. This leaves about 330 more to be done. If anybody would be interested in transcribing a tithe award, please let Sue know.

Sue discussed the programme of events for the past year, which she felt had not been very successful. Four events had had to be cancelled because of low numbers. In the New Year, she plans to ask members for suggestions for events, speakers, topics, etc. She ended by reminding members of a tour of the Somerset Heritage Centre on Tuesday 7th December.

2. Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Report

Brian Airey, the outgoing Treasurer and Membership Secretary, started his report by discussing the financial situation of the Friends. At 31st December 2009 there was £746.44 in the current account and £637.13 in the savings account, giving a total of £1,383.57. The balance as at 4th December 2010 stood at £998.12 in the current account and £637.48 in the savings account, giving a total of £1,635.60. The income is about £250 up on this time last year. The vast majority of the Friends' income comes from membership subscriptions.

The Friends' membership currently stands at about 83 members. This has gone down considerably compared with last year, possibly because of the closure of the Record Office for the move this year. However, the same downwards trend can be seen in other societies.

Malcolm Daniels proposed that the accounts be accepted; this was seconded by Brian Austin and passed.

Brian was warmly thanked for all of his work for the Friends.

3. Election of Officers

Chairman: Malcolm Daniels was proposed as the new Chairman by Sue Berry, seconded by Martin Crook; this was accepted. Malcolm then took over from Sue as Chairman for the rest of the AGM.

Malcolm explained that the Friends does not currently have a written constitution, and expressed his desire to have one in place for

the next AGM. Therefore, the election of officers was done according to the current customs of the society – i.e. that the rôles of Treasurer and the Membership Secretary are combined, and that committee members serve for a period of three years.

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Sue Berry proposed Frances Daniels as the new Treasurer and Membership Secretary, seconded by Val C; this was accepted.

Other committee members: Sue Berry was proposed as **Vice-Chairman** by Malcolm Daniels, seconded by Frances Daniels; this was accepted. Sue will continue to organise events, assisted by Jane de Gruchy. The following other committee members were elected *in absentia*: Carol Dimmer as **Minutes Secretary**; Liz James as the **Newsletter Editor**; Anne Murch as the **Assistant Newsletter Editor**; Jenni Llewellyn as a **Committee Member** for tasks to be decided at a later date.

4. New Chairman's Statement

Malcolm Daniels discussed how the Friends should be looking to the future, rather than dwelling on what has already happened. He stated that the low numbers at this year's events were doubtless due in large measure to the Record Office's closure, rather than to any fault of Sue's. He is optimistic that improved advertising for next year will help matters. Malcolm introduced a proposal to move the AGM to the summer months, some time between Easter and September (at a date to be decided by the committee), which was seconded by Brian Airey. It was suggested that we combined the AGM with a social event like a BBQ and make a day of it. Malcolm thanked Brian Airey for all his work on the Friends committee – not least, in arranging the venue for the AGM.

A suggestion was made by Brian Austin that the Friends could try advertising for members in America and Australia, which Malcolm agreed to look into.

A question was asked on the relationship between the Friends and the Somerset Heritage Service. This will be discussed under item 5.

Brian Austin asked why there were currently no membership cards, and why life members do not receive an official letter. It was suggested that membership cards could perhaps be shown to obtain some small benefit at the Somerset Heritage Centre, such

as a free cup of coffee. Malcolm agreed to look into this. The email list for event reminders was discussed, as some people have not been getting emails. Malcolm is planning to look at the various email lists that currently exist. It was also mentioned that in the future members will be able to tell the staff at the SHC if they intend to attend an event.

5. Statement by Tom Mayberry, Head of Heritage and Libraries

Tom began by outlining how when the Friends was initially set up, in 2004, it was decided that it should stand at a little distance from the Heritage Service. He suggested that some people were now feeling that the Heritage Service was not supporting the Friends sufficiently, and that maybe the time has come for the two to work more closely together, in a mutually supportive relationship. As part of this, Heritage staff are offering to take a more active rôle, including in helping to organise events; these members of staff will be supported themselves by the wider heritage service.

Tom expressed his great personal thanks to Anne Leamon, a remarkable person, and to Robin for his support of her and the Friends. Tom also spoke about how difficult this past year of change has been for everybody, and how the changes were continuing with the work on the Museum of Somerset, due to be completed in Summer 2011. However, he was confident that everything will calm down, and that the new normality of the Somerset Heritage Centre will be something we can all celebrate in the time ahead.

He ended by talking about how the Friends have a very important part to play in the difficult times ahead by being advocates and supporters of archives.

6. Concluding remarks by Malcolm Daniels

Malcolm outlined how the new committee would meet to discuss what the Friends are really about and what we should be doing. These ideas will be circulated in the next edition of *Somerset Snippets* to gauge members' reactions.

