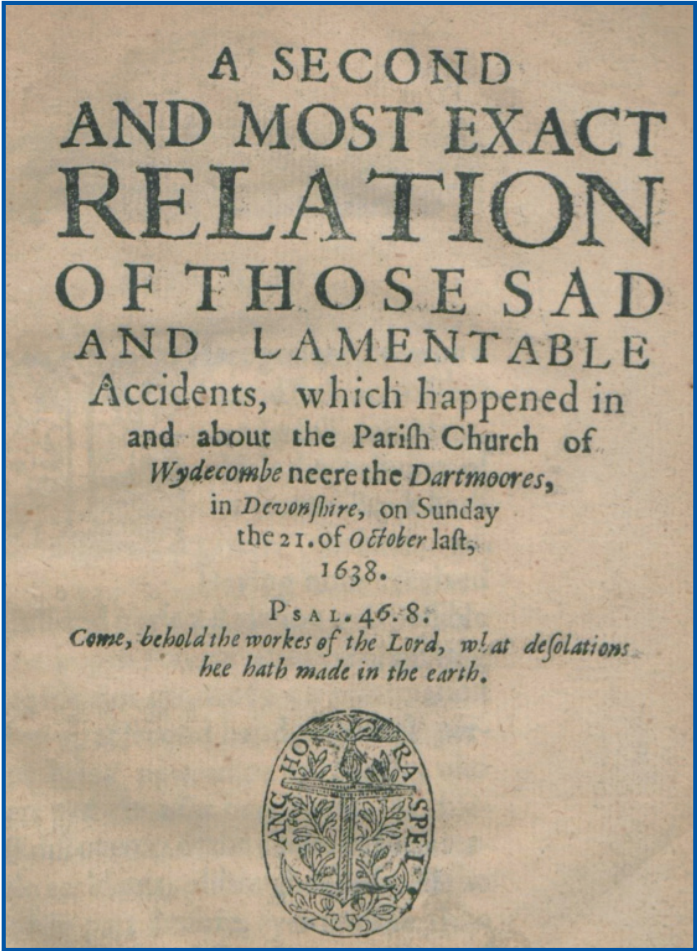


Devon History News



• NEWSLETTER OF THE DEVON HISTORY SOCIETY •



Front page of the oldest record in the National Meteorological Archive relating to Devon. (see article on page 5)

From the Editor

Once again we have a bumper issue of Devon History News. Our major feature this time is an introduction to one of the lesser known, but by no means less important, of the archives based in the county. The National Meteorological Archives are housed in Exeter and archivist, Glyn Hughes has written a fascinating piece describing how the archives were created and the resources available that may be of interest to local historians.

There is news from the Plymouth City Archivist about the plans for a new History Centre in Devonport. This is an important step for the county's largest city and something I think we can all agree will be a great asset to Plymouth.

We also carry an advance notice of the reopening of Exeter's flagship museum, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. This will be the subject of a longer feature in the next newsletter in February 2012.

As well as our usual updates, also included in this issue is the first of what it is hoped will become a regular feature looking at the activities of our affiliated societies.

The observant amongst you will have already noticed the changes to the design of the front page of this edition of the newsletter to incorporate the Devon History Society's new logo. Chris Jago gives more information about the logo on page 11.

Finally there is a short notice about the recent death of one of our founder members, Professor Joyce Youings. A fuller appreciation of Professor Youings life will appear in the Devon Historian in the autumn.

Ann Bond
Editor, Devon History News

Chairman's introduction... Summer 2011

Devon History Society was well represented at the funeral of Professor Joyce Youings, a major founder in the creation of our society. She died on 28 June 2011. She was very well known throughout the academic world and at the reception following the Service and thanksgiving (at which Todd Gray spoke eloquently) the affection felt for her by all the Devon Societies was tangible. She was our Chairman for ten formative years at the outset of Devon History Society's existence and never lost her great interest in us.

You will have noticed the continuing enlargement of our programme. The North/ South/ East / West morning seminars are becoming very popular and 2012 is already at the planning stage and will be even broader.

Devon History Society now has its own LOGO...entwined initials, simple but clear. It will soon be used on all correspondence and publications and a badge for members will follow.