He finished by commending Tom Mayberry and Janet Tall for their tremendous work in getting the Somerset Heritage Centre open, and with such a short closure period. He also thanked Esther Hoyle, Liz Grant and Jane de Gruchy, the past and present liaison officers from the Archive Service, and thanked Jane in advance for all of the work that she will be doing for the Friends in the future.

The meeting finished with refreshments and the annual quiz, set by Sue Berry.

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Quiz

For those of you not able to attend the AGM you might like to try and answer questions from the quiz:

Somerset dates

When was King Arthur's grave discovered at Glastonbury? Was it 1191, 1235, or 1330?

The Battle of Lansdowne took place in 1471, 1536 or 1643? 1643

When was James Scott beheaded? Was it June 1660, July 1685 or September 1745?

When did Taunton railway station open? Was it 1839, 1842 or 1846?

When was the first Glastonbury Festival? Was it 1965, 1970, 1975?

Somerset people

What connection does Geoffrey Chaucer have with Somerset?

What connection does Tom Jones have with Somerset? (trick question)

Which Lord Chief Justice and Speaker of the House of Commons who died in 1607 has a monument in Wellington church?

Which son of an Odcombe vicar died in India in 1617?

In which Somerset stately home can you see Antony and Cleopatra?

Somerset places

Where can you see a wedding with the bride, musicians and dancers all turned to stone?

Does the name Wiveliscombe come from the name of an Anglo Saxon settler, from the fact that there were a lot of weasels in the area or because the wives of the town were employed in combing fleeces for the wool trade?

Which hill in Somerset was bought as a memorial to the county's dead of World War I?

In which Somerset parish is Camelot?

Which Somerset parish had a population of 163 in 1811 and by 1911 was the second largest town in the county?

True or false?

John Churchill, later Duke of Marlborough, fought for the Duke of Monmouth at the Battle of Sedgemoor

The Alcombe toast rack was a local bus from Alcombe to Minehead in the 1930's

Frances Flood's feet, which had fallen off because of an attack of smallpox, were buried at Saltford on the first of April 1723.

A teal is a small duck which migrates from Siberia to the Somerset levels every winter

The first British woman cabinet minister was born in Chard.

Saints and sinners

The 13th century tower on top of Glastonbury Tor is dedicated to which archangel?

With whose murder is Reginald fitz Urse of Williton associated?

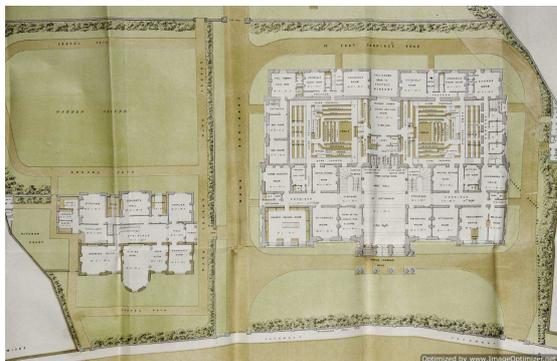
Which Somerset saint grasped the devil's nose with a pair of red hot pincers?

Which fictional villain is associated with Oare church?

Who planted the Glastonbury thorn and who chopped it down?

Pictures

Can you identify the plan before and also the places in the black & white photos?



Email me your answers and I'll let you know how you got on!! Answers in the next edition
Liz

Alfred the Gorilla

As well as reporting on the visit of the Friends to the Somerset Heritage Centre I include a little of the personal research that Frances and I carried out earlier in the day in Bristol Reference Library. It may well interest particularly the older members.

The background to such events is important of course and our quest started about three weeks ago with a visit with old schoolday friends to Bristol Museum. I had worked at Bristol Aeroplane Company when I left school

and the Museum was putting on an exhibition of 100 years of plane making in Bristol.

It was the first time that I had been to Bristol Museum since I was a little boy – more about that later – and it was fascinating to see that it had not changed that much, the magnificent building being much as I remembered it. The exhibition was excellent and afterward we spent much of the day touring the rest of the very interesting museum. Toward the end, we were looking at the Egyptian exhibits and my mind was going back to my previous visit, so many years previously. I had it firmly in my mind that I had been young, with my mum and I had been photographed with Alfred the gorilla.

Now anyone who grew up in Bristol at this time will know that Bristol Zoo had two famous characters, Rosie the elephant and Alfred the gorilla. Alfred was born in 1928 and was orphaned as a tiny baby. He was brought to Bristol Zoo in 1930. He was a star as, at that time, live gorillas even in zoos were a rarity and Alfred was made more of a favourite as he was regularly taken around the zoological gardens for walks by his keeper. Alfred died of TB in 1948. His body was stuffed and has been displayed in the City Museum for many years – which is where I come into the story.

My recollection is that as a young boy, I was taken to the Museum and just happened to be there when they were introducing Alfred. Recollections of sixty or so years ago are not my strong point and I cannot remember whether the 'Alfred' that I remember was the stuffed animal or the bronze, sculptured by a Bristol artist, Roy Smith, which I know also exists at the zoo. My memory, for what it is worth, is of a head of a gorilla rather than a stuffed body.

Whilst I was waiting for the rest of the party, I decided to go to the enquiry desk and ask whether they had any archives about Alfred. Certainly they had and they offered to get one of their archivists to come and talk to me. They were very interested and the whole of our party was invited into the depths of Museum where we went through all of the documentary records. We didn't find a photo unfortunately, but then we were shown into the depths where artefacts not on display are kept. It was all fascinating and one exhibit was Alfred's death mask. This was rather smaller than the bust that I remembered, but of course I was a little boy at the time.

The Museum staff pointed out that Bristol Zoo is celebrating its 175th Anniversary next year and are to feature Gorillas in those celebrations. They put me in touch with the organisers and we are due to meet with them as well as they are most interested.

I remembered the photograph being published on the front page of the Bristol Evening Post. The paper itself claims to have no photographic records which go back before 2000, which I find amazing. The task on the morning of the Heritage Centre visit was to consult the old copies of the paper which the Bristol Reference Library have on film. Being a daily paper this was no mean task and Frances and I covered 6 reels of film covering a year and a half with as yet no success. Defeated so far, we will continue at a later date, but after more than four hours squinting at microfilm, we had had enough!

We drove directly from Bristol to Taunton and although quite icy and slow, the journey was magnificent as we saw the trees that had been in many places in freezing fog all day glistening with the bows laden with ice. Conifers and weeping willows were looking particularly graceful and striking as were many other types of tree and bushes. The roads were slightly dodgy in places, but a steady drive saw us in Taunton in a little over two hours.

I was not surprised to see not that many at the Heritage Centre as members would have been put off venturing out in that weather and although main roads were largely good, side roads were still very slippery.

Eleven were present, for the tour which I thought quite good considering the road conditions, and as always Janet Tall lead the tour with authority and interest. She explained that the 8.25 million pounds needed to build the Centre had come fully from Somerset County Council own funds. The old Record Office at Obridge Road had been a state of the art building fifty years ago but the main reasons for the move were that it had long since run out of storage space and that the conditions under which records were stored were not up to current standards. One of the most important features of the new arrangement is that all of the experts in heritage are now on a single site and co-operation and co-ordination has, apparently, already begun to show dividends particularly in efficiency of operation.

The Heritage Centre comprises two buildings. The buildings are called 1 and 2. The purchase of the two plots of the original developers design means that there is a large car park between the two buildings which was intended as large enough for an articulated lorry to turn. This is a great advantage for future-proofing in as much as there is plenty of room for future expansion should, or more likely when the need arises.

Building One is the one with which most of you will be familiar. It holds the reception area, locker area, the search room, meeting room, SANHS room, offices and not least the all-important strongrooms. The reception area includes a much improved cafeteria and drinks cost only 50p – considerably less than at many similar places. Notice boards are to be added soon.

The searchroom is 33% bigger than that at Obridge Road. It is split into three sections, the fiche/film area, the document study section and the local history books area. The public areas are still under development as ideas are put forward for further improvements.

The staff offices on the first floor are totally open plan, encouraging collaborative working. There are also the SANHS office (Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society) and a Learning Room for general use. The Learning Room is kitted out with an overhead projector, interactive white board and a set of laptops and with furniture which is all moveable, making the room totally adaptable for many different types of uses. Tea and coffee making facilities are included.

The various strongrooms are furnished with moveable racking and there is plenty of space for expansion for twenty years to come. All are protected by a special fire system which floods the strongrooms with inert gases making combustion impossible. It is truly state of the art.

Building Two is the one which is slightly less relevant to the daily visitor, but equally important to the County's Heritage. It contains areas for Museum artefact storage, semi-current (County Council) records storage, education artefacts, a large workshop, conservation and design and digitisation.

The Museum artefacts are kept in Building 2 when not on display as, even when the much larger Museum at the castle is open, in common with all museums, only a small

proportion of artefacts can be displayed at any one time.

The conservation room is one which will be of particular interest to the Friends. When the original office conservation room was built at Obridge Road, it was state of the art, but of course in time that changes and Mervyn Richens is now like a boy in a sweet shop as his emporium has returned to that state of the art condition. Much of the equipment has been developed by Mervyn with manufacturers directly and so some of it is truly unique. He is particularly proud of his light wall where huge pieces of glass are back lit by LED giving a very even work surface for large document repair.

There is a room where visitors who want to examine museum artefacts can come. Another very important room is the one where items are kept which are intended for school use and schools are able to borrow artefacts for extended periods as they fit into the curriculum.

I have not gone into great detail on some of the facilities that the new Heritage Centre has, but I don't want to bore you all with a lengthy diatribe. I think that I have covered most of the points that are of particular interest to the Friends and of course others can always write comments for further issues of the Snippets or indeed for the web site.