The Annual General Meeting on October 8th 2011 is a particularly important one. The draft of a new constitution, based on the current one formulated in 1994, is enclosed. I am sure you are all aware that changing times and above all the guidelines of the Charity Commissioners for societies operating under a Charity umbrella have made this essential. It will of course be open to discussion at the Annual General Meeting on October 8th after which a vote will be taken that we adopt it.

We were sorry to lose Gill Selley from Council for personal reasons. She has been missed this year as we search her replacement. For the last eight years the Devon Historian has been produced under the inspired editorship of Andrew Jackson. It is difficult to express fully our gratitude to him. Now with much regret he feels the time has come to pass on the editorship so the hunt will be on the find his equal... Not an easy task!

The last twelve months has been full of interest and we shall continue to search the history of our county of Devon, so rich in history... As they say now, Enjoy!

Shirley Purves

A few words from the programme secretary

The DHS programme for 2012 marks the third year of our extended calendar of events, and it is encouraging to see that our regular seminars at alternating venues around the county have been increasingly well attended. During a three year period we will have held meetings at Barnstaple, Crediton, Chudleigh, Exeter, Honiton, Ilfracombe, Kenton, Kingsbridge, Lustleigh, Petrockstowe, Shilstone, Tavistock and Teignmouth. In addition to the regular local history days, and the AGM, we hope to provide an opportunity for members in all corners of the county to attend an event in their own locality. The provision of an optional buffet lunch at the spring and summer local history days has also proved to be popular, with a record number of seventy lunch bookings for the 2011 summer meeting at Lustleigh. This year, for the first time, members will receive a complete programme for the year and booking forms for all events with the August newsletter. Booking forms can be sent to me at any time during the year, and reminders about forthcoming events will be included in the DHS newsletters.

In addition to the regular programme, the Devon History Society will also be offering a series of three one-day annual symposia on the history of religion in Devon. The first one, on the subject of the Reformation in Devon, will be held on Saturday 12 May 2012 at the Boniface Centre, Crediton. Themes to be explored in the following two events will be non-conformity and Catholics and Anglo-Catholics in Devon. A booking form for the first event is included with this newsletter. Early booking is recommended as all the speakers are distinguished authorities in the field of Reformation history.

Jane Bliss, Honorary Programme Secretary
jbhistory@hotmail.co.uk

Membership update

Membership numbers continue to rise albeit gently, and we now have 285 individual members, 27 family members and 28 life members. It has also been heartening to welcome five new affiliated societies from Lymptone, Ilfracombe, Feniton, Kenton and Otter Valley to the Devon History Society this year, bringing the total number of affiliated societies to 56 with a further 26 corporate members.

It would be much appreciated if all members could check the address we hold for them and notify any corrections to me (contact details on back page). I would also like to thank those members who have already supplied their email addresses and encourage anyone who has not yet done so to please do so now. Email contacts lists not only speed communication with members but also enable the society to keep our costs, and therefore your membership fee, as low as possible.

Gerald Quinn
Membership Secretary

Apportionment transcription project update

Volunteers have now come forward to transcribe over 200 tithe map apportionments in this Devon-wide exercise (see February 2011 Newsletter, p.9) which involves the collection of hundreds of thousands of discrete data concerning land use, field names and tenurial relations in mid-nineteenth century Devon.

If you wish to become involved, it's not too late; there are still around 270 'unadopted' apportionments - all you need is an email address and a computer. Contact the Devon Record Office at devrec@devon.gov.uk.

National Meteorological Archive

'In the first, second and third weeks of August there was great heat, which ceased on the 20th day, and which was thought to be greatest on the 2nd. I believe that was the hottest day of the summer, and there were not sufficient clouds or wind to diminish the heat in the least'.

Thus wrote William Merle, Rector of a small village in Lincolnshire, in August 1340, in what is considered to be the oldest weather journal in the world. It would appear therefore that in this country we have always been fascinated by the weather, indeed it is often said to be one of our favourite topics of conversation and one might even say that our keen interest in the weather forms part of our collective national identity. At the National Meteorological Archive – one of the many services delivered by the Met Office – it is our role to protect the public memory of the weather and to provide a major resource for scientific and historical research.

The first mention of the Met Office as having a large and growing collection of meteorological records and related literature was in the 1870s, but official responsibility for custodianship of appropriate public weather records was not actually accepted until April 1914. The archive collection continued to expand as the Meteorological Office took over weather observing station networks from organisations such as the Royal Meteorological Society and British Rainfall Organisation. In the 1960s the new Meteorological Office Headquarters at Bracknell, Berkshire, included the National Meteorological Library and Archive – a decision that had been given impetus by the 1958 Public Records Act, which required more stringent practices concerning the selection and retention of records, as well as provision for public access. With the relocation of the Met Office Headquarters to Exeter in 2003, the National Meteorological Archive followed some 18 months later and opened to the public at Great Moor House in March 2005 – a building we share with Devon Record Office.

Whilst we are not limited to weather records in this region and store records for all over the world, we do have a great many records particular to this county. In fact, we have over one thousand items relating to Devon, the earliest of which is a short booklet published in 1638 about the famous incident at Widcombe-in-the-Moor Church, now thought to be the first recorded example of ball lightning (see cover illustration).

Some of our main record types include the following:

- Meteorological logs from Royal Navy and Merchant ships, which typically date from the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century. We even have logs made on board certain historic voyages such as HMS Beagle, on which Darwin once sailed with Captain FitzRoy, and HMS Erebus used

in several daring voyages of discovery that ultimately ended in tragedy as the ship became icebound in the Arctic.

- Hourly weather data from aerodromes in England and Wales from the 1930s to the present. Elements include pressure, temperature, wind, visibility, and cloud amount. The large numbers and frequency of the recorded data makes them a rich source of information for people who need the weather conditions at specific places and for very specific times. For example, they can prove particularly useful when investigating airplane crashes during the Second World War.
- We have a great many rare books, held on behalf of the Royal Meteorological Society, including a parchment copy of a treatise on the weather by Albertus Magnus dating from 1282 making it the oldest item in our entire collection.
- Weather diaries kept by private individuals, some of which were composed by brilliant men of science who became key individuals in the history of meteorology such as Luke Howard – who devised a method of classifying cloud types still used today – and Admiral Francis Beaufort, in which he first wrote down his scale for estimating the force of the wind and his shorthand notation for describing the general weather conditions.
A version of the Beaufort wind scale is still used today in the shipping forecast on BBC radio.
- Hand drawn synoptic weather charts from 1867 onwards, including those used for the D-Day landings in June 1944.
- UK Daily Weather Reports from 1869 onwards, containing summaries of general weather conditions, reports from specific stations and, from 1872 onwards, a simplified weather chart. We use these when composing historic weather charts on behalf of our customers who often request to know what the weather was like on a key date in the life of one of their ancestors or for an important event in history.

Our vast and diverse collections are among the most comprehensive on meteorology anywhere in the world and therefore comprise an outstanding historical, scientific and cultural resource. Whether you're a climate researcher, teacher, historian, or family history enthusiast, you're sure to find the material we hold useful.

Our website is available at: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/library/archive>.

Our catalogue is available to search online: <http://library.metoffice.gov.uk/search~S18>.

For more information about the National Meteorological Archive, please download our fact sheet from the following location:

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/library/factsheets>

For examples of historical weather charts which you can request for specific dates of personal significance to you and your family, see the following: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/library/historical-facts>

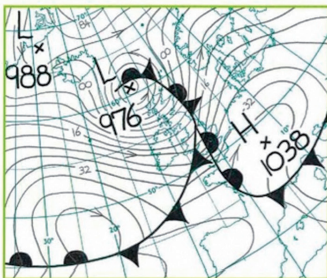
We are open from 10am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Advance booking is essential.

Tel: 01392 360987
 Email: metlib@metoffice.gov.uk

The National Meteorological Archive, Great Moor House, Sowton Industrial Estate, Exeter, EX2 7NL.

Glyn Hughes
 Assistant Archivist

Monday 13 February 1989
 (Highest recorded wind speed for the United Kingdom)



Weather chart for 1200 UTC on 13 February 1989

Daily weather extremes

Highest Maximum Temperature:
13.6 °C at Exmouth (Devon)

Lowest Maximum Temperature:
6.8 °C at Lerwick (Shetland)

Lowest Minimum Temperature:
-1.6 °C at Fylingdales (North Yorkshire)

Lowest Grass Minimum Temperature:
-6.3 °C at Eskdalemuir (Dumfries and Galloway)

Most Rainfall:
30.9 mm at Aviemore (Highland)

Most Sunshine:
5.6 hours at Cardiff, Bute Park (South Glamorgan)

Example of an historic weather chart produced on request.