I would like, on behalf of the Friends, to thank Janet Tall again for such an interesting tour and for giving up out-of-hours time in what must be a very busy life.

Malcolm Daniels
Chairman

Early 20th century frustration with local bureaucracy

Perhaps we tend to think these days, when there seems to be so much red tape involved in even the slightest contact with local or central government, that life was much simpler in this respect at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the following letter, written in 1911, by the Chairman of the Governors of Hambridge School, suggests that, judging by the exasperation of the writer, bureaucracy is not a modern phenomenon.

March 31 1911

Dear Sir

Your letter of March 28 has been laid before the Managers of the above school & they have been duly informed that you consider our schools defective under your Schedule IIIA because of "Class room accommodation required, unsatisfactory cloak room accommodation, gallery, lighting, playground surface".

We beg to offer in reply the following comments.

Class room accommodation. Some time ago we were astonished to learn that our space was defective. Your inspector was sure of this but upon measurement and calculation the fault detected was in his arithmetic and mensuration. Perhaps the same gentleman has again been calculating the class room accommodation?

Gallery. When the Infant room was built your inspectors believed that no sound alphabet could be taught to infants without a gallery. That priceless boon was provided and many generations of infants learnt upon its basis the rudiments so necessary for their existence. Then a gentleman, whom you employed, discovered flaps were an urgent need for the studious infant. We provided flaps. Another of your masterly inspectors next found out that the galleries, even with flaps, were of the essence of unrighteousness. He expressed himself with some heat and animation. We smiled, bowed and removed the obnoxious gallery, flaps and all. Since December 1909 the happy infants have studied A & B a few inches nearer to the sea level. We now wish to know what your latest view about the gallery may be? Have you rediscovered its extreme necessity? Or what? Or is the word in your report a general oburgation? Will you kindly formulate your latest change more clearly?

Lighting. We know nothing of complaints on this head. Some years ago at the suggestion of one of your inspectors we put ground glass into the windows to soften the glare. There was no glare. The windows face the north but how could a stranger know the points of the compass? We humoured the gentleman as usual.

Playground surface. What is this? Ought not the playground to have a surface? The curate allows us for a nominal rent, a piece of the glebe for a playground. Its surface is smooth

and flat. Do you wish us to have valla, fossae & tumuli illustrated thereupon? Or what? Perhaps a raised map of the Holy Land would be vivid & be educational? But even then it would have a surface we fear. The playground is only used during the break.

Cloak room accommodation. The hats and jackets are now housed in a lean-to shed which is unpretentious but water tight. This building seems to awaken the fierce animosity of your agents, who aspire to Cordelier housing for the vacant garments and apparently would like us to build some thing in the Corinthian or Ionic mode. We are always open to suggestions which may advance the health, happiness, good conduct or sound learning of the scholars entrusted to us. We lend our buildings rent free, we keep these in repair, we replace and restore, we attend to the drains, stoves, windows and general working of the machinery, as well as we can at our own proper charges. The Education Secretary for the County most kindly came down and looked at our cloak room in December 1909 and could see little amiss about it. Consequently, when we are asked to spend considerable sums that the hats of our children may be more luxuriously housed than their heads, we can but reply that we are convinced of no such necessity and decline to undertake any such work.

I am, Sir, yours truly, Charles Marson

Many thanks to Sue Berry for this article

Victorian County History Series

The latest volume in the Victoria County History series on Somerset, an authoritative and comprehensive account of one of Somerset's leading towns was published last month.

Exploring Castle Cary's history from the original castle and its lords to its rebirth as an industrial town, this volume also covers Ansford, Kingweston, Keinton Mandeville, Wheathill, West Lydford, Barton St David and Lovington

More details of this book can be seen at its page

<http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewitem.asp?idProduct=12637>

The company would be happy to offer the Friends a discount of 25% off the full price of this volume. If you are interested please let me (Liz) know.

New Accessions 2010

Due to the Record Office move last year, we tried to limit the number of accessions taken in between Easter and October 2010. Despite this, we had a very busy year for accessions – and have many more collections waiting to come in. This list is a summary of some of the larger accessions received between January 2010 and February 2011. Not all of these collections have been listed, but they are all available for research at the Heritage Centre. If you cannot find the details on our online catalogue (www.somerset.gov.uk/dserve), please get in touch and we can give you more information.