General summary

Overnight the weather turned cloudy nearly everywhere and rain, often heavy, spread to most places before daybreak, although some eastern areas stayed dry all night. In the north there was sleet and snow for a while, especially over the Scottish mountains.

During the morning the wet weather reached all areas with heavy rain in many places. Later in the morning in Northern Ireland the weather brightened up and this brighter weather with some sunshine, but showers as well, reached all parts by early evening. In the north there were heavy showers with hail and thunder with snow over the Scottish mountains.

Temperatures were well above average again everywhere but most places had a very windy day with gales or severe gales even storm force winds, especially in Scotland.

Significant weather event	Highest gust speeds		
	(knots)	(mph)	
It was very windy, particularly in northern areas, with gusts reaching 92 knots at Butt of Lewis and 93 knots at Benbecula, in the Western Isles and 100 knots at Fair Isle. At Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, the mean wind speed increased very rapidly from 15 knots at 1730 GMT to 60 knots at 1900 GMT as the wind direction veered from south-westerly to north-westerly, a record gust for a low-level station of 123 knots was measured: the hourly mean speed was 66 knots. The high winds disrupted traffic and brought down trees as far south as Leicestershire and North Wales, with buses and high-sided lorries blown over. In Dunfermline, Fife Region, nine people were injured when the roof of a hospital ward was blown off.	Fraserburgh (Aberdeenshire)	123	142
	Lowther Hill (Strathclyde)	106	122
	Fair Isle (Shetland)	100	115
	Benbecula (Western Isles)	93	107
	Butt of Lewis (Western Isles)	92	106
	Stornoway (Western Isles)	85	98
	Sumburgh (Shetland)	80	92
	Dunstaffnage (Strathclyde)	80	92
	Wick (Highland)	79	91
	Leith (Lothian)	79	91
	Lossiemouth (Grampian)	78	90
	Duirinish (Highland)	78	90

Daily weather statistics

	London	Edinburgh	Cardiff	Belfast
Maximum Temperature/°C:	11.4	11.4	11.9	10.0
Minimum Temperature/°C:	5.0	1.9	1.3	1.3
Rainfall Amount/mm:	2.4	3.3	6.4	3.3
Sunshine Amount/hours:	0.1	1.8	5.6	2.4

Affiliated Society Corner

In the first of a series showcasing the activities of local history societies around the county, we hear from Tricia Whiteaway, Secretary of the Dawlish Local History Group. I hope that by featuring local groups in this way it will help affiliated societies to share ideas about how to carry out research projects, get your work published, or even start up a new group. If your society would like to feature in this section in a future edition please contact the newsletter editor. Contact details are on the back page.

Dawlish Local History Group meets alternate months at The Manor House, Dawlish, on Monday afternoons having speakers on a variety of subjects. It was formed 17 years ago to research and promote the history of the parish, and since then we have produced some 24 books covering the history of its fishing, the mills, the brewery and pubs, the schools, people, farms and houses, to name but a few and includes *How Dawlish Lost its Independence*, *The Diary of a Victorian Schoolgirl*, and *Dawlish at War*. We are currently working on *Shops & Trades of the town*.

Our books are available at our meetings of course, at Dawlish Museum (open from May to October), whilst the Open Daw (at Wesleyan Church) holds a few of our books. A complete selection of our books is in Dawlish library and some are in the Westcountry Studies Library, and a few in Tree House.

Our books are researched and written by our members and put into book form with our photos by a clever computer-tech member, then photocopied professionally. In this way we can publish as many or as few as we need without piling up a large stock.

The group also takes interesting outings in the district in the summer months, has occasional historic walks around the town and has carried out archaeological field walking on the farms. All this for the membership of £5 per annum. Visitors are always welcome.