Parish records

Aisholt: registers of baptisms (1813-2007) and burials (1813-2009) (D\P\ai^{sh})
Alcombe: marriage register, 1981-2004 (D\P\alc)
Baltonsborough: thirteen parish registers, 1558-1997 (D\P\balt)
Bawdrip: baptism register, 1883-2010 (D\P\baw)
Bradford on Tone: PCC minutes 1990-2000 (D\P\bra.t)
Chedzoy: PCC minutes 1974-2003, Articles of Enquiry, inventories, orders of service for war memorial, Quinquennial reports and Vestry meeting book, 1863-2001 (D\P\chedz)
Creech St. Michael: marriage register, 1991-2000 (D\P\crch)
Culbone: marriage and burial registers, 1813-2004 (D\P\cul)
Frome St. John: overseers' returns for electoral rolls for Frome and Shepton Mallet, with CD-Rom of pdf images and transcripts, 1834-1865 (D\P\fr.jo)
Glastonbury St Benedict: additional parish records including PCC minutes, preacher books, registers of service, wills and bequests, faculties and annual accounts, 19th cent.-20th cent. (D\P\gla.b)
Goathurst: burial register, 1813-2009 (D\P\gst)
Kingston St. Mary: registers of baptisms (1926-2009) and burials (1927-2003) and service registers 1985-2003 (D\P\king.m)
Leigh on Mendip United Benefice: administrative records including financial papers 1997-2003, PCC minutes, 1985-2005, church log books 1989-2006, pen-and-ink drawing of church, notes re. shooting of vicar in late 19th century and Jubilee photograph album, 1977 (D\P\l.o.m)
Nynehead parish records: marriage register 2000-2010, faculties 1968-1996; quinquennial report 1997, and church accounts, 1996-1998, 2006, 2008 (D\P\nyn)

Oare: marriage and burial registers, 1813-2009 (D\P\oare)
Portishead: Papers of the late Revd. R. O. Fry as Rector of Portishead, 1952-1978 (A\DDP)
Shepton Beauchamp: parish magazines, 1965-1989 (D\P\she.b)
Shepton Mallet: additional parish records, including rate books, service registers, poorhouse records, vestry minutes, pew rents, charity accounts and church electoral rolls, 1742-1936 (12 boxes) (D\P\she)
Stogursey: marriage register, 1984-2001 (D/P/stogs)
Stoke St. Michael: charity papers, c.1926-c.2000, and file re. school (closed 1988) (D\P\sto.s.mi)
Walton in Gordano: parish records including PCC minutes and accounts, Banns register, register of service, papers re. renovations, churchyard plans, log books and electoral rolls, 1955-2004 (D\P\walt.g.m)
Widcombe: CD-Rom of digitised images of D\P\wid/4/1/2 – damaged churchwardens' accounts, 1822-1854 (D\P\wid)

Transcripts and monumental inscriptions

Monumental inscriptions for Wedmore Baptist burial ground, Wedmore cemetery, Wedmore parish church, Wedmore Crickham Baptist burial ground, Wedmore Methodist burial ground, Weare, Theale, Shipham, Rowberrow, Rodney Stoke Methodist cemetery, Pilton Ebenezer Wesleyan burial ground, Pilton Methodist burial ground, Loxton, Glastonbury St. John the Baptist, Frome St. John the Baptist, Draycott, Compton Bishop, Christon, Cheddar Methodist burial ground, Cheddar Baptist burial ground, Cheddar parish church, Burrington, Blackford (Wedmore), Biddisham and Axbridge, 2009 (DD\X\MDT)
Batcombe: Graveyard survey, 1991 (A\DEJ)
Friends of Somerset Archives tithe award transcripts for Bathford, Broadway Old Enclosure, Charlton Adam, Charlcombe, Kewstoke, Langridge, Shapwick, Swainswick, Watchet/Washford and Woolley, [1837-1843] (A\CKO)
Somerset parishes: DVDs containing electronic images of parish register entries for the following parishes - Babington, Buckland Dinahm, Cameley, Camerton, Clutton, Dunkerton, Emborough, Farmborough, Farrington Gurney, Hemington, High Littleton, Hinton Charterhouse, Kilmersdon, Leigh on Mendip, Mells, Midsomer Norton, Paulton, Peasdown St John, Priston, Radstock, Ston Easton, Stowey, Stratton on the Fosse, Timsbury Wellow and Vobster – with index, [1813-2000] (A\CQO)

Alphabetical index to the Mendip Hospital Cemetery burial registers, [1874-1981] (A\CQY)

Nonconformist records

North Petherton United Reformed Church: minutes, correspondence, plan and photographs, 1950s-2000s (D\N\np.ur)
West Somerset Methodist Circuit records: files relating to the closure and sale of churches at Wheddon Cross and Brompton Regis, records relating to Washford Methodist Chapel and general West Somerset Methodist Circuit records, 19th-21st cent. (D\N\wsc)
Society of Friends, Western Division: miscellaneous records including births, marriages and burials, 19th-20th cent. (4 boxes); West Somerset Monthly Meeting Newsletters, 1999-2010. (DD\SFR.w)

Local government records

Campaign material for the 2010 General Election (A/CPB)

Somerset County Council: records including architects' plans, education, Fire Service, financial, highways, children and young people, Travellers, Social Services, Legal Services, environment department and Council Minutes (c.393 boxes), 1940s-2010s (C/-)

West Somerset Coroners' records for 2007 and 2008 (39 boxes) (C\CR\w)

North Somerset Council: Local Land Charges department records, including files relating to street naming, property numbering, village greens and Common Land registration, 1970s-c.2007 (21 boxes) (D\DC\n.som)

South Somerset District Council: councillors' records and Langport Highway Board copy of highways acts of 1835-1864, [1835]-c.1989 (D\DC\s.som)

Electoral registers for 2010-2011 for Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane and West Somerset districts (Q\RRER)

Ilminster Urban District Council: additional records including building plans and specifications, records of evacuees, rate books, wages books, sewerage plans and details, correspondence re roads/highways, surveyors' accounts, and photographs of members of the council, 1915-1970s (11 boxes) (D\U\ilm)

Barrington Parish Council records, including minutes, account books and correspondence, 1959-2004 (D\PC\barr)

Binegar Parish Council records: account books, Rights of Way definitive map, correspondence, burial receipt books, planning records, 20th cent. (D\PC\bin)

Buckland St Mary Parish Council records, including minutes, allotment register, housing file and sewerage records, 1896-2003 (D\PC\b.my)

Chedzoy Parish Council: minute books, 1883-2005, accounts, tithing books and other administrative records 1823-1976 (D\PC\chedz)

Corfe Parish Council: minutes 1989-2005, papers concerning Millennium Committee 1997-2000, account 1957-1998, 2007-2010 (D\PC\crf)

Nailsea Town Council: minutes and supporting papers, 1998-2010 (D\PC\na)

Neroche Parish Council minutes, 1989-2006 (D\PC\ner)

Old Cleeve Parish Council records, including planning applications, correspondence, insurance and premises licences, 1998-2009 (6 boxes) (D\PC\cle.o)

Saltford Parish Council minutes, 1991-2007 (D\PC\salt)

Westbury sub Mendip Parish Council: minutes, deeds of sale and tenancy agreements, 1895-2005 (D\PC\wby)

Clubs and societies' records

British Federation of University Somerset Women, Somerset Branch: minutes 1969-1977 (A\DEE)

Somerset County Bowling Association, the Somerset County Ladies' Bowling Association and the Somerset Bowls Association: records 1928-2010 (A\CSU, A\DES, A\DET)

Somerset Federation of Women's Institutes: records for Sampford Arundel, Bishops Hull, Bishops Lydeard, Bradford on Tone, Cranmore, Crimchard, Doultling, Glastonbury, Mark, Queen Camel, Templecombe, Vivary, Westbury sub Mendip, Woolavington and Yeovil Marsh, 20th cent. (DD\WI)
Taunton Amateur Operatic Society: rules of the society, programmes, photographs, review and year planner, 1900-1980s (A\ACO)
Victoria Bowling Club: score book, wages book, photographs and memorabilia, 20th cent. (A\BSE)

Women's Co-operative Guild, Crewkerne branch: minutes 1957-1962, 1966-1989, and register of members 1957-1989 (A\BII)

School records

Ansford National School log books, 1890-1924 (A\DCZ)

Brewham School admissions register, 1896-1965 (A\DCZ)

Cannington Old Students' Association: student magazines, notebooks, 'A Chronicle of Cannington' and prospectus, 1919-2008 (A\DEG)

Nynehead Primary School records, including papers and photographs relating to services, assemblies, events, projects, trips, etc., 2006-2009; Governors meeting records 1987-2005 and Ofstead papers, 1998 (A\DDF)

Oake Council School: managers' minutes 1903-1944 (A\BEV)

Business records

Biographical research on individuals associated with the Brendon Hills iron mines, West Somerset Mineral Railway, etc., on CD-Rom, 2010 (A\CUV)

Leaflets from the Crypton Factory (Crypton Technology), Bridgwater, 1950-1986 (A\DCQ)

Plans and professional papers of Anthony Sheldon, architect, mainly Shepton Mallet, Wells and Frome areas, 1943-1987 (27 boxes) (A\DFC)

Health Authority records

Frome Cottage Hospital: Register of Cases, 1888-1906 (D\H\fr)

Sandhill Park: registers of admissions, death, mechanical restraint, correspondence regarding discharges, reports of the matron and night nurse, and nurses' personnel records (some of these are closed), 20th cent. (D\H\snd)

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust: records for unknown institutions, drug book, food index, day/night reports and publications, 1940s-1960s (D\H\s.nhs)

Tone Vale Hospital, Cotford St. Luke: Farm reports and publications, 1940-1958 (D\H\lv), plan 1947 (A\DDV)

Wells Asylum: Female case book, 1903-1909 (D\H\men)