For further information about membership or about our research activities contact the Secretary, Tricia Whiteaway, on 01626 866927, email whiteaway219@btinternet.com

Tricia Whiteaway

Out and about with DHS



The exhibition area at the Local Studies Day held in the Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter in February 2011. Members of the Devon History Society attended and organised one of the displays. (Photograph courtesy of Westcountry Studies Library)

Over the last few months, representatives of the Devon History Society have been looking for opportunities to publicise our activities to the wider local history community within the county. We have organised exhibits and attended local studies days in both Exeter and in Plymouth. At each of these events we have been able to give out information about our society and sign up some new members. We have also met other people who share our interest in and passion for Devon's history, whether as members of local history groups, as researchers into genealogy, as academic researchers or simply as people who have a general interest in history. Those of us who have attended these events have very much enjoyed our outings and we also believe that this has been a useful exercise enabling the society to raise its profile throughout the county. Several members have also spoken to various organisations. We are planning to attend more events in the future, including the AGM and Conference of the Devon Family History Society and the AGM of the Friends of Devon's Archives. If you see us at any of these events, please come up and say hello and if anyone knows of similar events in other parts of the county which you think we should attend, please let a member of Council know and we will see if we can arrange to be represented.

Plymouth History Centre Update

In March 2011, the Plymouth & West Devon Record Office reached a very important milestone in its journey towards new premises. Plymouth City Council's 'Accommodation Strategy' was published, setting out at a corporate level the priorities for the authority in finding new homes for various services. Within this, outline approval was given for the progression of a Plymouth History Centre on the Parkside Community College site in the Devonport part of Plymouth.

Having this high-level support for the scheme means that we can now work with key players within the authority to map out the rest of the journey. At this stage, although it is still very early in the process, we are all very excited at what this could mean for the future of Plymouth's Museums and Archives Service.

The project team has since been convened, with key players from within the Museums and Archives and Libraries Services, co-ordinated by a representative of the Accommodation Strategy team. The first action for us has been to review our vision for the building and to identify key workstreams that need to be addressed to get us to a stage when we can apply for external funding support. We are in a good position because work has been done on these areas when looking for another home in the past.

We will be looking for this external support in the form of a capital grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). We have already had initial conversations with them about what we would like the building to be and they are very enthusiastic about our proposals. The HLF application will be co-ordinated by a dedicated Project Officer whom we are looking to appoint at present. We hope they will be with us in the next few months.

The application to HLF for a project of this scale has to be done in two stages. We plan to submit Stage 1 in the early part of 2012 and we would look to progress to Stage 2 a year later. Successful applications would enable us to complete the project by 2014. It is going to involve a lot of work in the interim and we are very grateful for the support of all the members of the Devon History Society to date and we hope you will continue to help us eventually reach our new home.

Louisa Mann, Plymouth City Archivist
July 2011

Exeter's museum reopens on 16 December

Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) reopens on 16 December with stunning new displays. Drawn from its world-class collections, they reflect the changing fortunes of Exeter and Devon, its position nationally and its global links.

The largest gallery in the museum tells the story of Exeter and Devon starting with the fragmentary remains of prehistoric Devon leading on to the splendour of Exeter in its 'Golden Age' of the 18th century, the craft and industry in the 19th-century and concluding with a reflection on contemporary Devon and Exeter. Drawing on the archaeology, decorative art, costume and fine art collections, as well as physical and screen-based interactives, it will deliver a coherent picture of Exeter and Devon through the ages.

Talks on RAMM and its redevelopment are available to groups in Devon. Call RAMM's volunteer coordinator at 01392 665858 to book.

RAMM's redevelopment was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£9million), Exeter City Council and other sources.

Rob Mackenzie | Marketing Assistant
Royal Albert Memorial Museum

Professor Joyce Youings

Members of the society will be saddened to learn of the death on June 28 of Emeritus Professor Joyce Youings, one of our founding members. Joyce was appointed to the History Department at Exeter University in 1951 and became the first female professor not long afterwards. Over the course of fifty years she was tireless in her efforts to promote Devon's history. No one has contributed so much to our county societies: Joyce played a leading role in them all and was instrumental in the setting up of the Devon History Society. Her research on the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the life of Walter Raleigh and especially on the social history of Tudor England, remains the key works on those subjects. Plans are currently underway to honour Joyce's life. Members will be kept informed of developments through our newsletter and on our website at www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk.

New DHS logo

For some time now, Council has been discussing the need for a DHS logo that would provide the Society with a symbol that clearly projects its identity. The logo could then be applied to all its official communications, both towards its members and to the wider world. We can now report that a design prepared by Delphine Jones, Senior Graphics Designer at the University of Exeter, has been chosen as the official Society logo. It will be applied to all Society letter heads, programme sheets and membership application forms as well as the journal and newsletter. It will also be applied to the anniversary book, now in preparation, and will feature on the DHS website.

Chris Jago



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