Family papers and research

Farming records relating to the Clatworthy family of Yondercott, Uffculme, Devon, and Old Cleeve Farm, Old Cleeve, including accounts, wages books and correspondence, 1904-1987 (A\DEY)

Dickinson: additional family papers including publications, correspondence, diaries and sale particulars, 1844-2004 (DD\DN)

Diaries of Mrs. Phyllis Galpin, 1958-2010 (A\DFD)

Deeds and wills relating to the Gibbs family and Babcary, 1664-1883 (A\DCP)

West Lambrook, South Petherton: notebooks, diaries, account books, etc., of the Hebditch family concerning the running of New Cross Farm, 1900s-1980s (A\AJK)

Knatchbull of Babington: estate papers including deeds, wills, sale particulars, plans and lease of Windsor Hill Quarry, 20th cent. (A\CGP)

Stogursey: miscellaneous papers, farming accounts, and other papers relating mainly to the Pearce family of Stogursey. Includes 1906 rate book for the parish, 1833-1982 (A\DDD)

Correspondence of the Troup and Vickery families of Taunton, 1897-1956 (A\DEA)

Diary of Frank Willy, farmer of Ilminster and later Illinois, 1883, and home diary of an unknown Somerset woman, 1918 (DD/X/WI)

Stanley Ransome Wyatt Collection: family history research into the Wyatt family of Somerset and elsewhere, [c.1685]-2009 (A\DDW)

Charity records

Barrington: records of the Eason Trust, including copy trust deed, minute book and account book, 1927-1999 (A\DFE)

Bicknoller: deeds, drawings and associated papers relating to Bartholomew Thomas Almshouses, 1845-1985 (A\DEP)

Bishops Hull Charity: accounts, minutes and correspondence, 1850s-2010s (A\DEI)

Bridgwater: minutes and associated papers relating to King James Exhibition and Scholarship Endowment Foundation, 1888-1992 (DD\BA)

Other records

Glass plate negatives formerly housed in the Somerset Room at Taunton Castle, including negatives of photographs of engravings and watercolours, possibly for publication purposes, and negatives and photographs of individual men, late 19th-early 20th cent (DD\X\SOM)

Architectural plans for Bath and the surrounding area, 1980s-1990s (6 boxes) (A\DDZ)

Somerset Vernacular Architecture Reports for Henstridge, Lilstock, Blagdon, Stogursey, Combe St Nicholas, Charlton Mackrell, Allowenshay, Cudworth and Winscombe, 2010 (DD\IV)

Kingston St Mary: two volumes of photographs and drawings of the village, [c.1810]-1970s (A\DEK)

Langport and Low Ham: notes, drawings and publications concerning the Low Ham Villa and albums of photographs, postcards, drawings, etc., concerning Langport, late 19th cent.-c.2002 (A\AHA)

Photographs relating to the peat industry on the Somerset Levels, Nd., early 20th cent. (A\DER)



(Women peat workers)

Literary papers of Margaret Joyce Baker of Minehead, children's author: manuscripts, proofs and personal papers, 1940s-1980s (18 boxes) (A\DEX)

Weston super Mare: records relating to Tom Thould, Weston Olympian swimmer, 19th cent.-20th cent. (DD\X\AUS)

Robin Bush: research notes of the late Robin Bush of Taunton, [1600s]-c.2010 (31 boxes so far) (A\DEV)

Somerset Record Office: visitors' books and loans register, 1928-1991 (A\CVL)

Exciting times at the Somerset Heritage Centre



(Search room in use, February 2011)

As expected, we had a very busy first few months since opening on Monday 27th September. In the first month we had 889 visitors to the searchroom, and we've had 2,688 visitors so far (to the end of January). We've produced 5,715 documents and put away 8,791 fiche. We are often getting out over 100 documents every day – which was a record number in the old Record Office. It has been a bit hectic at times, but it is great to see the Heritage Centre being used by so many people.

Here in the archives, we've been getting up to speed with the other collections that have joined us: the Local Studies collection and the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society library. There is a lot to learn, but it's really interesting and I'm enjoying finding out about the huge range of resources we can now tap into.

The Heritage Service is also working a lot more closely together than we were able to when we were scattered all over Taunton. One good example of this is the Henry VIII mural that was recently found in a house in Milverton: Bob Croft, the County Archaeologist, was called in to see it, and he then asked Esther and I to read the writing to help work out what it was.



(Henry VIII mural in Milverton)

We have also been dealing with the many collections that we were unable to take in while we were moving. We have acquired all sorts of records, from the very corporate (County Council committee minutes) to the extremely personal (diaries and love letters). To get an idea of what we've recently accessioned, have a look at the accessions summary on page 10 - 14

You might think that, having spent the past year moving 27,000 boxes, the Archives Service would be having a well-earned break. Not so! We are involved in several major projects this year, including the new Museum of Somerset at Taunton Castle, which will showcase some of our documents. We are also achieving modest fame in the media at the moment: articles recently appeared in *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *Somerset Life* and will shortly appear in the *Sunday Times*, and we will be on TV twice in the spring: on *Time Team* on 10th April and on *Restoration Home* some time later on.

We are looking forward to working with the Friends in 2011 – it is shaping up to be a very exciting year.

Jane de Gruchy

Somerset Heritage Centre opening hours

Monday: 1pm-5pm

Tuesday-Friday: 9 am-5 pm

Saturday:

From March 2011 Saturday opening hours will be 9.00 am-1.00 pm. The Heritage Centre will be open on the following Saturday mornings:

| | |
|----------|--------------|
| 5 March | 6 August |
| 19 March | 20 August |
| 2 April | 3 September |
| 16 April | 17 September |
| 7 May | 1 October |
| 14 May | 15 October |
| 4 June | 29 October |
| 11 June | 12 November |
| 25 June | 26 November |
| 9 July | 10 December |
| 23 July | |

To book an appointment you can telephone 01823 337600 or email

archives@somerset.gov.uk (allow 2 days for a response)

I was looking on the Heritage web site and found this interesting piece about the foundation of the Archives:

Somerset can claim a longer continuously-known history of official record keeping than any other county in England. A meeting of Quarter Sessions held at Wells in 1617 decided that a room should be provided "for the safe keeping of the records of the Sessions."

By 1619 Somerset possessed not only its own record room, but also a room adjoining for the use of searchers. The record room stood next to the Chain Gate on the north side of Wells Cathedral, and remained in use for the next 200 years.



Notes from a recent Committee Meeting where a brainstorming Session on the future of the Friends - subjects suggested

Need to liaise with similar societies – possibly combining for meetings and trips – providing support if necessary.

Need for more advertising of events – information about places and speakers – suggestion that the Friends should put an advertisement in relevant magazines, e.g. *Family History*.

We looked at the reasons that people joined the Friends – social: meeting other people, taking part in practical projects such as the tithe awards

In future, the AGM should take place during the summer months (between Easter and September) rather than in the winter. There could also be something like a barbecue.

There was a question of what we were the Friends. It was felt that we should be Friends of the Archives Service as archives held in other parts of the country often had their own friends. Many other archives effectively came under the auspices of the Somerset Archives Service in any case. It was felt that there was no need for a change of name. The existing one covered our remit sufficiently.

The idea of twinning a visit with the relevant documents was suggested. This was felt to be

a good idea and should be considered further. Suggestions were Martock and Lytes Cary. Query whether Lytes Cary took groups – (the answer is yes. A tour can be arranged which lasts about 2 hours. See NT website entry for Lytes Cary). Downside Abbey and Mells were also suggested.

We considered circulating a questionnaire to discover what activities the members were interested in. This could include users of the Record Office as well.

There was some discussion on the future availability of the Tithe Awards. It was felt these should be put on the hard disk of a dedicated computer. Other things could be kept on this computer such as more assistance could be given to help people find their way around the Heritage Centre. The idea was that there could be a plan – something that could be used as a guide and if published on the website would be available to consult before attending the Heritage Centre.

Suggestion that Friends should be able to work as volunteers in the Record Office. This idea was welcomed by Janet. There were projects that the Archives Service would like to have carried out with which the Friends could help.

It was felt that there was a need for the Friends to promote themselves more within the building – provision of a notice board – a special area for the Friends – posters – mention in the video.

Suggestion that donor cards could be made available for the Friends so that people could bequeath records of interest to the Record Office and their executors would know that this was their wish.

**The Museum of Somerset
Programme of talks to be held at the
Meeting Room, Taunton Library, Paul
Street, Taunton at 7.30 p.m.**

Tuesday, 15th March – Kingdom of Bhutan,
Land of the Thunder Dragon –
Speaker: Roger Stokley

Tuesday, 19th April – The Victoria County
History, South Exmoor Project –
Speaker: Mary Siraut

Tuesday, 17th May – Castles as they were
meant to be seen –
Speaker: Christopher Moule

All are welcome, non-members £2 per person. Please telephone 01823 275810 to confirm as sometime the meetings are moved to fit in with other users.

Contact Information

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Committee member - Jenni Llewellyn

Items For Sale

We still have a number of books and CDs that Paul Mansfield has kindly donated to the Friends for sale to help raise funds. We have the following titles.

Norris' Taunton Journal 1725 to 1727.
Indexed and filmed by Paul Mansfield.
A full facsimile of the original with an index on one cd-rom for £4.00 post free to the U.K. and £4.60 overseas.

Books

A Catalogue of Unfortunate Incidents –
Inquests and Death by Misadventure in 18th Century Somerset and Surrounds. - £6.00 including UK postage

Please make cheques payable to The Friends of Somerset Archives and send to 102 Monks Dale, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 3JH